



# THE TRAVELING SCHOOL

## *Curriculum Guide*



# Academic Overview

## Mission

Our mission is to amplify female voices through transformative education to ignite positive change.

## Vision

We envision a world where strong, compassionate female leaders build an equitable and sustainable global community.

## Accreditation

The Traveling School is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS-WASC) as a Supplementary Education Program. Our transcripts and academic credits are accepted by public and private schools across the country.



## Calendar

Both fall and spring semesters are approximately 105 days in length. Students participate in classes and academic activities every day of the week. Although schedules vary from day to day and week to week, The Traveling School carefully records academic hours for each class, whether a seminar-style lecture, visiting speaker, or cultural exchange. Each course meets or exceeds national averages for high-school instructional time standards.

## School Pillars

Transformative education at The Traveling School goes beyond the confines of hour-long classes. We intentionally weave the following pillars throughout semester academic coursework, activities, and overall programming:

1. Experiential Education
2. Community Engagement
3. Outdoor Pursuits
4. Transformational Leadership

## Honors-Level Courses

Traveling School courses emphasize the ability to access, synthesize, evaluate, critique, and communicate information through various formats. While students may come from unique academic backgrounds, faculty challenge each student to grow in their intellectual pursuits and quality of work. Courses are honors-level due to pace, depth of content, and focus on high-order thinking and skills.

## Place-based, Thematic Learning

The Traveling School's place-based curriculum centers regional topics around unifying, global themes to deepen students' engagement with course areas while contextualizing learning. Our unifying themes across all semester locations are:

- *Borders and Migration*
- *The Environment: Natural Resources, Land, and Water Rights*
- *Identity, Sovereignty, and Power*

Students are immersed in complex subject matter and nuanced perspectives through their teachers, peers, community members, visiting speakers, guides, and geographic settings. As they learn to read the primary sources of places and people, Traveling School students discover how to dialogue across difference; challenge their assumptions; and reflect profoundly upon both past and present, local and global socio-ecological-political issues.

## Assessment

Faculty aim to create authentic assessments that allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and growth. Students are regularly assessed through class discussions; reflective and analytical essays; projects; presentations; homework; field exams; quizzes and tests. Students complete a final interdisciplinary capstone to culminate their semester.

The Traveling School uses a traditional letter-based grading scale with the following equivalences: A+ (100-98), A (97-93), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), etc. F = 59 or lower. A student must earn a 70 percent or high to PASS in a PASS/NO PASS course. After the semester, each student and their sending school receive a transcript accompanied by specific course details, as well as individual letter grades and comments about the student's growth, proficiency, and achievements.



# Course Offerings

Each student must enroll in all required courses and can choose one additional supplementary course as desired.

<b>Required Courses</b>	<b>Semester Credits</b>
Honors Global Studies	1
Honors Literature & Composition	1
Honors History & Politics	1
Honors Environmental Science	1
Leadership & Life Skills	1*
Physical & Outdoor Fitness	1*
Honors Spanish (Level I, II & III) <i>Required on South America semester; not offered on Southern Africa or Western US semesters</i>	1
<b>Supplementary Courses**</b>	
Statistics	1
Advanced Financial Algebra	1
Independent Study (upon request & approval)	n/a

## Notes:

- \*Denotes classes that are pass/fail with no numerical grade, with passing equaling 70 percent or above. The Traveling School can award a traditional percentage grade if required. This request must be noted on the Credit Transfer Form.
- \*\*Supplementary Courses:
  - A minimum of three students must express interest by the enrollment date in order for a supplementary course to be offered.
  - If the minimum is not met, we may be able to establish an independent study.
  - Based on interest and capacity, The Traveling School may choose to only offer one supplementary course per semester.
- The Traveling School will address independent study requests on an individual basis during admission and enrollment. The Traveling School must approve requests and will determine whether to charge an additional student fee.
- Course changes during semester require the approval of a Traveling School administrator, student's home high school, and parent/guardians.

# Course Descriptions

## Honors Global Studies (Required)

In this interdisciplinary and discussion-based course, students evaluate local and global power dynamics; examine personal and cultural biases; identify systems upholding colonization and imperialism; analyze the interplay between identity, power, and privilege; and reflect on what it means to be a proactive agent of change in a globalized world. Students begin by questioning the nature of education and practicing Paulo Freire's concept of "reading the world" as way of engaging with people and place during their travels. They subsequently employ this practice in a weekly reflective essay. Through essential questions, students then learn to draw important connections between complex topics and diverse, often conflicting, perspectives from primary and secondary sources. Students are encouraged to incorporate learnings from their experiences and other courses into discussions and reflection. Global Studies explicitly ties together different knowledge streams throughout the semester under the umbrella of The Traveling School's core academic themes: Borders & Migration; The Environment: Natural Resources, Land and Water Rights; and Identity, Sovereignty and Power. Students demonstrate their understanding through class participation, Socratic Seminars, reflective essays, projects, and presentations.

### *Global Studies Final Presentation*

Each student is required to give a 30-minute public presentation for a group of their peers within ten days of returning home. This presentation must be verified by a supervising adult and verification must be sent to The Traveling School. Presentation completion is incorporated into the student's final Global Studies grade. Details are further described in the Student and Parent Handbook.

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## **Honors Literature & Composition (Required)**

Stories wield power: the power to construct identities or destroy them; the power to fix minds or change them; the power to tell us about people, place, and ourselves. These are the animating ideas behind Honors Literature & Composition, which is designed for students to build robust reading, writing, and literary analysis skills through engaging with the diverse literature of the region of travel. Students are pushed to explicate and argue with evidence the deeper meaning of a text, while also cultivating their own voice and harnessing the power of their individual narrative through writing. Students read two novels, as well as short fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Works are sourced from highly-acclaimed authors whose writing speaks to the power of storytelling and the particular silences of a place, identity, or time period. Close reading practice and discussions hone students' literary analysis abilities, and rigorous writing workshops progress students' clarity and creativity in a variety of writing genres. Students utilize the editing process to produce a minimum of three major compositions over the course.

## **Honors History & Politics (Required)**

In this course, students are challenged to learn history through the lens of resistance by non-dominant and indigenous peoples, while unlearning ingrained Eurocentric framings. Beginning with the question, 'What is history?' the course evaluates the myths upon which certain national and global histories are founded, which often obscure the realities of genocide and the settler-colonial project. Students question their assumptions around how they know what they know, identifying personal and other biases, and critically engaging with diverse primary and secondary sources. Through investigating how the past influences present hierarchies of power, authority, and governance, students forge connections between complex concepts; assess disparate points of views; build arguments based on evidence-backed claims; and ultimately move beyond the concept of history as strictly linear and temporal. Assessments involve presentations, map creations, oral projects, interviews, essays, Socratic Seminars, and other structured discussions.

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## **Honors Environmental Science (Required)**

Honors Environmental Science begins with students exploring the nature of science, engaging in the scientific process, and studying the flora and fauna of local ecosystems in their region of travel. Throughout the semester, students maintain detailed field journals—including species accounts, sketches, observations, data, questions and hypotheses—as they learn how to practice scientific inquiry and investigation. The course then dives into ecological and earth science topics such as migration, adaptation, succession, biodiversity, trophic cascades, keystone species, population dynamics, geologic history, the rock cycle and plate tectonics; in an effort to conceptualize both global and local processes that shape our environment, society, and landscapes. Building upon this foundational ecological knowledge, students examine the environmental impacts of land, water, and natural resource use both regionally and globally before transitioning into studying the broader impacts and processes of global and climate change. Students read journal articles, textbooks, and other scientific literature, as well as engage in guest lectures, discussions, self-designed experiments, group projects, presentations, citizen science projects, and in-depth field studies. This course is designed to meet relevant Next Generation Science Standards and select AP Environmental Science topics.

## **Leadership & Life Skills (Required)**

The course focuses on the transferable skills necessary to become a self-aware, effective citizen who takes responsibility for their personal and community well-being. Students are encouraged to develop awareness around and practice self-care, life-work balance, and holistic well-being during and after the semester. Workshops begin with a focus on the individual; shift to one's impact within their community; and culminate by contemplating our positionality in the global community. Essential questions ask students to explore aspects of identity, privilege, communication, leadership, and group living to facilitate introspective learning and inspire growth. As the semester progresses, each student practices being Student Leader for the Day, in which they plan, manage and communicate the group's schedule and itinerary. Skills learned in this class are woven throughout all aspects of the immersive Traveling School experience as students are prompted to be proactive community members whose actions contribute to an inclusive and intentional community. Students also participate in 15-20 hours of community engagement and service to emphasize active citizenship.

## **Physical & Outdoor Fitness (Required)**

Traveling School semesters are filled with physical and outdoor pursuits to build confidence, scaffold leadership skills, and promote an active lifestyle. Students participate in a variety of routine workouts – circuits, intervals, and endurance – to develop strength and cardiovascular fitness. Additionally, each semester region incorporates various outdoor expeditions such as hiking, backpacking, rafting, canoeing, rock climbing, canyoneering and more, which build both fitness and technical skills. Students learn about expeditionary behavior and leadership techniques in Leadership & Life Skills to effectively participate in outdoor fitness opportunities. This participation-based class teaches students how develop their own workout class that they instruct to their peers.

## **Honors Spanish (Level I, II, III)**

*Required on South America semester; not offered in other semester regions.*

Students have 15 weeks and the perfect classroom - Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia - to strengthen their language skills and build confidence in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension. Each course level implements the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century from the National Standards in Foreign Language Education, commonly referred to as the 5 C's: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. This course aims to increase students Spanish fluency through reading, writing and speaking during discussions and interactive, immersive activities. Students are expected to practice their language acquisition skills by engaging with the people, cultures, and communities through which we travel.

The Traveling School references student's credit transfer forms to create initial class rosters. To achieve the most compatible groupings, prior to the semester each student completes a written and oral assessment in order to create class levels with like skill levels.



## **Statistics (Supplementary)**

*Prerequisite: Algebra 1*

Students will observe the social, political, and scientific power of math as they learn foundational skills in statistics. They will use these skills to evaluate specific problems and challenges related to the region of travel through a data-driven, statistical lens. Topics covered include but are not limited to: data types (categorical versus quantitative, one and two variable data); data collection, sampling and study design; data visualization; and probability, standard deviation and data distributions. Students learn how to collect, interpret, infer, and represent data utilizing real-world, open-source data sets as well as through interdisciplinary projects with Honors Environmental Science and Global Studies. Other assessments include problem sets, homework, tests, quizzes, class participation, and presentations.

## **Advanced Financial Algebra (Supplementary)**

*Prerequisite: Algebra 1*

Students apply algebraic concepts to the world of finance, exploring the role of money and markets on a personal and societal scale. Through inquiry-based practice and modeling, students investigate real-life math applications to evaluate aspects of their financial lives and futures including budgeting, bank accounts, credit cards, income taxes, the stock market, different types of investments, and loans. Students will engage with the national and regionally specific economic dynamics and challenges in their area of travel; as well as the financial outcomes of gender bias, considering how financial and mathematical empowerment intersect with feminism. This interactive course asks students to use applied algebra, logic, and problem-solving skills to build financial literacy, encourage wise financial decision-making, and promote financial well-being over a lifetime.