

School Committee Curriculum Subcommittee  
Tuesday, January 14, 2025  
4:00 PM – 5:20 PM  
Remote via Zoom and Town Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

*Curriculum Subcommittee Members present:* Ms. Suzanne Federspiel (Chair), Ms. Helen Charlupski, Dr. Steven Ehrenberg, and Dr. Jesse Hefter.

*Other School Committee Members present:* Ms. Carolyn Thall.

*Staff present:* Dr. Linus Guillory, Superintendent; Dr. Jodi Fortuna, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; Michelle Herman and Gabe McCormick, Senior Directors for Teaching and Learning; Hal Mason, BHS Assistant Head of School; Robin Fabiano, BHS Special Education Director; Britt Stevens, BHS Career and Technology Education Curriculum Coordinator; Ed Wisner, BHS Teacher; Jen Martin, BHS Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator; John Andrews, BHS English Curriculum Coordinator; and Betsy Fitzpatrick.

Ms. Federspiel called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

**1. Approval of Minutes: December 10, 2024 Curriculum Subcommittee Meeting**

On a motion of Ms. Federspiel, and seconded by Dr. Hefter, the Curriculum Subcommittee voted, by roll call, with 3 in favor (Ms. Federspiel, Ms. Charlupski, and Dr. Hefter; Dr. Ehrenberg was not present for the vote), 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions, to approve the Minutes of the December 10, 2024 Curriculum Subcommittee meeting.

**2. Brookline High School Course Catalog Changes, 2025-2026**

**a. Construction: A Tour Through the Trades (Career and Technology Education)**

Ms. Stevens, Curriculum Coordinator for the BHS Career and Technology Education (CTE) department, shared the attached course description, and she was joined by Mr. Wisner and Ms. Fabiano to describe the proposed course in more detail. The course aims to equip students with the comprehensive skills and knowledge required for success in the construction industry, and will cover the following areas: carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HVAC-R, masonry, drywalling, and finishing. Ms. Fabiano described how this course is one step, as part of a larger effort, to provide alternative programmatic offerings for students who may be at risk of not graduating, or who have reported that they don't see the value in traditional course offerings. Ms. Stevens noted that this proposal is budget-neutral; based on actual student enrollment, fewer sections of woodworking will run to accommodate the new section(s) of this course. She discussed some of the labor market demand resources she uses to design curriculum and plan CTE courses. Members expressed their enthusiasm for this course proposal – and some members would like to visit the course in session next year!

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski, and seconded by Dr. Hefter, the Curriculum Subcommittee voted, by roll call, with 4 in favor (Ms. Federspiel, Ms. Charlupski, Dr. Ehrenberg, and Dr. Hefter), to recommend that the full School Committee approve the proposed new course - *Construction: A Tour Through the Trades* - for the 2025-2026 BHS course catalog.

**b. Contemporary American History (Social Studies Department)**

Jen Martin, BHS Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator, joined the meeting and shared the attached course description. This course had traditionally been offered for many years at BHS, but it fell off the course catalog a few years ago. There is presently no history course option for seniors

through the Social Studies department (lots of great elective Social Studies options, but no true history option). This will be a mixed-level (Honors or Standard credit), semester elective. This is a budget-neutral proposal (it will only run if there is student interest/registration). The curriculum will cover 1980-present, delving into the dynamic history of the United States from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski, and seconded by Dr. Hefter, the Curriculum Subcommittee voted, by roll call, with 4 in favor (Ms. Federspiel, Ms. Charlupski, Dr. Ehrenberg, and Dr. Hefter), to recommend that the full School Committee approve the proposed new course – *Contemporary United States History* - for the 2025-2026 BHS course catalog.

**c. Justice in Action: Unpacking Crime, Law, and Consequence (Interdisciplinary Course offered jointly through both the English and Social Studies Departments)**

Mr. Andrews joined the meeting to discuss this full-year, interdisciplinary course through which students would earn 2 credits (one for English and one for Social Studies). This proposed course would replace the current Legal Studies course in the Social Studies department. The course will be divided into two sections, taught by an English teacher and a Social Studies teacher in separate blocks, which will sometimes meet together (for example, for special activities). The Citizens Police Academy component of the current Legal Studies course will transition to in-school hours in this new course, during which members of the Brookline Police Department will visit the class to cover issues such as de-escalation, mental health, less lethal weapons, and domestic sex trafficking. Members asked that care and thoughtfulness be taken when planning for the participation of police officers in the course, in light of the decision several years ago to discontinue the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. Running the course is budget-neutral; however, the teachers proposing the new course are seeking Innovation Fund funding for summer planning.

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski, and seconded by Dr. Hefter, the Curriculum Subcommittee voted, by roll call, with 4 in favor (Ms. Federspiel, Ms. Charlupski, Dr. Ehrenberg, and Dr. Hefter), 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions, to recommend that the full School Committee approve the proposed course – *Justice in Action: Unpacking Crime, Law and Consequence* – for the 2025-2026 BHS course catalog.

**d. Friendship in Literature and Film (English Department)**

Mr. Andrews discussed a proposed new course that will be taught by Peter Sedlak in the English Department. He noted that, coming out of the pandemic, more people are attuned to the importance of friendship, including our students. As students struggle with mental health challenges and loneliness, the time seems right for this course. This is a budget-neutral proposal; it will only run if enough students register for it.

On a motion of Ms. Charlupski, and seconded by Dr. Ehrenberg, the Curriculum Subcommittee voted, by roll call, with 4 in favor (Ms. Federspiel, Ms. Charlupski, Dr. Ehrenberg, and Dr. Hefter), 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions, to recommend that the full School Committee approve the proposed course – *Friendship in Literature and Film* – for the 2025-2026 BHS course catalog.

Mr. Andrews stated that he had originally planned to propose an AP English course for the 2025-2026 catalog. Members asked why that course proposal was pulled. Mr. Andrews said that after

feedback from some members of the English Department, and from other educators at BHS, he has decided to pause on the proposal. He is very supportive of the AP course, but will use the next few months to have conversations with his colleagues to build consensus around the proposal, with a plan to have it ready for consideration for the 2026-2027 course catalog. Members expressed support for this course, and look forward to seeing it proposed in the future.

### **3. New Business**

Dr. Fortuna reported that at the next meeting of the Curriculum Subcommittee there will be a discussion of a proposed dual enrollment program for BHS students with Mass. Bay Community College. This will be a tuition-free experience, allowing students to earn college credit.

Mr. Mason requested that the Curriculum Subcommittee set aside time at the next meeting to discuss a new Competency Determination (CD) for graduation. Previously, passing the MCAS exam in 3 areas (ELA, Mathematics, and Science & Technology) was the CD. Following the results of the Massachusetts ballot question vote in November 2024, MCAS will no longer be used to determine competency, and each school district must create their own CD measure. This item will require discussion by the Curriculum Subcommittee, and a new School Committee policy to be presented through the Policy Subcommittee, prior to full School Committee approval.

Ms. Federspiel adjourned the meeting at 5:20pm.

## **Course Title:**

Construction: A Tour through the Trades

## **Course Description:**

The course aims to equip students with the comprehensive skills and knowledge required for success in the construction industry. This hands-on course introduces students to the fundamental skills and knowledge needed to work in five essential building trades: plumbing, electrical, HVAC-R, masonry, and several carpentry trades. In this course for beginners, students will learn tool safety and technical skills and engage in activities to prepare for further training or entry-level work in the trades. Additionally, units will include health and safety practices, technical drawing interpretation, and sustainable energy solutions. Additionally, students will enhance their problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills and explore entrepreneurship opportunities within the construction field.

The **Carpentry** units will provide essential skills in woodworking, framing, structural construction, and technical drawing, along with required safety skills. The **Electrical** unit will focus on wiring basics, circuitry, and safe practices for handling electrical components. In the **Plumbing** unit, students will practice pipe installation, repair, and troubleshooting along with understanding water supply and drainage systems. During the **HVAC-R** unit, students will gain a foundational understanding of heating, cooling, and ventilation systems, including refrigerant handling and system maintenance. Additionally, the **Masonry**, **Drywalling**, and **Finishing** units will teach students techniques for constructing, repairing, and finishing walls, including proper use of materials and tools.

Virtual reality (VR) simulations will be incorporated alongside hands-on projects throughout the course to enhance the student learning experience. These simulations will provide practice in tasks such as troubleshooting electrical circuits, navigating HVAC systems, and performing complex carpentry cuts, enhancing hands-on skills in a safe and controlled environment.

In addition to classroom and workshop instruction, the course includes field trips to local job sites, guest speakers from the industry and post-secondary credential-granting institutions (Peterson School, Franklin Cummings Tech, North Bennett Street), and collaboration with the Brookline Building Department so that students will understand the regional trades labor market.

## **DESE Career Cluster: Construction**

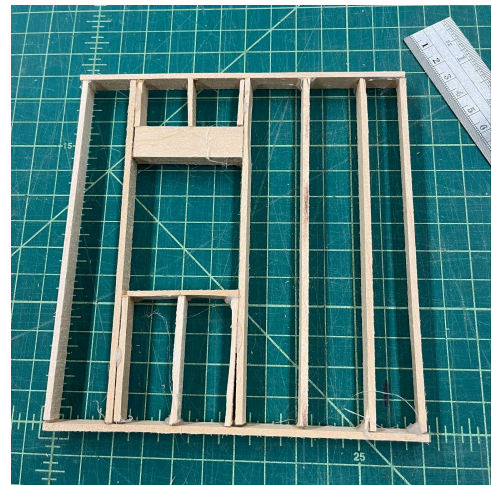
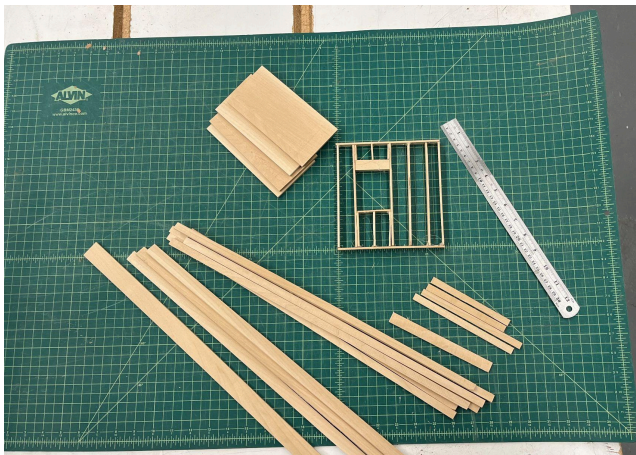
This course aligns with selected and merged DESE Career Cluster Standards from 7 of 8 strands (see links below). **Health & Safety Standards** emphasize the importance of creating safe and healthy environments through proper practices and awareness. This course incorporates **Technical and Integrated Academic Standards** by blending hands-on technical skills with foundational academic knowledge, ensuring students are prepared for real-world applications. **Employability Standards** are met by fostering critical skills such as

communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and professionalism, which are essential in any career. Additionally, the course integrates **Entrepreneurship Standards** by encouraging innovative thinking, business planning, and an understanding of market dynamics, empowering students to develop and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

- [Carpentry](#) (2024)
- [Electricity](#) (2024)
- [Plumbing](#) (2024)
- [HVAC-R](#) (2024)
- [Construction Craft Laborer](#)
- [Facilities Maintenance Mgmt](#)
- [Mason and Tile Setting](#)
- [Painting and Design Technologies](#)

### Key Topics Covered:

- Tool identification and usage across all trades
- Scale model building of residential housing. In the pictures below, a single wall with a window opening was made with a hot glue gun, and the tools in the woodshop.



- Blueprint reading and basic layout skills
- Hands-on practice with pipe installation, wiring, HVAC system maintenance, and carpentry
- Safety protocols, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and safe handling of hazardous materials
- Introduction to building codes and regulatory standards
- Basic troubleshooting techniques for plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems
- VR simulations for skill-building in real-world scenarios

**Space Requirements:** Possible locations for building project walls and classroom activities

- UA Basement hallway for interior and exterior wall construction
- UA16 for walls, floors and material storage
- UA Woodworking shops for classroom activities, individual workstations, model building, and tool management
- STEM 204 for occasional video screening

- Exterior space behind UA for small masonry projects

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course, students will:

Standard	Unit	Duration
<b>1 Health and Safety Proficiency:</b> Demonstrate comprehensive health and safety practices, including the use of PPE, adherence to OSHA and EPA regulations, and effective hazard mitigation in shop and construction environments.	1. Safety Unit	1 week
<b>2 Hoisting and Rigging:</b> Assist with hoisting and rigging tasks by identifying the center of gravity, selecting appropriate equipment, and using effective communication.		
<b>3 Ladders and Scaffolding:</b> Demonstrate safe installation, use, and maintenance of ladders and scaffolding.		
<b>4 Technical Drawing Interpretation:</b> Identify, design, and interpret technical drawings and blueprints relevant to construction projects.	2. Models Unit	2-3 weeks
<b>5 Carpentry and Construction Math:</b> Apply carpentry principles and basic construction math to identify building materials and complete layouts to specifications.		
<b>6 Structural Building Skills:</b> Demonstrate industry-standard practices for constructing and installing floors, walls, ceilings, partitions, and roof framing.		
<b>7 Interior and Exterior Finishing:</b> Utilize techniques for finishing interior and exterior systems, including siding, trim, molding, and weatherization products.	3. Framing Unit	2 weeks
<b>8 Fastening and Tool Operation:</b> Safely install various fasteners and operate power tools per industry standards.		
<b>9 Tool and Equipment Management:</b> Operate, maintain, and store hand, power, and pneumatic tools safely and efficiently.		
<b>10 Electrical Theory and Circuit Building:</b> Explain AC/DC electrical theory, measure and build circuits, and install electrical components such as raceways, conductors, and overcurrent protection. Describe and evaluate grounding systems, including the use of electrodes, bonding jumpers, and grounding methods.	4. Electricity Unit	2-3 weeks
<b>11 Plumbing Skills:</b> Demonstrate techniques for measuring, cutting, joining, and installing plumbing pipes and drainage systems according to the Massachusetts State Plumbing Code.	5. Plumbing Unit	2-3 weeks
<b>12 HVAC-R Skills:</b> Apply HVAC-R guidelines for measuring, cutting, and joining pipe and ductwork per project specifications.	6. HVAC Unit	1-2 weeks
<b>13 Tile Setting:</b> Execute tile-setting procedures, including project preparation, pattern alignment, adhesion, and grouting.	7. Finish Unit	1-2 weeks

Standard	Unit	Duration
<b>14 Drywall Application:</b> Demonstrate the application and finishing of drywall to align with project specifications.		
<b>15 Masonry Skills:</b> Perform masonry tasks, including preparation, layout of brick bonds, paver base construction, and precision in masonry work.	8. Masonry Unit	1-2 weeks
<b>16 Energy Efficiency and Sustainability:</b> Design energy-efficient systems, identify compliant insulation materials, and use sustainable resources according to IECC guidelines.	9. Big Picture Unit	1 week
<b>17 Professional Skills:</b> Exhibit critical thinking, problem-solving, professionalism, teamwork, and collaboration.		
<b>18 Entrepreneurship in Construction:</b> Describe business opportunities and evaluate the benefits of entrepreneurship in the construction field.		
<b>19 Demolition:</b> During the last week, safely deconstruct the construction projects using proper techniques and concepts of leverage.	10. Demo Unit	Last week

**Technology Use:** Candidates will utilize tools associated with each trade: *This tool set supports various tasks across carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HVAC-R, masonry, and safety operations in the construction environment. Most equipment is currently in BHS inventory.*

### General Hand Tools

1. Hammers (claw, sledge, mallet)
2. Screwdrivers (flathead, Phillips)
3. Pliers (needle-nose, locking, cutting)
4. Wrenches (adjustable, socket, pipe)
5. Tape measures and rulers
6. Levels and squares (spirit level, carpenter's square, speed square)
7. Utility knives and blades
8. Hand saws (crosscut, hacksaw)
9. Chisels

### Power Tools

10. Drills (corded and cordless)
11. Fastening power tools (impact wrenches)
12. Circular saws
13. Jigsaws and Reciprocating saws
14. Power sanders (orbital, belt)
15. Nail guns (pneumatic or battery)
16. Table saws
17. Miter saws

### Masonry Tools

18. Trowels (brick, pointing, margin)

19. Mason's hammers
20. Jointers
21. Mixing tools for mortar (rental)
22. Levels and lines (for masonry work)

### Plumbing Tools

23. Pipe cutters (PVC, copper)
24. Pipe wrenches
25. Pipe threaders
26. Plumber's tape and sealants
27. Tube reamers
28. Crimping tools

### Electrical Tools

29. Wire strippers and cutters
30. Multimeters and Circuit analyzers
31. Fish tape
32. Conduit benders

### HVAC-R Tools

33. Duct cutters and crimpers
34. Sheet metal shears
35. Thermometers

### **Safety Equipment**

- 36. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – helmets, gloves, safety goggles, ear protection
- 37. Harnesses for elevation work
- 38. Dust masks and respirators

### **Measurement and Layout Tools**

- 39. Laser levels
- 40. Chalk lines
- 41. Measuring wheels
- 42. Plumb bobs
- 43. Tape measures (various lengths)

### **Specialized Construction Tools**

- 44. Ladders (extension, step)
- 45. Scaffolding systems (rental)
- 46. Tile cutters
- 47. Drywall lifts
- 48. Drywall trowels and knives
- 49. Joint compound applicators
- 50. Hydraulic jacks

### **Demolition Tools**

- 51. Sledgehammer
- 52. Jackhammer (rental)
- 53. Pry Bars, crowbars, wrecking bars
- 54. Reciprocating saw
- 55. Nail pullers

**Summary:** This course is ideal for 11th and 12th-grade students interested in exploring a career in the skilled trades or gaining foundational knowledge in building and repair techniques for personal use. No prior experience is required.

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## Contemporary US Proposal

### Background

- This course has historically been offered for many years at BHS. It fell off the course catalog a few years ago when the department had many more electives competing for student enrollment within our department. The only changes that have been made to this version of the course is that the previous iteration started after WWII, but this version will move students forward significantly to be able to learn a more “contemporary” history.
- We are keen to offer a history course for students in their senior year.
- The Social Studies department spent the fall pitching and voting for new courses and this course was by far the most popular choice both in terms of what the department needs to round out their offerings and what teachers are excited to present to students.

### Course Description

*Contemporary American History: 1980–Present is a mixed-level (Honors or Standard credit), one-semester elective that delves into the dynamic history of the United States from the late 20th century to the present. As the only history-specific offering for seniors at the high school, this course provides a unique opportunity to engage deeply with recent historical developments. Students will explore the political, social, economic, cultural, and foreign policy changes that have shaped contemporary America. By examining key events, movements, and figures, students will gain critical insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by the nation during this transformative period. Through analysis, discussion, and research, students will deepen their understanding of the country's recent history, uncovering the roots of many issues and trends that influence the world today. This course will equip students to make meaningful connections between the past and present, preparing them to be informed, thoughtful, and engaged members of a rapidly changing society.*

**Potential Topics:** Not a definitive list, but just a sample

#### Domestic Politics and Policies

- Reagan Tax Cuts, Americans with Disabilities Act, Immigration Act of 1990, *Roe v Wade*, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” Welfare to Work, Marriage Equality, No Child Left Behind Act, Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), Trump Tax Reform, Budget Control Act, Economic Relief, and more.

#### Foreign Policy and Military Engagements

- Cold War, INF Treaty, Strategic Defense Initiative, Iran Hostage Crisis, Grenada, Iran-Contra Affair, Persian Gulf War, War on Terror, Iraq, Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, Iran Nuclear Deal, Trade Wars, and North Korea.

## Social and Cultural Shifts

- Equal Rights Amendment, Sandra Day O'Connor, Sally Ride, Los Angeles Riots, OJ Simpson Trial, Women's March, George Floyd, Alternative Rock and Hip Hop, and advancements in diversity and inclusion.

## Technological and Environmental Developments

- Macintosh Computer, Hubble Space Telescope, Deepwater Horizon, SpaceX, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, and Hurricane Katrina, Social Media revolution.

## Major Events and Crises

- September 11 Attacks, Challenger, Oklahoma City Bombing, Great Recession, Coronavirus Pandemic, Enron Scandal, Capital Riot and government shutdowns.

## Elections and Leadership Transitions

- Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Election of 2000, Bush v. Gore, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, Joe Biden, and related impeachment proceedings or controversies.

Potential Assignments/Activities
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**Oral History Interview:** Conduct and record an interview with someone who experienced a significant historical event from the 1980s, 1990s, or early 2000s to gain a personal perspective on history.

**Debate on Contemporary Issues:** Participate in structured debates on topics such as immigration policy, the role of the U.S. in global conflicts, or the influence of technology on society.

**Media Analysis Projects:** Analyze a piece of media (e.g., a news article, film, or TV show) from a specific decade to understand its reflection of the era's social or political climate.

**Policy Proposal Presentation:** Research and propose solutions to a current issue rooted in developments from the 1980s onward, such as healthcare reform, climate change, or criminal justice policy.

**Pop Culture and History:** Explore how music, fashion, or movies from a specific decade reflect societal trends and changes, culminating in a class presentation.

**Primary Source Analysis:** Examine and interpret documents such as speeches, court rulings, or political cartoons from the course's time period to understand their historical significance.

**Research Paper on a Major Event:** Write an in-depth paper on an event like 9/11, the 2008 financial crisis, or the rise of social media, analyzing its causes, impacts, and legacy.

**Community Impact Project:** Identify and research a local issue tied to broader historical trends.

**Brookline High School English Department**  
**New Course Proposals for 2025-2026**  
~ DRAFT~

From Peter Sedlak  
11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Friendship in Literature and Film**

Coming out of a once-in-a-generation global pandemic, many people appear more attuned than ever to the importance of friendship. This course will explore the pleasures, struggles, and complexities of friendship through a study of short stories, novels, and films that all consider the meaning of friendship and other important connections. In this course, we'll look at characters and the various ways they connect or seek out non-romantic connections. What does it mean to call someone a friend? How are friendships different from other types of relationships? What makes certain friendships last a lifetime and others fall apart? Why is the pain of losing a friend often less acknowledged than the pain of losing a partner or a family member? How are male friends different from female friends? How do race, gender, and ability impact friendships? Friendship, after all, is a capacious category; friendships can be platonic, they can be familial, they can become romantic (or walk a fine line), they can become clique-ish, they can exist in nature and extend across species, they can be intimate or professional, and, of course, they can become fraught. Besties can become rivals. Competitors can become frenemies. Sometimes friendships need to cool down, and, in some cases, a positive intensity can transform into enmity. Students will study texts such as Toni Morrison's *Sula*, Claire Keegan's *Foster*, Yasmina Reza's *Art*, and some classics like *Hamlet* and *Gilgamesh*. We will also view films like *Moonlight*, *Didi*, and *Crip Camp*, as well as read several short stories and poems.

From Rob Primmer  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Justice in Action: Unpacking Crime, Law, and Consequence**  
(with Social Studies)

In this full year interdisciplinary course, students would earn 2 credits (one for English and one for Social Studies). This elective focuses specifically on the criminal justice system and would replace the current Legal Studies course. Students will learn the difference between civil and criminal law and the full criminal justice procedure including what happens post trial and sentencing. Students will do a deep dive into two major case studies: The case of OJ Simpson and the case of Charles Stuart, both highlighting and delving deeper into the issues in criminal procedure. At the same time, students will read books and watch films closely related to these same issues. During the third quarter, students will complete 4 observation hours a week to replace three days of class. During the other class periods, we will move our Citizens Police Academy to "in school hours" using the time to discuss current issues in policing including de-escalation, mental health, less lethal weapons, drugs, and domestic sex trafficking. Students will complete a final project in both English and Social Studies using the knowledge to create a major mock trial packet and a screenplay or final paper. The course is divided into two sections and taught by an English teacher and a Social Studies teacher in separate blocks which will sometimes meet together.