

Humanities Department News

October 17, 2016

Social Studies:

All US History classes have incorporated the 2016 Presidential election into their studies. After reviewing a political spectrum chart graphic, students have been asked to theorize the modern day political party affiliations of Theodore Roosevelt, Alexander Hamilton and/or Thomas Jefferson. After completing further research about the policies and practices these historical leaders stood for, students were then asked to surmise, with specific supporting evidence, which current candidate each would prefer. Since the parties of old do not perfectly correlate to those of today, any assumption was valid as long as it was well supported. The study of our past and current events is largely subjective and personal. All US History classes welcome multiple points of view.

- By Jessica Memmott

AP World History II students have been reviewing material pertaining to periods before the Industrial Age. As part of engagement, students have recently completed a DBQ (document-based question) evaluating the overall tone of the Middle Ages, determining whether or not its secondary name should be one of the following: the Dark Ages, the Age of Faith, the Age of Feudalism, or the Golden Age. Provided primary sources were to be analyzed and used to support made claims of which titles could or could not be considered applicable. The students' utilization of relative content and skills has not only been pertinent to the current topic of study, but also further practice for the DBQ portion of the AP exam.

- By Pat Holyst

Fine Arts:

Mrs. Costa's Middle School Design and Drawing class has been studying color and abstract art in depth. They have researched color facts, shared their research with each other, and discussed the power of color as a language. They discussed the differences between abstract ideas and concrete things, and confirmed that just as non-lyrical music can express ideas and emotions, so can non-representational art. To experience this, they first responded in writing with abstract concepts (emotions) that they felt listening to three selections of music. They then painted abstract images, using only the elements of design (line, shape, color, value, texture, space) to express the emotions that they felt listening again to these three selections of music. We concluded by discussing the similarities and differences between the written responses and the painted responses.

Mrs. Costa's Photography classes will be taking two local field trips to extend their photography skills. Next week they will go to the Boardwalk to practice new depth of field skills to vary focus on areas of the fall landscape. During the first week of November, the students will be at Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy to practice both their depth of field skills and motion capture skills with the abundant variety of birds found at the Conservancy. The 2D Design, 3D Design, and Drawing class has been working on a unit in Communication. Each student was challenged to choose an abstract idea or emotion and express it in a painting, logo, drawing, photograph, or sculpture. Having such varied responses made for a rich and lively critique at the conclusion of the unit.

Computer Graphics students are working on new Art Department MacBook Pros in Photoshop 2015.5, the latest version of Photoshop. They have learned the basics of using a digital SLR camera to capture their own subject matter. To learn the various selection tools in Photoshop, the students photographed a wide variety of fruits and vegetables that were made available in the classroom. The students then selected and isolated the fruit and vegetable pieces in their various photos to combine them into a whimsical face in Photoshop. Their inspiration was Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, who painted composites of fruits and vegetables and many other common objects to create portraits.

The AP Studio Art class is composed of students pursuing AP Drawing, AP 2D Design, and AP 3D Design portfolios. They have a very rigorous schedule of approximately one major project per week, plus sketchbook work to build ideas and skill level. One project that was a new experience for many was drawing with paint-filled syringes for the Line Quality assignment. This approach helped many students to think about their mark making and expression in new ways.

-By Wendy Costa

Language Arts:

Students in Advanced Placement Language and Composition have begun their study of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. In preparation for reading this classic American story of love, adultery, shame, and guilt students analyzed Puritan values by examining Puritan tombstones. The class then read Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" and "The Minister's Black Veil" and the most famous sermon in American history, Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Students then created tombstone pancakes for the characters in the story and/or pancake imagery using the sermon as inspiration for their creations. To better understand the protagonist of The Scarlet Letter, Hester Prynne, students were asked to think carefully about their own weaknesses, bad habits, and flaws and create a sign based on the letter of the alphabet that represents this flaw. Students attached this letter to their shirt and wore the letter for the school day. Students then reflected on the reactions (internal and external) with the class.

-By Stephanie Pixley

World Languages:

French and Spanish rotation students have practiced greeting people formally and informally both verbally and with proper gestures. Students have also learned to introduce themselves and to ask someone his/her name. Additionally, they have practiced asking how someone is feeling and the ways to answer for various situations. French I students learned to spell words using the French alphabet. They recognized and used cognates, words that are spelled similar in two languages and mean the same, to help aid their understanding in listening and reading comprehension. Furthermore, students researched English terms that were adopted from the French language. They connected various spelling and pronunciations as clues that a word originated from French.

-Elvira Butler