

# The Link School Course Catalog 2010 - 2011

**The experiential education** at The Link School has five key components:

**Academics** - a variety of learning opportunities includes an innovative blend of small group and individual instruction taught by dedicated Christian Scientist faculty members who hold advanced degrees appropriate to their subjects; intensive block courses conducted by visiting instructors; state-of-the-art online courses which allow students to earn credits outside of the Link curriculum; and interdisciplinary learning opportunities in an unparalleled natural setting of rivers, mountains and canyons which stretch out from the school's backyard.

**Expeditions** - trips each month encourage character development, leadership, writing, and natural sciences education in backcountry settings.

**Individually Mentored Projects** – projects broaden knowledge and skills in areas of the students' interests with instruction and oversight from a mentoring adult.

**Service Work** – service opportunities include daily chores and responsibilities at home in the Lodge and projects that extend out into the greater community.

**Spiritual Development** - purposeful spiritual exploration and community investment in living our faith deepens students' "link" with the Divine.

## **Academic Plan**

**The academic program** is designed and taught by the school's faculty. Courses are taught in multi-age settings with grade-appropriate assignments, resources, and assessments. Link School courses are experiential by design and include a wide variety of assessments, including, but not limited to, portfolios, presentations of learning (POLs), field experiences both local and abroad, fieldwork, blogs, group problem-solving, and authentic assessments such as writing for publication. Extensive use of technology is a critical component of the curriculum.

Students pursue individualized learning plans (ILPs), individual projects and group activities. Some credits are earned through successful mastery of college preparatory core subjects; others by self-directed student explorations. In general, for three weeks of each month, students will work on their ILP through Link's project based courses and then have time in the afternoons for personal projects, and group recreation and service activities. The other week of each month will be spent on a wilderness expedition.

## **Student Assessments & Placement**

The Education Director and Academic Advisor work together with each student and his/her parents to review their previous work and determine appropriate course

placements at start of term. Standardized tests may be used to assist in appropriate placement.

### **Individual Learning Plans - ILPs**

ILPs are developed for each student based on their grade, previous course work completed, and goals for either a college prep track or aiming for high school graduation and then vocational courses.

### **Transferring Link Credits to other High Schools**

We are currently in the candidacy stage of accreditation with North Central Association. Accreditation should be complete Fall 2010, which will ensure transferability of courses.

### **Standardized Tests**

Standardized testing: Freshmen through juniors will register to take the PSAT (Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test) in October. This preliminary exam gives students practice in taking standardized tests before results from such exams become part of their record for college. Students and faculty receive detailed PSAT score reports. As part of the college admission process, upperclassmen will also take SAT and/or ACT exams, depending on the requirements per college. Students are responsible for SAT/ACT test fees.

### **Library Cards and On-line Research**

Each student will obtain his/her own library card in Salida and Buena Vista – two separate cards. The Salida Library is good for access to research sites such as EBSCO Host, Gale Group, First Search, Lexis Nexis, and Encyclopedia Britannica, to name a few. Students can access these sites remotely by using their library card. The Buena Vista Library, however, does not have those research sites.

Staff take students to the library with a piece of mail showing their Colorado Link School address or a letter from the School Administrator to apply for a library card, or The Link School Administrator writes a note including names of all the students, the official address of TLS, and his/her signature to request library cards for each student and send a staff member to the library for the cards. The person going into the library may have to explain to the Librarian the situation in more detail.

### **Academic and Career Advising**

Link teachers meet with students one-on-one at least four times a year to discuss academic progress, and academic goal setting, done both at the beginning and middle of each semester. We focus on each student's goals, whether those be to attend college, a vocational school, or begin work, and how Link can support each student. In addition, each senior is guided through the college application process, including all support necessary for taking standardized tests.

## **Project Based Learning (PBL) Overview**

The Link School works to ground academic learning in real life experiences and employs PBL as a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.

*Driving Question:* A central part of Project Based Learning is the selection of a theme or “driving question” for each academic year. For the 2010/11 school year our theme at The Link School is **“What is ‘healthy community?’”**

### **Assessment:**

Assessments are done in a narrative fashion and “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” and “I” letter grades. Assessments are developed appropriate for the student’s skills and grade level. “I” represents an Incomplete and students are given the opportunity to complete their work and earn a passing grade.

### **Block Courses**

From time-to-time, Link courses are instructed in blocks. On those days, rather than rotating from class to class each hour, students spend the entire day, or multiple days, on one interactive subject and corresponding project.

### **Presentations of Learning – POLs**

Students conclude each term with Presentations of Learning that display to the community the students’ knowledge and development in a given subject area, or from their project work.

### **Whole School Learning Community – WSLC**

Link staff do not view students as empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge by teachers. Link teachers facilitate and teach, but also openly join students as learners and coconspirators in the quest for understanding. Link staff also share what they are working on professionally and personally through POLs. Lastly, staff work to honor students’ input by engaging students in academic and community problem solving and not just imparting solutions.

### **Graduation requirements**

The graduation requirements listed are minimum requirements. Students interested in attending highly selective colleges are expected and encouraged to complete more academic coursework.

English	4 credits
Mathematics	3 credits
Modern Languages	2 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies/History	3 credits
Electives	8 credits
Physical Education	1 credit minimum
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 credits + 1 PE</b> (a minimum for graduation)

## **Course Requirements for an Academic Year at Link**

English	1 credit
Mathematics	1 credit
Spanish	1 credit
Science	1 credit
Social Studies	1 credit
Electives	1 or more credits
Physical Education	1 PE credit
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6 (minimum) + 1 PE</b>

### **Portfolios**

Students prepare a portfolio of completed work as a key graduation component including: course work, photos, writing samples, projects, expeditionary accomplishments, service work, personal code, athletics, entrepreneurial work, & presentations of learning (POLs).

### **Diplomas**

High School diplomas are awarded to students who have completed graduation requirements.

### **AP (Advanced Placement) courses**

Courses are available and offered on request.

### **College Courses**

Courses are available through a local satellite of Colorado Mountain College.

### **Academic Integrity**

The Link School cultivates honesty in every area of a person's life. Academic integrity means that the student or teacher guarantees that work turned in as his or her own is in fact original, unless properly cited.

Any instance of academic cheating, copying other's homework, or plagiarism is a serious offense. Copying and pasting information is common, but the student is responsible for learning proper methods of paraphrasing or citing information so that another's ideas are not represented as one's own.

Consequences for academic dishonesty are a grade of zero on the assignment and, if the situation continues, possible suspension from school.

# **The Link School Course Catalog**

## **English**

Contributing citizens of the 21st century must be able to think and communicate clearly. Guided practice in analytical reading, and writing and speaking for various audiences, gives students the tools and confidence to share their ideas with others. Much of Link's writing instruction is on a one-on-one, coaching basis.

### World Literature I-IV

Two Semesters, one credit

How does literature reflect history and society, and vice versa? What can we learn about ourselves by learning about societies around the world? How does world literature speak to the idea of "healthy community"? These are a few of the driving questions for this year's English course, as we read a selection of texts that address the idea of community from various perspectives.

The course incorporates poetry, drama, and prose and addresses the four main standards of English from Colorado's state standards: oral expression and listening, reading for all purposes, writing and composition, and research and reasoning. The reading list includes William Shakespeare, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chinua Achebe, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Pablo Neruda, and Thomas More. Although a reading list has been set, it may vary depending on timing and inspiration.

Overall goals, classroom approach, and literature are mainly the same for all students, but expectations on assignments are individually tailored for students according to Colorado's grade-specific standards.

## **Mathematics**

Mathematical reasoning, skills and principles play an ever-increasing role in our digital society. Colleges expect students to complete four years of high school level math starting with Algebra I.

### Algebra II

Two semesters, one credit.

Intermediate Algebra provides students with a solid foundation in algebra. The course introduces the basic concepts of graphing and reinforces the areas of real numbers, solving equations and inequalities, exponents and polynomials. Students encounter rational expressions, roots and radicals, and quadratic equation solving during their journey through the course. Geometric concepts are emphasized and integrated throughout.

## Geometry

Two semesters, one credit.

In this course students learn the concepts of geometry including coordinate geometry, logic, and proofs involving parallel lines, congruent triangles, quadrilaterals, similarity, right triangles, trigonometry, and circles. Students are expected to explore, research, evaluate, and apply concepts using various technologies.

## Pre-Calculus

Two semesters, one credit

In Pre-Calculus, students develop a deeper understanding of functions and their graphs. The function types covered include polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric. Covered topics from polynomial and rational functions include complex numbers, zeroes of polynomial functions, and synthetic division. Some exponential and logarithmic topics discussed are change of base formulas, properties of logs, growth and decay, and logarithmic growth models. Part I concludes with the unit circle, trigonometric functions, and their inverses.

Pre-Calculus Part 2 begins with trigonometry topics such as identities, trigonometric equation solving, inverse trigonometric functions, half-angle and double-angle formulas, the law of sines, and the law of cosines. Students solve linear equalities and inequalities in two and three variables using graphing and algebraic techniques (i.e. substitution, row-echelon, and Gaussian elimination). Infinite series, partial sums of series, and geometric series are introduced as well as limits. Statistical concepts include probability, the counting principle, and the Binomial Theorem. The course concludes with an in-depth study of conics (i.e. parabolas, hyperbolas, and ellipses).

## Consumer Math II

Two semesters, one-half credit

Consumer Mathematics Part Two focuses on consumer applications of math. It utilizes problem solving strategies and alternate methods of computation to solve a wide range of consumer-related problems. The course also discusses tax rates and loans and helps students build basic math skills.

## Business Math

Two semesters, one credit

Students learn the various aspects of consumer-oriented business practices including keeping financial records; calculating pay rates, benefits, and commissions; understanding metric measures; and borrowing, saving, and investing money. Practice problems promote proficiency in dealing with everyday mathematical transactions. Students are introduced to mathematical applications in typical business situations and provided an understanding of how a business functions.

### Advanced Calculus

Two semesters, one credit

Advanced Calculus is a balanced approach to problem solving using analytic/algebraic, numerical, graphical, and verbal/written methods of representing problems. Students study all topics associated with functions, graphs, and their limits. Students study derivatives of a variety of functions (i.e. polynomial, trigonometric and inverse trigonometric; exponential, and logarithmic). Integration, area under a curve, and volumes of a surface of revolution are also covered.

Students study limits in indeterminate forms, L'Hospital's rule, growth rates of functions, and indefinite integrals. Students also study a variety of sequences and series, along with polynomials of infinite degree and their derivatives and integrals. Taylor series and MacClaurin series, as well as tests for convergence and divergence. The course closes with parametric functions, vectors, and polar coordinates. Completion prepares students for either the Calculus AB or BC exam.

### **Modern Languages**

Study of a second language opens windows on the world. Students become comfortable standing in another person's shoes. Language study includes an appreciation for and understanding of other cultures. It also heightens awareness of one's native tongue of English through emphasis on speaking, listening, reading and writing. The Link School offers Spanish language study for its practical application in the U.S. and as preparation for the extended field program in Spain.

#### Spanish I

Two semesters, one credit.

Spanish I covered the basic dialog, both verbal and written, through Powerspeak, our online curriculum provider. Students mastered common vocabulary terms and phrases; learned to comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns; instigate and continue simple conversations; respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts; generate language, incorporating basic vocabulary and a limited range of grammar patterns; analyzed and compared cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various Spanish-speaking countries; and regularly assess progress in proficiency through quizzes, tests, and speaking/writing submissions. Each week consisted of an ongoing adventure story, a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, numerous interactive games reinforcing vocabulary and grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, and multimedia cultural presentations that covered major Spanish-speaking areas in Europe and the Americas. All students will be participating in our international trip to Spain and Turkey, which will include a week of Spanish language immersion in Madrid. Students will be placed in a home stay program and participate every morning in language classes. This is all enrichment to the full online program.

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### Spanish II

Two semesters, one credit.

Students continued their introduction to Spanish with fundamental building blocks in four key areas of foreign language study: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. Students mastered common and some specialized vocabulary terms and phrases; comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns; instigate and continue simple conversations, and responded appropriately to increasingly nuanced conversational prompts; generated language incorporating basic and some specialized vocabulary and a range of grammar patterns; analyzed and compared cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various Spanish-speaking countries; and regularly assess progress in proficiency through quizzes, tests, and speaking/writing submissions. Each week consisted of an ongoing adventure story, a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, numerous interactive games reinforcing vocabulary and grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, cultural presentations covering major Spanish-speaking areas in Europe and the Americas, and assessments.

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### Spanish III

Two semesters, one credit

Intermediate Spanish students who have a strong base of vocabulary, speaking and listening skills will reach a new level of mastery and fluency in this course. This course teaches advanced grammar and vocabulary and emphasizes correct accents and comprehension of “real world” native speech. The high energy excitement of the content, the challenging games and the wide variety of compelling stories contained in this course combine to make advanced learning as exciting as ever. Our unique error recognition technology helps students to eliminate common mistakes from their speaking and writing.

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### Spanish – AP

Two semesters, one credit.

Powerspeak<sup>12</sup> provides an online AP Spanish course that enables students to practice perfecting their Spanish speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. They study vocabulary, grammar, and cultural aspects of the language, and then apply what they've learned in extensive written and spoken exercises. By the end of the course, students will have an expansive vocabulary and a solid, working knowledge of all verb forms and tenses. The equivalent of a college-level language course, AP Spanish prepares students for the AP Exam and for further study of Spanish language, culture, or literature.

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### **Environmental Science**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the environmental sciences will continue to play a powerful role in transforming our society and our place in the universe. Stewardship for the natural environment is an Intended Outcome of The Link School. Environmental Science courses develop that sense of stewardship as humanity makes progress towards sustainability.

#### Wildlife Biology and Ornithology

Two semesters, one credit.

Understanding the dynamic natural world within which we live helps create a context for learning, environmental citizenship and connection to place. To nurture this understanding, students in this course investigate current biological knowledge and the scientific processes that have established that knowledge.

In the fall, we focus on the biology of plant and animal wildlife. Using a combination of in-class lectures, visiting wildlife experts, field trips and hands-on labs and projects we explore flora and fauna across a broad geographic range. Beginning with the Buena Vista region, the class uses driving questions to investigate the elements and processes of various biological communities from the cellular level to large ecosystems. Students learn to embody the role of scientists both in and outside of the classroom, especially during school expeditions both to the canyon lands and abroad.

In the spring, we focus on the behavior, diversity and adaptations of birds. Similar to the fall, students will observe birds in their native habitats, learn to distinguish various species by sight and sound and look at the relationships between birds and their varied habitats. Organization, research skills and curiosity are stressed throughout the course.

The course texts and resources will include Sibley, Audubon, Peterson and other field guides, Planet Earth, National Geographic and PBS documentaries, readings from “Biology” by Campbell & Reece and from various scientific papers and news resources as appropriate.

### **Social Studies**

Social studies courses help students meet many of The Link School’s Intended Outcomes, including a compassionate and respectful relationship with others, service to their communities as informed citizens and prospective voters, and making a difference for good through prayerful and informed action. An interdisciplinary extended field program to Europe and Central Asia provides a unique classroom setting in which to learn history, geography, religion and culture.

#### **Modern American History**

Two semesters, one credit.

What challenges and opportunities did your parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents face as Americans? Did they meet those challenges? What did they do with those opportunities? What can we learn from the past to help us meet today’s challenges?

This course traces the journey of Americans from 1898-2008. Through historical video documentaries, we explore key historical trends, individuals, and social movements. Always we ask: what from the past matters to us today? In support of Link’s overall theme focusing on healthy community, the course aims a critical eye on several communities from the past, such as immigrant communities, civil and women’s rights communities, a World War II paratrooper community, and 1960s counterculture communities. Projects include a college-prep research paper on historical topics with conflicting interpretations and two oral group presentations shared with the public.

One night a week includes a 30-minute discussion of current events.

#### **World Religions I**

Two Semesters, one credit

This course explores the cradle of monotheism through Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course includes, texts from M. Chute, K. Armstrong, and The Message, a speaker series, field trips, and a capstone expedition to Spain, Turkey and Greece studying early Christian communities and the Johanine/Pauline concept of a “community of love.”

*Content Goals* – students will...

1. know the history and key practices of the world’s 3 great monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
2. understand how through these faiths people search for identity, God, & meaning.

3. be familiar with literature which explores these religions including reading from original sacred texts.
4. examine the question “what is healthy community” in light of what can be learned from these religions.

#### *Driving Questions*

- What is monotheism?
- What inspired the founding of these 3 monotheistic religions?
- What are their sacred texts?
- Who are their key prophets & teachers? (Abraham/Patriarchs, Moses, David, Elisha, Isaiah, Jesus, John, Paul, Mohammad)
- What are their key teachings?
  - What is the view of God in each faith?
    - Discovery of God through the OT/NT record.
  - What is the view of humanity?
  - How is creation/nature viewed?
  - What is the meaning of life?
- What are their most important practices?
- How have these religions grown, changed and deviated from their origins?
- How did Islam and the crusades shape European Christianity?
- Why is the Holy Land sacred geography for all 3 faiths?
- How does Christian Science seek to “reinststate primitive Christianity?”

#### **Electives – 1 credit per year**

Electives at The Link School are designed to support the living and learning experience of each student. Many of the skills and dispositions cultivated in these courses are integral to the underlying educational philosophy the school, but do not fit cleanly in more traditional coursework.

#### **Service Learning & Stewardship**

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Service work in support of the school and local communities includes forestry work, trail work, projects with the Division of Wildlife, construction of a yurt, animal husbandry, and work in our greenhouse and garden.

### Leadership Seminar and Expeditions

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Leadership skills are taught, in particular, in preparation for and during expeditions. Students earn various levels in relation to communication skills, small group leadership skills, small group participation, expedition mentality, outdoor skills, & environmental awareness. Expeditions during Year Three include rafting in Canyonlands through Cataract Canyon, Horse packing in the San Isabel, Mountain Biking in Colorado and Utah, Hiking in through canyon settings in UT, an international trip to Turkey and Spain, a mountaineering trip to The Lost Wonder Hut, a river trip down the Escalante River in UT, and a variety of shorter weekend trips.

### Creative and Industrial Arts, & Computer Workshops

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Students have the opportunity throughout the year to develop artistic skills and abilities in photography, fine arts, music and handcrafts. Students receive basic instruction and have the opportunity to work on projects in carpentry, auto mechanics, pottery, and metals. Students also have the opportunity to become proficient in a variety of computer applications, including blogs, video and photo editing, web page design, Skype, video conferencing and other skills useful in presenting POLs.

### Culinary Arts & Sustainable Foods

Two quarters, one-quarter credit

Students learn the practical art of planning nutritious, well-balanced meals from local food sources, shopping, cooking and meal presentation. In addition they participate in cooking classes taught by local chefs, in food related activities with the local Farmers' market, and learn about sustainable ways to produce food as well as the resources available on a local level, including working in our own garden.

### College Prep for Juniors and Seniors

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Students focus on the college search process, including college essay writing and SAT/ACT practice, review, and testing.

### **Physical Education**

Two semesters, one credit

Students engage in daily workout routines and spend one week each month on a physically demanding expedition.

### **Senior Seminar**

Seniors who qualify may choose to engage in a self-directed project during their final semester at Link. Qualification will be based on 1) having a completed core course work necessary for graduation, and then 2) being in good standing in the community.

Projects may range in length from a few weeks to a few months.

A staff member works as a project mentor with each student on his or her project.

Senior projects culminate with a POL and should focus on Link outcomes – i.e. service work, career development, backcountry skill development, an expedition, etc.

Projects will be assessed by staff on a Pass/Incomplete basis.

Application Process: Students who would like to be considered for a senior project should submit a written proposal by December of their first term senior year. Staff will then review the proposal and help the student come up with a firm plan by the start of the spring semester.

The written proposal should include:

- Description of the project (one page on the project content)
- Assessment of qualification (in terms of showing you have or will have the credits to graduate)
- Explanation of how it will fulfill Link School Outcomes
- Length of time for the project and the proposed dates
  - Project timeline for key components
- Budget for the project (up to \$50/day is available from Link for senior projects – beyond \$50/day the student will need to have a plan to cover)
- Presentation of Learning (POL) plan

If approved, seniors should give their fall semester POL on what they are planning and spring semester POL on what they did and learned.

### **Block Courses:**

Block courses fit into the overall academic program as enhancement. The instructors work with Link staff to accomplish established objectives and meet planned benchmarks. Whenever possible, block courses are project based and employ the PBL approach coordinated by Dave Bailey. Time blocks for these courses is often the afternoons but sometimes is all day.

### **Faculty and Adjunct Faculty List for 2010-2011**

- Bobby Lewis (Link Director) Spanish tutor, World Religions, PE, Service Learning, Leadership, Wilderness Skills.
- David Bailey (Education Director) Language Arts faculty of record, Math and Spanish tutor, Wilderness Skills
- Natalie Lewis (School Administrator) Home Economics, Math and Spanish tutor, Horsemanship
- Christine Love Bailey (Instructor) English Instructor, Spanish tutor, ACT/SAT Prep

- Bill Fabian (Academic Advisory Committee, Instructor) Current Events & Modern American History, Academic & Career Advising, Accreditation Head
- Bryan Reed (Instructor) Math instructor, ACT/SAT Prep, Wilderness Skills
- Hannah Mensing (Instructor) Science Instructor, Spanish tutor, Wilderness Skills