

## What's REALLY Going On In Fine Arts Classes? More Than You Might Think!

Students climb up to the Fine Arts Building for Metals, Glass, Drawing and Painting, Visual Media, Photography and other art classes. Inside, they apply three-dimensional geometric concepts, brush up on acids and bases, reflect on world cultures and history, apply ideas from literature and practice public speaking.

“This is what makes art at the Priory so exciting,” says Reed Easley, Fine Arts department chair.

“Our students brainstorm together and integrate subjects such as Math, Chemistry and English into their creative projects. They plan, critique and make choices. They learn new vocabulary words to talk about art and life. It is great to watch them gain confidence in themselves. Support from the entire faculty makes this possible.”

Reed points to several joint projects as examples of cross-disciplinary enthusiasm. Because freshman schedules are crowded, they historically haven't had room for any Fine Arts classes. This year, Fine Arts teacher Teri Dillion Scott is helping Allison Stasney's ninth grade English classes paint portraits based on short stories. In addition, Social Studies teacher Shakar Link and Teri are combining art with ninth grade World History and the study of Islam.

Reed is also proud of the “positive propaganda” pieces created by the seniors as part of their Senior Seminar unit on Africa. These students designed several model public information campaigns with the goal of combating problems such as government corruption and distribution of wealth, or promoting improvements such as clean water, proper sanitation practices, prevention of HIV/AIDS, and eradication of poverty. (Another tie is that seniors' service learning experience this year is with African refugees.)

Along with opportunities for co-teaching, Reed explains that new technologies fuel ideas for the Fine Arts classes. “We're constantly adding projects based on the latest equipment,” she says. “With our recently acquired digital projector and ten new Mac Minis, students become savvy with technology that opens up more possibilities for their art.” She appreciates the donation of new glass equipment that makes it possible for 20 students to participate in the Glass class this year versus only eight students last year.

Students trying to decide where to plug into the smorgasbord of Fine Arts offerings now have a class to help them. Art Spectrum is a yearlong class that covers the elements and principles of design, what Reed calls “the universal language of art. Just as algebra is the basis for mathematics, there are certain tenets of design that are the basis for art.” This class includes one unit of every specialty Fine Arts class taught at the Priory. It is also the prerequisite class for AP Studio Art. Another new class, AP Art History, is being taught by Social Studies and Physical Education teacher Laura Young; both are fantastic, Reed says.

“The Fine Arts Building is a special place for students to make art, apply what they're learning in other subjects, collaborate with others and find balance in their day,” Reed says. “Not just in art classes, but during break and after school, students can spend time here and inspire each other.”

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