

HUMANITIES



The Governor's School highlights connections between and among artistic and academic subjects. Students will learn both to dig deeply into their specialized disciplines and to think broadly about how these fit together. Through a range of activities and coursework, the Humanities program sets up time and a structure for this kind of "big picture" thinking. The Humanities course emphasizes the arts in context so that students have an opportunity to study the ways in which the arts speak to each other as they also connect to specific times, places, and people. The point of view on the past is also a conversation with contemporary culture as students examine continuities with current artistic and intellectual creativity. The course is also designed to help students reflect on their experiences in this community as they learn from peers, staff, and faculty throughout the school.

Five guiding questions run through the course:

Who are we as artists?

Why do we do what we do?

Why do the arts have value for society?

How do we think as artists?

How do we thrive as artists in today's society?

Through the study of the humanities, students begin to ask these questions of themselves and to pursue what we hope will be a lifelong investigation. Students will also consider how these questions echo differently in distinct times and places. Whether through service to others or more indirect involvement in the school and larger community, artists need to know why their work matters to the world. The answers to these questions vary widely considering who asks them when and where (again, context is key).

The class officially meets on designated Friday mornings for a three-hour block that includes school-wide gatherings, smaller seminar-style discussion groups, film screenings, panel discussions, and other activities. In the spirit of investigation and quest outlined above, these are called "Humanities Why-Days." In addition to these meetings, all academic teachers integrate humanities prompts, lessons, and activities as part of their regular coursework. Students also study the humanities in most of their arts classes, as they consider the context of the art they both study and make.

Since it is fundamental to the mission of the school, the successful completion of Humanities is required each year students are enrolled in the Governor's School. The course carries a numerical/letter grade, which is calculated in the GPA, with students earning ½ unit of credit each year. As outlined in the School Profile, successful completion of Humanities I and II is also a requirement for the Scholars Diploma.

HUMANITIES ELECTIVES

Throughout the school year, faculty and student leaders sponsor activities such as film screenings, a symposium on world religions, an International Relations Club, guest speakers, outings to area museums or theaters, service learning projects, and a range of other activities. Students are required to participate in at least one Humanities Elective each quarter.

ENGAGING WITH THE ARTS

While enrolled at the Governor's School, students have an opportunity to attend a range of performances and events in dance, drama, music, creative writing, and visual arts. They are required to attend and reflect on at least one event in each arts discipline over the course of the school year, although the vast majority of students exceed this requirement.

COURSES

Honors Humanities I and II: Contexts and Continuities

Humanities I, for eleventh graders, introduces the five arts disciplines and the ways they connect with and diverge from each other. Humanities II, for seniors, emphasizes collaborations among artists. As a culmination of their work, seniors also present a "PechaKucha" talk using images to convey some core personal understanding of the humanities. These courses also help students reflect on their experiences in this unique school community.

Honors Introduction to Humanities

This course serves tenth-grade dancers and musicians as an introduction to interdisciplinary work and to the guiding questions they will continue to explore in depth as upperclassmen. As a final project, sophomores design a lesson in the humanities to introduce the course's content and approach to middle- or elementary-school children.

FACULTY AND GUESTS

Faculty from all our arts and academic departments collaborate on the course design, and they co-teach the course itself throughout the school year. Humanities Why-Days also feature school-wide guests, through both our Presidential Guest Artist Series and in conjunction with art departments. Ms. Uchechi Kalu directs the program and monitors the progress of juniors and seniors. Ms. Kathryn Dey teaches the Introduction to Humanities course for sophomores. Dr. Jennifer Thomas teaches regularly in the program and collaborates on course design.

Uchechi Kalu

Humanities Instructor

Uchechi Kalu is a multi-disciplinary artist with experience in education, business, and foreign languages. While receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Near Eastern Studies and Arabic at Princeton University, Uchechi found her love for interdisciplinary studies. She is deeply interested in how culture, society, and politics shape art and artists internationally. While at Princeton, Uchechi performed with the Princeton Jazz Ensemble and with modern and Shakespearean theater groups. After university, Uchechi moved to Beijing, China (and briefly to London), where she lived for 4 years and worked in education, PR, and Marketing for various Chinese- and American-owned companies. She was active in Beijing's literary and music scenes as a writer and performer. Uchechi also co-founded an arts collective that facilitated cross-cultural arts exchange among Chinese nationals and Beijing expats. She was first introduced to the Governor's School in 8th Grade when she attended the Discovery Program for Voice. Uchechi returned to the Voice Program the following summer, and then graduated from the residential high school in the Creative Writing department. When she's not reading Humanities journals or organizing Why Days, you'll find her hiking Paris Mountain or cooking vegan Nigerian food.

Kathryn Dey

Music

SCGSAH string faculty and Greenville Symphony Orchestra's principal violist, Ms. Dey also performs regularly with organist David Turner as The Lila Duo. Together the duo founded the Haiti Music Project, an outreach program connecting musicians in the United States and Cange, Haiti. Active as an educator, her teaching has been

recognized by the American String Teacher Association, Strings Magazine, Music Teachers National Association, the American Viola Society, the South Carolina Alliance for Arts Education, and the South Carolina Music Educators Association. Ms. Dey has given workshops to teachers and students throughout South Carolina and helped build rural string programs in Chester, Fairfield, Jasper, Laurens, and Pickens Counties. She is a frequent presenter at music teaching conferences and has been recognized nationally for her interdisciplinary work in the fields of music, creative writing and acting. Ms. Dey is on the faculty of the Eastman Summer Viola Workshop and the Swannanoa Chamber Music Festival. She earned degrees in viola performance from the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a student of Sally Chisholm, and at the Eastman School of Music, where she served as teaching assistant to John Graham. Ms. Dey speaks fluent German, practices hatha yoga daily and together with her husband cellist Robert O'Brien, has been renovating a historic home in downtown Greenville, South Carolina, for the past nineteen years.

Dr. Jennifer Thomas

Dean and Vice President of Arts and Academics

Dr. Jennifer Thomas is the Dean/VP for Arts and Academics here at the Governor's School, and she continues to join the teaching faculty in the Humanities whenever possible. Interdisciplinary work has always been the focus of her scholarship and teaching: as an English major at Furman University, to her graduate studies at Emory in English and Women's Studies, to a postdoctoral fellowship in the Arts and Humanities at Valparaiso University. She joined the Governor's School faculty as an English instructor when the school opened in 1999, and the Humanities course has given her a great focus for her interdisciplinary interests and her deep commitment to the arts. Outside of school, she's most likely reading (no surprise there); attempting a Zumba class; planning her next travel adventure; cooking with her husband; or trucking her middle-school son to an ARMES Drama class (an afterschool program in Greenville County schools), one of his strings concert (he's an enthusiastic cellist), or a tennis lesson.