



Merit Academy
Catalog of Courses
Using Alternative Instruction

2024-2025

2025-2026

Merit Academy is a K-12 classical charter school, nestled at the foot of Pikes Peak, in the heart of Woodland Park, CO.

Being a classical charter school, most of our courses are direct instruction led by our expert teachers on our beautiful campus. However, there are times when students may need an alternative course to boost their opportunities for success. The alternative courses offered may include online supplemental learning through Colorado Digital Learning Solutions, work study, or internship opportunities. These courses are ONLY available through teacher recommendation and administrator approval. This course catalog will discuss the opportunities available to students through these programs.

Supplemental Online Learning

Courses offered through Colorado Digital Learning Solutions (CDLS) may be taken by students if there is a schedule conflict that the school cannot work around, if the students wish to progress to a more advanced level (primarily with math), if a student failed a course and needs to repeat it to recover credit, or if a student wishes to take a language that our onsite instructors do not teach. Students may need to only take 1 semester of a particular course, or the full year credit. Please see administration to discuss the requirements and commitments for CDLS courses.

CDLS Course Availability:

CDLS Languages

French 1 (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

In this course, you learn the basic French language. You will be able to engage in short conversations in French, including greeting people, introducing yourself, and exchanging basic information with others about school, family, friends, food, shopping, house, activities, and the city. You will also explore the cultures of France and francophone Europe by learning about geography, foods, celebrations, and traditions from each place. Bon Voyage! Enjoy the trip!

French 2 (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

In this course, you will reinforce the fundamental skills you acquired in French 1 and increase your listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in French. Like many French explorers, you too, will set sail and visit the French territories overseas and learn about the geography, foods, homes, celebrations, and traditions from each place. While you continue your journey as a French pioneer, you will be able to exchange information with others about your home, family, activities, life habits, traveling, and future plans. All aboard! On y va!

German 1 (.5 credit/semester)

In semester 1, students will be introduced to various common situations that require communication. They will learn how to exchange names and greetings, describe people based on physical and personality traits, and talk about family members and aspects of their social life. Throughout the course, students will start with basic sentence structures and grammatical tools, enabling them to communicate in German through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They will also internalize new vocabulary and grammar. In addition, students will have the opportunity to learn about different regions of the German-speaking world visited by the central characters in each unit. This will provide them with cultural insights and context related to the language they are learning.

In semester 2, students will be introduced to several common situations in which they will learn how to ask for food, talk about family members, describe their town and urban transportation, discuss various seasons and associated weather conditions, and talk about food, clothing, and activities. They will also explore various art forms, such as plays, concerts, and movies. Additionally, students will have discussions about health and well-being, as well as travel and tourism. Throughout the course, students will build upon what they have learned in semester 1 to enhance their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in German while internalizing new vocabulary and grammar. They will also gain insights into different regions of the German-speaking world. By doing so, students will lay a solid foundation for further learning as they progress in their German studies, acquiring both language proficiency and cultural understanding.

German 2 (.5 credit/semester)

In semester 1 students build on grammar and language skills that they acquired during their German 1A and German 1B courses. While reviewing basic grammar skills in present and past tense, students learn and study stem-changing verb conjugation and explore cultural themes regarding current events, famous German people, music, and famous festivals.

In semester 2 students increase their proficiency in being able to communicate by forming more complex German sentences in a variety of tenses using all four cases (Nominative, Accusative, Dative, and Genitive). The variety of topics increases also, from exploring different careers to discussing relationships. Cultural themes are entwined throughout this course related to going shopping, going to the zoo, and traveling throughout the German-speaking world.

Latin 2 (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

Immerse yourself in a journey through Roman history using the Latin language as your guideposts. In the Latin 2 course, you will build upon your first level grammar and vocabulary skills to help increase fluency and language proficiency. You will explore the culture and apply what you learn through translation practice as well as writing, listening, and conversation exercises, while learning all about the different eras of Rome—from Foundation to Fall.

Spanish 1 (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

Immerse yourself in the beauty of the Spanish language and the richness of its diverse cultures. In this course, you will learn beginning grammar and vocabulary skills to help build basic fluency and language proficiency. You will explore the culture and apply what you learn through written practice, listening, and speaking exercises. This course provides elective credit.

Spanish 2 (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

Get ready to immerse yourself on a journey towards Spanish fluency! Along this language path, you'll explore facets of your home life, daily routine, health, cherished memories, travel must-haves, and visions of career plans. You'll gain the skills to talk about your life—past, present, and future—and increase your conversational expertise. Along the way, you'll meet Spanish-speakers from around the world to gain their perspectives on unique cultural traditions, pastimes, and celebrations and explore the bustling cities, astonishing architecture, wonders of nature, and vibrant colors of their diverse countries. Are you ready for this exhilarating adventure.

CDLS Core Courses

Algebra 1 (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

Algebra 1 is the foundation—the skills acquired in this course contain the basic knowledge needed for all future high school math courses. The material covered in this course is important, but everyone can do it. Everyone can have a good time solving the hundreds of real-world problems algebra can help answer. Course activities make the numbers, graphs, and equations more real. The content in this course is tied to real-world applications like sports, travel, business, and health.

This course is designed to give students the skills and strategies to solve all kinds of mathematical problems. Students will also acquire the confidence needed to handle everything high school math has in store for them. Algebra 1 emphasizes the importance of algebra in everyday life through hundreds of real-world examples. Assessments are designed to ensure that your understanding goes beyond rote memorization of steps and procedures. Upon successful course completion, you will have a strong foundation in Algebra I and will be prepared for other higher-level math courses.

Algebra II (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

Algebra 2 allows students to learn while having fun. Interactive examples help guide students' journey through customized feedback and praise. Mathematical concepts are applied to everyday occurrences such as earthquakes, stadium seating, and purchasing movie tickets. Students investigate the effects of an equation on its graph through the use of technology.

Anatomy & Physiology (.5/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

Take a deep breath. Though we may take seemingly effortless functions of the body such as breathing for granted, the human body is constantly working as a system to maintain balance and good health. Anatomy and Physiology will give you a better understanding of the structure and functions of the human body. This course presents topics, such as immunity, reproduction, cardiovascular health, and musculoskeletal functions, using 21st-century content, graphics, interactives, and videos. Students will be inspired by real-world phenomena about health topics and career connections opportunities from entry-level positions to the doctoral level. In each Module of Anatomy and Physiology, students explore the organization of the human body and how each organ and body system functions and interacts. Students acquire the knowledge necessary to understand the body's internal functions and interconnections and what is necessary to maintain overall health and wellness. Prerequisites: Biology (recommended)

Biology A (.5 credit) Credit Recovery

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms) CDLS Credit Recovery (CR) courses are designed for students who have taken a course and failed it.

CR courses are organized so that students can take a pre-test for each lesson/unit. The exemption of activities is based on which content in the pre-test that the student demonstrates mastery in, not the overall "grade" on the pre-test.

The Biology course guides students through the study of living and non-living systems and how they interact with one another. Students explore the world they live in by posing questions and seeking answers through scientific inquiry. Discovery takes place through observation and data

collection. The students will be introduced to the structure, function, diversity, and evolution of living matter. This is a course with real relevance. It encourages curiosity and provides opportunity for students to work on hands on lab activities and develop relationships through collaboratively learning. Engaging in the study of biological science broadens the picture of the world around us.

Earth Science A (.5 credit) Credit Recovery

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms) CDLS Credit Recovery (CR) courses are designed for students who have taken a course and failed it.

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How much do we really know about our home, planet Earth? The Earth Science course will explore the dynamic systems of Earth and Space to help students understand how Earth’s systems have developed through time, how they are interrelated, and how humans impact them. In the first semester, students will investigate the universe and its stars, the planets of the Solar System, and the systems that make up Earth. Students will examine the role of water on our planet and sun-driven interactions affecting climate and weather. They will also model biogeochemical cycles and energy flow through Earth’s systems. Students will use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to learn through videos, readings, interactive activities, mini-projects, labs, and simulations based on real-world data. These course assignments are designed to explicitly engage students’ Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Performance Expectations (Pes). Also, students will apply Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) to construct an understanding of Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs) through the lens of Crosscutting Concepts (CCs) to explain a phenomenon. The discussion assignments focus on enabling students to use their science knowledge to make informed decisions about personal and societal issues. Students will be assessed through lesson quizzes and semester exams.

In the second semester, students will explore how Earth’s surface changes through plate tectonics and geological processes. Students will also take a step back in time to see how the Earth and life developed through its timescale. By the end of the course, students will be able to explain the different systems on Earth, how they affect each other, and how the Earth is changing due to human activity. This course will give students tools and information to examine their daily choices in response to ongoing natural hazards like climate change and find ways to protect the Earth and its natural resources. Students will use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to learn through videos, reading, interactive activities, mini-projects, labs, and simulations based on real-world data. The course assignments are designed to explicitly engage students in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Performance Expectations (Pes). In many cases, students will apply Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) to construct an understanding of Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs) through the lens of Crosscutting Concepts (CCs) to explain a phenomenon. The discussion assignments focus on enabling students to make informed decisions about personal and societal issues. Students will be assessed through lesson quizzes and semester exams

Economics (.5 credit)

1 Semester (offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

Economic decisions affect us every day of our lives. Understanding economics means thinking about how scarcity, or limited resources, requires us to make choices and evaluate our options. In this course, you will recognize examples of economics in your daily life. You will understand how the economic choices of larger groups, like businesses and governments, affect you and others. As you progress through the course, you will recognize that the costs and benefits of choices connect individuals and groups around the world.

English 9A (.5 credit) Credit Recovery

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms) CDLS Credit Recovery (CR) courses are designed for students who have taken a course and failed it.

CR courses are organized so that students can take a pre-test for each lesson/unit. The exemption of activities is based on which content in the pre-test that the student demonstrates mastery in, not the overall “grade” on the pre-test.

Join us in English 9 for a series of journeys. In each unit of the course, we embark on a new journey. Through the study of literature, nonfiction, and life, we will explore the unknown, search for identity and equality, and seek achievement, opportunity, and understanding. You will read to analyze the way language is used to express human motivation and will research to examine the results of actions in the real world. The lessons in each unit will give you the tools you need to gain insights from what you read and to use your knowledge in creative and analytical writing.

English 12 (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

In English 12, students explore history’s impact on modern texts. By focusing on elements like universal theme, author’s purpose and perspective, and historic influence, students are able to see literary works as a whole and understand the deeper experiences that surround these texts. With a strong focus on writing, speaking, and presenting, students engage with their audience and explore elements of English that are highly applicable to both college and the workforce.

Forensics 1a Introduction (.5 credit/semester)

Our notions of forensics are often fictionalized, containing fantastic notions of what forensic science really is. In this course, you’ll explore the truth behind the science from its history to its modern-day developments. You will learn how detectives conduct thorough investigations as well as common equipment and methods that are used throughout the field. Finally, you will learn about collecting and analyzing the most common types of evidence found at a crime scene

and how they guide investigators to answers. Let's track your interests and continue your pursuit of justice through science!

Geometry (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

One day in 2580 B.C.E., a very serious architect stood in a dusty desert with a set of plans. His plans called for creating a structure 480 feet tall, with a square base and triangular sides, using stone blocks weighing two tons each. The Pharaoh wanted the job done right. The better this architect understood geometry, the better his chances were for staying alive.

Geometry is everywhere, not just in pyramids. Engineers use geometry to build highways and bridges. Artists use geometry to create perspective in their paintings, and mapmakers help travelers find things using the points located on a geometric grid. Throughout this course, students travel a mathematical highway illuminated by spatial relationships, reasoning, connections, and problem solving.

Reading & Writing for Purpose (.5 credit/semester)

1 Semester (offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

As you move through high school to college or to your career, the types of writing and documents become more high stakes. Real-world information can be journalistic and researched-based articles, legal, insurance, college entrance forms, employment, vehicle-related documents, and more. Learn how to critically read, write, and evaluate real-world writings to set you up for your future success.

US History (.5 credit/semester)

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms)

The United States began as an experiment in freedom and democracy. Since its establishment, the country and its people have endured social, political, and economic revolutions. In this course, students will investigate the people, events and ideas that have shaped the United States from the end of the Civil War through today.

Students are asked to analyze and evaluate decisions made by political, business, and military leaders. Emphasis is placed on connections between events of the past and present. This course also gives students the opportunity to conduct research and apply their learning to current, real-world problems.

US History A (.5 credit) & B (.5 credit) Credit Recovery

2 Semesters (both semesters are offered during the Fall and Spring terms) CDLS Credit Recovery (CR) courses are designed for students who have taken a course and failed it.

CR courses are organized so that students can take a pre-test for each lesson/unit. The exemption of activities is based on which content in the pre-test that the student demonstrates mastery in, not the overall “grade” on the pre-test.

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Work Study & Internships

Work-based Learning (aka Work Study) and Internship courses are credit-bearing courses that are also learning opportunities that occur in part or in whole in the workplace and provide the learner with hands-on, real-world experience.

Both Work Based Learning/Work Study and Internship opportunities are explored in each student’s Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) portfolio. Students and employers also work with the schools to communicate the number of hours the student is working with and the overall professional skills and leadership the student is displaying (and learning). Work Based Learning is generally a paid position for students, while Internship opportunities are (most often) voluntary. For internships, we partner with Pikes Peak Business and Educational Alliance and their vast network of businesses to place students in a field of interest.

For both Work Study and Internships, the student must clearly present (for ICAP portfolio) what work based or internship opportunity they wish to pursue, and how that opportunity connects to their postsecondary workforce or education goals.

For every 150 hours worked/interning (and provided to the school from the employer or organization), the student may earn .5 enhancement credit. A max of 2.0 credits for either work study or internship (or combined) is permitted for a student’s high school career.