



ALZAR
SCHOOL

Alzar School Curriculum Guide

The Alzar School is an independent, college-preparatory semester boarding school for approximately 16 students in their sophomore or junior years (select seniors may be eligible). Students immerse themselves in leadership training for one semester of their high school career, while maintaining their normal course of study in preparation for further education. The school has its home on over 100 acres along the North Fork of the Payette River, in Cascade, Idaho. Each semester also features an extended international expedition to Chile. We teach students to think critically and to work collaboratively.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Alzar School is to develop and educate high school leaders who will change the world. We aim to equip them with the background knowledge and skills to be effective leaders.

Our Six Foundations

The Alzar School is built on our “Six Foundations” that are fully integrated into the student’s experience. These foundations guide both teaching and learning at the school, and provide the basis for positive community membership. Students typically leave the Alzar School mentally stimulated, intellectually challenged, empowered to be positive, effective leaders in their communities.

Six Foundations of the Alzar School

Academics	Leadership Training
Outdoor Adventure	Cultural Exchange
Service Learning	Environmental Stewardship

Overview of Semester

A semester at the Alzar School is an investment in a future leader. Each semester is approximately 120 days long, with the curriculum designed such that the Fall semester starts in mid-August and ends in December, and the Spring semester starts after Martin Luther King day and ends at the end of May. Students spend 11 weeks at the Alzar School campus in Cascade, Idaho and 5-6 weeks on an international expedition to Chile. In all settings, students engage in a rigorous curriculum. Students receive at least the same number of formally structured contact hours (~80 hours/semester) as those of sending schools. In addition, they receive significant outdoor technical training and have the opportunity to earn valuable outdoor certifications.

Curriculum Overview

The curriculum of the Alzar School is designed for students pursuing a challenging course of study in their home school. The school offers a variety of traditional courses to coincide with typical schedules of motivated sophomore and junior students. Each student is required to take 7 classes while at the Alzar School. Additionally, they may take an independent study with supervision of a teacher at his or her sending school. All courses are taught at the honors- or AP-level.

Subject	Course Offerings	
English	AP English Language and Composition	
Math	Geometry	Pre-Calculus / Trigonometry
	Algebra II	Calculus (AP at AB level)
Science	Environmental Science	Physics (AP, Algebra-based)
	Chemistry	Biology (AP)
History	World History & Civilizations	U.S. History (AP)
Foreign Language	Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Spanish	
Leadership	Capstone Leadership Course	Culminating Leadership Project Practicum
Electives	Independent Study (varies based on student)	Outdoor Adventure Activity (P.E. Elective)

Assessment

During a semester at the Alzar School, students will be assessed by a variety of means. Faculty work to use authentic and innovative evaluations of student performance, while also preparing them for the reality of standardized testing. Some examples of evaluation methods include essays, quizzes, tests, practical exams, portfolios, and research papers. Course work is graded on a traditional letter grade and percentage scale.

90 – 100%	A
80 – 89%	B
70 – 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
Below 60% is not passing	

Accreditation

The Alzar School is accredited by the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and AdvancED. These are regional and national accrediting organizations which oversee all public and private schools in the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. NWAC is one of the nation's six acknowledged accrediting agencies. Additionally, the Alzar School has been approved by the College Board to offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses and administer AP exams, and administer the PSAT. The school's CEEB number is 130096.

Although students may join the Alzar School from any school in the country, it is the student's and his or her family's responsibility to ensure that the credits earned while at the Alzar School will transfer back to their sending school before he or she enrolls in our school. Our administrators can help provide necessary information to your home school.

Note on Advanced Placement Classes

Advanced Placement (AP) classes are a great opportunity for students to stretch their academic muscles and potentially earn college credit while still in high school. To earn college credit, students must pass an end-of-year exam. There are several courses offered by the Alzar School that have curriculum designed to help students prepare for the AP Exams (specifically: English Language and Composition, Calculus, Environmental Science, World History, and U.S. History). If students are interested in taking the AP test, they should be enrolled in the AP class at their sending school. Each student and the Alzar School teacher for the subject area will work to prepare for the AP exam by adding supplemental readings and assignments he or she will complete (outside of class) to properly cover the material. Due to our extremely small class sizes, students can expect a great amount of individual attention from teachers, helping make AP courses feasible. If a student is enrolled at the Alzar School for the Spring semester, he or she will be able to take AP exams while at the school.

Opportunities for Independent Study

The Alzar School does not offer every class a sophomore or junior in high school may want or need to take in a given semester. Therefore, we are happy to support an independent study as a replacement for one of the student's classes. To effectively facilitate this independent study, we ask that students arrange for a teacher at their sending school to help supervise this course. That supervisor should help you develop a list of objectives to meet, with readings and assignments. An Alzar School teacher will serve as your on-site mentor, performing regular check-ins to make sure you are on track. This option is only effective for highly motivated students who are committed to taking on a significant academic challenge. That is why we limit each student to one independent study and discourage students from doing an independent study unless it is necessary to remain on track for graduation.

Culminating Leadership Project

The Culminating Leadership Project (CLP) is a fundamental part of every student's experience at the Alzar School. ALL students create a project. Throughout their semester on campus, students will participate in a Capstone Leadership Course that will help them identify and establish their project. They will make all of their preparations for implementing this project while at the Alzar School and then complete the project in their home community. Students can expect to spend approximately 75 hours working on their CLP outside of Alzar School, over the course of 6 months. While completing the project, they will participate in an online course with their Alzar School cohorts. Students can receive academic credit for completing the CLP and associated online course.

Athletics and Fitness

The Alzar School works to instill the value of lifetime fitness in our students. During their semester at the school, there are morning workouts and students participate in a number of outdoor and noncompetitive athletic endeavors. Options include: alpine skiing, canoeing, cross-country running, general fitness and training, hiking, intramural soccer, kayaking, backpacking, Nordic skiing, rock climbing, snowboarding, and ultimate Frisbee. These activities are a great way to stay in shape for competitive sports at students' sending schools. Additionally, all students receive a semester credit for a P.E. elective titled "Outdoor Adventure Activity."

Art in and around Alzar School

From photography to videography to sketching, students can document their experience artistically. Students may spend independent study periods and free time practicing art skills.

Course Descriptions

English		
	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English Language and Composition	<p>Students are introduced to American and international writing. They will complete literary analyses of several works of short fiction and novels, and compose short fiction. They will learn and practice principles for writing persuasive, personal, and analytical essays. They will review Latin American literature, which will be integrated with their international expedition to Chile. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement English Language & Composition tests. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>	Same as the Fall Semester.

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Mathematics		
	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Geometry	Students will be introduced to the concept of plane and coordinate geometry, examining topics such as angles, triangles, circles, polygons, area similarity, congruence, and right-angle trigonometry. Students will apply geometric principles in everyday scenarios.	Students will continue to study topics from Fall Semester. Students will learn to set up and write proofs to justify logical arguments and conclusions. Students will apply geometric principles in everyday scenarios.
Algebra II	Students will expand their understanding of basic concepts of Algebra, starting by looking at inequalities and proofs. They will study linear equations and functions, as well as polynomials. Students will use rational expressions, irrational and complex numbers, and quadratic equations and functions. They will apply functions to real-world situations through mathematical modeling.	Students will continue their study of topics from Fall Semester. They will learn to manipulate exponential and logarithmic functions and learn more about triangle trigonometry. They will be introduced to basic statistics and learn to use matrices and determinants. They will apply these skills to real-world situations through mathematical modeling.
Pre-Calculus & Trigonometry	Students will study advanced topics in trigonometry such as identities, circular functions and other special formulas. They will study limits with regards to linear, quadratic, slope, polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic functions.	Students will learn about permutations, combinations, and probability. They will use polar coordinates and complex numbers, use matrices, and examine sequences and series. They conclude the semester looking at rational functions and continuity. Note: There are generally two sections of Pre-Calculus each term, with both sets of topics offered.
AP Calculus AB	This course is taught at the college level and follows the expectations of the College Board. Students will study functions and graphs, limits and continuity, derivatives, and application of the derivative.	This course is taught at the college level and follows the expectations of the College Board. Students will study antiderivatives and definite integrals, and apply them to find volume, work, and center of gravity.

History

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
World History & Civilizations	Students will study ancient civilizations such as Egypt and Greece, and the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan empires. They will study the Roman and Byzantine Empire, Islam, and the West during the Early Middle Ages. They will emphasize their study on the pre-Columbian history of Chile during their international expedition to that country. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement World History test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i>	Students will study the High Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation. They will review the progress of science, Enlightenment and revolutions around the world. They will learn about large social and economic systems/theories. Their study will examine the 20th century through the lens of post-World War II Chile during their international expedition to that country. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement World History test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i>
AP U.S. History	Students will examine the pre-Columbian history of the Americas, colonization and the Revolutionary War. The semester finishes with the Civil War and Reconstruction. <i>This course is specifically designed for students to take the Advanced Placement U.S. History test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i>	Students will study imperialism, the Progressive Era, and the U.S. involvement in WWI. They will learn about the Roaring Twenties, Great Depression, and the New Deal. Students will then study WWII, the Cold War and postwar society. They will discuss the Civil Rights movement and the culture of the U.S. during the 1960's. In learning about the Vietnam War, students will look at U.S. involvement in Chile and other Latin American countries, to be integrated with their international expedition there. They will study the post-Cold War period. <i>This course is specifically designed for students to take the Advanced Placement U.S. History test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i>

Science

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Environmental Science	<p>Students will study Earth's systems, matter, and the flow of energy. They will look at the different types of ecosystems around the globe and how they work. They will study climate, weather and biomes.</p> <p>Students will study biodiversity, population dynamics, and human populations. Lab work will be primarily field-based. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement Environmental Science test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>	<p>Students will look at geology, the Earth and nonrenewable minerals and soil. They will compare renewable and nonrenewable resources, including energy sources. They will look at food resources and urban/rural land uses. They will examine air and water pollution, as well as climate change. They will examine environmental health issues. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement Environmental Science test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>
Chemistry	<p>Students will be introduced to the atom and its components. They will learn to read and use the periodic table and to determine electron configurations. They will convert between mass, moles, and molecules. Students will be introduced to stoichiometry and use the mole:mole ratio. Lab work will focus on everyday chemical uses.</p>	<p>Students will continue to learn about stoichiometry and will be introduced to the concept of limiting reagents. Students will examine gases, solutions, and the properties of acids and bases. They will be introduced to organic chemistry. Lab work will focus on everyday chemical uses.</p>
AP Physics (Algebra-based)	<p>Students will examine the principles of measurement and uncertainty, then look at linear motion. They will move into two-dimensional motion, learn Newton's laws, and study momentum, impulse, work and energy. They will study circular motion and gravity. Lab work will focus on application in real-world situations.</p> <p><i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement Physics test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>	<p>Students will study waves and sound. They will learn about static electricity and electric circuits. They will examine magnetism and then light and optics. Lab work will focus on application in real-world situations. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement Physics test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>
Biology	<p>Students will study populations, communities and ecosystems. They will then look at cells and cellular chemistry. They will look in-depth at cellular respiration and energy production at the cellular level. They will conclude this semester by looking at simple and complex cell structures. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement Biology test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>	<p>Students will study variation and heredity, including molecular genetics. They will learn about evolution and the theory of natural selection. Then, they will move into the classification of both plants and animals. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement Biology test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>

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Foreign Language		
	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Spanish (multiple levels)	<p>Students will study Spanish through an immersive process during their time on campus and especially during their international expedition to Chile. Each student will be assessed individually at the beginning of the semester and placed in the appropriate level. Students will work within small groups with similar vocabulary and speaking levels. Their study will include authentic tasks with native speakers and a homestay. They can receive credit for Basic, Intermediate, or Advanced Spanish, depending on ability and experience. <i>There is the opportunity for students to supplement this course with specific readings and assignments if they are preparing for Advanced Placement Spanish Language test. See the section entitled "Note on Advanced Placement Courses."</i></p>	Same as Fall Semester.
Leadership		
	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Capstone Leadership Course	<p>Students will participate in an in-depth analysis of what it means to be an effective leader. They will learn and practice the Alzar School's "10 Elements of Leadership." During this course, they will identify an issue they are passionate about addressing, research potential solutions, and prepare to implement their effort. This effort is called their Culminating Leadership Project (CLP). After they leave the Alzar School, they will continue to work on their CLP for approximately 100 hours, under the mentorship of Alzar School teachers. This course meets 2-3 times per week, as well as during impromptu meetings while in the wilderness or on the international expedition.</p>	Same as Fall Semester.
Electives		
	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Elective Pursuits	<p>Students have the opportunity to pursue a variety of electives as independent study courses. This is a great way to find time to practice an instrument, work on creative writing, paint, draw, or maintain personal fitness for competitive sports. Students will have designated time for elective pursuits 2-3 times per week.</p>	Same as Fall Semester.



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