



April 16-20, 2018

- **Chicago Art & Architecture**
 - **Arizona: Borderlands**
 - **Smoky Mountains**
 - **Puerto Rico**

ST. BENEDICT PREPARATORY SECONDARY SCHOOL
Grades 11-12
AGORA SEMINAR OVERVIEW SBPS 2018

The Agora Seminar is a unique part of the high school college preparatory curriculum which aims at connecting the learning in the classroom to a real world experience.

WHAT WERE THE AGORA?

Defined as a central meeting place or as “open gathering spaces,” Agora refers to the center of artistic, athletic, spiritual and political life of Ancient Greek City States. Some of the world's most important ideas were born and perfected within the confines of the Athenian agora including, famously, the concept of democracy. Scientific theory also got its start in the agora, where the city's greatest minds regularly met informally to socialize. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle all frequented the Athenian agora, discussed philosophy and instructed pupils there.

WHY IS THE PROGRAM CALLED “AGORA?”

Capturing the theme of “open gathering spaces” for learning, SBPS faculty look at the world as our classroom and instructional toolbox. Deep learning, thinking, creating, sharing and problem-solving happened at the Agora of the ancient Greek cities. By creating bi-monthly, interdisciplinary seminar classes, all our students have the opportunity to participate in enriching learning opportunities throughout the year. We will then take our learning out into the larger classrooms of our city, nation and world.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE AGORA SEMINAR AT SBPS?

The purpose of Agora at SBPS is to provide students an opportunity to delve into a subject area and experience learning outside of the classroom. This authentic, interdisciplinary approach to learning is guided by some of the best practices of the Framework for 21st Century Learning. Some of these standards suggest that 21st Century learning should

- Focus on [21st century skills](#), content knowledge and expertise.
- Build understanding across and among core subjects as well as 21st century interdisciplinary themes
- Emphasize deep understanding rather than shallow knowledge
- Engage students with the real world data, tools, and experts they will encounter in college, on the job, and in life--students learn best when actively engaged in solving meaningful problems
- Enable students to learn in relevant, real world 21st century contexts expanded community and international involvement in learning
- Encourage the integration of community resources beyond school walls

HOW WILL THE AGORA SEMINAR WORK?

For a week in May, students and faculty will work together to better understand a specific area of academic interest. We will move our classrooms to other “open gathering spaces” in our city, country and world. Agora seminars are designed to be interdisciplinary and are taught collaboratively by all members of our faculty. In preparation for our week immersion in May, students will meet in their Agora seminar groups twice a month for 40 minutes each time to begin learning about their topics. Upon returning to school, each Agora group will host a presentation of their experience to the student body.

Each high school student will receive ½ elective credit for their Agora Seminar at the end of the third trimester. Seminars that include community service will also have the service hours recorded on their transcripts.

Agora Seminar Guidelines for Grades 11-12

Students in grades 11-12 will either have the choice to travel to International locations, locations in the United States or remain close to home in Chicago and delve into various topics of interest.

AGORA Week will take place the week of April 16-20, 2018. Students and families will be provided with detailed itineraries in the Fall of 2018.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

Students and parents must complete the attached registration form and return to school by Schedule pick up week. Once a student has picked their Agora, no changes will be made after October 1.

Parents will also have the option of rolling the cost of the seminar into their FACTS accounts. The international trips are paid directly to the travel company.

GENERAL POLICIES (11-12)

- Participation in AGORA is a graduation requirement for students in grades 9-12. Students will be issued ½ credit for successful participation. Credit and grade will be issued Trimester 3.
- Students are expected to complete all assignments, projects and reflections in accordance with the individual seminar.
- Students are expected to participate fully and reflect on their new understanding in their Portfolios.
- All rules and expectations will pertain to all students grades 6-12 participating in Agora will abide by all policies in the student handbook.
- Individual trips will be provided with field trip waivers.
- SBPS reserves the right to cancel a Seminar due to low enrollment.
- SBPS reserves the right to move faculty members to other Agora seminars due to extenuating circumstances.

AGORA SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS AND GOALS

AGORA: GRADES 11-12

CHICAGO ART & ARCHITECTURE

Students will spend a week immersed in the art and architecture of Chicago. While we are still working on the description students can expect to learn about the history of architecture in Chicago, attend museums and create their own works of art!

COST: \$600 (includes workshops, travel, tours and lunch)

BORDERLANDS AGORA: ARIZONA

The USA is and always has been a nation of immigrants, and the perennial issues surrounding immigration and migration come with complex questions relating to justice and human dignity. The Borderlands Agora will travel to southern Arizona (travel via Tucson, staying/visiting in Nogales, AZ) to examine these issues up close and on both sides of the border. We will mix experiential learning, interactive presentations, and group discussions around an itinerary that will potentially include time in the desert along migration paths, meetings with advocates for immigration justice and those people in the system, time with the justice and border patrol systems, and more. While travel to Mexico comes with warning from the State Department, this area of Mexico (Nogales, Sonora) at this border area is not part of the travel advisory, and our guides for the time we will spend across the border are experienced in leading visiting groups. Our goal is to undertake a thorough educational immersion that has students encounter these marginalized people and their realities so that they can start becoming advocates for justice and human dignity.

Cost: \$800 (based on 12 students with 2 adult chaperones)

Notes: Students must obtain on their own...

- Valid, up-to-date passport
- Reusable water bottle
- Properly layered clothing for desert time
- String bag and/or backpack for portable supplies that fits in carry-on luggage (only one wheel-suitcase per student)

SMOKY MOUNTAINS

Few places are as beautiful and as richly diverse as the Smoky Mountains. Ridges cascade through the landscape, providing a home for over 10,000 known species of plants and animals. Your group will uncover the wildlife, hike on some of the parks 800 trails and learn the area's human history that ranges from ancient Native Americans to Roosevelt's New Deal. You'll also go whitewater rafting, shop in Gatlinburg, and take a gondola ride into the mountains.

COST: \$1803

All fees must be paid directly to Grand classroom

GO to: www.grandclassroom.com click "Find My Trip/register" and search "St. Benedict Preparatory School"
Please register by August 30th. You must also complete the SBPS Agora registration form.

Day One

- Arrive in Atlanta
- Depart for Smoky Mountains National Park
- Hike the Tallulah Gorge
- Free time in Gatlinburg, TN
- Check into hotel

Day Two

- Enter Smoky Mountains National Park

- Explore Visitor Center and Museum at Sugarlands
- Hike to Laurel Falls and Grotto Falls
- Hike to the top of Clingman’s Dome
- Shopping in Pigeon Forge
- Return to hotel

Day Three

- Breakfast
- Walk the Trail of Tears to remember, learn about, and commemorate the survival of the Cherokee people, forcefully removed from their homelands in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee to live in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. They traveled by foot, horse, wagon, or steamboat in 1838-1839.
- Lunch
- White water rafting on the Pigeon River
- Freshen up at hotel
- Dinner

Day Four

- Ziplining
- Lunch
- Drive Newfound Gap Road with hiking and photo stops throughout
- Dinner

Day Five

- Visit Forbidden Caverns
- Depart for Atlanta
- Sites in Atlanta as time permits
- Depart for home

PUERTO RICO:

Puerto Rico is the domestic destination that feels international. Have an exciting tropical adventure on Grand Classroom’s Puerto Rico Trip—all without leaving the US! Puerto Rico is a US territory—that means no passport is required for you to zipline through the rainforest, boat in the mangroves, and snorkel amongst the coral reefs on this 5 day excursion. Students will immerse themselves in Puerto Rico’s vibrant culture—enjoying salsa lessons, cultural games, and exposure to the Spanish language—while giving back through the trip’s extensive Service Learning component. Groups will volunteer with children at a local orphanage and do environmental clean-up at the beach.

COST: \$2479

TO REGISTER: Go to www.grandclassroom.com. Click “Find my trip/Register” and search “St Benedict Preparatory School”

Please register before August 30th.

Itinerary to Include:

- Walking Tour of Old San Juan
- Capitol Building
- San Juan Cathedral
- La Fortaleza
- Walking Tour of Ponce
- Ponce Art Museum
- Salsa Lessons
- Service at Orphanage
- Night Swimming in bioluminescent bay
- El Yunque Rain Forest
- La Mina Waterfall
- Luquillo Beach
- Snorkeling at Reserva Natural Arrecifes de la Cordillera
- El Mourro
- Oceanography research project