

Course Syllabus

Life Design – Senior Extended Curriculum Course

Spring 2026

Class Meetings: Approximately once a week – when “FREE” period is 2nd block of the day

Course Description:

“Life Design” is the senior-year course, inspired by Ed Hajim’s *The Island of the Four P’s*. This course is designed to equip students with essential tools for curiosity and self-discovery, so they may begin to consider possible life plans when they enter college. Through the exploration of passions, principles, partners, and plans, students will hone communication skills, learn to connect with others, and cultivate a mindset of lifelong learning.

In addition to the Four P’s, the course will emphasize four essential realms of one’s life: self, family, work, and community. These will guide students as they envision their futures and consider their roles in the world. The course will also help them gain deeper self-awareness and understanding of their own uniqueness.

The course will meet six times during the spring semester, with an emphasis on preparing for Senior Career Day in April and culminating in their Senior Review session in May. Taught in sections of 8-12 students, with occasional guest lectures, the class encourages our seniors to keep their minds open and their curiosity alive as they transition to college.

Some Notes and Course Philosophy:

- * Boys are NOT required to have a life plan solidified when they graduate in May 2026
- * Focus is giving boys the tools, language and guiding concepts to explore and consider the 4 P’s
- * This is the ‘warm-up’ for proper Life Design over the next 4 years after ‘Wick graduation
- * Each class starts with a “big” question & text excerpt, then time for quiet reflection and journaling, followed by group discussion.
- * Roughly 1/3 to 1/2 of boys will not have their college placement secured at the start of course
- * Pass/Fail course – no homework, just relevant reading from text

Course Outline:

Class 1: Intro and Passions (Late January/Early February)

Class 2: Principles (Mid February)

Class 3: Partners (Late February)

Class 4: Junior Year Self-Assessment Review & Application to 4 P’s (Early March)

Class 5: Senior Career Day Prep (Late March/Early April)

Class 6: Senior Career Day (April 7)

Class 7: Career Day Recap & Senior Review Prep (Mid April)

Class 8: Senior Review (Early May)

Notes and Questions from the 4 P's

Key Ideas & Questions (From *The Island of the Four P's*)

Passions

- Passions are the powerful interests that drive us forward in life. They should be the starting point for the plans we create
- Our passions and our strengths are often closely linked, and that can be powerful. But where they diverge, we should concentrate on our passions
- There can be practical barriers to pursuing our passions – including time, cost and knowledge
- Passions do not necessarily last forever: some will last, others will morph, and new passions may arise.

Indicators:

- * Energy – activities that energize rather drain
- * Time – activities where time seems to fly by
- * Growth – areas where you naturally seek to improve
- * Impact – work that feels meaningful to others
- * Joy – activities that bring genuine happiness

- 1) What are your passions?
 - 2) Which of them is most important to you?
 - 3) What are your areas of strength, skill and talent
 - 4) Which of them overlap with your passions and which do not?
 - 5) What barriers might interfere with your pursuing each of your passions?
 - 6) How might you overcome these barriers?
 - 7) Have you experienced changes in passions?
 - 8) Have these changes affected the way you think about your future?
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Principles

- Your principles help define the kind of person you are and the way you live your life
 - Principles complement your passions, shaping the way you pursue them.
 - For our principles to be meaningful, we must act on them in the four key realms of our lives: Self, Family, Work, Community
 - We should test ways of viewing the world other than those we typically use.
- 1) What are the fundamental principles guiding your life?

- 2) Which of them is most important to you?
 - 3) How do your principles affect how you pursue your passions?
 - 4) Are there any conflicts between your principles and your passions?
 - 5) How do you apply your principles in each realm?
 - 6) How might you apply them in the future?
 - 7) Have you had experiences that changed the way you view the world and prompted you to reconsider any of your principles?
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Partners

- Partners are essential: they help us take advantage of opportunities and respond to challenges effectively
 - The earlier in life you identify the right partners, the better prepared you are to take on complex challenges and responsibilities
 - Your Prime Partner's passions and principles will help determine which peaks you climb and how far up you go
- 1) How will you identify the kind of knowledge, skills, and emotional strengths that you need partners to provide?
 - 2) What steps have you taken to choose partners who can provide what you need?
 - 3) Have you told your partners specifically what roles you'd like them to play?
 - 4) Have you and your Prime Partner (or the person who might become your P1) discussed how you can help each other pursue your passions and principles?
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Plans (Part I)

- Understanding your environment is essential to creating an effective life plan
 - Observing change enables you to understand how your environment came to be as it is, see how it may change, and anticipate how it may affect your future
 - Catching the rising wave of an S Curve is often a powerful and relatively easy way to pursue your passions and principles
- 1) How well do your passions and principles fit with your environment?
 - 2) What opportunities for pursuing your most important passions and principles are available in your environment?

- 3) In what ways are Economics, Government, Demographics and Technology driving change in your environment?
- 4) Are there other significant change drivers affecting your environment?
- 5) What are some of the S Curves operating in your environment?

Plans (Part II)

- Time and energy are limited, and we must allocate them carefully among our priorities in each of the four realms
 - It's important to draw up a money-achievement-happiness calculation and consider its effect on your priorities and plans
 - You cannot plan for luck: you can only be flexible in responding to it and recognize its impact, good and bad
- 1) How are you presently allocating time and energy among Self, Family, Work and Community?
 - 2) How might that allocation change?
 - 3) How do you currently balance making money, achieving personal goals, and just enjoying life?
 - 4) How might that balance change?
 - 5) Can you identify times in your life when a positive result came as much from good luck as from your efforts and abilities?
 - 6) How about times when a setback resulted as much from bad luck or unfortunate circumstances as from your actions or shortcomings?