

# Extinct Classes

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Westhill’s course catalog is shrinking fast, as falling enrollment and sudden schedule shifts threaten to wipe out established classes. From AP courses to ECE credits, the impact of taking away classes, especially those that offer college credit, cannot be understated.

“While the course fee for a 3-credit undergraduate course is \$2127, the course fee for an ECE 3-credit [class] is \$150,” Mr. Ng, who teaches the soon-to-be-extinct ECE Asian American Studies class, said.

As college tuition continues to rise, it’s not only unfair to take college credit-bearing courses away, but it is actively putting Westhill students at a disadvantage. Many students have to take out massive loans to cover the cost of tuition, so by not allowing students to go into college already having certain credits, they are placed into financially strenuous positions.

Not only does the loss of these courses impact students financially, but it also removes an invaluable opportunity to learn real-world skills.

“[AP Capstone] fosters critical thinking, research, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving skills that many traditional courses don’t prioritize as explicitly,” Ms. Leveille, who teaches the soon-to-be-extinct AP Capstone course, said.

AP Capstone is being removed due to a lack of space in the new 4x4 schedule as well as low enrollment, and with it goes the unique opportunity for students to work on actively applying skills they need in the working world. Furthermore, this course provides students with an opportunity to complete a passion project that can be referenced on college applications, another

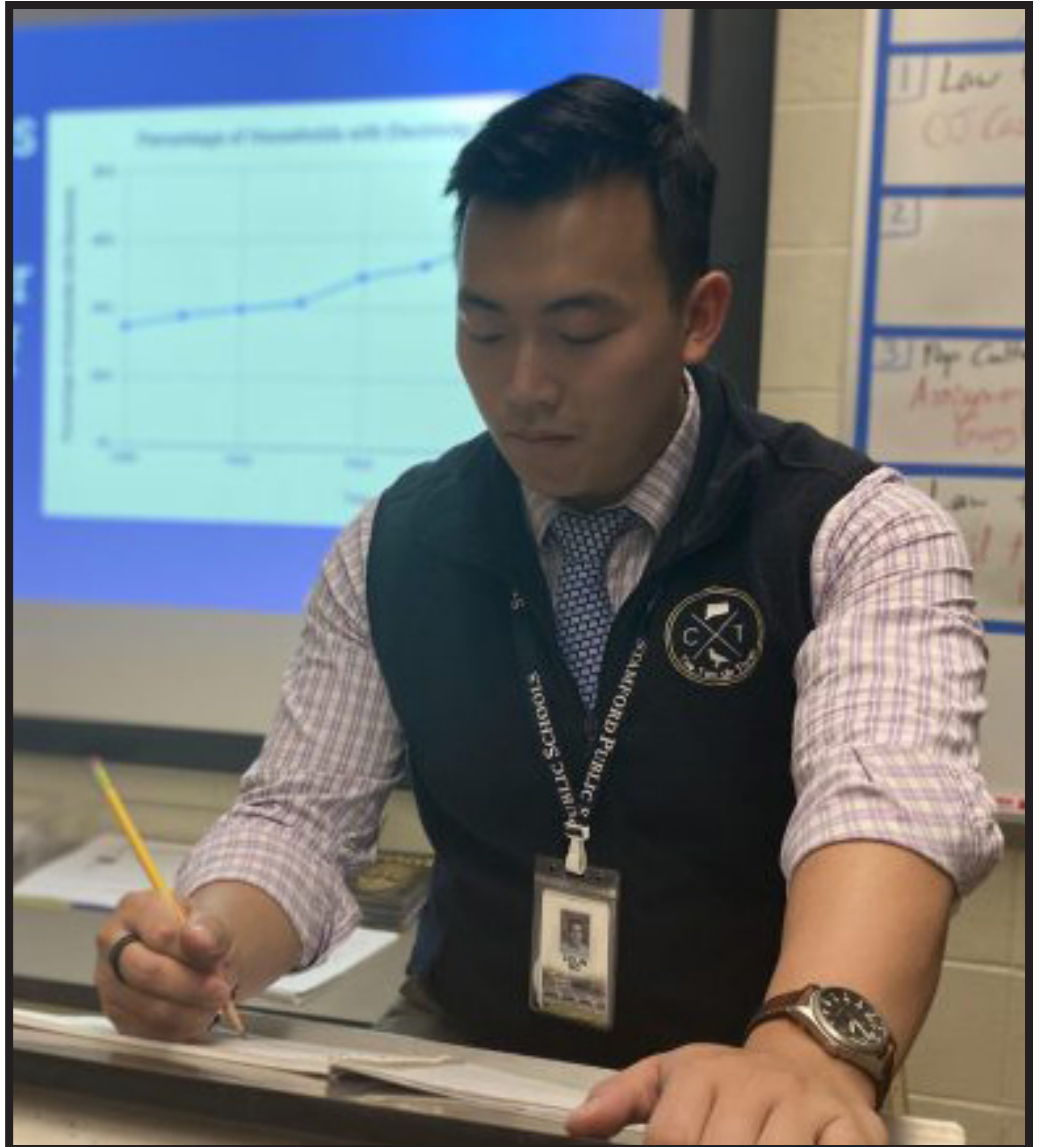
opportunity being taken away. As students struggle with the change in the course selection, the situation leaves one question in mind: Is it ever a positive change to remove a class from the course catalog?

“While I recognize that schools sometimes need to adapt due to shifting enrollment, staffing, or funding, I believe decisions to cut courses should be guided by the value they bring to students, not just logistics,” Leveille said. “[AP Capstone’s] value is immense, and cutting it feels more like a step backward than progress.”

Enrollment numbers should not be the final determinant of a class’s importance. If a course can have a positive impact, then it is a course that is worth keeping. Courses like AP Capstone and Asian American Studies set students up for their futures and provide them with opportunities that they can find nowhere else in their communities. It is a disservice to all students who take advantage of these opportunities to eliminate them.

“Smaller class sizes offer a more direct learning experience. Students are unable to be anonymous in class, have to participate more in discussion and projects, and I can spend more time on authentic feedback and responding to questions/inquiries,” Ng said.

Smaller class sizes are beneficial to students, as they do not inhibit productivity but rather cultivate it. Removing classes, especially those that function well with small enrollment numbers, is not only misguided, but also actively set students up for failure.



MR. NG teaching a class. Photo by Malcolm Fenster ('23).

## AP Seminar

### Year 1

Earn score of 3 or higher

## AP Research

### Year 2

Earn score of 3 or higher

## 4 AP Exams

### Throughout High School

Earn score of 3 or higher

**THE REQUIREMENT** to get an AP Capstone diploma. The AP Capstone program is being cut, limiting the ability of students to attain a Capstone diploma. Photo courtesy of College Board.