

York SCHOOL

Course Planning and Curriculum Guide

York's Course Planning and Curriculum Guide is designed to provide students and families with a comprehensive overview of York's academic program and annual course planning process.

2025-26



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MISSION AND VALUES

OUR MISSION

We inspire and prepare a diverse community of creative, independent thinkers.

OUR VALUES

We believe empowering students to be curious, to ask questions, and to engage in conversation prepares them for higher education and fulfilling lives. With an open and inquisitive mindset, York Students can discover the most about themselves and the world.

DIVERSITY

We believe having a student body and faculty diverse in talents, viewpoints, and backgrounds creates the highest-quality learning experience while fostering local and global connections. Students learn from the experiences, heritages, and stories of their classmates and teachers, and push their own understanding through this exposure to multiple perspectives and voices.

INCLUSIVITY

We believe our actions should be guided by the following principles: honesty, respect, responsibility, and compassion. Valuing these principles creates and encourages an open-dialogue where students feel safe to express new ideas, new arguments, and new passions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

York’s student learning outcomes outline the school’s goals for student growth and integrate our mission into the daily school experience. By achieving these learning outcomes, York students will develop academic confidence, critical thinking skills, and courageous leadership.

CREATIVE, INDEPENDENT THINKERS

Students explore and evaluate multiple perspectives across a variety of curricular areas; demonstrate active listening, curiosity, and risk-taking; and discover and develop interests, passions, and purpose.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

Students speak and write with precision and purpose for diverse contexts and audiences; express ideas and information compellingly and creatively; and practice empathy and collaboration.

COURAGEOUS LEADERS AND PROBLEM SOLVERS

Students tackle complex problems to better understand the world and their place in it; cultivate personal integrity in order to be responsible leaders; and are action oriented and seek to effect positive change.

GLOBAL PARTICIPANTS & COMMUNITY-MINDED CITIZENS

Students practice cultural curiosity and flexibility; develop a nuanced and profound understanding of relevant issues and diverse cultures; and demonstrate active civic involvement and social responsibility.



SCHEDULE



York School 2025-2026

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
PERIOD 1 8:30-9:30	BLOCK 1	BLOCK 6	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 7	BLOCK 5 JAZZ BAND / CHAMBER / TUTORIAL	BLOCK 4	BLOCK 3	BLOCK 8
COMMUNITY BLOCK 9:35-10:30	See Community Block Schedule	See Community Block Schedule	See Community Block Schedule	See Community Block Schedule	See Community Block Schedule	See Community Block Schedule	See Community Block Schedule	See Community Block Schedule
PERIOD 2 10:35-11:35	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 7	BLOCK 5 JAZZ BAND / CHAMBER / TUTORIAL	BLOCK 4	BLOCK 3	BLOCK 8	BLOCK 1	BLOCK 6
LUNCH 11:40-12:15	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
PERIOD 3 12:20-1:05	BLOCK 3	BLOCK 8	BLOCK 1	BLOCK 6	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 7	BLOCK 5 CHAMBER / TUTORIAL	BLOCK 4
PERIOD 4 1:10-1:55	BLOCK 4	BLOCK 3	BLOCK 8	BLOCK 1	BLOCK 6	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 7	BLOCK 5 JAZZ BAND / CHAMBER / TUTORIAL
WORKJOBS 2:00-2:05	WORKJOBS	WORKJOBS	WORKJOBS	WORKJOBS	WORKJOBS	WORKJOBS	WORKJOBS	WORKJOBS
PERIOD 5 2:10-2:55	BLOCK 5 CHOIR / CHAMBER / TUTORIAL	BLOCK 4	BLOCK 3	BLOCK 8	BLOCK 1	BLOCK 6	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 7
3:00-	CO-CURRICULARS	CO-CURRICULARS	CO-CURRICULARS	CO-CURRICULARS	CO-CURRICULARS	CO-CURRICULARS	CO-CURRICULARS	CO-CURRICULARS

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The mission of York School is to develop a diverse community of creative, independent thinkers. To that end, in order to earn a diploma from York School, students must fulfill specific requirements geared for this development. And, while all students fulfill these same requirements, the School allows for individual differences and encourages the pursuit of specific interests within the program.

Graduation from York requires more than an accumulation of courses or credits, and, accordingly, students may only be awarded a York diploma after completing York’s program requirements. Without exception, students are expected to be enrolled at the school for 12th grade. And, while rare, waivers to graduation requirements are sometimes granted if there is good cause.

The York School program requirements fall into three categories:

- Academics
- Athletics / Health & Fitness
- Service Learning

ACADEMICS

Grade 8

Students in York’s 8th grade take a combination of courses unique to their grade level and courses with students in upper grade levels. Six courses are required, including grade level-only courses in arts, English, history, and science. Students also enroll in appropriate math and world language courses, based on their individual levels. Students can choose to take a music ensemble, including Choir and Jazz Band.

Grades 9-12

York School values a breadth of study, so requires the following distribution requirements for graduation. Requirements for students who enter York after the 9th grade may be altered based upon the student’s previous study. Each semester, students must enroll in six courses, except 12th graders, who may take five courses. Students who wish to take seven courses must obtain the permission of the Assistant Head of School.

ARTS	1 credit	One full credit in either visual arts or performing arts. Some arts courses are year-long courses and others are semester long. In performing arts, the credit may be attained by completing two years of a music ensemble, which are graded, year-long courses and earn the student 0.5 credit per year. Music ensembles may be taken in addition to a student’s six courses.
ENGLISH	4 credits	English is required each year: English II in 9 th grade, English III in 10 th grade; English IV in 11 th grade, and English V in 12 th grade.
HISTORY	3 credits	Three credits are required: Modern World History I (9 th grade), US History (10 th grade), and two semester-long electives in either 11 th grade or 12 th grades.
MATHEMATICS	3 credits	Three years of math are required, through the 11 th grade and including Algebra II.
SCIENCE	3 credits	Three years of science are required: Biology (usually taken in 9 th grade), Chemistry or Physics, and one other year-long science course.
WORLD LANGUAGES	3 credits	Students are required to complete three years of a world language, either Mandarin or Spanish, through at least level III of that language.
LEADERSHIP	0.5 credit	All 9th graders are required to take the one-semester course, “Foundations in Leadership.”

ATHLETICS AND HEALTH & FITNESS

The mission of York School Athletics is to strive for the highest level of personal growth and athletic excellence. To fulfill this mission, we strive to compete fairly and respectfully and we strive to develop our student-athletes’ skills, competitive drive, perseverance, and integrity. York School Athletics is built on competition and participation so students can improve their athletic abilities, work with teammates toward a common goal, and practice sportsmanship.

In order to fulfill the Athletics graduation requirement, students must participate in two out of three seasons of either an interscholastic sport or a health & fitness activity. During each season the Athletics/Health & Fitness period is an integral part of the school day, and attendance in these activities is mandatory. Team sports typically meet from 3:00 p.m. to approximately 5:00 p.m. Health & Fitness activities usually meet two days per week for approximately 90 minutes.

INTERSCHOLASTIC TEAMS

York School is part of the Pacific Coast Athletic League (PCAL). Under league rules, only students in grades 9-12 may participate in interscholastic sports practices and competitions. Team sports are open to any student in grades 9-12 interested in participating, whether new to the sport or experienced practitioners. Interscholastic team sports meet Monday through Friday afternoons.

FALL ATHLETICS

- Cross Country - Coed
- Field Hockey - Girls
- Tennis - Girls
- Volleyball - Girls
- Water Polo - Coed

WINTER ATHLETICS

- Basketball - Boys
- Basketball - Girls
- Soccer - Boys
- Soccer - Girls

SPRING ATHLETICS

- Golf - Coed
- Lacrosse - Girls
- Swimming - Coed
- Tennis - Boys
- Track & Field - Coed
- Volleyball - Boys



ELIGIBILITY

In order to maintain eligibility for Interscholastic sports, students must remain in good academic standing. Students transferring to York after the beginning of their 9th grade year will need to file the appropriate Sports Eligibility Transfer paperwork. These forms require the signature of the previous school’s Athletic Director and that of the York School Athletic Director.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Activities usually meet twice a week (Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday). These activities vary, and students are encouraged to try different activities. Sample Health & Fitness Activities include:

- Mountain Biking
- Outdoor Basketball
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Weight Training
- Yoga

Independent Athletics/Health & Fitness

Students may participate in an organized independent team sport or fitness activity not offered at York (e.g., martial arts, equestrian, ballet, club sports, etc.) in lieu of participating in York offerings. Credit for these independent activities is subject to the approval of the Health & Fitness Coordinator.



SERVICE LEARNING

In alignment with York’s core values of honesty, respect, responsibility, and compassion, students are driven to make meaningful and positive contributions to their community through the Service Learning program! The service requirement creates a unique experiential education opportunity which extends the boundaries of the school and engages students in volunteerism, helping the community grow closer and stronger through collaboration, hard work, and positive connections.

York’s Service Learning program includes a “Service Learning Internship” structure, which serves different purposes for the three constituent groups involved (students, community organizations, and York School). For students, commitment to intentional partnerships with local organizations gives them first-hand knowledge and experience in combating social and environmental issues, expands their network and understanding beyond the school campus, and provides a catalyst for personal growth and broadened self-awareness. Community organizations benefit from expanded capacity, potential staff recruitment, and increased visibility. Finally, through this program, York is able to support and engender contributions to the broader community, strengthen our resource network, and nurture a service ethic in the school body.

The Service Learning requirement consists of 40 hours completed between grades 9-12, which can be divided up in the following ways:

1. A 20-hour Service Learning Internship with an approved local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization followed by a student reflection upon completion.
2. A 10-hour Service Learning Internship with a secondary approved local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization OR 2-for-1 hours of service to York School in the Peer Tutoring Program and second-year York Shield Student Ambassador Program. (Meaning, as a Peer Tutor, or beginning with your second year as a Shield member, every 2 hours you volunteer on campus will count as 1 hour toward the Service Learning requirement for up to 10 service hours.)
3. Up to 10 flex volunteer hours toward approved organizations of the student’s choice.

Note that all 40 hours may be completed through a single Service Learning Internship with an approved local 503(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

All Service Learning Internships and volunteer hours must be:

- Comprised of 40 hours completed between grades 9-12, per the above guidelines;
- Non-paying and done outside of York, with a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (unless completed through Peer Tutoring or Shield);
- Not under the supervision of a parent or close relative;
- Completed before the fourth quarter of the student’s senior year.
- Internships must be pre-approved and facilitated by the Service Learning Coordinator.

Students may complete internships and other volunteer hours after school, during an athletic off-season, on weekends, school breaks, or summer vacation. Students are encouraged to start their service learning requirement before the 11th grade. Through the Service Learning Internship experience and volunteer hours, it is hoped that students will encounter people, places, and situations that challenge them. Students should prepare to confront preconceptions, ask questions, and embrace different ways of thinking, thereby engaging in a process of self-discovery, social responsibility, and growth. The reciprocal nature of learning and giving through community involvement is a cornerstone of our program.



ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

GRADES

Final grades are the only grades entered on the student’s official transcript. Once recorded at year’s end (or end of semester for a semester-long course), grades become part of a student’s permanent record. A grade is a single representation of several aspects of a measurement of progress, level of current mastery, recommendation for advancement or placement into the next level of a course, and potential indicator of additional support needed. The goal of grades is not to rank students, reward effort, or assess students’ character.

CREDIT

Students earn one credit for successful completion (D or above and C or above in English courses) of most year-long courses and one-half credit for single-semester courses. Students receive one-half credit for year-long music ensembles, except for Chamber Choir, which earns students a full credit. Credit is not awarded for courses in programs not sanctioned by York, since a York transcript represents work completed at or under the auspices of the school.

ONLINE LEARNING

York wants interested students to have access to quality online courses as part of their high school experience. Students enrolling in any online course must seek approval from the Assistant Head of School.



ADVANCED CURRICULUM

York aims to offer students the best educational opportunities possible in order to prepare students for life after York. To this end, York offers a challenging curriculum, including a variety of advanced courses. The highest level of advanced coursework features Advanced Placement (AP) and York Advanced Studies courses (YAS).

The Advanced Placement (AP) program is a curriculum that is designed and sponsored by the College Board. The AP curriculum offers standardized courses in individual subjects that are meant to be comparable to college level courses. York offers a number of math, science, and arts courses based on the AP curriculum and which prepare students for the corresponding AP exams. Students who enroll in an AP course are expected to take that course’s AP exam. In some cases students may choose to take an AP exam even without taking the AP course. A student who plans to sit for an AP exam without taking an AP class must receive permission from the Assistant Head of School.

Some York courses have distinctive features that set them apart as particularly challenging and comparable to college level courses, even though they are not part of the College Board’s Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum. These courses are designated as York Advanced Studies (YAS). Students who wish to enroll in either AP or YAS courses must receive approval from the appropriate Department Chair and the Assistant Head of School. Students who successfully pass and complete an AP or YAS course receive additional weight in the calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA).

Advanced coursework is not required to earn a York diploma, though, since every discipline culminates in advanced coursework, many students elect to take advanced courses toward completion of graduation requirements and electives. In addition, colleges take these advanced courses into consideration for admission, including the University of California, which recognizes both YAS courses and AP courses as honors-level curricula. However, every college has its own policy about admissions, credit, and placement, and students should research policies for colleges in which they are interested. The Director of College Counseling is also available to assist in this research.



COURSE PLANNING AND COURSE SELECTION

The course selection process for the following academic year begins early in the second semester with course planning meetings for each grade level. During the process students consult with their teachers, Department Chairs, the Director of College Counseling, and the Assistant Head of School. Students should exercise care in selecting their courses so they satisfy both York School graduation and college admission requirements, while at the same time exploring subjects and opportunities and pursuing interests and passions. When in doubt, students should confer with the Assistant Head of School regarding York requirements or the Director of College Counseling regarding college admission requirements.

COURSE LOAD

Students must enroll in six courses each semester, except for students in 12th grade, who must enroll in a minimum of five courses. Students who wish to take seven courses must obtain the permission of the Assistant Head of School. Music Ensembles, which are graded courses and meet fewer times per cycle, may be taken in addition to the six courses. Students wishing to take more than four advanced courses, including Advanced Placement (AP), York Advanced Studies (YAS), or Honors courses, must receive permission from the Assistant Head of School. For students wishing to take seven courses or more than four advanced courses, the Assistant Head of School will consult with the Department Chair and Director of College Counseling.

We encourage students to take the following load of courses each year:

Grade 8

Six courses: English I, History, Science 8, Arts 8, a math course, and a world language course. All 8th graders also enroll in Study Period. Students can also take a music ensemble.

Grade 9

Six courses: English II, Modern World History, Biology, a math course, a world language course, a semester-long course in leadership, and another semester elective, such as an arts course or Code+Design. Students can also take a music ensemble.

Grade 10

Six courses: English III, US History, a science course, a math course, a world language course, and an arts course, technology course, or even a second science. Students can also take a music ensemble.

Grade 11

Six courses: English IV, a history elective, a science course, a math course, a world language course, and either an arts course or a second history or science course. Students can also take a music ensemble. Juniors add the college counseling course, Pathways, in the second semester, which meets once per cycle. Some juniors also join the Distinguished Scholars Program, which meets once per cycle.

Grade 12

Five or six courses: Because many seniors choose to enroll in one or more advanced curriculum courses and take Pathways in the first semester to help them in the college application process, students in their senior year sometimes take only five courses. English V is the only required course, and depending on where seniors are with graduation requirements, there are many options to add courses based on personal interest.

COURSE ENROLLMENTS & CANCELLATION

During the construction of student schedules, the school makes every attempt to fulfill student course requests. However, because of the wide variety of course offerings, the limitation in periods, and the general complexities of scheduling, students are not always able to take all requested classes. A course with low enrollment may be canceled at any time up to the first week of classes. Likewise, the school has the right to restrict enrollment in any course when sign-ups exceed the departmentally determined course capacity.

COURSE CHANGES

Students may request discretionary course changes at the beginning of each semester. To request a change with the Assistant Head of School, a student must first obtain the permission of a parent/guardian and, if the student is a senior, the Director of College Counseling. The school only considers requests for course changes, not requests for different sections, and not all changes can be accommodated. Students have until the end of the first three weeks of the semester to request these changes. There is an extended course change period for necessary course changes, such as moving from an advanced-designated course to a regular section or dropping a course because of a heavy load.



ACADEMIC SUPPORT

By design, there are several levels of support and counseling for students. In addition to consulting with teachers, students, as well as parents, are invited to contact the following at any time.

ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Oversees the curriculum and coordinates course selection and scheduling. Permission from the Assistant Head of School is required in order to take seven classes, multiple advanced-level courses, or to change courses.

DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING

Provides guidance on college selection, admission requirements, application procedures, and College Board/ACT standardized tests. Seniors and juniors meet with the College Counselor individually and in a scheduled class entitled "Pathways," where they work on all aspects of the college admissions process.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Manage their academic departments, including overseeing the departmental curriculum and goals, and thus have a superior understanding of course progressions and student placement.

ACADEMIC COACH

Available to assist students with study skills, to work with teachers in planning appropriate academic support, and to coordinate and review diagnostic testing.



COLLEGE COUNSELING

York's College Counseling Program provides students guidance throughout the college search and application process. Our goal is to help students find colleges where they will be challenged, where they will be happy, and where they will be successful. We do this by guiding, counseling, questioning, recommending, referring, suggesting, and informing. In return, we expect each student to take control of the process. Students who are happiest about the college process are those who ask themselves the hard questions, understand their abilities and needs best, and who are, therefore, willing to work to find good fit colleges during the college search.

To accomplish this, there are many tools we will utilize, including:

- Pathways—a required course for all juniors and seniors, designed to guide students through the search and application process and help them stay on track, including work on their personal statements
- *College Matters* e-Newsletter—a great resource for junior and senior parents to stay up-to-date on the month's tasks
- Exam Preparation—we have many online and physical resources for students to use when preparing for standardized exams
- On-campus College Visits—to help learn about the many colleges and universities out there, we bring as many representatives to campus.



YORK SCHOLARS PROGRAM

YORK SCHOLARS

The YORK SCHOLARS program, formerly known as Distinguished Scholars, is an academically rigorous, two-year interdisciplinary experience for 11th and 12th-grade students. Beginning in the 2025–26 academic year, all York Scholars—both new (11th grade) and returning (12th grade)—will be enrolled in AP Seminar, the first course in the AP Capstone sequence. The following year, the program will expand to include AP Research for seniors, creating a cohesive pathway where 11th graders take AP Seminar and 12th graders progress to AP Research. Upon successful completion of both courses, including a portfolio submission to the College Board, students will earn the prestigious Capstone Certificate, signaling advanced college readiness and scholarly achievement.

AP Seminar engages students in cross-curricular inquiry, critical thinking, and collaborative research, emphasizing project-based learning and real-world application across STEAM, Global Studies, Community Engagement, and Internship Paths. Students will have the opportunity to work with external mentors, analyze complex issues from multiple perspectives, and develop evidence-based arguments through written, oral, and visual presentations. The program prioritizes ethical research, design thinking, and synthesis of ideas, culminating in a capstone project that demonstrates mastery of independent research and communication skills. York Scholars graduate with a deep understanding of interdisciplinary connections and the skills necessary for success in college and beyond, all within a nationally recognized and college-endorsed framework.

AP SEMINAR

Year course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12 in the York Scholars Program

AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations, exploring the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing various texts, including articles, research studies, foundational texts, and artistic works. They learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop their own perspectives in written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team.

The course emphasizes the development of critical thinking, research, and communication skills. Students learn to investigate problems or issues, analyze arguments, compare different perspectives, and synthesize information from multiple sources. They also work on crafting and communicating evidence-based arguments.

Throughout the course, students engage with rigorous college-level curricula, extending their abilities to synthesize information from multiple perspectives and apply skills in new situations and cross-curricular contexts. The ultimate aim is to equip students with the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision, preparing them for success in college and beyond.





COSTA RICA PROGRAM

Since 2022-23, with the inaugural year of the Costa Rica and Sustainability program, York has partnered with the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) to take students to its Monteverde campus in Costa Rica for a week of experiential learning, exploring firsthand the scientific and social causes and consequences of climate change in the Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Preserve. Students attend classes by local professors and professionals to investigating sustainability, focusing on how Costa Rican institutions has become a world pioneer in climate change mitigation and a leader in establishing green economic practices. Nature walks and field work inspire students to develop research questions and solutions in order to bring their learning back to the York community.



ARTS

The arts play an important role in the life of York School. All our students participate in the arts at some level and many are involved in a wide range of arts activities. With three music ensembles available, students enjoy Choir, Chamber Choir, and Jazz Band. Our theatre program presents a Fall Play, and a Spring Musical, with opportunities for work in technical theatre. In the visual arts we offer classes in drawing, painting, and digital photography. The art studio is a wonderful place to explore and celebrate the diversity that is so highly valued at York School. All our classes, ensembles, and productions are designed both to be accessible to beginning students and challenging for those more advanced. Beginning students often discover hidden talents in themselves, and students with exceptional ability in the arts, who may be considering college and professional work in the field, will find many rich opportunities at York.

Requirements: In Grade 8, students enroll in Arts 8. In Grades 9-12, students must complete at least one full credit in either visual arts or performing arts. In performing arts, the credit may be attained by completing two years of a music ensemble, which are graded, year-long courses and earn the student 0.5 credit per year.

GRADE 8

ARTS 8: AN EXPLORATION OF PERFORMING ARTS

Year Course, 1 credit

Required: 8

Arts 8 is an exploration of finding confidence in your own voice. We build that confidence through the mediums of theatre, musical theatre, and music. We start the year with learning about how the theatre works, how to use correct theatrical vocabulary, and feeling comfortable in the physical space. Then we move into communication styles: pantomime, nonverbal, improvisation, monologues and scene work. Then we will work on taking those skills into collaborative presentations about the history of musical theatre. Finally, we take the opportunity to learn a new instrument: the ukulele. This allows students to find their musical voice, by learning the technique to play and sing their own song by the end of the year.



VISUAL ARTS

Our visual arts program offers students a new way of seeing their world and expressing their creativity. It is a chance to build better problem solving skills and strengthen their confidence, as well as develop passions and hobbies that resurface throughout their lives. Students begin with a foundation art course that centers on drawing and incorporates a variety of media such as charcoal, pastel, pen and ink, color study, and printmaking. York’s art teachers are very active in their fields and are fully involved in the professional art community in Monterey County. Their experiences enhance the curriculum in the classrooms and give real world vitality to the program.

STUDIO ART I: FOUNDATION

Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: none

This is an introduction to art with no experience necessary. The class is focused on drawing fundamentals for the first 6 weeks; covering contour, texture, line, gesture, value, and perspective while emphasizing the need to observe and develop coordination between the eyes and hands. Students will research and write about periods in art history that appeal to them, developing personal tastes and preferences, and defending those positions to their peers and teacher. In the second quarter, students are introduced to the modalities of color, printmaking, painting, and sculpture.

STUDIO ART II: DRAWING

Fall Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Studio Art I: Foundation

In this course students will have the opportunity to further their exploration of drawing mediums. This is the core experience of any artist. The semester will include reductive drawing (using an eraser and graphite powder layers), dry-point etching, the use of charcoal on different surfaces, reductive linoleum prints using three colors, textured drawings using India ink, and more. Exercises will be aided by examples, demos, videos, and guest artists. Research and writing exercises will also be employed as well as weekly critiques.

STUDIO ART II: PAINTING

Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Studio Art I: Foundation

In this course students will work with a variety of canvas sizes while completing assignments dealing with a specific design element. There is often an emphasis on value, pattern, balance, color, emphasis, texture, or a combination of several elements. Students will use collage, acrylic and oil paints and other mediums while embracing an environment for experimentation. We always start with a still life to learn mixing and matching and further subjects include animals, abstraction, portraiture, the human form, and landscape. These exercises will be interspersed with demos, artist of the week talks, and writing exercises.

STUDIO ART III: BUILDING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Semester Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: Studio Art II: Drawing or Studio Art II: Painting

Studio Art III allows students to build a portfolio throughout the course of a year. Highlighting this process is a concentration or “sustained investigation” of a particular theme chosen by the student. In this way each portfolio is meant to be personal and evolving with new experiences. Studio Art III students will develop familiarity with many styles and means of artistic expression that will help encourage original designs. Students will be encouraged to use multiple mediums and a variety of subjects. This is a full-year course that requires a high level of autonomy, motivation, and love for the visual arts. Students are exposed to the art world through field trips to galleries and museums, visiting artists, research, and critiques. This course is recommended to be taken in the junior year in preparation for AP Studio Art in the senior year.

AP STUDIO ART: DRAWING or 2D DESIGN

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: Studio Art III & permission from Arts Department Chair

AP Art allows students to create a portfolio that allows students to show their skills, dedication and originality over the course of a year. Portfolios include works of art and design, process documentation, and written information about the work presented. In May, students submit portfolios for evaluation based on specific criteria, which include skillful synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas and sustained investigation through practice, experimentation, and revision, guided by questions. The work expectations are significant in this advanced class, and the bulk of each project is expected to be completed outside of class.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Fall Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: none

This class will not only give students the basic technical tools they need to take better photographs but also give them the ability to become a more observant person and to see the visual world in a fresh new way. The journey begins with learning to get the most out of the camera students usually have with them - the one built into phones. Students will tackle the basics of Adobe Photoshop to help refine the photographs they take so that they can reach their fullest potential. Students also learn about the work of a diverse group of photographers from around the globe and how to look at and discuss their work in order for it to inspire their own.

MAKERSPACE

Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: none

In this hands-on, project-based course, students will explore the intersection of design, technology, and innovation. Working in York’s Makerspace Design Shop, students will learn to safely use a variety of tools—from laser cutters and 3D printers to hand tools and digital design software—to create functional, artistic, or experimental projects. Emphasis is placed on prototyping, creative problem solving, and design thinking. Projects may include signage, wearable tech, architectural models, or collaborative installations. Whether you’re a tinkerer, an artist, or an inventor, this course offers space to build, test, and bring ideas to life.

DIGITAL MEDIA DESIGN

Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: none

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of digital design through hands-on creative projects that combine photography, typography, graphic design, and animation. Students will learn industry-standard tools like Adobe Photoshop and After Effects while exploring how digital media shapes our world. Projects include poster design, animated title sequences, and dynamic visual compositions. Emphasis is placed on developing a strong visual voice, understanding the elements of good design, and learning how to communicate ideas clearly and creatively through digital platforms. No prior experience necessary—just curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to experiment.



PERFORMING ARTS

Our mission in the performing arts at York School is to discover and develop each student’s unique skills and talents while emphasizing artistic excellence. We seek to nurture a vibrant, collaborative arts community that builds confidence and creativity while bringing our students together in a powerful shared experience. York’s theatre program presents challenging material that integrates the students’ analytical minds with their emotional and physical selves as they learn to connect with and inspire an audience. In the fall we produce our annual Fall Musical, which has included shows like Les Miserables, Ride the Cyclone, Alice by Heart, Frozen, Chicago, The Wedding Singer, and many others.

We work with local and national guest directors, choreographers, musical directors and designers so that students get a varied experience working with professionals. York’s music program is an integral part of the York School experience. Students have many options for participating in performance ensembles. The three music ensembles offered by the department are open to students in all grades, including 8th grade. Our flexible scheduling allows students to participate in both instrumental and vocal music ensembles. The groups perform several times each year, both on campus and in the surrounding community like Monterey Bay Football Club, Laguna Seca, CHOMP Hospital, Hacienda Hay & Feed, and Carmel Mission.

CHOIR IA/IB & IIA/IIB

Year Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: none

Our vocal music program starts in Choir I and is devoted to helping students expand their repertoire and achieve new levels of vocal technical skills and creative expression. For those who have never explored music, singing is the perfect place to start. Choir will give students an opportunity to sing varied choral literature from a range of styles that could include: traditional, sacred, popular, jazz, and musical theatre. Students will learn about good vocal health, technique, and pedagogy. York Choir performs at various school events and in the community at large. Participation in Choir is open to everyone regardless of experience or singing ability. Testing for vocal placement is done at the beginning of the year. Students will sing at many different functions throughout the school year that includes Grandparent’s Day, and Winter/Spring Concerts. Students must complete two years of Choir (Choir IA & IB) in order to advance to Choir II.

CHAMBER CHOIR

Year Course; 1 credit
Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: Choir IA or Musical & audition

Chamber Choir is an advanced choral group that is designed to give students the opportunity to sing varied choral literature from a range of styles: traditional, sacred, popular, jazz and musical theatre. Students will study vocal health, pedagogy, and technique, as well as learn basic music theory. They will have the opportunity to perform in a variety of spaces throughout the Monterey Bay area and on tour. Each student will help to create a vibrant, unique arts community that builds on their confidence and creativity while working together to create a powerful collaborative experience.

JAZZ BAND IA/IB & IIA/IIB

Year Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: none

Through ensemble rehearsal, individual practice, and a variety of performance opportunities, students will gain an understanding and appreciation for this unique and exciting art form. By the end of this course, students will have a basic understanding of jazz and the beginning level forms associated with it, and they will be able to perform a variety of standard jazz/popular music repertoire. All instruments are welcome, and Jazz Band makes every attempt to accommodate students at their present level of ability. Students must complete two years of Jazz Band (Jazz Band IA & IB) in order to advance to Jazz Band II.

MUSICAL THEATRE REPERTOIRE I, II & III

Fall Semester Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: none

This course gives students the opportunity to perform music in a variety of musicals. Students will work to create a “rep book” that will consist of Broadway songs that they will be able to use for future auditions, and performances. They will work at building their repertoire with musical theatre songs pre-1965 and post-1965, and pop/rock songs – building off what college Musical Theatre auditions require. We will present a recital of these songs in December 2025. Concurrent enrollment in Choir or Chamber Choir is suggested. Open to all students of abilities/ranges.

MUSICAL THEATRE HISTORY: BROADWAY REFOCUSED

Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: none

How has the American Musical Theatre influenced social movements over the last hundred years? How has Broadway created or supported political statements/movements? What is the future of Broadway and how will it survive? This course will be a deep dive into the historical significance of shows like Oklahoma!, South Pacific, Chicago, Cabaret, RENT, and Hamilton that were on the forefront of change that included conversations about race, mixed marriages, gender, sexuality, AIDS-crisis, slavery, and immigrants. This course will give students an overview of musical theatre history but it will also connect to how musical theatre has influenced history for over a hundred years. There will be readings, discussions, individual and group projects.

BACKSTAGE THEATRE

Semester Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: none

This hands-on course immerses students in the behind-the-scenes world of theatrical production, with a strong focus on set construction and scenic painting. Students will learn how to safely use tools and materials to bring theatrical environments to life, contributing directly to York’s mainstage productions. Depending on the needs of the chosen show for the semester, students may also gain experience in prop design, lighting, and sound. Backstage Theatre emphasizes collaboration, creative problem-solving, and the practical skills that support live performance. No prior experience is required—just a willingness to build, paint, and help shape the visual world of a show.



ENGLISH

In York’s literature-based English courses, students learn to read critically, think logically, write clearly, and speak confidently. Courses feature diverse authors and texts so that students can fortify their understanding of themselves, others, and the universal human experience. Courses balance a foundation in vocabulary, grammar, and composition with close reading and analysis. Through rich discussions, students engage with peers in scholarly discourse. Toward the goal of preparation for college-level writing, we teach writing as a reflective, metacognitive process as students explore a variety of modes—poetry, short stories, literary analysis essays, research papers, and the personal essay. Peer evaluation and individual writing conferences with the instructor aid the development of authentic voice and style. York provides additional opportunities for creative expression and authentic publishing via *Ars Gratia Artis*, York’s Literary Magazine; Cafe Night open mic events; participation in regional Poetry Out Loud competitions; and hosting of visiting authors.

Requirements: In Grade 8, students enroll in English I for the full year. In Grades 9-12, English is required each year in order to receive a York diploma.

GRADE 8

ENGLISH I: WRITES OF PASSAGE

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: Grade 8

Literature is an adventure of discovery, and in English I, students will focus on stories that center self-discovery. Upbeat and energetic, this class approaches literature as an opportunity for enjoyable collaboration while building the skills of class discussion, deep reading, and writing for a variety of audiences. Students will explore works of various genres, with authors ranging from William Shakespeare to Harper Lee to Trevor Noah. Coursework reinforces students’ familiarity with basic elements of literary analysis and introduces them to more advanced analytical concepts, promoting strong critical thinking skills while bolstering English mechanics. Students expand their comfort with writing excellent paragraphs, advancing to the point of constructing coherent analytical and personal response essays. The goal of this course is to meet students where they are while exploring the frontiers of their abilities and moving them towards the academic expectations of a challenging high school English curriculum.

GRADES 9-12

ENGLISH II: THE CANON REIMAGINED

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: Grade 9

Ninth grade English takes students on an unconventional journey through literary history. From works as old as *The Iliad* to its 21st Century retellings, students will examine how ancient tales resonate in our contemporary world. They will explore speculative fiction as a throughline from Ursula K. Le Guin to N. K. Jemison, they will analyze in both graphic memoir and film what it means to come of age in wartime, and they will embody the politically paranoid populace of *Macbeth* in a Shakespeare acting workshop. Meanwhile, students strengthen their argumentative writing skills through literary analysis as well as a debate unit, compelling them to develop points and counterpoints using ethical frameworks. At the end of the course, students will have the opportunity to reimagine a classic text through any of the storytelling genres they will have encountered along the way.

ENGLISH III: NARRATE, ELEVATE, RESONATE

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: Grade 10

How can one person’s story impact us, inform us, change us, and stay with us? Students will explore the power of a story in English III, a literature-based course that invites students to think deeply and critically about literature while building their strengths of reading, writing, speaking, and analyzing. Students will read novels, essays, plays, short stories, and poetry, all with an eye towards how narrative is constructed and interpreted, and how stories build our understanding of the world and the human condition. Students also explore and develop their own story as they write and deliver their Sophomore Oration—a York tradition celebrated by our supportive community that bolsters confidence while offering a unique public-speaking experience. Within this focus on the power of narrative, students will continue to strengthen their skills as close readers, deep thinkers, perceptive writers, and articulate presenters. They will write frequently, formally and informally, through analytic and personal essays, journals, and response forums. They will also cultivate their abilities to build arguments and think cooperatively through frequent student-led discussions and small-group collaborations.

ENGLISH IV / ENGLISH IV-YAS: CRAFT AND CRITIQUE

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11

Prerequisites: For YAS: a grade of B+ or above in English III & recommendation from English III teacher

In English IV, students step into the world of college-level language arts by investigating the two central questions of literary study--Why do authors write? and What is the “art” of writing? Through close reading and analysis of wide-ranging works from authors like Brenda Peynado, Oscar Wilde, Clint Smith, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Carmen Maria Machado, students examine the choices writers make to shape meaning, develop voice, and move readers emotionally and intellectually. Over the year, students will sharpen their analytical thinking, speaking, and writing skills while learning about and exploring literary theory. These tools will help them approach texts through a variety of critical lenses, deepening understanding and interpretation. They will study novels, drama, short stories, poetry, film, fine art, and more to explore how authorial purpose, literary form, and cultural context intersect. Along the way, they will engage with a range of voices, experiences, and perspectives. Assessments include analytical essays, informal responses, discussions, and personal reflections. Students are expected to participate thoughtfully and revise their work with attention to feedback and clarity of thought. Supplementary readings, including literary criticism and contextual texts, will deepen interpretation and strengthen arguments. The ultimate goal of this course is to become confident, curious, and critical readers and writers-- individuals who find meaning in literature and art outside of the classroom and who use language with purpose and power.

Assignments and assessments in English IV-YAS can be longer and more challenging than those in regular English IV, as well as more frequent, including out-of-class readings, discussions, assignments, and projects. YAS students are expected to participate vibrantly and regularly in class discussions.

ENGLISH V

Seniors enroll in both semesters of English V. In the first semester all students enroll in English V: Composition, which is a writing-focused course taught using a critical literary lens to guide students' readings, discussions, and writing. The second semester focuses on genre, fiction-centered analysis, fulfilling the literature requirement of your senior year in English. Students are able to request one of three different options below. Students may request YAS placement, with the requirements being they have a grade of A- or above in English IV or B+ or above in English IV-YAS, as well as recommendations from previous English teachers, based on the following criteria: eagerness to learn/excel; commitment of time and effort; writing skills; and academic honesty.

ENGLISH V: COMPOSITION

Fall Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 12

In the first semester, all seniors take Composition, a course designed to develop more confident and skilled writers, stronger rhetorical analysts, and more proficient practitioners of the writing process. Early in the course, class time is devoted to personal reflection and the college essay, after which students move progressively outward in focus, from argumentation to synthesis to the research paper. Each of these scenarios presents a different context and audience as well as style that informs, persuades, and even entertains. Pulling from works by classic and contemporary public intellectuals to ground our readings and discussions, this course helps students to develop an authentic voice, and to find their place in public discourse as they look beyond high school.

ENGLISH V: ANATOMY OF THE GROTESQUE: EXAMINING THE DARK PHILOSOPHY OF HORROR

Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 12

The second semester focuses on genre, fiction-centered analysis, fulfilling the literature requirement of the senior year in English. The spooky, the creepy, the uncanny, and the unexplainable will be common threads through reading and writing in this course, as well as the inspiration for discussions, presentations, and creative projects. In some classes, students read short stories; in others, they write them. We use a variety of critical lenses to drive discussion of how authors develop fear and discomfort in their audience while simultaneously addressing social issues.

ENGLISH V: FOLKLORE AND FAKELORE

Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 12

For every Disney princess movie, for every round of Bloody Mary or tale of tortoise and the hare, millions of people have passed along a story without writing down a single word. In this 12th Grade English course, students examine works that existed first in an oral tradition: fairy tales from around the globe, indigenous North American mythology, and urban legends in the internet era. Students will also try their own hand at creative storytelling in a fiction workshop with a visiting author. Primary sources as well as critical texts will lead students to question the very meaning of authenticity—to ask, what separates “folk” from literature? How does digital virality mirror oral tradition? What recurring archetypes underlie the stories human beings tell across all time and space, and what might this reveal to us about who we are, who we’ve always been?

ENGLISH V: THE BAD PLACE: DELVING INTO DYSTOPIAN, SPECULATIVE, & POST-APOCALYPTIC NARRATIVES

Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 12

The second semester focuses on genre, fiction-centered analysis, fulfilling the literature requirement of the senior year in English. The inverse of the “good world” of eutopia, dystopian literature explores how the social and political choices made by individuals and cultures create what is an ultimately nightmarish world; these narratives serve as criticism against real life injustice and tyranny. In this course, students engage with analyzing fiction as well as current events, civics, and the news to better understand the patterns and themes of dystopian storytelling that are so compelling to modern audiences. Students spend time reading, discussing, critiquing, and interpreting these events and narratives as well as engaging in creative writing of their own.



HISTORY

The History Department wants students to gain insight into the connection between significant historical events and today’s complex world. Our courses develop each student’s appreciation for and understanding of the past and its impact on the present by engaging students in discussions, debates, simulations, primary and secondary sources, and research projects. Particular emphasis is placed on historical thinking skills, analysis, and interpretation. Innovative assignments challenge students to recreate historical eras through a variety of cooperative projects.

Requirements: In Grade 8, students enroll in the year-long civilizations course. In Grades 9-12, three years are required for graduation: Modern World History (Grade 9), US History (Grade 10), and two semester-long electives during Grades 11 and 12.

GRADE 8

THE RISE, TRANSFORMATION, AND LEGACY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: 8

This course tackles tough questions: What is a civilization and what can we learn from different civilizations? How do societies organize, unify, and share beliefs? What are the Connections between the long-distance past and the present? Beginning with the decline of the Roman Empire and the rise of feudalism, students explore medieval societies through project-based learning, simulations, debates, and primary document analysis. The course compares European development with the Golden Age of Islam, China, India, Mali, and the Americas, examining their remarkable achievements. Students then investigate the revolutionary transitions from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance, Reformation, Age of Exploration, and Scientific Revolution, culminating in debates about influential rulers of this era. Throughout, students learn to draw connections between past and present, using historical insights to consider where current global trends might lead.

GRADES 9-12

MODERN WORLD HISTORY

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: 9

This course offers students opportunities to gain insight into the connection between significant historical events and today’s complex world by using primary sources and student-centered inquiry projects. Particular emphasis is placed on historical analysis and interpretation, using multiple historical perspectives to build their understanding of events. Students explore the revolutionary forces that have shaped our modern world, beginning with the French Revolution and its global impact, including uprisings in Haiti and the Americas. The curriculum examines the Industrial Revolution, Victorian working conditions, and the expansion of voting rights, before analyzing how both World Wars fundamentally altered societies worldwide. Students will study the Communist revolutions in Russia and China and their evolution to the present day, alongside the rise of fascism in Italy, Spain, Germany, and Japan. Throughout, the course highlights positive role models who have made meaningful differences in challenging historical contexts, inspiring students to connect the past with contemporary global issues.

U.S. HISTORY / U.S. HISTORY - YAS

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: 10

Prerequisites: For YAS: a grade of A- or above in Modern World History + recommendation from current history teacher.

This course develops a balanced and comprehensive understanding of United States history, addressing political, economic, social, and cultural U.S. History from the pre-Columbian period to the present. Beginning with a deep inquiry-based analysis of indigenous cultures, the class progresses through the United States’ political and social development as a colony, state, empire, and world power. Using discussion-based and inquiry-based approaches, the course provides students with the opportunity to expand their understanding of U.S. history. Students strengthen their historical thinking skills through practice in all forms of student literacy – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – and advancement of skills in note taking, research and analysis of primary and secondary sources, analytical writing, and public speaking.

In US History-YAS, students are offered opportunities to broaden and enrich their academic experience by way of additional readings and activities and more extensive projects and assessments. US History-YAS is designed for students who have a strong interest in history, and who are ready and willing to do the work necessary to dig deeply into the material.

ROMAN HISTORY

Fall Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 11, 12

This course tackles three primary questions about the over 2000 years of Roman history: What did Rome achieve? How did (and do) representative governments rise and fall? How did Rome cope with evolving crises for so long? This semester-long course will introduce students to major Roman historical events and crises: the rise and fall of the Republic, the Civil Wars, the establishment of empire and general peace, and the emergence of crises from the third to the fifth centuries and the empire’s response. Students will be expected to closely analyze and interpret primary sources and complete a research paper addressing one of the primary questions of the course.

DEBATE

Fall Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Debate has long been the foundation of a healthy democracy. Yet, when public discourse is taken over by talking heads shouting talking points, we lose the ability to resolve controversy. In a debate round, the formal presentation of two sides of a topic is adjudicated by common sense citizens with shared values. Good debaters research all facets of a topic, collaborate effectively with teammates, present their ideas clearly and compellingly, think on the spot, and (perhaps most importantly) listen to their opponents. In this course, students will learn all these skills while covering a variety of contemporary topics, including policing in the 21st Century, environmental policy, and our nation’s involvement in foreign affairs. This course will prepare students to distinguish between solid and spurious arguments, making them keen competitors at the podium as well as informed citizens and practitioners of healthy discourse.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Fall Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 11, 12

This course is a one-semester introduction to the foundations, institutions, and processes of the government of the United States and its political systems. Students can expect to delve into the Constitution and its amendments, landmark supreme court cases, as well as current events to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of governance and politics at the local, state, and federal levels. Special attention will be given to local, state, and federal elections if they happen to occur during the semester this course is run.

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Fall & Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 11, 12

Introduction to Psychology is a survey course that aims to introduce the major content areas of the field of Psychology. The course covers theories, basic research methodologies, and current research in various subject areas. Additionally, students are challenged to articulate their understanding of foundational concepts and relate them to their own personal experiences. Upon completion of the course, students can expect to have an introductory understanding of key areas within psychology, including the historical origins of various psychology traditions, the complexities of consciousness, processes of learning and information processing, the intricacies of motivation and emotions, stages of human development, personality theories, the interplay between stress and health, therapeutic approaches, and psychopathology.

ASIAN HISTORY: CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY IN ASIA

Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 11, 12

This course will look at the development, evolution, and challenges for democracies across Asia. Themes tackled will include defining and maintaining independence, challenges of integrating diverse and unique cultures, the impact of external forces and influences on maintaining democracy, governmental and non-governmental responses to internal and external crises. The course will focus on a selection of the following countries, depending on current events and student interest: India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Turkey, Israel, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Nepal and Bhutan, Hong Kong. The culminating project will result in a self-published class magazine.

WORLD RELIGIONS

Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 11, 12

What is religion? What is spirituality? How do religious traditions impact society? Throughout this course, students can expect to explore many of the world’s religious religions and engage with the big questions that they seek to ask and answer. The religious traditions explored throughout the term are Indigenous, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese philosophical traditions. Through respectful engagement, we will learn to better understand the various functions of religion and look at how specific belief systems cultivate differing worldviews and cultures. By seeking to understand the views and beliefs of billions of religious practitioners, this course aims to promote compassion, religious literacy, and respect for humankind. Students will primarily do this work by engaging in careful reading and discussion of the world’s scriptures and through taking in a wide variety of perspectives from religious leaders, practitioners, and academic authorities.

ECONOMICS

Semester Course; 0.5 credit (not offered in the 2025-26 academic year)
Open to: 11, 12

This course acts as an introduction to microeconomics. The course covers individual and business economic activities, economic decision-making, supply and demand, consumer and production theories, competition, unemployment and labor. A key component of this course is the “start-up” project. Students will work in groups to start a manufacturing business, including everything from writing the business plan, sourcing the raw materials, manufacturing, advertising, and selling the final product to the York community.

REEL AMERICA: 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH FILM

Fall & Spring Semester Course; 0.5 credit
Open to: 11, 12

This course is a comprehensive history of America from 1920-1980, focusing on domestic politics, American culture, and societal shifts. Film will be used as the primary texts in this course, some contemporary with the era they portray, others modern and reflective in nature. Students will practice both cinematic interpretation and historical literacy. Two major assignments offer some agency for students to display their understanding, but focus on historical context and cross-textual analysis.

LEADERSHIP

FOUNDATIONS IN LEADERSHIP

Semester Course, 0.5 credit
Required: 9

York’s curriculum in Academic Leadership begins with the 9th grade course, “Foundations in Leadership.” This class is designed to give 9th graders a strong, research-based foundation in the theories and principles of leadership. Students will engage with the most important understanding of leadership: Leadership isn’t a position, but a set of behaviors that can be observed, learned, and mastered. By examining the research behind these behaviors, aspiring leaders will consider how to best build the habits that lead to informed, effective, ethical, and intentional leadership. The course will combine elements of literary analysis, philosophy, ethics, behavioral science, and social sciences, allowing students to explore leadership through a multitude of lenses, and will offer regular opportunities to put their learning into practice through student-led discussions and activities.



MATHEMATICS

We recognize that mathematics is a language shared by all civilizations and all populations regardless of culture, religion, or gender, and our programs are designed to improve every student’s quantitative literacy. We aim to foster strong critical thinking and mathematical reasoning in our students, with the goal of teaching them to view the world through a mathematical lens.

Requirements: In Grades 9-12, three years of math, through the 11th grade and including Algebra II, are required for a York diploma. York’s requirement meets University of California admissions requirements, which include a provision that students must complete a geometry course. Any student who wishes to take a credit math course over the summer must receive permission from the Math Department Chair and the Assistant Head of School.

ALGEBRA I

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 8, 9, 10

Algebra is the base upon which nearly all of mathematics is built; it is a leap from arithmetic to abstract, defining the rules for the study of mathematical symbols and how to manipulate them. Taken seriously, this is every student’s first foray into quantitative thinking. Students will work to develop fluency in the language and application of algebraic definitions and procedures, using those skills to solve for unknowns in increasingly complex equations. Emphasis is placed on developing student understanding of linear relationships and their applications to the real world.

GEOMETRY

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 8, 9, 10, 11

Prerequisites: A grade of C or above in Algebra I

Geometry is the study of shape and helps to develop deductive reasoning. The subject appeals to visual thinkers who might otherwise cringe at its logic, though many students love geometry precisely because it is so logical. Students learn important definitions, postulates, and theorems connected with Euclidean geometry and apply them to solve geometrical application problems. A balance is sought between an intuitive understanding of what is true, and the need for a thorough, careful, deductive reasoning about one’s perceptions. Students learn how to order their arguments in clear, precise language when writing their proofs of geometry theorems. Students will also develop spatial skills in two and three dimensions, and review their algebra skills throughout the course. Students work on group projects and utilize computer exploration.

ALGEBRA II

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Geometry

Students will study a variety of different functions (such as quadratic, exponential, rational, trigonometric, etc.) learning their properties and graphical behavior. They’ll discover how each function relates to practical applications, putting theory into practice via math labs. Although graphing calculators are incorporated to enhance the curriculum, the emphasis remains on the thought process and on understanding mathematical concepts.

PRE-CALCULUS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of C or above in Algebra II

This course combines advanced Algebra II skills with trigonometry, data analysis, vectors, and an introduction to Calculus. In addition to strengthening Algebra II skills and problem-solving strategies, students learn to apply concepts to real-world problems through mathematical modeling. While the emphasis is on honing algebraic and graphical analysis skills, the course makes extensive use of the graphing calculator. Many of the same topics will be covered as in the Pre-calculus Honors class, but not as rigorously and at a different pace.

PRE-CALCULUS HONORS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Algebra II & recommendation from current math teacher

This course covers Pre-Calculus topics in greater depth, with a broader scope, and includes challenging enrichment topics. Students will learn how to describe both new and already familiar functions verbally, algebraically, graphically, and numerically. Students also will learn how to transform these functions in order to model real-world data. In addition, students become familiar with other coordinate systems and with the use of vectors to model physical quantities. Experience with proofs will strengthen students’ ability to make conjectures, construct logical arguments, and justify their reasoning. Pre-calculus Honors is intended for students who have a strong interest and aptitude for math, and who are ready, willing, and able to do the work necessary to tackle demanding problems at an accelerated pace.

CALCULUS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Pre-Calculus & recommendation from current math teacher

This course introduces students to the basic concepts of differential and integral calculus. It is roughly equivalent to one semester of college calculus. Although this course is not aimed at preparing students for the AP exam in Calculus AB, the topics covered will be very similar, but the assignments are shorter and the tests are less rigorous than in Calculus AB.

AP CALCULUS AB

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Pre-Calculus Honors; recommendation from current math teacher

Students will master the basic topics of differential and integral calculus, equivalent to one semester of college calculus. Besides learning a variety of differentiation and integration techniques, students will also gain a deep, conceptual understanding of these topics. Clear mathematical statements demonstrating this conceptual knowledge will be required, as students prepare for the AP exam in Calculus AB. All students enrolled in the course are expected to take the AP exam.

AP CALCULUS BC

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in AP Calculus AB & recommendation from current math teacher

Students will continue their understanding of the mathematical contexts and concepts within calculus, namely the three big ideas of limits, derivatives, and integrals, with the addition of a fourth: series. The depth and breadth is equivalent to a second year of college-level calculus. The course will include all of the concepts and techniques that appear on the AP Calculus BC exam, and all students enrolled in the course will be expected to take this exam in May.

AP STATISTICS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Algebra II & recommendation from current math teacher

Statistics introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Examples are drawn from applications in the natural and social sciences. Students collaborate with their classmates to learn statistics by doing statistics via in-class activities and simulations, computer labs, and projects. Students will master four broad conceptual themes: (1) Exploring Data (analysis of data through the use of graphical and numerical techniques to study patterns and departures from patterns); (2) Sampling and Experimentation (planning and conducting a study); (3) Anticipating Patterns (exploring random phenomena using probability and simulation for anticipating what the distribution of data should look like under a given model); (4) Statistical Inference (estimating population parameters and testing hypotheses). The course includes the material that appears on the AP Statistics exam, and all students are expected to take this exam in May.

STATISTICS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Algebra II & recommendation from current math teacher

This course introduces students to the basic concepts and techniques of statistics and is roughly equivalent to one semester of college statistics. Although this course is not aimed at preparing students for the AP Statistics exam, the topics covered will be very similar, but the assignments are shorter, and the tests are less rigorous than in AP Statistics. Instead of taking the AP Exam, students will complete a capstone project report and presentation.

MATH MODELING (offered in alternating years; will be offered in 2025-26)

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Pre-Calculus Honors & recommendation from current math teacher

The overall goal of this course is to enable students to build mathematical models of real-world systems, analyze them, and make predictions about the behavior of these systems. A variety of modeling techniques will be discussed with examples taken from physics, biology, chemistry, economics, social sciences, and other fields. Mathematical modeling uses graphical, numerical, symbolic, and other techniques to describe and explore real-world data and phenomena. Emphasis is on the use of elementary functions to investigate and analyze applied problems and questions, on the use of appropriate supporting technology (e.g., Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets, Python, and other software or programming languages), and on the effective communication of quantitative concepts and results through relevant projects and presentations. This course is not intended to be a prerequisite for Calculus, though it will introduce and help students understand the basic topics of differential and integral calculus through application. Likewise, the class can be a math elective for students seeking an additional math class, for those hoping to solidify math concepts through modeling applications, or both.



SCIENCE

The York science curriculum helps students develop critical thinking skills grounded in a broad knowledge of the major concepts of science and the scientific method. Students learn to understand and interpret natural phenomena through extensive laboratory work, class discussions, field trips, guest lectures, and experimental research projects.

All students are required to take Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and one other science course, so that a basic competence is developed across the range of natural phenomena. Secondary elective courses, some at the AP level, are offered in all three areas. Students with special interests in science have many opportunities to further develop their general knowledge and their research skills in preparation for college majors in science. Other significant features of the science curriculum include the following:

- York’s own Science Fair, judged by local scientists, which allows students to further understand the scientific method;
- Our “green” science building, which helps students to achieve a sense of global awareness and responsibility;
- The Outdoor Lab and Design Shop, where students can easily conduct field work to advance their understanding of science.

Requirements: In Grade 8, students enroll in Science 8 for the full year. In Grades 9-12, three years of science are required for graduation: Biology (taken in 9th grade), Chemistry or Physics, and one other science course.

GRADE 8

SCIENCE 8

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: 8

The goal of this course is twofold. First is to give the students a conceptual overview of the major topics in physical science. Second is to teach the scientific method and help students develop the ability to use this tool as a logical approach to problem solving. Labs, activities, and projects are used to help students become scientists-in-training, simultaneously helping to develop proficiency with making measurements and fostering critical thinking in the analysis of data. Students learn the principles and connections between physics, chemistry, and earth science, while taking a journey from the outer reaches of space to the inner workings of atoms and molecules.

GRADES 9-12

BIOLOGY

Year Course; 1 credit

Required: 9

With scientists unraveling the mysteries of life faster than ever before, this introductory survey course provides a foundation for students to understand the living world around them. It covers introductory biological principles, including chemistry of life, cellular structure and function, heredity and molecular genetics, evolution, ecology, and classification. Students are encouraged to approach science both critically and with curiosity, utilizing lectures, discussion, readings, and a significant laboratory component. In addition, all students complete an individual research project based on the scientific method, enabling them to make their own science connections to the real world. Also, field work and environmental studies can be conducted easily in the 100-acre York Outdoor Laboratory.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Biology

This course introduces students to a variety of environmental issues both locally and globally. The emphasis is on solutions for living sustainably. Issues are considered from many perspectives to help students realize it takes compromise and understanding from many groups to solve today’s environmental problems. The students use critical thinking skills and examine the “big picture.” Field trips to local areas of interest, work in the field, and laboratory exercises help to reinforce ideas discussed in class. Field research and environmental studies can be conducted easily in the 100-acre York Outdoor Lab.

ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY (offered in alternating years; will not be offered in 2025-26)

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Biology

Students are introduced to the basic concepts of anatomy and physiology, with an emphasis on humans, while using the comparative anatomy approach to show relationships between all vertebrates. Approximately 40% of class time is devoted to laboratory activities which include dissection, monitoring various physiological parameters and hands-on study of 3-D models. Through lectures, discussions, and labs, students develop a strong sense of how structure and function are related.

MARINE BIOLOGY & OCEANOGRAPHY (offered in alternating years; will be offered in 2025-26)

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Biology

This course introduces students to the basic concepts of oceanography, marine ecology, marine zoology, and marine botany. Field trips to local areas of interest and laboratory exercises give students an appreciation for and knowledge of the dynamics of the marine ecosystem both locally and globally. Laboratory investigations include hands-on dissections, scientific illustration and work with live specimens.

CHEMISTRY

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Biology; completion of/concurrent enrollment in Algebra II

This course takes a look at the world on the atomic level. Students will gain an appreciation for the diversity and complexity of everyday chemical substances. They will be able to apply atomic theory to explain why certain elements or compounds react under certain conditions. They will be able to describe these reactions using appropriate nomenclature, symbols and chemical quantities. The understanding of theoretical concepts is reinforced during lab activities. Students will use a variety of laboratory techniques to collect data and apply critical thinking skills to analyze the results.

PHYSICS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Biology; Algebra II

This is a foundational course for science and engineering with an evolving emphasis on project-based learning of introductory applied physics. Applied physics is at the intersection of physics and engineering. Physicists build to understand; engineers understand to build. In this course students are doing both. Through the curation of various experiences, the goal is to help students gain a better understanding of how science applies to the real world and develop skills that will be useful in their future career. The course is designed to encourage and promote self-directed study, exploration of physics in the context of real-world applications, improved collaborative and communication skills in team-driven activities, and the development of research skills by working on projects. The subject areas covered by this course include kinematics, momentum, force, work and energy, with extensions into rotational kinematics, angular momentum, gravitation, and oscillation and waves. It is equivalent to a standard introductory algebra-based physics course.

AP BIOLOGY

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Biology and Chemistry & recommendation from current science teacher

This course is designed to be the equivalent of a college introductory biology course taken by biology majors during their first year. The textbook, reading assignments, writing assignments, and written examinations are equivalent to those found in major college biology programs. Lectures, discussions, chapter study questions, laboratory investigations, and written examinations are used for instruction and student evaluation. Students become extraordinarily adept at tying various concepts together, and in the world of modern biology, this is definitely a skill necessary for success. The course will include the material that will appear on the AP Biology exam, and all students enrolled in the course will be expected to take this exam in May.

AP CHEMISTRY

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Chemistry & recommendation from current science teacher

This course is designed to build on the body of knowledge gained in the first year Chemistry course. Content will be equivalent to an introductory college level course and so the lectures, problem sets and lab activities are designed to replicate this. Topics covered include stoichiometry, aqueous reactions, electronic structure, phases of matter, chemical bonding, thermodynamics, kinetics, electrochemistry, equilibrium and acids and bases. These are the concepts that will appear on the AP Chemistry exam which students will be expected to take at the end of the course. In addition students will be introduced to a variety of essential lab techniques including titration analysis and spectrophotometry. All assignments and hands-on activities are designed to develop strong data analysis, critical thinking and creative problem solving skills.

AP PHYSICS C: MECHANICS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Physics; completion of/concurrent enrollment in a calculus course; recommendation from current science teacher

This calculus-based course builds on the body of knowledge gained in the first-year Physics course. Whether students are headed into science, engineering, or any field that values critical thinking, this course will sharpen their ability to analyze, strategize, and solve problems with rigor and creativity. Through hands-on experiments, real-world applications, and a wide range of conceptual and quantitative problems, students will learn how to model physical systems, identify key variables, and apply fundamental principles to uncover solutions. Emphasizing reasoning over memorization, the course encourages flexible thinking, collaboration, and multiple solution paths, helping students become more confident and adaptable problem solvers. The course includes the material that appears on the AP Physics C: Mechanics exam, and all students are expected to take this exam in May.



TECHNOLOGY

The curriculum of the Technology Department of York is designed to foster problem solving abilities, stimulate intellectual curiosity about technology, and prepare students to be effective content creators. Objectives for all courses offered include fostering procedural proficiency when working with computers, discerning what tools are apt for a given task, and gaining familiarity with ethical issues surrounding technology.

York's Design Shop is a teaching and learning space dedicated to hands-on, active learning, creativity, and innovation, where students access space for tinkering, making, fabricating, and building across subject areas and grade levels and in interdisciplinary STEAM experiences. The Design Shop supports robust learning opportunities that ensure York students will be future-ready for the exciting challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

CODE+DESIGN (C+D)

Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: none

C+D is a hands-on, project-based, service-learning course designed to expose students to general computing methodology necessary for all citizens in the 21st century. Rather than focus on a particular language, students will explore multiple platforms while designing and programming computer applications, mobile applications, websites, robots, and custom-built machines. Students will also work on a project that applies technology to serve a real-world audience (such as building exhibits to install at local museums).

TECHNOLOGICAL ENTREPRENEURIALISM

Semester Course; 0.5 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Code+Design

Technological Entrepreneurialism is a project-based course for students who have successfully completed the Code+Design course and would like to continue their project work independently. Students are charged with incubating and launching a project beginning with a proposal that addresses the purpose and audience for the project. Students follow the design-thinking process and document their work. Students present their final project to their audience at the end of the course. The Design Shop is available for students to collaborate, prototype, test, and deliver their work.

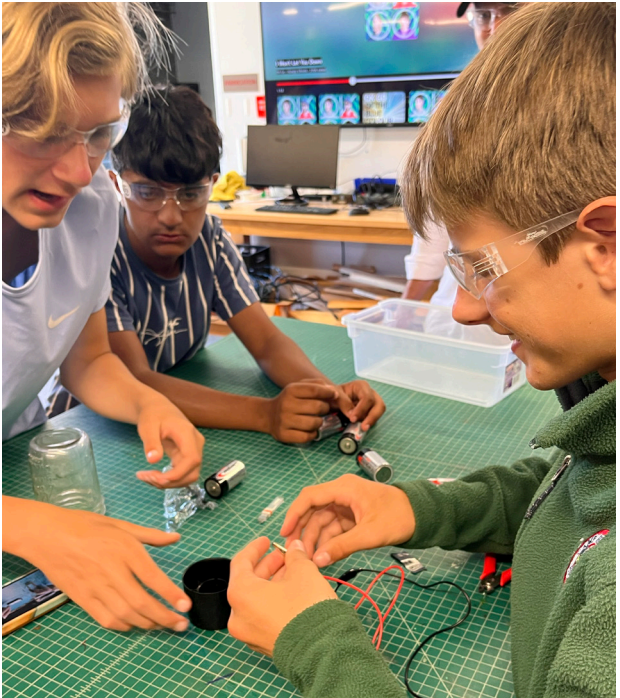
AP COMPUTER SCIENCE A

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: Permission from Director of Technology & Innovation

The AP Computer Science A course is an online course taught asynchronously through One Schoolhouse. This course introduces the key concepts of programming in Java. The analytical, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills that students develop in this course transfer to programming in other languages as well. The course is designed with the idea that programming should be fun, engaging, and intuitive. Students will learn to apply the main principles of object-oriented software design and programming using classes and objects, constructors, methods, instance and static variables, inheritance, class hierarchies, and polymorphism. Students work creatively and collaboratively with their classmates to discuss ethical and social issues relating to the use of technology, and develop a solid foundation from which to launch into a wide range of computer science areas. Students will take the AP Computer Science A exam in May.



WORLD LANGUAGES

York’s World Languages programs develop communicators, linguists, and aficionados of world cultures both past and present. We value training students to understand how languages work but emphasize language as a communicative tool in performing interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal tasks. Such skills are not, however, gained in a vacuum of language study. To communicate effectively, our students also gain insight into and appreciation for the cultures of the people who speak Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. A York World Language graduate will learn to communicate in cultures that offer surprising differences and share striking similarities to their own cultures.

The York World Language requirement allows students to choose among Mandarin Chinese or Spanish and complete three years in Grades 9-12, including at least the third level of one of these languages. By means of our interactive programs, students are immersed in the language and are engaged in using it in meaningful, authentic real-world contexts, where grammar and vocabulary are acquired with the goal of achieving proficiency in communication.

Requirements: In Grades 9-12, students are required to complete three years of a world language, either Mandarin Chinese or Spanish, through at least level III of that language.

MANDARIN CHINESE

MANDARIN I

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: none

Mandarin I introduces the fundamentals of Mandarin Chinese by exploring familiar topics such as self, family, hobbies, school, and sports. Students will develop basic skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing through interactive classroom activities, with a strong focus on establishing a solid foundation in Mandarin tones and Chinese characters. While students will be introduced to Chinese keyboarding using pinyin, writing simplified characters legibly will be expected throughout the year. The course also offers insights into culturally significant topics such as Chinese names and family dynamics.

MANDARIN II

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Mandarin I

Mandarin II builds on foundational language skills through engaging games and interactive communicative tasks set in real-world contexts. Students will learn to express and inquire about basic needs and feelings, agree or disagree, state opinions with supporting reasons, and compare and contrast different ideas. A strong emphasis is placed on developing Chinese orthographic awareness through the systematic acquisition of recurring character components. Additionally, students will explore Chinese culture in depth, covering topics such as holiday and birthday celebrations, traditional foods and their symbolism, and traditional Chinese musical instruments.

MANDARIN III / MANDARIN III HONORS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Mandarin II; For Mandarin III Honors: a grade of B+ or above in Mandarin II & recommendation from Mandarin II teacher

Mandarin III builds on the core skills acquired in previous levels, further enhancing students’ interactional competence through communicative activities and multimedia resources. As their linguistic repertoire expands, students will gain greater ability to engage in everyday conversations, express needs and opinions, discuss personal interests, and complete paragraph-length writing assignments. The course also incorporates in-depth cultural discussions on various aspects of student life in China, encouraging students to compare and contrast these experiences with their own, on topics such as health and fitness, academic support, extracurricular activities, and strategies for learning Chinese beyond the classroom.

While Mandarin III Honors covers linguistic and cultural topics in greater depth, its scope is also much broader and includes numerous abstract and challenging enrichment topics. As a result, Mandarin III Honors is intended for students who have a strong interest and aptitude for language learning, and who are ready, willing, and able to do the work necessary to tackle demanding communicative tasks at an accelerated pace.

MANDARIN IV / MANDARIN IV - YAS

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 11, 12

Prerequisites: Mandarin III; For Mandarin IV-YAS: a grade of B+ or above in Mandarin III or B or above in Mandarin III Honors & recommendation from Mandarin III teacher

Mandarin IV aims to enhance students’ ability to communicate spontaneously and effectively in real-world situations, with a focus on cultural appropriateness. Students will expand their vocabulary and discourse strategies, allowing them to articulate opinions on a wide range of topics, including traditional performing arts, the impact of technology on contemporary Chinese society, the significance of renowned historic sites, and the diverse cultures of ethnic minorities in China. Through interactive learning activities, guided discussions, and collaborative projects, students will further develop their Mandarin fluency while gaining a deeper understanding of both Chinese culture and their own.

While Mandarin IV-YAS covers linguistic and cultural topics in greater depth, its scope is also much broader and includes numerous abstract and challenging enrichment topics. As a result, Mandarin IV-YAS is intended for students who have a strong interest and aptitude for language learning, and who are ready, willing, and able to do the work necessary to tackle demanding communicative tasks at an accelerated pace.

MANDARIN V

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 12

Prerequisites: A grade of B or above in Mandarin IV & recommendation from Mandarin IV teacher

Mandarin V is aimed to enhance students’ communicative competence and prepare them to function more confidently in the Mandarin-speaking world. The course covers various social, political, and environmental topics, and is supplemented with short stories, news, videos, films, and other authentic materials to help students gain a better understanding of colloquial and idiomatic expressions. They will further strengthen communication and language learning strategies, such as inferring meaning through sociocultural context or linguistic features. Through discussions, presentations, and other cooperative learning activities, students will have multiple opportunities to apply their language skills with greater fluency and accuracy.

SPANISH

SPANISH I

Year Course; 1 credit
Open to: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: none

Spanish I offers an immersive, input-rich approach to language learning, focusing on both language acquisition and cultural understanding. Using the SOMOS curriculum and the TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) method, students are introduced to Spanish in a way that emphasizes communication from Day 1. Using comprehension-based instruction, this course teaches language and culture simultaneously, allowing students to develop their proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing while gaining a deep appreciation for the diverse cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. By the end of the course, students will have the tools to communicate confidently in Spanish and a rich understanding of the cultures that shape the language. The proficiency goal for students to achieve by the end of the year is Novice High.

SPANISH II

Year Course; 1 credit
Open to: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: Spanish I

Spanish II offers an immersive, input-rich approach that emphasizes both language acquisition and cultural exploration. Using the SOMOS curriculum and the TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) method, students deepen their understanding of Spanish while expanding their ability to communicate more effectively. With a solid grasp of basic vocabulary and structures, students in this course are ready to tackle more complex themes and concepts affecting the Spanish-speaking world. Students will engage with a variety of topics, allowing them to express opinions, explore cultural issues, and navigate more advanced conversations. A key component of Spanish II is the introduction of reading novels in Spanish, which enhances comprehension skills and allows students to see language in context. This also provides further opportunities to develop cultural insight by reading authentic, culturally relevant literature. By the end of the course, students will have strengthened their abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, moving toward a higher level of proficiency. With a deeper appreciation of Spanish language and culture, students will be able to engage more confidently in real-world conversations and explore the richness of the Spanish-speaking world on a broader scale. The proficiency goal for students to achieve by the end of the year is Intermediate Low.

SPANISH III

Year Course; 1 credit
Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12
Prerequisites: Spanish II

Spanish III is an intermediate-level course conducted predominantly in Spanish (95%), designed to enhance proficiency across interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication modes within a blended-level setting. The course fosters mastery of vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and communication skills, while offering extensive exploration of Spanish and Hispanic cultures through history, literature, art, music, and contemporary events. Students delve into the interplay between language and society, addressing cultural themes such as race, social justice, migration, and globalization. The course also examines the impact of region, social status, and ethnicity on language use, exploring language variation and change. Through a content and task-based approach, students engage with primary sources from literature, history, politics, art, and media, refining their written and oral skills through discussions, compositions, presentations, and research projects in Spanish. The proficiency goal is for students to achieve an Intermediate Low/Mid level by the end of the year, equipping them for meaningful encounters with Spanish-speaking cultures in various contexts.

SPANISH III HONORS

Year Course; 1 credit
Open to: 9, 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Spanish II; A grade of B+ or above in Spanish II & recommendation from Spanish II teacher
Spanish III Honors is a high intermediate-level course conducted predominantly in Spanish (95%), designed to challenge students with a deeper engagement in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication modes. The course fosters advanced proficiency in vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and communication skills, while providing an in-depth exploration of Spanish and Hispanic cultures through history, literature, art, music, and contemporary events. Students delve into the intricate interplay between language and society, critically examining cultural themes such as race, social justice, migration, and globalization. The course also explores the impact of region, social status, and ethnicity on language use, with a focus on language variation and change.

Spanish III Honors is distinguished by its rigorous assignments and elevated performance expectations, requiring students to engage more intensively with primary sources from literature, history, politics, art, and media. Written and oral skills are honed through demanding discussions, compositions, presentations, and research projects, all conducted in Spanish. The proficiency goal for the year is to achieve an Intermediate Mid level, equipping students with the linguistic and cultural competence necessary for meaningful encounters with Spanish-speaking communities in diverse contexts.

SPANISH IV / SPANISH IV-YAS

Year Course; 1 credit
Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Spanish III; For Spanish IV-YAS: a grade of B+ or above in Spanish III or B or above in Spanish III Honors & recommendation from Spanish III teacher

This is an intermediate/advanced, communicative course based on a series of documentaries about the Spanish-speaking world. The four fundamental skills of reading, writing, speaking and aural comprehension are developed with a balanced approach. This course is based on the curriculum laid out in the textbook El cine documental. The Spanish IV curriculum reviews and elaborates upon various grammatical structures from previous years, and offers multiple opportunities to apply them in written and verbal exchanges. By the end of Spanish IV, students will be able to write and talk about various social, political, historical, and cultural topics and present their points of view in the target language.

While Spanish IV-YAS covers linguistic and cultural topics in greater depth, its scope is also much broader and includes numerous abstract and challenging enrichment topics. As a result, Spanish IV-YAS is intended for students who have a strong interest and aptitude for language learning, and who are ready, willing, and able to do the work necessary to tackle demanding communication tasks at an accelerated pace.

ADVANCED SPANISH

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Spanish III; a grade of B or above in current Spanish class; recommendation from current Spanish teacher

The Spanish Seminar rotation (A, B, and C) offers advanced Spanish learners the opportunity to explore thematic content in-depth through literature, film, cultural studies, and sociolinguistics. Designed for advanced Spanish students, each year-long seminar focuses on a distinct theme. Seminar A: Lengua, cultura y sociedad a través de la literatura, cine y teatro investigates cultural identity and historical legacies in Latin America through a project-based curriculum. Seminar B: Conflictos personales y relacionales examines psychological, social, and emotional dynamics of identity and relationships across cultures. Seminar C: Sociolingüística hispánica provides students with a comprehensive introduction to the diversity and variation of the Spanish language, grounded in linguistic theory and sociocultural analysis. Each seminar emphasizes interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication while fostering learner agency, creativity, and academic inquiry. Themes rotate yearly. Students may take one or more seminars in any order.

AP SPANISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE

Year Course; 1 credit

Open to: 10, 11, 12

Prerequisites: Spanish III; a grade of B or above in current Spanish class; recommendation from current Spanish teacher

The AP Spanish Language and Culture course focuses on effective communication, emphasizing the ability to understand and be understood in real-world situations. Students develop interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills through meaningful interactions, incorporating vocabulary, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. While grammatical accuracy is important, the course prioritizes communication over rote memorization of rules.

Students will explore Spanish-speaking cultures in both contemporary and historical contexts, gaining a deeper appreciation for cultural products (such as literature, music, laws, and institutions), practices (social customs and traditions), and perspectives (values, attitudes, and beliefs). The course is structured around six key themes: families and communities, personal and public identities, beauty and aesthetics, science and technology, contemporary life, and global challenges. At the end of the course, students will take the AP exam, providing an opportunity to earn college credit.



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