

Upper School Profile 2020–21

School

Since 1967, the Nueva School has delivered an innovative, award-winning learning experience designed to meet the needs of academically gifted learners.

Over the past 50 years we have become internationally recognized for our unique curricular approach, which inspires the passions, purpose, and potential in each student while igniting a lifelong love of learning.

Nueva's Upper School, launched in 2013, is a re-imagination of high school. In many ways more like a university than a traditional high school, Nueva offers broad-based interdisciplinary studies coupled with deep explorations into specific areas of interest.

Nueva is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is a member of the California Association of Independent Schools.

Students

Nueva attracts inquisitive, high-performing students from the greater San Francisco Bay Area who have been drawn to the possibilities and challenges of a young, innovative high school.

These socially minded intellectual entrepreneurs, researchers, and artists — a senior class of 98 students who possess a high degree of agency and self-direction — enjoy hard problems, risk-taking, and peer-to-peer learning.

Advanced Curriculum

At the heart of Nueva's program is an advanced, interdisciplinary curriculum with significant emphasis on self-directed learning, collaboration, and primary research. A typical student course load is 7–8 classes per semester. Seniors typically take 7 classes.

In scope and depth, all courses offered range from college preparatory to college-level. **The majority of core courses meet or exceed the rigor of Advanced Placement courses; Nueva does not designate Honors or AP courses.**

The academic program builds a robust foundation in the major disciplines, supports deep inquiry into topics of individual interest, and provides explicit instruction in methods of thinking and reasoning. Advanced electives and independent courses of study allow students to move at an accelerated pace in the directions they choose.

Faculty

Nearly 80% of our upper school faculty hold advanced degrees. Many have taught at the university level and have been recognized by local, state, and national organizations for leadership, excellence, and innovation in teaching.



Facts and Figures

Class of 2021 enrollment	98
Upper School enrollment	437
Student-to-faculty ratio	5:1
Average class size	14
Students of color	57%
Students receiving financial aid	21%
Admitted to four-year colleges	100%



National Merit

Class of 2020	
Semifinalists	12
Commended	28
Hispanic Scholar	1
Total	41
Total % of class	54%



Test Scores

Class of 2020		
	mean	mid 50%
ACT	34	33–35
SAT		
EBRW	751	750–770
Math	754	730–790
SAT Subject Tests		
Math II	773	650–800
English Lit.	696	640–740
Physics	766	730–800

Grading

Nueva intentionally discourages academic competition among our students. We do not calculate class rank and do not offer academic honors, prizes, or valedictorian status.

To facilitate meaningful assessment of students' skills against absolute benchmarks, students receive both standards-based grades and in-depth written narratives focused on core learning competencies. Nueva reinforces continuous feedback and recognizes the need for students to learn from their mistakes as they take risks and tackle difficult problems.

Grade 9 courses are Credit/No Credit. In Grades 10–12, the highest grade is an A (no "A+" grades), which indicates the student has reached an Exemplary status with regard to the standards for that course; a "B" indicates Proficiency; and a "C" indicates a Foundational achievement of the standards. We do not weight grades.

It is Nueva's policy not to report disciplinary infractions; our expectation is that students will self-report any serious violations of school conduct policy. Nueva's college counseling office works with students to ensure they provide colleges with appropriate context for the students' decisions and their consequences.

Applied Learning

Nueva supports in-depth inquiry, research, and experimentation through programs that extend and deepen the core curriculum.

Quest Projects, an annual requirement, enable individual, mentored pursuits in areas of passionate interest. Recent projects include developing a public health initiative to address obesity in post-embargo Cuba, designing and building a jet-pack for human flight, and writing a screenplay adaptation of *Hamlet*.

The Global Immersion Program provides students with broadening academic and cultural perspectives. They have studied anthropology and history (Peru), wildlife biology (Costa Rica), land management (American West), military culture (North Carolina), political caucuses (Nevada), immigration (Mexico), and AIDS activism (New York).

Intersession is a two-week intensive that allows students to work, think, experiment, and lead in courses taught by local and international experts in their fields. From surgical virtual reality to constitutional law to graffiti art, Nueva students describe this mid-year program as an "intellectual party."



Defining Elements of a Nueva Education

Design Thinking

Students learn and develop an approach to problem-solving in which they identify pressing and practical needs and problems, generate creative ideas, and introduce, test, and refine solutions under real-world conditions.

Science of Mind

Students study foundational principles of psychology and neuroscience, developing fluency in social-emotional best practices through peer feedback and coaching.



What Is a Nueva Student?

In their free time, Nueva students write programs and poetry, create laboratories in their basements and other worlds in their journals, borrow quantum mechanics textbooks from their teachers, and stay up late debating Dante. On a Friday evening, student-built robots cruise the halls, debates about global economics unfold at teachers' desks, and goggle-clad students pursue supervised but purely extracurricular research.

Nueva was lauded by Pulitzer Prize-winning and *New York Times* best-selling author Thomas Friedman in his book *That Used to Be Us* as "what's right in America's schools."

Upper School Course Offerings 2019–2020

Math

3 years required

**Math 1, 2, and 3 is an integrated math sequence in which students learn geometry, algebra 2, trigonometry, pre-calculus, basic statistics, and functions.*

Math 1*

Math 2*

Math 3*

Calculus

Post-Calculus Options

Multivariable Calculus
Mathematical Modeling
Differential Equations
Number Theory
Complex Analysis
Linear Algebra

Electives

Cryptography
Statistics and Probability

Independent and Collaborative Study

Lab Science

3 years required

Required Courses

Biology
Chemistry

Electives

Physics
Modern Physics
Calculus-based Mechanics
Bioorganic Chemistry
Drug Design
Experimental Biology
Physics Research
Applied Molecular Biology
Mechanisms of Cancer
Biological and Cognitive Neuroscience
Neuroscience of Addiction
Computational Biology
Advanced Biological Research Methods
Social Action Science Research
XRT: Experiment and Research Team
Chemical Engineering
Intro to Mechanical Engineering

Interdisciplinary Courses

Environmental and Earth Science

History, Social Sciences, and Civics

3 years required

Required Courses

Global History I
Global History II
American History

Senior Seminars

American Government
Rise and Fall of Rome
International Relations
Religion in America

Electives

Post-Colonial Latin-American History
Interpreting Religions
Economic Inequality
Environmental Economics
Deindustrialization and Neo-liberalism in Modern America
Senior Economic Thesis Seminar
How Not to Think Wrong
Microeconomics
Macroeconomics
Steel, Telescopes and Trains: Recreating Science and Technology
Japanamerica: Japanese Pop Culture
50 Words for Snow: Translation Theory
Capitalism and the Apocalypse
California History: Foot, Hoof, Rail
Philosophy of Consciousness

Design Thinking, Engineering, and Computer Science

I-Lab Engineering and Fabrication Workshop
Creature Comforts
Programming and Data Analytics
Functional Programming
Electric Bike Building
Product Design (Intro/Adv)
Computer and Digital Security
Intro to Computer Programming
Advanced Programming Workshop
Mobile App Design
Object-Oriented Programming
Machine Learning (Intro/Adv)

Independent and Collaborative Study

Literature and Communications

4 years required

Required Courses

English 9: The Great Dialogue
English 10: Landscapes of Self and Other
English 11: American Literature

Senior Seminars

Adaptations: From Text to Screen and Stage
Fiction Writing
The Immortal Gothic Genre
“This World is not Conclusion”: 20th Century American Poetry
Shakespeare in the World
20th Century American Drama
Contemporary Narratives of Slavery
The Multitudes: Creative Writing
French Literature from the Hexagon and Beyond
Afrofuturism: Black Histories, Black Futures
Tales of Monsters and Monstrosity
Seeking Truth in Amalgamation: The Memoir
Philosophy of Consciousness and Personhood

Electives

Intro to Journalism
Yearbook and Online Media Production
Speech and Debate

Independent and Collaborative Study

World Languages

3 years required

Chinese 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Japanese 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Spanish 1, 2, 3, 4

Advanced Spanish Classes

Spanish Oral Communication
Spanish Literature (Intro/Adv)
Society and Culture of Spain
Advanced Spanish: Drug Trafficking and Human Rights in the Americas
Our Americas

Arts:

Fine and Performing

2 semesters required in the same subject

Performing Arts

Fall Play
Musical Theater (Intro/Adv)
Chorale (Intro/Adv)
A Cappella Soundwaves
Music Design and Production (Intro/Adv)
Jazz Ensemble
Steel Drums
Groove Workshop

Fine Arts

Drawing (Intro/Adv)
Graphic Design (Intro/Adv)
Mixed Media (Intro/Adv)
Painting (Intro/Adv)
Sculpture (Intro/Adv)

Interdisciplinary Arts

Stained Glass
Fabricating Your Artistic Vision (Intro/Adv)
Yearbook and Online Media Production

Independent and Collaborative Study

Additional Requirements

Nueva Quest: Pursuit of In-Depth Mastery
4 years required

Athletics and Wellness
8 seasons required

Interdisciplinary Studies
2 years required

Design Thinking
Design Engineering
History and Philosophy of Science

Science of Mind
4 years required

College Acceptances and Matriculation Classes of 2017 to 2020

Bold indicates matriculation by at least one student

<p>Allegheny College American University (2) Amherst College Arizona State University Baldwin Wallace University Bard College Barnard College (2) Bates College Becker College Bennington College Berklee College of Music Birmingham-Southern College Boston College Boston University (8) Bowdoin College (3) Brandeis University Brown University (9) Bryn Mawr College (4) Bucknell University California Institute of Technology California Institute of the Arts California Poly - Pomona California Poly - San Luis Obispo Carleton College Carnegie Mellon University (5) Case Western Reserve University Central St Martins College of Art & Design Chapman University Claremont McKenna College Clark University Cleveland Institute of Music Colby College (5) Colgate University College of Wooster Colorado College Colorado State University Columbia University (4) Connecticut College Cornell University (3) Dartmouth College (2) Davidson College DePaul University Dickinson College Drew University Drexel University Duke University (4) Durham University Eastman School of Music Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Emerson College Emory University Emory University, Oxford Fairfield University Fordham University Franklin & Marshall College George Washington University Georgetown University Georgia Institute of Technology</p>	<p>Gettysburg College Gonzaga University Grinnell College Hamilton College (2) Hampshire College Harvard College (6) Harvey Mudd College (8) Haverford College (2) Imperial College London Ithaca College Johns Hopkins University Kalamazoo College Kenyon College King's College London Knox College Lawrence University Lehigh University Lewis & Clark College Loyola Marymount University Loyola University Chicago Loyola University Maryland Loyola University New Orleans Macalester College Maryland Institute College of Art and Design Massachusetts Institute of Technology (3) McGill University Middlebury College (3) Mills College Mount Holyoke College Muhlenberg College New England Conservatory of Music New York University (5) New York University, Abu Dhabi North Carolina School of the Arts Northeastern University (8) Northwestern University (4) Oberlin College Oberlin Conservatory of Music Occidental College (6) Ohio State University Olin College of Engineering (7) Otis College of Art and Design Otterbein University Pace University Pennsylvania State University Pitzer College (2) Pomona College (2) Pratt Institute Princeton University (6) Purdue University (2) Reed College (3) Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (3)</p>	<p>Rhode Island School of Design (4) Rice University Rochester Institute of Technology Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology San Francisco State University San Jose State University Santa Clara University Sarah Lawrence College Savannah College of Art & Design School of the Art Institute of Chicago Sciences Po - Columbia Sciences Po - UC Berkeley Scripps College (4) Seattle University Sewanee: University of the South Skidmore College Smith College (2) Southern Methodist University St. John's College St. Olaf College Stanford University (36) Stevens Institute of Technology Swarthmore College (5) Syracuse University Temple University The New School Trinity University Tufts University (9) Tulane University Union College University College, London University of Alaska University of British Columbia University of California, Berkeley (12) University of California, Davis University of California, Irvine University of California, Los Angeles (2) University of California, Merced University of California, Riverside University of California, San Diego University of California, Santa Barbara University of California, Santa Cruz University of Cambridge University of Chicago (23) University of Colorado University of Denver University of Edinburgh University of Exeter University of Glasgow University of Hartford</p>	<p>University of Illinois University of Leeds University of Massachusetts, Amherst University of Miami University of Michigan (3) University of Minnesota University of North Carolina University of Oregon (2) University of Oxford University of Pennsylvania (5) University of Pittsburgh University of Portland University of Puget Sound University of Redlands University of Richmond University of Rochester University of San Diego University of San Francisco University of Southern California (10) University of St Andrews (2) University of Sussex University of Texas University of the Pacific University of Toronto (2) University of Vermont University of Virginia University of Washington University of Waterloo University of Wisconsin University of York Ursinus College Vanderbilt University Vassar College (3) Villanova University Washington College Washington University, St. Louis (4) Wellesley College (3) Wentworth Institute of Technology Wesleyan University Westmont College Wheaton College (MA) Whitman College Whittier College Willamette University William and Mary Williams College (3) Worcester Polytechnic Institute (6) Xavier University Yale University (5) Yale-NUS College</p>
<p>The 319 members of the first four classes applied to 228 colleges, were admitted to 211, and are attending 96 different institutions in 27 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, England, France, and Scotland. Adventurous and independent, over 70% of Nueva graduates choose to leave the state of California for college and annually over a third are the sole matriculant to their college.</p>			