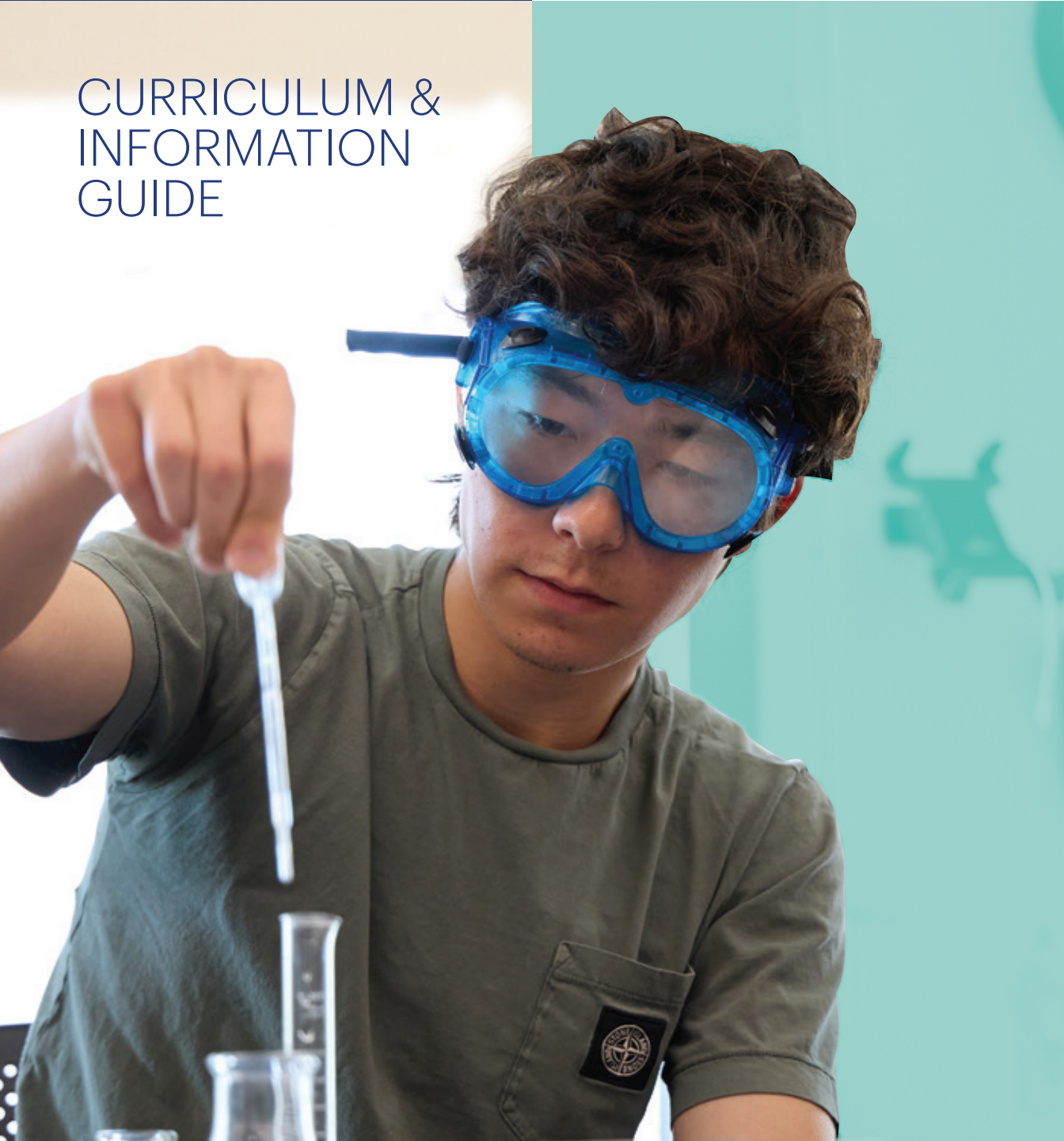


2024-25

# CURRICULUM & INFORMATION GUIDE



URBAN SCHOOL OF SAN FRANCISCO  
**CURRICULUM &  
INFORMATION  
GUIDE**



## MISSION

Urban School of San Francisco seeks to ignite a passion for learning, inspiring its students to become self-motivated, enthusiastic participants in their education — both in high school and beyond.



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# WELCOME TO URBAN!



This Curriculum Guide is intended as an introduction to the extraordinary opportunities available to Urban students. More than that, we hope these pages capture some of the intangible priorities that define this singular institution: to ignite a passion for learning; to develop skills and habits of mind with enduring relevance in a changing world; to nurture a diverse, inclusive community of teachers and learners; to instill a sense of agency and social responsibility; to sustain a culture where students can push boundaries, make mistakes, and become the people they want to be.

Go Blues!

Dan Miller  
Head of School

Lauren Byrne  
Director of Admission

## URBAN'S CORE VALUES

Learning is an active, joyful process of discovery where students are challenged to ask essential questions, solve problems in disciplined and creative ways, and construct substantive understandings under the guidance of passionate and inspiring teachers.

Academic excellence is demonstrated by depth of conceptual understanding and achieved through rigorous engagement, comprehensive assessment and thoughtful self-evaluation.

We honor the uniqueness of each individual and embrace diverse backgrounds, values, and points of view to build a strong, inclusive community and to prepare students for lives in a multicultural society.

Students best grow in personal responsibility and self-worth in a school characterized by trust, honesty and mutual respect among students and teachers.

We are committed to reflection, evaluation, evolution and innovation as means to improve teaching and learning.

Learning extends beyond the classroom to instill in students a sense of mission and purpose as citizens of the larger community and world.

As we prepare students for college, we celebrate the vitality of adolescence and the abundant possibilities for intellectual growth and personal achievement during these four years.





## **ABOUT URBAN SCHOOL**

Urban School was founded in 1966 by a group of Bay Area parents seeking an innovative alternative to conventional secondary education. Our founders believed that high school should be a joyful experience – designed around the particular creative, inquisitive and idealistic energy of adolescents. They also felt that a diverse community of teachers and students should work collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust, honesty and mutual respect. Now a thriving high school of 420 students in San Francisco’s historic Haight Ashbury, these values continue to define our mission today.

As you dig into this Curriculum Guide and the Urban School website, note the commitment to dialogue about complex topics, curricular freedom to ignite and honor student interest, myriad arenas for collaboration and innovation, and a commitment to equity and social justice. Most of all, sense if you can the unique alchemy of the Urban culture – the dynamic, purposefully engaged community of learners proud to be part of a singular institution, ever restless to improve.

### **Belonging at Urban**

Students come to Urban from nearly 80 different Bay Area middle schools and bring an extraordinary diversity of identities and life experiences. Our first priority is to create a safe, comfortable environment where every one of them can thrive. Equity and inclusion programming at Urban includes affinity and ally spaces; community-wide educational programming and celebrations; ample opportunities for students to explore their own identities; and an essential emphasis on the importance of empathetic, engaged dialogue across differences.

## Being a Blue

Urban entrusts our students with an unusual degree of ownership and authentic leadership responsibility for creating the school they want it to be. Their contagious, enthusiastic investment creates a culture vibrant with showcase performances, spirit weeks, dances and school-wide events that foster excitement for the entire student body. They are also the guiding energy behind more than 40 clubs and activities ranging from student government, to the award-winning student newspaper, to the yearbook, to 15 affinity and ally spaces, to helping guide our outdoor trips program.

## Excellence in Instruction

Urban attracts and sustains a remarkable faculty and staff who are drawn to the school's distinct vision and mission, and many remain for their entire careers. The ability to teach both foundational classes as well as a broad range of electives is exciting for teachers — many of whom are scholars, scientists, writers and artists in their own right — and this enthusiasm and investment is what inspires our students the most.

## Advising and Personal Development

Upon entering Urban, each student is assigned a faculty advisor and a grade-level Dean who form an academic and social support system, as well as serving as readily available and consistent family liaison during the student's and family's Urban journey. Because they travel with the student and grade for four years, advisors and the grade-level Deans come to know students and their families extremely well over time. School counselors and academic support staff are also readily available resources for both students and families. Recognizing that adolescents often turn first to one another for reassurance, assistance and advice, Urban also trains groups of students to serve as peer tutors and counselors. Students who are part of these programs are able to offer support to other students who simply need a sympathetic ear or advice from an older student who can relate to their challenges.





## The Schedule

Urban organizes the school year into three, 12-week terms rather than using a conventional semester system. Urban’s schedule allows students to take fewer classes at any one time to allow for longer periods of instruction. This opens up myriad opportunities for hands-on learning, creative teaching methodologies and time to explore subjects in far greater depth. It also reduces the number of subjects a student is asked to prepare for each night at home. Multiple terms also allow for an extraordinary range of elective opportunities so that students and teachers can explore their particular interests – a critical element of our mission to excite student interest and promote life-long curiosities. Due to our longer class periods, the content of a one-term class is equivalent to a semester course in a traditional semester system, and a two-term class is equivalent to a year-long course.

In addition to A, B, C or D-period classes each term, students may also take non-academic elective classes, including, but not limited to, performing arts ensembles, technical theater, journalism/student newspaper and yearbook design. Urban’s schedule also makes room for a slate of other “just-for-fun” electives from spoon carving to origami, to circus skills to the study of languages like Korean, Arabic or Italian.

Study halls for 9th and 10th graders and departmental tutorial sessions are also built into the weekly schedule, as are advising periods and all-school meetings.

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE EXAMPLE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:30–9:45 A Period	8:30–9:30 E1	8:30–9:30 B Period	8:30–9:30 D Period	
9:50 All School Mtg.	9:35–10:50 D Period	9:45–10:45 B Period	9:45–10:45 D Period	9:05–10:20 B Period
10:25–11:40 B Period	10:55–11:40 U1	10:50–11:40 E2	10:50–11:40 Tutorial 2	10:35–11:50 C Period
11:40–12:35 Lunch	11:40–12:35 Lunch	11:40–12:35 Lunch	11:40–12:35 Lunch	11:50–12:45 Lunch
12:35–1:30 Tutorial 1	12:35–1:35 A Period	12:35–1:35 C Period	12:35–1:35 A Period	12:45p–1:30 Advising
1:35–2:50 C Period	1:50–2:50 A Period	1:50–2:50 C Period	1:55–2:50 E3/U2	1:35–2:50 D Period

### SAMPLE 9TH GRADE SCHEDULE

	FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SPRING TERM
<b>A</b>	Science 1 A	Math 1A	World History 1B
<b>B</b>	Spanish 1A	Spanish 1B	Science 1B
<b>C</b>	English 1A	Health 9/Service: Identity/Ethnic Studies	Visual Arts: Video Production
<b>D</b>	World History 1A	English 1B	Math 1B
<b>E</b>	Study Hall	Study Hall	Study Hall
<b>U</b>	Inside Urban	UrbanX Design	Yoga
<b>T</b>	Tutorial Study Hall	Tutorial Study Hall	Tutorial Study Hall

### SAMPLE 11TH GRADE SCHEDULE

	FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SPRING TERM
<b>A</b>	XLabs: Applied Physics Electronics & Robotics	Math 3B	UAS Chinese 5B
<b>B</b>	UAS Chinese 5A	UAS Infectious Disease	UAS Functions
<b>C</b>	UAS Immigrant Literature: A Legacy of Innovation	UAS Constitutional Law	Service Learning 11
<b>D</b>	Math 3A	Circus Techniques	Voices of Incarceration
<b>E</b>	Advanced Jazz Band	Advanced Jazz Band	Advanced Jazz Band
<b>U</b>	Intro to Japanese	Chaotic Art	MD in the Making
<b>T</b>	Tutorial Study Hall	Tutorial Study Hall	Tutorial Study Hall

These are sample schedules only and are meant to show the range of academic courses a 9th grader and an 11th grader might experience over an entire year at Urban. To see an at-a-glance week, please view the weekly schedule on the previous page.

In all departments, Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) designates the school's most rigorous coursework, which is deemed honors-level by colleges and universities.

## Feedback and Assessment

Urban's evaluation and grading practices combine the best of innovative and traditional approaches, consistent with our long history as a nationally recognized leader in progressive education. Our goal is to coach students toward their highest academic achievement through cycles of comprehensive teacher feedback and student self-evaluation.

Students and parents receive reports every six weeks, both at the midpoint and at the end of each term. Each interim report includes a statement of course expectations; an interim rubric noting student progress in skills and understanding, a bulleted list of goals for improvement; and a summary indication of overall achievement in the course to date. In addition, students have a mid-term conference with each of their teachers to review the interim report, discuss progress to date, and set goals for the remaining weeks of the course.

The course report at the end of each class consists of a final course grade accompanied by a rubric similar to the interim report, a written evaluation summarizing the student's work and achievement in the class, and a student self-evaluation recognizing their own successes and areas for growth.

While students receive grades at the end of each term that are reflected on a traditional transcript for college applications, we de-emphasize grades during the term to reduce anxiety and competitive pressure and to focus students on more enduring goals: how they learn, the relevance of the material they are studying, the excitement of discovery, and the satisfaction of intrinsic motivation. This aspirational philosophy is likely different from one students or families have experienced previously, but generations of Urban alumni have confirmed that our approach has not only prepared them well for their continuing education in college, graduate school and careers, it has played a part in the fulfillment they find as lifelong learners.

## Service Learning

Urban's nationally recognized Service Learning program offers an integrated four-year community service program that blends rigorous classwork with meaningful volunteerism and project work to solve real-world problems. In the 9th grade classroom, students explore issues of their own identity and culture, and examine the impact of historical factors such as race, ethnicity and socioeconomic standing. With that context established, 10th through 12th grade students engage in internships and projects that align with their passion and values. By the end of four years, students have learned cultural competency skills, the power and value of understanding the context behind the narratives they see and hear, and the ability to engage empathetically in challenging, complicated conversations. Students leverage classroom learning to enhance the work of community organizations and, in the process, become reflective, resourceful citizens.

## Technology at Urban

Urban was a leader in developing many of the 1:1 laptop practices now employed at schools across the country and internationally, having first started our program 25 years ago. Since the start, we have prioritized the integration of digital practices and technology across the curriculum in order to deepen and extend student learning, and not as end unto itself.

Importantly, Urban now integrates lessons in digital citizenship to help students navigate the opportunities, but also the pitfalls of social media and smartphone use. Most recently, Urban is engaging in thoughtful discussion and evaluation of the role artificial intelligence will be playing in all of our lives, both within the school and beyond.

## Herbst Library

Urban's Herbst Library supports the curriculum by providing a dynamic, curated collection of 8,000 print books, thousands of ebooks, and more than 20 subscription databases that give students, faculty and staff access to thousands of periodicals, reference works, video content and more.

The library's education program teaches students to be independent, curious and thoughtful researchers. In addition to myriad online databases for research and exploration in all academic areas, the library staff provides research guides and specialty resource lists based on affinity and ally space events, guest speaker presentations and other subject-specific activities.



## Home of the Blues! Athletics at Urban

The same kind of initiative and enthusiasm that animates Urban classrooms also inspires the Blues in athletic competition. On average, more than 70% of the student body participates in the interscholastic athletics program each year. Urban is a member of the Bay Area Conference and the Bay Counties League-West. Urban competes against independent, parochial and public schools throughout the Bay Area and Northern California.

Every interested student is given the opportunity to try out for competitive athletics teams at either the varsity or junior varsity level, depending on the individual's level of ability and experience. JV teams provide competitive game schedules and introductory strategy and skill instruction, while varsity teams stress competition and advanced skills. Some sports allow for a Frosh/Soph team to learn the basics of a sport. Participation on any team requires a strong commitment and the ability to place team goals ahead of personal ones.

Urban also has a physical activity program designed to instill enduring habits and enjoyment while also satisfying the state requirement for physical education. In order to honor a diversity of interests and abilities, students can participate in approved classes outside of school or those provided at Urban. Recent Urban offerings have included yoga, rock climbing, strength and conditioning, dance and hiking.

## Co-Curricular Activities and Outdoor Education

In addition to athletic participation, Urban students may choose from more than 40 different clubs, some serious, some more lighthearted, ranging from the Model United Nations to the Taylor Swift Club, from astronomy to circus performance skills. Urban empowers students with an unusual amount of authentic leadership responsibility on critical all-school committees, including those in admissions, discipline, student government, peer health and tutoring, and even as representatives on the Board of Trustees.

Urban also has a thriving Outdoor Trips program that introduces students to backpacking, kayaking, rock climbing, river rafting, skiing and biking, with activities varied enough to challenge those with some or no expertise. Each grade level takes a trip during the school year, which offers students and teachers an opportunity to interact in a unique way outside the classroom. The school also offers international trips, usually tied to language classes, where students improve their language acquisition and experience a different culture firsthand.

## **Health and Wellness**

Urban has evolved quickly in recent years to prioritize health and wellness in the broadest sense of the term. Increased staffing in counseling, academic support and college advising are only part of a larger initiative that includes an assigned grade-level Dean and advisors that accompany their grade for four years; classes in mindfulness and meditation; a robust health curriculum; a peer counseling and tutoring program; and a general school-wide recognition of the essential importance of mental health. Perhaps most importantly, a close-knit, intentionally small student body and an attentive faculty come to school each day in an intimately scaled campus. We see one another, and we look out for one another.

## **The College Process**

The college process is one of self-discovery, which gives students the confidence and independence to choose the college or university that best matches their needs. Urban's counselors work closely with students and their families over time to identify colleges that reflect students' varied interests, talents, abilities and aspirations. Urban Seniors are accepted to a variety of schools, including Ivy League and highly selective public and private colleges and universities, as well as specialized schools for those gifted in science, engineering, and visual and performing arts.

Formal college counseling begins early in 11th grade when students and their parents/guardians attend a school-sponsored event designed to educate families about the various steps in the college admissions process. Later, students and their parents meet as a family with their assigned college counselor to create an initial list of schools for further exploration. During senior year, the counselors work closely with Seniors to assist and monitor their progress in the application process. Once students receive acceptances in the spring, the counselors assist them in evaluating their choices and in selecting the school they will attend in the fall.



## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE URBAN CURRICULUM



Urban classes are characterized by the enthusiastic engagement of both students and teachers in the learning process. The nature and quality of classes result in part from the school's schedule and longer class periods, which allow for more intense and focused study of the material.

Our curriculum is rich and extensive and includes core academic classes, as well as an unusually large number of specialized courses, advanced electives and creative arts courses usually found at the college level. In all departments, Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) designates the school's most rigorous coursework, which is deemed honors-level by all colleges and universities

All Urban courses share a common educational approach based on the following principles:

- the expectation that students be active participants in their education;
- a commitment to collaboration and cooperation among students;
- an understanding and respect for the achievements, experiences and perspectives of people of diverse backgrounds and identities;
- use of the Bay Area's rich environmental, cultural and intellectual resources to extend learning beyond the classroom.

Urban's academic program seeks to involve students in their broader community — the school, the city, the world — and develop in them a sense of social responsibility.

## Graduation Requirements

Urban requires 22 credits for graduation, distributed across the curriculum. One credit is equivalent to a year-long course. Urban’s curriculum provides an exceptionally strong foundation in college preparatory subjects. Many of our classes have distinctive features that set them apart as particularly challenging and comparable to college level work. These classes, designated as Urban Advanced Studies (UAS), are offered in every subject area and are recognized by colleges (including the University of California) as honors-level courses. Urban does not teach AP courses. In completing Urban’s graduation requirements, students exceed the minimum course requirements for admission to the University of California system.

**English:** 4 credits

**Mathematics:** 3 credits

**Science:** 2 credits

**History:** 2 credits

**Language:** 3 credits

**Arts:** 2 credits

**Community Service Learning:**  
2 credits, distributed over 4 years

**Advanced Coursework:**  
4 or more additional credits



## Urban's Academic Innovation Program



### URBANX LABS

Urban School's integrated and interdisciplinary approach to design, technology and engineering flourishes in UrbanX Labs. With offerings like Electronics and Robotics, Materials Science, Advanced Computer Science, Industrial Design, Architectural Design and more, we're teaching students how to develop, design and build their ideas. In our purpose-designed UrbanX lab, we teach students the fundamentals of discovery, innovation, creativity and problem solving—skills that serve them throughout their academic careers and far into their futures.



### CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Urban offers many classes that address different aspects of our relationship with the natural world, while building upon and making connections to students' prior knowledge from other disciplines, including science, history and English. Many of our environmental sustainability classes, such as Marine Biology, Geology and Cal Studies, include field trips as central components. Student understanding, classroom activities and major assessments all proceed from these field experiences. By taking Urban's environmental sustainability classes, students will expand their knowledge, personal connection and contextualization of key sustainability challenges.

### MULTIDISCIPLINARY CLASSES

Urban offers and will continue to develop electives that fuse and transcend specific academic disciplines and exist both within and beyond the traditional classroom. Classes like Voices of Incarceration, Cal Studies and Infectious Diseases to name a few, variously combine history, English, sociology, anthropology, epidemiology and issues of social justice. Particularly as students reach beyond the core curriculum, we seek to inspire engagement by exploring larger social issues with an immediate relevance that young people both crave and need as they mature into engaged citizens of the world.



## Mathematics

The math program at Urban draws from both traditional and contemporary approaches and content. Urban requires three years of high school math for graduation. Students considering a career in math, science, computer science or engineering should take four or more years of math, including more challenging electives. See [www.urbanschool.org/math](http://www.urbanschool.org/math) for more details.

**Math 1A and 1B** help students develop the concepts, skills and habits that form the foundation of high school mathematics. Many of the tools are algebraic, but almost all concepts are looked at in a variety of ways including geometric, numeric and verbal approaches. Basic arithmetic and algebraic operations are modeled with physical manipulatives, making a geometric and visual connection with these operations. Our goal is for students to integrate and connect these methods. **(1 CREDIT)**

**Math 2A and 2B** is an integrated course where students explore concepts through hands-on materials to create geometric conjectures, to use the language of algebra to describe some of these relationships, and to write formal proofs. Various algebraic concepts, such as simplification of square roots and variation functions, are approached geometrically. Slope and measurement are used to introduce trigonometric ratios. Writing computer programs and using dynamic geometry to create designs and figures, students deepen their understanding of geometric relationships as they experience the logic of computers. **(1 CREDIT)**

**Math 3A and 3B** continues and deepens our work with algebraic manipulation and graphical representation of functions as mathematical models. The practices

developed in previous courses are expected to be in place so that the focus is on understanding concepts and demonstrating mastery. In particular, we expect fluency with algebraic symbols and notation. As the last course required for all students, Math 3 rounds out the basics of mathematical literacy, intensifies the challenge for students, and provides the foundation for upper level electives. **(1 CREDIT)**

**Advanced Math Applications** is appropriate for students who would benefit from more experience with, and a deeper understanding of, the key math concepts that are foundation for Functions and other upper level math and science courses. Key topics from Math 1, 2 and 3 are reviewed and extended. Emphasis is placed on numeric and algebraic fluency. The course is also appropriate for any students interested in the history of mathematics and its applications to science. Prerequisite: Math 3 **(½ CREDIT)**

**Data Science** is an interdisciplinary course using programming and mathematics to analyze and understand very large amounts of unstructured data. This course is an introduction to the foundations of data science from three perspectives: inferential thinking, computational thinking, and real-world relevance. Students will use programming to analyze real-world datasets

and use data visualization to communicate information. They will also delve into the social and legal issues and impacts surrounding data science such as privacy and data ownership, ethics, bias, and the misuse and misinterpretation of data. The course assumes prior knowledge of computer programming (abstraction, iteration, data types) and focuses on critical concepts and skills in statistical inference, in conjunction with hands-on analysis of diverse real-world datasets. Prerequisite: Computer Science 1 (½ CREDIT)

**Discrete Mathematics** is a survey course, covering many topics in mathematics that are relevant in today’s world. Students will be introduced to and study practical applications of graphs and networks, theories about numbers, and logic. They will also be exposed to more abstract concepts deriving from these topics. Prerequisite: Math 3 (½ CREDIT)

**Statistics & Probability** is an elective that concentrates on the applications of mathematics to the social and life sciences. This course is appropriate both for students who intend to go on to calculus, as well as students who do not. Students apply concepts of counting, combinations and permutations to probability problems, and to the foundations of statistics. They use appropriate tools and techniques to interpret data. The course also includes the mathematics underlying the sampling techniques used by scientists and pollsters. Prerequisite: Math 3 (½ CREDIT)

**URBAN Computer Science 1** is an introduction to programming concepts using Snap!, a computer language developed at UC Berkeley. Snap! makes it possible for students to program images, animation and interactions and learn about algorithms,

data handling and other fundamentals of computer programming, in a visual context. Prerequisite: Math 2 (½ CREDIT)



### **UAS Computer Science 2**

focuses attention on the central idea of abstraction, make heavy use of the idea of functions as data, and discuss relevant topics in

Computer Science such as functions as data, complexity and graph theory. It will also focus on some of the “Big Ideas” of computing such as recursion, concurrency and the limitations of computing. Prerequisites: Math 3, Computer Science 1 or instructor approval (½ CREDIT)



### **UAS Computer Science 3**

continues the Computer Science sequence, focusing on more advanced principles of software engineering, data structures and algorithms,

emphasizing computability and feasibility. Topics in computer science such as Game Theory and Machine Learning will be discussed. Prerequisite: UAS Computer Science 2 (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Functions** focuses on the topics needed for calculus. It is structured around functions as models of change, emphasizing that they can be grouped into families that model real-world phenomena. One goal of this course is to begin the transition toward more text-based college-level courses and more independent student learning. Students extend and deepen their knowledge and skills of the core curriculum (Math 1-3). Prerequisite: Math 3 (and in some cases, Advanced Math Applications) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Calculus A and B** seeks to provide students with a solid foundation for subsequent college level courses in mathematics and other disciplines. The course is focused on differentiation, integration and their relationship. The math concepts are enhanced by applications relating to geometry, physics, economics, ecology and medicine. Students are expected to take full responsibility for their learning by using the text and applying all the skills and content learned in previous courses. They are expected to navigate between graphical, numerical, analytical and verbal representations of problems and to use the graphing calculator appropriately. Prerequisite: Functions (1 CREDIT)

**UAS Analytic Geometry** introduces complex topics at the precalculus level that are challenging and useful for advanced students, but not prerequisite for the standard calculus course. The daily problems can be more substantial than the standard work in the core curriculum. There is a focus on moving fluently back and forth from a variety of algebraic forms to graphing in

different coordinate systems in two and three dimensions. Students build models, do constructions, and derive equations from definitions and general principles. Prerequisite: Math 3 (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Space: Group Theory** is an advanced geometry course, which includes a thorough exploration of symmetry, including an introduction to group theory, and extends students' geometric experiences into three and four dimensions. Many hands-on 3D building labs, creative projects and the reading of mathematical fiction illustrate the concepts. Prerequisite: Math 3 (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Infinity: Theory of Infinite Sets and Chaos Theory** allows students to discuss ancient paradoxes about infinity, and learn how Georg Cantor resolved them. This discussion launches our most theoretical course. Infinity includes a strong emphasis on formal proof and an introduction to chaos theory and fractal geometry, two computer-centered branches of mathematics. Connections are made with literature and philosophy. Prerequisite: Math 3 (½ CREDIT)



## Science

Urban's science program offers a rigorous and experiential introduction to the key concepts and skills needed to understand phenomena in the natural world. With weekly labs, Urban students formulate testable questions, design experiments, analyze data and present their results. Labs, field trips and special projects often anchor an academic unit or an entire course. By participating in authentic investigations, students gain the ability to evaluate scientific claims critically, both in high school and beyond. Learn more at [www.urbanschool.org/science](http://www.urbanschool.org/science).

### Fundamentals of Science 1A and 1B

welcomes all 9th graders to lab science at Urban. This integrated course lays down the mathematical, physical, chemical and biological foundations of the natural world. Students are introduced to problem solving, experimental design, data gathering and analysis. Though students enter this course with varied experience in science, this two-term sequence gives students the necessary knowledge and skills for success in later classes. The first term takes an in-depth look at matter, the physics of energy and chemical reactions. Picking up from this point, the second term of this sequence focuses on chemical bonding, molecular structure and properties, and the fundamentals of cellular life. (1 CREDIT)

### Fundamentals of Science 2A and 2B

continues the sequence begun in the first year with a greater emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving, both in the laboratory and in analyzing academic problems. More is expected of students, in terms of their level of critical thinking, laboratory fluency and tenacity in grappling with challenging concepts. Major topics

in 2A include genetics, heredity and evolution. The topics in 2B include a review of atomic structure and chemical naming, stoichiometry, gas laws, equilibrium, and acids and bases. In both classes, the scientific concepts are connected to real-world issues and concerns. (1 CREDIT)



### Applied Physics: Electronics & Robotics

is a project-based course that applies the fundamental concepts of analog and digital circuits to a variety of devices ranging from simple to complex. Students learn to create circuits, write and debug code for microprocessors, and design interactive electronics. Along the way, they will develop an understanding of modern electronic hardware and software and how it functions in computers, robots and electronic devices. Students will gain hands-on experience assembling breadboard circuits, soldering and programming in Arduino. A significant portion of this course is a final project, where students design and build an interactive electronic creation of their choice using acquired skills and knowledge. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)



**Applied Physics: Motion & Machines** is a project-based course that explores some of the most fundamental aspects of physics, including forces, gravity and energy. Students

learn how to describe 1D and 2D motion and then explore the causes of motion. Students study concepts of velocity, acceleration, and aerodynamics and apply them to experimental observations. They also learn to use various hand and power tools to build projects that become increasingly more complex and more open-ended as the term progresses. In a culminating final project, students construct a catapult, trebuchet or other projectile launcher designed to answer a research question of their choice. The course spends considerable time relating concepts to student observations of the world around us. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)



**Applied Chemistry: Materials Science** is a project-based course that uses the fundamental concepts of chemical bonding and electromagnetism to

understand condensed matter. Through the study of real world applications of those materials, students will learn to analyze fluids, metals, ceramics and plastics. Emphasis will be placed on students' ability to relate micro- and nano-structural features to macro-scale properties, such as corrosion resistance, strength, thermal response and light absorption. Students also will use their understanding to engineer a solution to a practical materials selection problem. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)

**Astronomy** offers a survey of our universe, starting from the solar system and moving outward. Through fieldwork, classwork, labs and projects, students will investigate fundamental questions from both a historical and contemporary perspective. Where did planets and stars come from? Why do objects in the sky move as they do? How do stars and galaxies shine? How does the universe change over time? Could life exist elsewhere? And, vitally, how do we know what we know? Students in astronomy should be prepared to collect night sky observations, complete independent readings, analyze data, model simulations, apply concepts from prior science classes, and utilize conceptual problem solving skills. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)



**Climate Change: Challenges and Solutions** engages

students to dive deep into one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. We start by exploring the dynamics of global climate and climate science. What kind of predictions can we make about how our planet will look in the future? What are the political, economic and social justice implications of action versus inaction? How can we communicate effectively about the challenges and what is at stake? Can we implement real, working solutions through resilience, mitigation and sustainable practices? This course will include field trips to speakers and panels, community events, and community engagement to provide context and depth to the scope of the challenges and solutions. Student-generated final projects will expand upon a curricular theme and the approach and outcomes should reflect the diversity of disciplines covered in the course. Depending on student interest, possible outcomes could

include design projects (physical or digital), educational videos, mini-courses or research papers. (11th and 12th Graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Geology** is a field course that introduces students to the causes and effects of different earth processes. Students will study plate tectonics and earthquakes, the rock cycle and surficial geology. These topics and their connections will be modeled and measured both in the field and in lab. In studying these topics, students will apply their prior chemistry and biology knowledge, and will also gain experience in mapping and field interpretation. Field trips are fundamental to this class: by seeing and interpreting the geology of the Bay Area, students also learn about broader geologic themes. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)

**Human Anatomy and Physiology** is an in-depth study of the design and function of the human body that gives students the knowledge and tools to understand how the human body operates in health and disease. The primary emphasis will be organ systems, and students will enjoy the opportunity to be the subjects of several laboratory exercises. This course will focus primarily on the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Within these broader topics, we will investigate the fundamental mechanisms that regulate homeostasis. In addition, students will explore various interruptions in homeostasis caused by diet and exercise, lifestyle, diseases, infections and environmental agents. Coursework will include laboratory exercises, supplemental readings, case studies, interesting field trips, collaborative group work and student presentations. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B (½ CREDIT)

**Marine Biology** is a field course that examines a wide variety of life forms inhabiting the oceans and their adaptations to specific habitats. Focusing on coastal California ecosystems, students will gain an appreciation for the abundance and diversity of marine life and complex food web relationships. The course will provide a brief introduction to the circulation and structure of the ocean, but the primary emphasis will be on ecological relationships among species. Students consider human impacts, particularly overfishing, on the marine environment throughout the course. The course emphasizes the application of scientific methods in various field studies along the northern California coast. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B (½ CREDIT)

**Neuroscience** is an introduction to the mammalian nervous system, with a specific focus on the neurobiology of the human brain. Topics covered include basic neuroanatomy, neurons, and the sensory and motor systems, with an emphasis on the relationship between neural structure and function. Throughout the course students will begin to consider how the nervous system creates an internal neural representation of the external world through the sensory systems and in turn, influences physiological responses. Additional topics include diseases of the brain and the neural underpinnings of learning and memory. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Advanced Biology: Genetics** offers students an in-depth look into one of the most exciting and rapidly expanding fields of biology. The course encompasses learning about complex modes of inheritance, as well as performing cutting-edge labs and bioinformatics activities that offer students a chance to master practical techniques widely

used in research today. We begin first by exploring the structure and function of DNA, and how complex gene regulation is crucial to building an organism. This sequence is followed by learning about phylogenetics, the genetic basis of common diseases, human evolution and population genetics and modern biotechnology techniques including PCR, sequencing and CRISPR. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B and instructor recommendation. (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS Advanced Biology: Infectious Disease**

explores various aspects of immunology, microbiology, epidemiology, global public health and disease ecology in order to identify the root causes that affect the detection, transmission and treatment of communicable diseases. The course includes an in-depth investigation of the human immune system and its ability to respond to a variety of pathogenic agents. Students will also categorize pathogens (viral, bacterial, protozoan, fungal) and explain how they disrupt the body's ability to maintain health and homeostasis. In the process of studying bacterial infections, students will learn microbiological techniques, from culturing to microscopy, in addition to molecular and genetic analysis. The course develops a global perspective of infectious disease through the investigation of emerging and re-emerging diseases and the environmental and ecological components involved. Specific topics for investigation may include: tuberculosis, malaria, smallpox, MRSA, dengue fever, bubonic plague, cholera and HIV. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B and instructor recommendation. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Advanced Chemistry A and B** aims to give students a high level of understanding and competency in chemistry at an advanced pace. The content and laboratory sequence is roughly equivalent to a general chemistry course usually taken during the first year of college. Students will develop a deeper ability to think analytically and conceptually, expressing their ideas in writing and problem solving. Students will delve into topics studied in previous classes, and will also explore new topics including thermodynamics, quantum theory, advanced topics of equilibrium and electrochemistry. Advanced Chemistry is a fast-paced class requiring an active interest in chemistry, previous success with chemistry topics, and a willingness to work hard. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B, and instructor recommendation. (1 CREDIT)



### **UAS Environmental Science: Ecology**

introduces students to the principal concepts and processes that operate in ecological systems.

Beginning with simple interactions between water,

the atmosphere, and basic life processes (respiration and photosynthesis), the course develops a dynamic view of ecosystems, covering the principles of energy flow and the cycling of matter, population dynamics, trophic interactions, ecological networks and community change. Throughout the course students consider human impacts on these global processes and environmental change. Both lab and fieldwork will provide opportunities for students to investigate these concepts and processes in-depth — students will gain experience in experimental design and statistical interpretation of data. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B and instructor recommendation. (½ CREDIT)



### **UAS Environmental Science: Physical Resources**

explores the complex relationships between humans and their environment. Recurring themes include

interconnection of the systems that constitute our environment, material and energy cycling, and the question of what is sustainable. Specific topics include water resources, energy sources, local and global air pollution and global climate change. This class involves a field component, augmented by in-class labs and modeled simulations. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B and instructor recommendation. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  CREDIT)

### **UAS Advanced Physics: Electricity & Magnetism**

builds on some of the major themes and skills of Mechanics, applying them to topics of electricity and magnetism. We begin the course by developing concepts of electrical charge, force and field through the study of static electricity and learn to apply those concepts to more common and useful examples with electrical current. Magnetism, especially as it relates to electrical current, is then explored and developed. Although the topics are abstract and difficult to imagine, many demonstrations and experiments help to make them tangible and relevant to real-life applications. In a culminating project, students apply principles to build and electromagnetic device of their choice. Prerequisites: UAS Advanced Physics: Mechanics and instructor recommendation; Math 3B ( $\frac{1}{2}$  CREDIT)



### **UAS Advanced Physics: Mechanics**

is an in-depth exploration of some fundamental topics in classical mechanics. The class begins by using equations

to precisely describe the motion of objects in one and two dimensions. Then students study Newton's laws of forces and motion, and see how they can be applied to the real world. Students investigate circular motion, gravity, and the conservation of energy, both in the context of motion and in broader systems. At the end of the course, students take a flying trapeze lesson, gather data, and analyze the physics of their flight. As an advanced class, Mechanics demands strong mathematical problem solving skills and abstract conceptual reasoning. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B, Math 3B and instructor recommendation ( $\frac{1}{2}$  CREDIT)

### **UAS Advanced Physics: Waves & Light**

continues to develop major themes and concepts from prior physics coursework. New topics include simple harmonic motion, sound waves, physics of music, electromagnetic waves, light and optics. The study of light also leads to a survey of modern physics, including quantum mechanics, high-energy physics and relativity. Students in this class will continue to investigate both abstract physics concepts and real-world applications. A significant amount of time is dedicated to experimental and procedural design, so that students become more adept in laboratory situations. Throughout the term, the science is linked to specific technologies and real-world situations. Prerequisites: Successful completion of UAS Advanced Physics: Mechanics and instructor recommendation. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  CREDIT)



## English

The primary goal of the English curriculum is to develop appreciation for the joys and possibilities of literary expression. A central feature of our courses is the close reading and discussion of literature — a form of critical inquiry that supports and honors diverse points of view and varieties of interpretation. Our other primary task is writing, with the goal to develop not only the student’s competence, but their voice as well. Students leave Urban with a sense of themselves as thinkers and writers, thoughtful and reflective, and capable in expressing both their critical and creative sensibilities through their writing. Learn more at [www.urbanschool.org/english](http://www.urbanschool.org/english).

**The Journey (English 1A and 1B)** emphasizes the close reading of world literature and the preparation of a text for discussion. Students write frequently and in a number of forms, including expository essays and passage analyses, personal narratives and creative projects. Principles of English grammar are taught and reviewed. Required for 9th graders. (1 CREDIT)

- **English 1A: Stories of Us** examines themes and problems related to the ways that departures, journeys and homecomings influence the formation and development of character and identity. Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* forms the foundation of this exploration into the travels and travails of journey-making, as characters manage obstacles, friendships, family and their sense of home.
- **English 1B: Journeys** is an exploration of stories and storytelling as cultural, social and spiritual awakenings of self. Students examine how these stories can be “mirrors and windows” that enable complex understandings of the world. From Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, to Belle Yang’s graphic memoir *Forget Sorrow: An Ancestral Tale*, to the stories of their childhoods, students will dive into the cyclical nature of storytelling and why these story types persist.

Students will practice generating claims and ideas primarily through Socratic discussions and small group activities. Writing will emphasize arguable, clear thesis statements and topic sentences, as well as selecting and integrating textual evidence to strengthen literary analysis.

**Composition (English 2A and 2B)** is a two-course sequence designed to help students assume the habits and instincts requisite for strong writing. In multiple and regular assignments, students develop and hone their ability to craft clear expository prose in response to literature and ideas; several creative writing assignments challenge students to evoke or echo a pertinent theme. The grammar component includes common and complicated problems in syntax. Required for 10th graders. (1 CREDIT)

- **English 2A: American Voices — Part I** explores the complexity of American cultures and the nature of personal identity, examining a variety of 20th and 21st century American voices in several forms: poetry, short stories, essays and speeches. Authors include Langston Hughes, Adrienne Rich, Gwendolyn Brooks, Tracy K. Smith and Danez Smith, among myriad others.



- **English 2B: Languages of Love and Power** explores how writers interpret and challenge our ideas about power, love, and the intersection of the two. This course demands reflection: on the conflicts between the individual and society, between individuals and their own conscience, and on how power and agency shape our choices and are subsequently shaped by our choices. The literature in this class speaks to broader human experiences while each story examines a distinct era, region and subculture: F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are centered on American experiences in the early part of the 20th century, while our final work introduces us to the sinister dynamics of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

**Children’s Literature** invites students to use their amassed literary abilities and heightened consciousness to read with a childlike wonder. Answering the questions: What were the books you wished you read as a child? How did the texts you encountered as a child inform your understanding of the world? And, how has your relationship to reading evolved since childhood? Students will “celebrate the vitality of adolescence” by reading, imagining, and creating children’s literature of their own.

Additional areas of study will be: the historical, political, and contemporary role of children’s literature; censorship and banned books; accessing literacy practices; the creation and publication of children’s literature; theoretical lens of viewing children’s literature; the role of libraries and librarians; the distinction between young adult and children’s literature and more! Our intention will be to use the joy of revisiting children’s literature to reignite a passion for reading that can be sustained for life beyond Urban! (½ CREDIT)

**Examining the Good Life** will ask: What makes a good life? What kinds of happiness and fulfillment can we achieve in our lives? If we try to feel good, will we do good? How does the way we imagine the universe — and our self within it — shape our quest for happiness and fulfillment? We’ll read a wide range of philosophical arguments (from ancient Greece, India and China, to modern Europe and America) and short stories, watch a few films, conduct an interview, and write analytically and creatively in order to help ourselves articulate and reconsider what it is we want from life. (½ CREDIT)

## **Immigrant Literature: A Legacy of**

**Innovation** tackles everything from the complications and triumphs of interracial relationships, to having parents whose values are completely different to your own, to what it means to be one thing religiously and another thing culturally. What do we learn from belonging to more than one culture? Or feeling like we belong to none? And what can the dominant culture learn about itself from voices on the margins? The short stories, novels, graphic novels, poetry, films, plays and comedy specials covered in this course emerge from immigrants and their descendants the world over. These texts help us to look more deeply into the disorientation, excitement and insight gained from moving between cultures. Possible texts include: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, Hasan Minhaj's *Homecoming King*, *The Arrival* by Shaun Taun, and *We Should Change Our Names* by NoViolet Bulawayo. (½ CREDIT)

**Literature and Film** This course explores how visual media, primarily film, has responded to literature. We will examine what adaptation means, and how adaptations function as both commentary on an original text and revelation of a time period's interests and concerns. Our theme for this class is "shaped by setting": how do our characters, in print, on screen, in other forms of art, exist in their settings and spaces? When do they resist their placement in their society or culture? And how is this theme carried over into other mediums — how do the spaces and places of film, television, sculpture, painting (and more) respond to themes and ideas in written works? Possible texts include Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Kafka's *The Trial*, Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, James Baldwin's *If Beale Street Could Talk*, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, alongside short stories by Elmore Leonard, Flannery O'Connor, Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, Annie Proulx and more.



## **The Naturalist as Writer: Environmental Change and Justice**

considers fundamental questions about humanity's relationship to nature, wilderness and ecological change. These

include: What is the nature of environmental crisis and injustice? What happens to human and non-human beings and our relations with each other in a state of climate change, extinction, environmental illnesses and inequities, and ecological degradation? What are the root causes of our current conditions, and what are our options and pathways for reconstruction? To consider how writing itself can form ecological consciousness, we will read fiction, poetry, philosophy and natural histories about environmental destruction and the possibilities of different futures. Readings include: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*; Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*; Deborah Bird Rose, *Wild Dog Dreaming*; William Cronon, *The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature*; excerpts from foundational American environmental writers such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Muir; Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*; Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams*; and Valerie Kuletz, *Tainted Desert*. Students will write reading responses and generate visual projects; compose a personal history of their interactions with nature; and write analytical essays on the fiction, poetry and essays we read. (½ CREDIT)

**Poetry: Form and Meaning** uncovers some of the mystery in reading and analyzing poetry by exploring a variety of poetic forms, from traditional sonnets to experimental performance art. The goal of this course is to engage in active study of the exciting and complex worlds that poems create. We'll investigate the freedom found in

structure and the limitations of working without meter and rhyme. We'll write critically about poetry and honing our skills of poetic analysis; at the same time, we will grapple with the challenge of writing our own poems. Readings may include poems by William Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, Elizabeth Bishop, e. e. cummings, Allen Ginsberg, Anne Carson, Michael Ondaatje, Sharon Olds, Derek Walcott and many others. (½ CREDIT)

**Stories on Stage** From the massive theater festivals of the ancient Greeks to the rowdy theater in Shakespeare's day, to the plays and screenplays we experience now, we are drawn to stories in performance. No matter where they are located or when they were written, all plays focus on one of the most fundamental needs of being human: the desire to understand and to be understood. How are we understood, and how do we understand others? How do we reckon with external forces whether imposed by gods, by systems or by circumstances? In this class, we will move from ancient plays and adaptations to more familiar settings, considering how modern pressures can complicate our understanding of ourselves and others. We will address how the conventions of theater allow for the creation of character, tension and drama, responding to the reading both critically and creatively. We will also watch productions, addressing how directors and actors interpret the words on the page as well as how production choices, including sound and visual design, impact our understanding. Playwrights will reflect a variety of perspectives including Ancient Greek, LatinX, Irish and British South Asian.

### **Voices of Incarceration**

(see Multidisciplinary Courses)

**UAS American Romanticism** delves into a body of literature that emerges from 19th century New England but concerns itself

with the "true places" that aren't written down on any map. We'll study the distinct styles, motifs, themes, problems and ideas in Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, and the poems of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. While these works may seem, at first, to have little in common, we'll endeavor to find the threads that connect them as they lead us into unmappable mysteries: life's origin, meaning, and destination; the vast universe outside of us and the vast universe within us. We readers — like our authors and their characters — will explore such mysteries, as well as the limits of our ability to understand them. (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS British Literature: Breaking**

**Boundaries** explores the work of British writers of the late 19th and 20th centuries who were the inheritors of a literary tradition that included gender-bending Shakespeare and the wild Romantics. Partly through the influence of these writers, the word "queer" began to shift in meaning; while social conventions might be rigid, literature and life suggested a more fluid, complex reality. In 1928, Virginia Woolf published a novel with a gender-shifting protagonist whose various lifelines span four centuries; as Orlando puts it, "I'm sick to death of this particular life. I want another." Using *Orlando* as the central text, we will explore questions and definitions of identity, agency, self-expression, gender and sexuality in the works of authors who resisted easy or reductive labels and rejected comfortable conventions. We will place these authors in the context of their times, addressing historical and literary game-changers who pushed against boundaries and binaries to find more authentic, less defined spaces. Authors and works in addition to Woolf's *Orlando* may include: *The Bell* (Iris Murdoch), poetry (Jackie Kay), and short fiction (E.M. Forster, Adam Mars-Jones, Diriye Osman) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Creative Nonfiction** explores this compelling genre through excerpts from classic autobiographies, modern literary memoirs, personal essays and autobiographical poems. As we read and analyze the works of writers such as Michele de Montaigne, Cathy Park Hong, Saeed Jones, Morgan Jerkins and Lindy West, along with excerpts from magazines such as *Creative Nonfiction*, *The New Yorker*, *The Rumpus* and *Harper's*, we study and replicate the elements that create an authentic voice. Writing will be both critical and personal — we will examine our own experiences, ideas and interests as a way of strengthening writing and investigating first-hand how to architect a narrative, create a scene, manage dialogue and connect effectively with readers. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Introduction to Creative Writing** is a multi-genre introduction to the art of creative expression through language. How do we create realistic characters? What are the essentials of convincing dialogue? How do we write stage directions? What role does language play in creating tone and mood? How do I work with perspective and point-of-view in crafting narrative? In answering these and other writing-related questions, this course will explore the conventions of writing fiction, poetry, plays, and screenplays while offering students the skills they need to tap into their creativity within these genres. Through critical reading, writing exercises, peer workshops, and instructor feedback, students will develop techniques that support effective drafting, editing and revising; they will also explore their creative strengths, develop a vocabulary with which to articulate those strengths, and experiment with their emergent personal voice. To support our work, we will read from Stephen King's *On Writing* and *The Art of Series* to explore elements of craft, from syntax to plot

development, from cultivating creativity to exercising professional responsibility. We will also read, analyze and critique our own work with an eye toward iterating and revising to develop a sizable portfolio of polished writing by the end of the term. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Latin American Literature** dives deeply into magical realism and its derivatives, both through the dominant writers of the “Boom” generation — Julio Cortázar, Gabriel García Márquez and Silvina Ocampo — as well as “Post-Boom” writers, such as Clarice Lispector and Julia Alvarez, who have also left their mark on Latin American literature. Their work is experimental and, owing to the political climate of the Latin America of the 1960s, also intellectual and political, using humor, passion, myth and emotion unabashedly. The course looks at the relationship between fiction and truth, imagination and freedom, and authorship and tyranny. Readings include *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez and a number of short stories and poems. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Literature of Dystopia and Sci Fi** engages with the imaginations of authors and filmmakers as they render their “thought experiments” about oppression, individual rebellion, paranoia, morality, and the hazards of technological progress. This elective will offer a chance to debate, criticize and explore the critical warnings these texts offer. We will consider the question at the heart of science fiction and dystopian literature: What if? What if privacy were against the law? What if you were punished for your innate strengths? What if our attempts to improve our world actually destroy it? Our texts will include short stories, graphic novels, novels and films. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Modern American Literature** examines the traumatic impact of historical oppression on the bodies and minds of individuals. In three contemporary American novels — Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Junot Diaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and Tommy Orange’s *There There* — we see characters struggling to cope with the ways they have been fractured by their past, and we also see them discovering the power of love, community and storytelling to heal.

We will try to glean from these novels a better understanding both of the lived reality of America’s histories of slavery, colonialism and genocide — and of the tools and wisdom we all might use to cope and to heal. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Nigerian Literature** explores the literature and cultural forms of a nation with remarkable diversity: languages (Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, English, among many others), ethnicities (more than 250), and religious belief systems. This region hosted some of humanity’s earliest civilizations, its recent history includes colonialism and civil war, and Nigeria is now the largest economic power on the continent of Africa — these factors contribute to the content and complexity of its literature. As we dive into the diverse perspectives of this nation, we will read works by authors such as Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Wole Soyinka, Mfoniso Udofia and Noo Saro-Wiwa, as well as other artists whose works exist outside of conventional publishing formats. Through these literary voices we will listen to how some Nigerian writers dramatize and express their inner and outer landscapes; how they inherit and integrate the legacies of their past; and how they view themselves against the broader backdrop of other African nations and the increasingly globalized world.

(½ CREDIT)

**UAS Russian Literature: Dostoevsky and Chekhov** introduces students to the rich literary tradition of 19th century Russia through two of its great writers. We spend much of the term reading Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*; it’s a giant, philosophical, spiritual and utterly strange novel. We close with a number of short and subtle short stories by Anton Chekhov. Discussions and assignments demand both close reading and a constant wrestling with what 19th century Russians called the “accursed questions” — questions like: Should we believe that our suffering is ultimately valuable and for the good? What about others’ suffering? And what kind of order (political, religious, familial) do we really need, if any? (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Shakespeare** introduces students to the richness and complexity of William Shakespeare’s works, plays whose 400-year-old language is still alive and well and evolving on stage and screen today. Students read three major plays and study additional scenes and soliloquies. The course approaches Shakespeare from both a literary and dramatic perspective as we read aloud, discuss and perform his works. Students study the texts through a close analysis of passages and explore themes, relevant literary concepts and character so as to deepen their understanding of Shakespeare’s language on the page and on the stage. We use film, performances and creative approaches to develop students’ ability to assess production choices and deepen their understanding from the directing, acting and audience perspectives. (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS The Unconscious: Stories and**

**Theories** will offer windows into the mystery of what motivates people and what moves us about art. We will treat stories as dreams—as expressions of an inner world that is full of energy, feeling, and creativity and that resists the conscious mind’s efforts to understand it. We will examine myths, novels, films, and graphic memoirs where characters are driven by desires and fears that remain largely hidden to them and to the reader. These texts will be paired with the classic theories of psychologists like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Melanie Klein, and Donald Winnicott—theories which try to explain the contents of “the unconscious” and which offer tools for interpreting characters and texts. We will find each theory to be illuminating as well as limiting, and students will work to develop their own unique approaches to interpreting “the unconscious” in literature. Finally, the literary texts will, broadly speaking, move through the life cycle. The course will focus on the common (and possibly universal) experiences of self-discovery in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Toni Morrison** is a class that disrupts and complicates stereotypes about people of color in America through selected works by the award-winning author Toni Morrison. With her groundbreaking lyrical prose, offbeat plots and nuanced characters, Morrison — the first Black author ever to win the Nobel Prize in Literature — explores Black joy, pride and beauty even while writing about the tribulations of adolescence, colorism and exploitation. In this class, students will craft stylistic and thematic emulations, analyze prize-winning literature, endeavor to solve real world problems, respond to critics, and celebrate the diversity and breadth of the Black community in Morrison’s books. We will read novels like *Song of Solomon*, *Paradise and Sula*, and watch the documentary *The Pieces I Am*. (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS William Faulkner and Marlon James: Stop Making Sense Whether**

on the grounds of a Jamaican sugar plantation in the 1790s, or in the home of a family living in Mississippi early in the 20th century, the texts in this course stretch the boundaries of the English language as we know it. They center a wide range of voices, sometimes in words that “don’t make sense,” in order to help us inhabit histories that have often gone unexamined and under-appreciated. This class looks directly at the legacy of Whiteness and patriarchy in the US and the Caribbean, as well as the active resistance to these forces of separation and subjugation. Our class’s engagement with these voices demands that we abandon our attachments to familiar syntax and understandings, and to easy distillations of truth. In this way, these texts help us experience our profound interrelatedness, across ability, gender, class, race, language and time. This interrelatedness demands that we reconsider what it means to be an individual and to be a member of a distinct family, culture, era, race, or even species. Texts may include William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* and *Go Down Moses*, and Marlon James’ *The Book of Night Women*. (½ CREDIT)



## History

Urban values history for the greater understanding of today's world that it provides, and we want and expect Urban students to be active historians. In focusing on the making of the modern world, we aim to highlight how the past is relevant to the present, emphasizing that students are not simply spectators but participants in their society. Some courses are taught exclusively through documents from the era, and in all our classes, students develop their own analytical ideas through abundant writing and discussion. We are committed to depth of understanding by teaching topic-defined courses that allow intensive study of critical periods. We believe in the importance of global coverage, and each of our international courses focus on contemporary history and traces current issues to their historical sources. Learn more at [www.urbanschool.org/history](http://www.urbanschool.org/history).

**World History (A)** begins by examining the structure and systems of power within the Ottoman empire as it expanded across vast swathes of territory. Students will evaluate the Ottoman Empire's tolerance and inclusion of women and religious minorities in the first half of its rule. Then, students will examine the changes made under increasing pressure in the 19th century, as Ottoman rulers and residents adapted their society, with varying amounts of success. Students will debate the most influential people and moments of this Era of Transformation. We will study the outbreak of WWI, the genocide of Armenian peoples, and subsequent state led denial. Students will chart the impact of post war treaties which culminated in the empire's dissolution when borders were drawn hastily, and nationalist and independence struggles ensued. We will end with the creation of modern Turkey, and focus our efforts on understanding how nations are built and how culture and society are shaped — both from above and below. (9th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**World History (B)** shifts its focus to the Asian-Pacific region and the modern Japanese empire. We begin with foundational belief systems from the pre-modern era and then examine Japan's unification under its last feudal military government, which led to two and a half centuries of peace. The flourishing of arts and culture in the Edo period, as well as government bureaucracy, guide our study in this period. We then examine Japan's conflicted relation with the West that leads to the modern era — the Meiji restoration, an embrace of certain Western ideals and the rise of Japan as a world power throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. (9th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Making America** begins by examining the diverse indigenous communities and ways of life on the Atlantic coast. Students will then evaluate the encounters between Native Americans and Europeans, examining the process of and resistance to settler colonialism. The course then moves to the economic development of society, particularly through the development of and



resistance to reliance on enslaved labor. An investigation of the origins and politics of the American Revolution and the founding documents provide the basis for examining the historiography of this nation's origins. Required to fulfill US history requirement. (10th and 11th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Remaking America** challenges students to understand and interpret the evolution of the nation — politically, economically, socially — in the 20th century. This course begins by covering the changing relationship between the federal government and the American public during the Great Depression and the New Deal. Students then examine WWII and the Cold War as creating the conditions for the Civil Rights movement and attendant social movements in America's cities, campuses and households, setting the stage for the conservative counter-revolution that crystallized around the rise of the New Right. Students complete an independent

research paper in this course. Required to fulfill US history requirement. (10th and 11th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Birth of Modern China** closely examines three distinct periods of Chinese history: End of Imperial China (1842-1911), Republican China (1911-1949) and Chairman Mao's China (1949-1976). In 100 years, China transformed from an isolated and independent empire to an internationally embroiled player on the world stage. Students in this course gain a clear understanding of how 2,000 years of dynastic rule collapsed and the significance of western politics and political philosophy in China during the first half of the 20th century. Students also investigate various attempts to recreate and revise a Chinese identity suitable for and powerful enough to engage the modern world. This course takes special care to utilize primary resource materials such as political speeches, propaganda art, literature and film. (10th graders only) (½ CREDIT)



**Civics and Society** is an introduction to democracy and the political, economic and social systems that support it. With a focus on systems and power, students will develop an understanding of government structures at the local, state and federal levels. Students will reflect on their own political identities and consider how effective change makers assess, plan and carry out actions to make a lasting impact. Key topics include: the purpose of government, the evolution of democracy in the USA, and movements for human rights by people who cannot vote. Students will create a culminating research project on a topic of their choosing. This course pays particular attention to reading, writing and research skills, providing multiple opportunities for students to practice summarizing, synthesizing and building on the information and ideas they collect. (10th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Comparative Religion: Our Search for Meaning** considers the question: what is the meaning of life? We explore some of the answers offered by Native American religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Specifically, we focus on the following topics: creation, the nature of God and man, self-discovery, community, scriptures and rituals. We visit places of worship and invite spokespersons of various faiths to come speak to us. In addition, each student conducts a research project on a particular Bay Area religious community. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)



**Economics** We begin by developing some basic micro and macro-economic literacy. We will have a better sense of the impact of economic decisions on lives and ambitions. We will understand

economics as fundamental to and derived from politics, jurisprudence, social justice, ecology, moral philosophy, culture, and technology. We will see that economics is a lens with which we examine and understand threads in the fabric of everyday life like college costs, health care, the music industry, gentrification, etc. We will understand economics as a practical philosophy of applied ethics whereby we consider how to best solve the problem of scarcity and environmental care. Thus, we will focus on two contemporary issues affecting local and global communities: income inequality and environmental sustainability. The last six weeks involve primers on income inequality and environmental sustainability culminating in a research project in the student's choice of one of these concerns. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**The French Revolution** explores the birth of the modern era as the people of France catapulted their country from absolute monarchy to a revolutionary republic, taking hundreds of thousands of lives along the way. This tumultuous upheaval that reshaped Europe in the late 18th century started with the Enlightenment and ended with an uncertain future. The transformation of ideals into action during the French Revolution took many forms: an assertion of human rights that challenged ancient tradition; the mobilization of heretofore voiceless masses; the violent toppling of king and nobility; and many heads being chopped off, all in the name of liberty. (10th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Globalization** asks students to ponder three central questions to shape our efforts: What is globalization? How has it affected people's lives and shaped the way people live? How have people influenced the process of globalization? In attempting to answer these questions, we will define globalization and its broad features, and then examine pre-industrial, industrial and post industrial globalization in its economic, social, cultural, and now geologic manifestations. The course then ask students to apply the thematic lens of migrations — of people, ideas, commodities, and power which culminates in an independent research project.(10th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

### **Queer Theater History**

(see description in Multidisciplinary Courses)

**Screening History** uses popular Hollywood films as vehicles to analyze US society through the 20th century. Students will study clips of films, research relevant historical context, and analyze how films reflect economic realities, social movements or geopolitical maneuverings of a particular time period. We begin with the rise of the medium. We then initiate our historical examination in the 1920s and conclude in the 1970s by examining how filmmakers engaged with the American role in Vietnam. The course includes an independent research project (10th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**South African History** introduces students to a continent rich in culture, religion, music and art through a focused study of South Africa. After a brief overview of the geography and demographics of the continent, students will explore the political, economic, religious and social organizations on a broad basis, extending from the pre-colonial period to the present. To hone in on South Africa, we will begin our study

in the 18th century and continue into the 21st century. The focus will be on studying South Africa on its own terms rather than merely placing it into Eurocentric context of colonialism. (10th Graders only) (½ CREDIT)

### **US Foreign Policy in the 20th Century and Beyond**

examines the evolution of the nation's role in the world. From young upstart to global police force, the United States underwent a massive transformation in the scope and scale of its participation in international politics in the 20th century. What forces drove the increasingly interventionist policy? What have been the costs and benefits of American involvement in global affairs when it comes to war, humanitarian issues, arms, aid, development and the environment? The course begins with the Spanish-American War in 1898 when the United States commanded more attention as a major participant in international relations. From there, students will examine the shift away from isolation as the nation rose to prominence throughout the 20th century. Students will also explore current and future challenges facing the nation. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS America Transformed: 1865-1929**

is a thematically (rather than chronologically) organized course, which examines social, cultural and economic changes from the perspective of the "common" man and woman rather than that of the national political leadership. Through the lenses of race, class and gender, students explore the following topics: construction of racial identity and race hierarchies; the rise of big business and the ensuing battles between capital and labor for control of the industrial economy; urbanization; immigration and its impact on American culture; marriage and family; and the development of a consumer-driven, leisure-oriented culture. The ultimate

aim of the class is for students to construct rich connections between each of the above topics. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Asian American History** introduces students to the diverse narratives of Asian diasporic communities in America. The course opens with the first waves of immigration in the mid-19th century to subsequent exclusion laws; the watershed moment of World War II and Japanese American internment; the Civil Rights Movement and the impact of U.S. Imperialism and the Cold War; and end with current issues facing various Asian American communities today. Students will explore themes related to individual and community action, immigration and exclusion, race and resistance, citizenship and the law. When possible, we take advantage of San Francisco’s local history with off-site field trips and independent projects to better see the multicultural roots of our city and society. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Constitutional Law** is our study of Civil Liberties and The Bill Of Rights and focuses on a number of issues: freedom of speech, the rights of minors and students; and the rights of the accused; and equal protection under the law. Students primarily rely on The Constitution and U.S. Supreme Court judicial opinions as the core texts for the course. When possible students also visit courts and meet with lawyers. The goal of the course is for students to develop basic constitutional literacy and the ability to identify and apply legal precedent and reasoning to novel contexts. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)



### **UAS Environmental History**

examines the settlement of North America and the expansion of the United States through the lens of the interactions between people and the land. Moving forward in chronology and as we sweep east to west across North America, students will examine the relations between Native Americans and settlers, the motivations behind westward expansion and the rise of industrialization. We will also examine environmental racism and the environmental justice movement. Students are encouraged to consider questions of land and resource use and the role of the market economy as they arise from an ethical perspective, as well as an historical one. Readings include *Encounters with the Archdruid* by John McPhee, *Changes in the Land* by William Cronon, and writings by Wendell Berry and Carolyn Merchant. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS History of South Asia: Modern South Asia**

explores a region celebrated for its cultural diversity and roughly 3500-year textual history. The course focuses on the modern period (mid-18th to mid-20th centuries), which was crucial to the formation of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh as modern nation-states. Throughout the course we grapple with the challenges posed by the study of other cultures and identities (gender, caste, and religion) in culturally sensitive ways. For example, were the British justified in outlawing the ritual self-immolation of widows? Or, does Muslim-majority Kashmir have a right to independence from Hindu-majority India? We also confront the complex historiography of South Asian Islam: how and why historians have diverged so dramatically in their accounts of it. And for much of the course we track the ways in which different nationalist factions under leaders like M. K.

Gandhi—divided by caste and religion—agitated for and finally won independence. Our work culminates in a reflection on the tragic Partition of 1947 and an intensive exploration of a topic of contemporary significance, such as the fate of Kashmir or the rise of Hindu nationalism. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Modern Middle East** takes up the stories of three places — Israel/Palestine, Iran and Egypt — as students investigate a number of themes and issues: tyranny and aspirations for democracy, religion and secularism, civil rights and the status of women, western intervention, and nationalism and the nation state. Students gain fluency in the conflict over Israel/Palestine, the 1979 revolution in Iran and subsequent seizing of the American embassy, and the events leading to the Arab Spring in Egypt. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to recognize and wrestle with the preconceptions they bring to the study of this region. Our studies of all three countries begin in the late 1800s but will also include significant reading of contemporary news. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Race in Latin American History** begins by examining the significance of race in the region from the colonial era through the 1930s, when a sea change in thinking about race resulted in the emergence of the ideologies that are prevalent in the region today. We will then examine the efforts of the post-1959 Cuban Revolutionary Regime to address racial injustice, and finish by exploring the current significance of race in the region through works in the fields of sociology, anthropology and political science. Major themes to be explored include: the importance of race in the Spanish colonial project, the impact of the wars of independence on race relations, the influence of international currents of thought,

and the relationship between ideology and actual conditions. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Women’s United States History** examines the history of the United States with women’s lives at the center of the story. Rather than present a single, cohesive narrative of women in the United States, the course situates gender identity as inseparable from histories of class, age, race, sexuality and place. Students will grapple with the writing of history and how we understand women as active agents rather than passive witnesses of history. The course traces a number of themes that emerge from rapid urbanization at the turn of the 20th century: the rise of new industries and communities; changing definitions of gender; expressions of sexuality and desire; societal opportunities and obstructions; relations of power between groups of women; and spaces for mutual recognition and liberation. Students will choose their own readings and design their own course for our final project. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)



## World Languages

Urban's World Language Department seeks to inspire and motivate students to become proficient in their chosen language during high school and to continue their language learning beyond Urban in order to participate more efficaciously in a world made irrevocably smaller by technological innovation, globalization and immigration. The tools of proficiency encompass both form (grammatical precision, extensive and expressive vocabulary, near-native accent and intonation) and message (authentic and spontaneous communication exchanges). Digital technology plays a pivotal role in the language classroom, in particular because of its unique and intrinsic capacity to shape, facilitate and improve communication. Learn more at [www.urbanschool.org/language](http://www.urbanschool.org/language).

**Chinese 1** (novice level proficiency) is an intensive introduction to spoken and written Chinese language through contextual, real-life communicative activities. The focus is on pronunciation, vocabulary development and sentence formation, with students achieving the ability to speak and write a minimum of 300 words in simplified Chinese characters, and to read and listen effectively to a variety of elementary phrases and short passages. An important goal includes achieving intelligible pronunciation and intonation patterns. **(1 CREDIT)**

**Chinese 2** (novice to beginning intermediate level proficiency) reviews the basics covered in Chinese 1 and deepens students' understanding of the material. In addition, students acquire and use an additional 300 characters. Short readings of authentic materials supplement the basic textbook and are discussed in Chinese. Students improve their writing skills and work on oral skills through presentations, communicative activities, games, cultural activities and reading-centered discussions. **(1 CREDIT)**

**Chinese 3** (intermediate level proficiency) gives students the opportunity to go further in-depth into Chinese grammatical structures and their use in everyday situations. By this time, students will be able to hold longer and more satisfying conversations, present more sophisticated oral presentations, and write more detailed essays. More discussions on Chinese culture, society, history and poetry will be done at this level as well. Students will continue to develop their literacy skills by acquiring less frequently used Chinese characters. **(1 CREDIT)**

**UAS Chinese 4A: Language and Culture Immersion in Chinese** This is the first course of the UAS Chinese series, a continuation of intermediate Chinese. Students continue learning vocabulary and sentence structures used in everyday situations through various forms of practice. It is a comprehensive course at the advanced level that intends to further develop students' aptitudes in the four key language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of Mandarin Chinese. Students learn vocabulary and grammar via exploring Chinese pop culture and contemporary China through authentic

material, i.e. pop songs, vlogs, films. In addition, students celebrate and understand the importance of traditional holidays through hands-on cultural activities. (½ CREDIT)

#### **UAS Chinese 4B: Idiom Phrases** (chengyu)

This is the second course of the UAS Chinese series, a continuation of intermediate Chinese. This course focuses on intensive practice of spoken and written Mandarin with an emphasis on proper use of chengyu (idiom phrases), and building of vocabulary based on topics of interest and relevance. Students will enhance formal essay writing and conversation skills through learning chengyu. Students also learn traditional Chinese culture and examine the issues among contemporary Chinese societies. This class prepares students for a higher level of Chinese language learning. (½ CREDIT)

#### **UAS Chinese 5/6A: Chinese through Films**

This is the third course of the UAS Chinese series. This course concentrates on expanding skills in understanding and using Mandarin through films from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, with attention to the historical, linguistic, regional and cultural differences. Students examine contemporary Chinese films through multiple mediums of understanding (watching, script-reading, writing exercises) to better understand the culture, language and historical components of the Greater China Region. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Chinese 5/6B: A Closer Look at the Greater China Region** This is the final course of the UAS Chinese series. The class aims to develop student aptitude in the four key language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) through examining technology/scientific development, social/environmental challenges, and regional/international political issues in today's Greater China Region. Students also explore aspects of Chinese language in traditional Chinese linguistics, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics and Chinese dialectology. Topics include historical sources, social variations and geographical distributions. This class prepares students for advanced studies in Chinese in college. (½ CREDIT)

**French 1** (novice level proficiency) is an intensive introduction to spoken and written French and francophone culture through contextual, real-life communicative activities. The focus is on sentence formation and vocabulary development with students achieving the ability to speak and write effectively using the present and past tenses. An important goal is for students to begin thinking in French rather than translating from English. (1 CREDIT)

**French 2** (beginning intermediate level proficiency) reviews the basics covered in French 1 and deepens students' understanding of the material. In addition, students acquire and use the simple and



compound past tenses and are introduced to the subjunctive mood and to the conditional and future tenses. Short readings supplement the basic textbook and are discussed in French. Students improve their creative writing skills and work on oral skills through presentations, communicative activities, games, cultural activities and reading-centered discussions. (1 CREDIT)

**French 3** (high intermediate level proficiency) gives students the opportunity to review past and present tenses and to complete their acquisition of all simple and compound tenses. By this time, they find conversation and writing in French easier and more satisfying and can express themselves in all tenses. Discussions of current events and of short stories, debates and oral presentations are typical conversation activities. (1 CREDIT)

**UAS French 4A: Literature Fantastique-Creative Writing** This course is an introduction to fantasy French literature. The stories, *Oriental Tales*, written by Marguerite Yourcenar, comprise folktales, fantasies and allegories, in which themes are as varied as the countries represented. From China to Japan, to the Balkans and India, the tales address questions about human nature and how one comprehends our world through various themes such as love, conquest, betrayal, religion, gender perception and passion. The stories share a mythological form based on pre-existing myths and legends. The aim of the course is to help students become more confident creative writers, to fully engage with the reading process, including ways to critically analyze texts. Students will converse and write on a variety of topics. Writing includes essays, personal reflections and literary analysis. Advanced grammar is reviewed and integrated into all skill areas. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS French 4B: Post-Colonial Africa / Indochina and Neocolonialism** This course examines political, socioeconomic and cultural challenges in a post-colonial and globalized world. The class exposes students to the relationship between France and its former colonies from the first encounters to the current discourses about the “France Afrique,” as well as to post-colonial theory and immigration literature. Students will be introduced to the diversity of Francophone Cultures through the diverse media, including documentaries, films and texts. We explore the Poets of the Negritude literary movement with essays and texts by Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire. Students review advanced grammar, write analytical essays, and work on multiple research projects. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS French 5/6A: Theater of Ideas** This course questions and examines the themes of freedom, tolerance and justice through the study of the philosophical period of the enlightenment, the existentialist movement and its philosophers, the Absurd, the New Wave and the impact of feminism. Students reflect on the contributions that the writers have made to our contemporary understanding of society and human existence. Texts include stories, plays and essays by Molière, Voltaire, J.J Rousseau, J.P Sartre, Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir and Ionesco. Students are expected to read carefully and engage deeply with the assigned texts, analyzing them critically for themes, form and content. They will demonstrate original ideas in essays, journals and short reaction pieces. In connection with their literary pursuits, students will be exposed to audio and video clips that offer them practice with daily communicative functions. (½ CREDIT)



### **UAS French 5/6B: The Heroine in**

**Literature and Films** This course examines the problematic themes of identity, gender roles, equality, societal norms and social constructionism from the mid 20th century to today in literature and movies through the lens of female protagonists. We engage with novels by Marguerite Duras, Dai Sijie and Shan Sa, and films by Yamina Benguigui and Agnès Jaoui. Students explore how gender and ideas of masculinity and femininity structure space and shape mobility. We also discuss the changing social and historical contexts in which these heroines evolve. Both in terms of form and content, we investigate the following two genres: autofiction and autobiography, striving to understand how the narrative forms blur the line between memoir, autobiography and fiction. (½ CREDIT)

**Spanish 1** (novice level proficiency) is an intensive introduction to spoken and written Spanish and Hispanic culture through contextual, real-life communicative activities. The focus is on sentence formation and vocabulary development, with students achieving the ability to speak, write, read and listen effectively using the present and present progressive tense. An important goal is for students to begin thinking in Spanish rather than translating from English. (1 CREDIT)

**Spanish 2** (beginning intermediate level proficiency) reviews the basics covered in Spanish 1 and deepens students' understanding of the material. In addition, students acquire more vocabulary and learn to use the different past tenses. Additionally, they learn the imperative and are introduced to the subjunctive mood. Short readings supplement the basic textbook and are discussed in Spanish. Students improve their creative writing skills and work on oral skills through presentations, communicative activities, games, cultural activities and reading-centered discussions. (1 CREDIT)

**Spanish 3** (high intermediate level proficiency) gives students the opportunity to review different verb tenses, complete their study of the subjunctive mood and learn the conditional and future tenses. They will be able to hold longer conversations and debates, produce more sophisticated and detailed oral presentations about Hispanic culture and politics, and write essays, short stories and opinion pieces. The use of all the indicative and basic subjunctive tenses becomes more spontaneous and natural. (1 CREDIT)

### **UAS Spanish 4A: Immigration in the US: New Identities in a Globalized World**

The focus of this course is to examine the complex and sometimes contradictory experiences of new identities, whose thought and literature are not bound by national, racial or linguistic borders, but instead transit through them. We'll investigate how these new subjectivities exemplify the positive and negative effects of living in a globalized world. We'll explore fiction by Yuri Herrera, Tomás Rivera, essays by Gloria Anzaldúa, poems by Reinaldo Arenas, films such as *La Ciudad or ¿Cuál es el camino a mi casa?*, works that explore the border-defying experiences of immigrant, refugee and exiled subjects. Students will discuss texts, review advanced grammar, write analytical essays, and conduct a final interview project. (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS Spanish 4B: 20th Century Latin**

**America: What is Modernity?** This course asks the question: what is modernity and what does it mean for Latin America and for Latin American writers of the mid 20th century? We will investigate the power and sway of historical reputation on the individual, the national, and even the continental scale. We will study the genealogy of the dichotomy “Civilization and Barbarism” as it pertains to Latin America, and interrogate its subsequent reappearances and re-inscriptions. We’ll see the extent to which it appears in art, fiction and film as a kind of haunting or phantasmagoric subtext, even as Latin American countries hurl themselves onto modernizing projects and visions of an ascendant the future. We’ll look at art by Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Fernando Botero, read short stories by Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Juan Rulfo, Isabel Allende, and watch the film *También la lluvia*. (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS Spanish 5A/6A: Spanish Avant-Garde: Film, Literature and Art**

This course will provide an examination of literary and artistic movements in Spain in the 20th century, beginning with the country’s critical response to the loss of its world empire in 1898, the burgeoning of modernism and the avant-garde in the 20s and 30s, the total reversal of these movements in the aftermath of the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship through 1975, and their dynamic regeneration and reinterpretation in the 1980s and 90s up to the present day. We’ll engage with films by Pedro Almodóvar, fiction by Ana María Matute, art by Picasso and Miró, architecture by Gaudí and Calatrava, journalism and essays as we experience the dynamic shifts of a society grappling with its history and future direction. (½ CREDIT)

### **UAS Spanish 5B/6B: Contemporary Literature and Creative Writing in Spanish**

In this course students will study modern and contemporary literature in Spanish, organized around the four main genres of literature: narrative, poetry, essay, and drama. In addition, they will try their hand at being Spanish language fiction writers themselves. Throughout the term, After studying the components of what makes up each genre and analyzing the particular styles and methods of different authors, they will write their own original piece in that genre. The aim is twofold: to help students become more confident Spanish fiction writers, and to foster reflection and engagement with the writing process. The course will be carried out as a seminar and a workshop. They will read each other’s work, critique it, and help each other become better writers. As a final project, they will write, produce and act out a short play before their classmates. Texts to be read will include stories by Claudia Hernández, Samantha Schweblin, Marco Denevi; poetry by Pablo Neruda, Alfonsina Storni, Nicanor Parra; essays by Rosario Ferré; plays by Sergio Vodanovic, Sabina Berman.. (½ CREDIT)



## Performing Arts — Music and Theater

The goal of the Performing Arts Department is to introduce students to the discipline and the creative process of the performing arts. We stress ensemble work in our classes and productions, creating a trusting environment that allows students to free their imaginations and develop self-confidence and spontaneity. Our classes accommodate students with no performing experience. Learn more at [www.urbanschool.org/arts](http://www.urbanschool.org/arts)

### THEATER

**Theater 1: Performance Lab** introduces students to the basics of theater as an art form, as well as the skills and habits of mind required for performance. Students will engage in a range of activities, including basic acting, physical, and vocal exercises, character development, scene study, monologue performance, theater games, improvisation, and exploration of other elements of theater such as direction and design. Through these activities, students will increase their confidence, build greater physical and vocal awareness, enhance their observational skills, develop their ability to reflect on their creative process, and deepen their understanding of theater as an art form and storytelling tool. In cooperation with peers, they will gain greater access to their creativity and spontaneity, improve their ability to work collaboratively, and express themselves through writing and performance. The course includes a field trip to see a play at a local professional theater, where students can observe firsthand the elements and choices that makeup a theatrical production. (No previous experience required.) (½ CREDIT)

**Circus Techniques** teaches students to go upside down, juggle and balance on different objects; in other words, to expand their physical vocabulary by developing skills in a variety of traditional circus arts. In class we perform basic acrobatics, human pyramids, juggling and aerial work. These techniques enhance flexibility and build strength while teaching students timing, spatial orientation and coordination. Work in circus arts requires discipline, collaboration and imagination. It provides a strong foundation for anyone interested in learning new skills, expanding creativity and developing courage. The course culminates in a circus performance that is developed entirely during class time for the school community and public. (½ CREDIT)



**Essentials of Comedy** investigates an art form that is both unifying and polarizing: comedic performance. We will explore various styles of comedy, including short form (such as TikTok and improvisation games), sitcoms, satire, stand-up and more, to understand what makes something funny and why. This is a performance-based class where students will be expected to hone their comedic chops through individual and small group performances, presentations and writing exercises. All experience levels are welcome, from confident jokesters to those uncomfortable with jokes altogether. Comedy is more important than ever, and this class will invite students to both find and create a respite, emphasizing joy and playful discovery. The class will include a field trip to a local comedy event, such as a stand-up or a sketch group performance. Essentials of Comedy culminates in a final showcase performance developed by the class for the school community. (No previous experience required.) (½ CREDIT)

**One Acts Festival** is an advanced theater seminar that produces a festival of short, student-written plays for public performance. In this class, students will engage in workshops on directing techniques, engage with writings by theater professionals, and regularly reflect on rehearsal progress. They will hold auditions, develop rehearsal plans and direct their own rehearsals with actors not enrolled in the course, conducted outside of class hours. Students will also actively participate in other aspects of production, including design, construction and publicity. Please note that this class requires attendance at rehearsals after school, especially for technical rehearsals near the end of the term. Students interested in writing a play eligible for inclusion in the festival are required to enroll in the weekly Playwriting class during winter term. To complete a stage-ready script by the end of the winter term, Playwriting students will be expected to meet writing deadlines and submit several script revisions. Interested students with no prior theater production experience must consult with the instructor before enrolling. (12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Peer Education Theater** is a class, a performance event and an Urban tradition. Through a daily stream of journal prompts and performance projects, we write and perform constantly. Students mine their lived experiences and imaginations to produce solo and group scenes for each other. The ensemble practices a series of listening and witnessing skills, as well as collaborative decision making in group projects. We acquire stagecraft through regular improvisation and exercises for body and voice. In the second half of the term, focus shifts toward the production of a show or film, where students compile a script from their original written work and collective visions. The course concludes in a series of community performances and discussions. Prerequisite: Newly enrolled Peer Resource students are required to take this class in 10th Grade. Peer Education Theater is open to all students, no experience necessary. (½ CREDIT)

**Queer Theater History**  
(see description in Multidisciplinary Courses)

**UAS Musical Theater Production** is a full-scale ensemble production in collaboration with the music program at Urban. We spend approximately 10 weeks in rehearsal, culminating in public performances in the Gumption Theater. Production work may involve guest artists in choreography, design and instrumental accompaniment. This class requires an understanding and ability to engage in acting and singing techniques, as well as strong dedication, energy and mutual support. Students will analyze and rehearse a scripted musical, including engaging in rigorous practice of acting, singing and dancing, both in rehearsal and independently. In addition, students will explore the themes of the show and regularly reflect on personal progress. Please note that this class includes rehearsals after school three days a week throughout the term, and every afternoon





during Weeks 9-11. Students may not participate in an Urban athletics team while taking this class. Prerequisite: Intro to Urban Singers or Theater 1. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Theater Production** is an advanced acting class that stages a full-scale ensemble production. We spend approximately 10 weeks in rehearsal, culminating in public performances in the Gumption Theater. This class requires an understanding and ability to engage in acting technique, as well as strong dedication, energy and mutual support. Students will analyze and rehearse a scripted play, engage in research on the play's themes, apply writings by theater professionals, and regularly reflect on personal progress. Students will also engage with creative work in other aspects of production, including design, construction and publicity. Please note that this class includes rehearsals after school three days a week throughout the term, and every afternoon during Weeks 9-11. Students may

not participate in an Urban winter sport while taking this class. Prerequisite: Intro to Urban Singers Chorus, Theater 1 or Essentials of Comedy. Peer Education Theater can count with instructor approval. (½ CREDIT)

**Theater 2: Performance Ensemble** is the second in a sequence of classes that helps students develop the skills and habits of mind required for performance. Students will broaden their knowledge of theatrical approaches, develop strategies for analyzing scripts, learn to create complex dramatic characters, discover techniques for unlocking spontaneity, and gain experience in creating and performing work in varied styles. Students will analyze and perform scripted scenes and monologues from a range of plays, and investigate a selection of genres from the theatrical canon. They will also improvise scenarios and write their own short performance pieces. The course includes a field trip to a local professional show, as inspiration for developing an original group

scene. Theater 2 culminates in a showcase performance of scenes and monologues developed entirely in class time for the school community. Prerequisite: Theater 1, Musical Theater Production or instructor approval. (½ CREDIT)

## MUSIC

**Introduction to Urban Singers** is a performance-oriented class in which students study vocal technique and basic musicianship skills, including music theory and solfège. Students learn fundamental principles for successful singing in a choral environment, work in pairs and groups to accomplish rhythmic and sight singing goals, and learn about the anatomy and physiology of the voice. Students in Intro to Urban Singers learn repertoire that will be performed with the Urban Singers, which includes contemporary, classical, pop and spirituals. Students in this class will join Urban Singers for the entirety of the school year starting the second half of Fall term, which includes a yearlong combo (smaller group) commitment every other Thursday afterschool and performing in the Winter, Spring and Combo (smaller group) Concerts. (Open to 9th Graders and other interested students; meets during Fall term.) Prerequisite: Intro to Urban Singers students are required to join Urban Singers. (½ CREDIT)

**Urban Singers** is a performance-oriented vocal group committed to musical excellence and the building of skills and community through ensemble. The concert repertoire is drawn from a broad range of styles, including contemporary, classical, pop and spirituals. The ensemble is a musical ambassador for the school community, performing at school functions and neighborhood outreach centers. Students participate in small combos

every other Thursday after school, focusing on music of their choosing. Participating students earn one full arts credit and a letter grade for their yearlong commitment. (Yearlong commitment, meets for three E periods) Prerequisite: Intro to Urban Singers. Incoming 9th graders enter this yearlong class after week 6 of Fall Term. (1 CREDIT)

**Introduction to Jazz Band** prepares beginning instrumentalists for assimilation into Jazz Band by teaching the beginning tools and techniques in a supportive environment. This class will help musicians find their place in the band through specific, necessary instruction and assessment. Entering musicians will be part of a team, making the transition into the larger group smoother, more efficient and complete. Skills include Chart-Reading, Improvisation, Musicianship, Ear-Training, Ensemble playing, Intonation, Theory and Repertoire Development. Students in this class will join the Jazz Band for the entirety of the school year starting the second half of Fall term, which includes a yearlong combo (smaller group) commitment every other Thursday afterschool and performing in the Winter, Spring and Combo (smaller group) Concerts. (Open to 9th graders and other interested students; meets during Fall term) Intro to Jazz Band is a prerequisite to joining either Lab or Advanced Jazz Bands. (½ CREDIT)

**Lab Jazz Band** is a large ensemble focusing on development of the basic technical and conceptual skills required for participation in the Advanced Jazz Band. Previous experience on an instrument is recommended, but not required. Students will also perform in small combos incorporating non-jazz styles such as rock, pop, fusion and funk, depending on their experience. Combos will meet every other Thursday after school for the



entire school year. Participating students earn one full arts credit and a letter grade for their yearlong commitment. (Yearlong commitment, meets for three E periods) Prerequisite: Audition or instructor approval. Incoming 9th graders enter this yearlong class after week 6 of Fall Term. **(1 CREDIT)**

**Advanced Jazz Band** is a large ensemble specializing in music from the American jazz tradition. It focuses on performance and gives two major concerts a year. Previous experience on an instrument is required. Students also perform in small combos incorporating other styles such as rock, pop, fusion and funk, depending on their experience. Students work on improvisation and other fundamental skills in combos meeting every other Thursday after school. Participating students earn one full arts credit and a letter grade for their yearlong commitment. (Yearlong commitment, meets for three E periods) Prerequisite: Audition or instructor approval. **(1 CREDIT)**

### **Introduction to Chamber Orchestra**

is a performance-oriented class preparing new Urban musicians to successfully assimilate into Chamber Orchestra in a creative and supportive environment. Students will explore instrumental technique and basic musicianship skills including rhythm, intonation, ear training, sight-reading, practice techniques and fundamental principles for successful performance in an orchestral environment. The class will learn excerpts as an ensemble in addition to practicing music from Chamber Orchestra. Students in this class will join Chamber Orchestra for the entirety of the school year starting the second half of Fall term, which includes a yearlong combo (smaller group) commitment every other Thursday afterschool and performing in the Winter, Spring and Combo (smaller group) Concerts. This class is open to musicians of all levels with experience on their instrument. (Open to 9th Graders and other interested students; meets during Fall term) Prerequisite: Intro to Chamber Orchestra required to join Chamber Orchestra. **(½ CREDIT)**



**Chamber Orchestra** is an ensemble exploring repertoire from the past and present, some in its original form and others arranged or commissioned specifically for the ensemble. The ensemble performs two large concerts per year. Previous experience on an instrument is required, and some students add instruments during their tenure in the group. Opportunities to conduct or compose for the group are also available. Through rehearsal preparation, all students work to develop technical knowledge of their instrument, enhance their rhythmic and reading skills, and learn to listen and respond to other parts in the ensemble. Additionally, students will rehearse in small chamber groups with coaching sessions every other Thursday after school. In these small groups, students will learn how to rehearse independently, communicate effectively, and perform a variety of chamber music. Assignments for the course which will take the form of recordings of practice sessions and in-person playing tests with other musicians. Participating students earn one full arts credit and a letter grade at the end of their yearlong commitment. Meets for three E periods a week.) Prerequisite: Intro to Chamber, Audition or instructor approval. **(1 CREDIT)**

**Advanced Musical Ensemble** provides an opportunity for musicians to build, rehearse and perform with a small group in any musical style. They may draw from the student body to fill out their group's personnel. The bands will work closely with the instructor, but group leaders will be expected to choose their ensemble's personnel and repertoire as well as run their own rehearsals. The class will culminate in a showcase performance in May featuring all student groups. (Open to 11th and 12th graders) **(½ CREDIT)**

**Music Theory 1** answers the questions "How does music work?" and "How does one create original music?" Music Theory 1 is geared toward achieving a greater understanding of and facility with the music that we listen to, perform and create. This course accommodates multiple experience levels; no previous experience is necessary. Students with previous experience will explore topics on a deeper, more challenging level. Topics include solfege, notation, intervals, scales, melodic writing, Roman numeral analysis, chords, basic chord progressions and musical forms. This course is a prerequisite for UAS Music Theory 2: Composition, Applied Music Theory and UAS Music Production and Engineering. Open to all grades. **(½ CREDIT)**

### **20th Century American Popular Music: From Ragtime to Rap**

Students will acquire a familiarity with the basic music structures and stylistic developments of American popular music, as well as becoming familiar with some of the major artists and innovators of this music. Particular vocal and instrumental styles that will be studied include Spirituals, Blues, Be-bop, Tin Pan Alley, Rap, Rock, American Musicals and R&B. Students will gain an understanding of chronology and interconnectedness of these forms, and their interaction with the history of each era. Our course materials will include primary source documents (newspaper articles and reviews, interviews, testimonials and memoirs), and we will study recorded examples and videos by some of the major artists of the 20th century. Many of the recordings we hear will be archival recordings and videos of artists playing in their prime. **(½ CREDIT)**

**UAS Applied Music Theory: Tools for Performing Musicians** is designed to apply fundamental and advanced theory concepts to individual instruments and voice. These include scales, modes, arpeggios, approach notes, patterns, harmonic substitutions, melodic manipulations and other devices. Students will use their own instruments and/or voices to perform and assimilate these concepts while discovering real world applications. Regular practice outside of the classroom will be mandatory as well as written homework and regular playing/singing tests. Prerequisite: Music Theory 1. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Music Production and Engineering** will actively explore the roles and responsibilities of music producers and engineers from idea inception to finished product. Students will immerse themselves in basic studio technologies and recording

procedures, focusing on digital audio technology. Students will learn about types of microphones, pre-amplification, compression, equalization, microphone placement, tracking, digital effects, mixing and editing, as well as talent management, pre-production and problem solving. There will be in-class evaluation of commercial recordings and student work. The class culminates in student-produced final recording projects, utilizing the skills taught throughout the class. Prerequisite: Music Theory 1 or instructor approval. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Music Theory 2: Composition** explores the skills necessary to begin creating original music pieces. Students will continue to study music theory in conjunction with several compositional projects of varying size and scope. Through analysis and text students will gain a broad and in-depth understanding of how music is put together. The resulting compositions will be created and performed using both music notation software and live players. This class will re-introduce all elements of music (rhythm, melody, harmony and form) solfege, scales, harmony, ear training, theoretical analysis of progression, basic arranging and composition. These tools will be necessary as we explore modes, advanced harmony, odd meter, chromatic solfege, symmetrical scales and more. Students will deepen their understanding of rhythm, develop their ears and incorporate new tools for composition. We will explore and master fundamental music writing skills, including notation, key signatures, relative scales and modes, melodic development, basic/advanced harmonic progressions and analysis. At the conclusion, students will have the option of taking an AP music theory test. Prerequisite: Music Theory 1 and instructor approval. (½ CREDIT)



## Visual Arts

Urban's Visual Arts program is designed to stimulate and develop students' facility with and enthusiasm for creative visual expression in a variety of media. In a range of courses, Urban introduces students to the vast potential of the visual arts as a means of self-expression and as a way to engage their imaginations in giving their ideas aesthetic form. Through different media and materials, we seek to introduce students to the vast potential of the visual arts as a means of self-expression and to engage their imagination and curiosity in giving their ideas aesthetic form. Our classes are designed to foster independent and flexible thinking, as well as discipline, risk-taking and perseverance. Learn more at [www.urbanschool.org/arts](http://www.urbanschool.org/arts)



**Architectural Design** is a project-based studio class in which students learn the principles of architectural composition. Through a number of shorter projects and one long-term project, students learn about topics related to the design of private and public spaces, addressing foundations of the design process such as form, function, proportion, scale and articulation of space in the process. Students practice freehand and computer drawing as well as model making through a series of form studies of nature, architectural forms, linear perspective and abstract elements of composition. Experiential, social and material concerns are introduced together with formal and conceptual issues, and emphasis is placed on creativity, graphic presentation and computer skills. Substantive studio work is supplemented by a survey of important monuments in the history of architecture. (Open to 11th and 12th graders only.)  
Prerequisite: Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, Sculpture, Industrial Design or permission of instructor. (½ CREDIT)

**Art as a Daily Practice** will combine hands-on art projects with a number of field trips to arts organizations and artists' studios. We will be looking at ways that artists practice art every day, considering both fine and applied arts, political activism, conventional exhibition spaces and alternative spaces, and various careers. We will also look at examples of art as a social practice, curating as social justice and a wide variety of ways that artists integrate activism into their practices. Each student will choose a focus for his or her own art making and commit to a daily practice — making something every day. This could translate into any number of mediums, working with collage, paint, sculpture photo, or something more conceptual, such as a performance art piece, creating scores for events, games, a mail art project, a sewing project or an installation. The assignments are very open-ended and there will be ample independent studio time. Student work will be exhibited in May. (12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Drawing/Mixed Media** focuses on developing observational skills, drawing techniques and creative thinking using a range of drawing media that includes charcoal, graphite, ink and mixed media.

The process of drawing engages the student in quieting the mind, connecting the eyes with the hands and the imagination. Students will develop both technical abilities and creative responses to materials, ideas, feelings and imagery. Working abstractly, from their imagination and from observation, they will embark on a variety of projects that include drawings inspired by sound, contour line drawing, self-portraits and objects among others. The class culminates with a final independent project in which they synthesize and apply their knowledge of ideas, tools and processes, to an idea or image of their choice. In addition to a daily studio practice, this class includes outside readings, writings and regular sketchbook assignments. (Open to all grades.) (½ CREDIT)



**Graphic Design** approaches design as a concept, as a process, and as a set of tools for the materialization of an idea. In a visual culture where technology is quickly evolving,

the need to be visually literate and design savvy becomes imperative for successful communication. Through practical and personal projects, we learn to use Adobe design software including Illustrator and Photoshop. Assignments begin with the nuts and bolts of design principles. Students learn about traditional and experimental design, layout techniques, and basic graphic design through smaller projects. Each project offers an invitation to think outside the box in terms of scale, materials, and formats to solve different real-world design problems. The course ends with an individual project either in printed or digital online format. Students will design original and elegant solutions that strategically move audiences to feel, think and act. Each project will explore questions that broaden our perceptions as image producers and consumers. Prerequisite: Drawing, Painting

or instructor approval. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th Graders ) (½ CREDIT)



**Industrial Design** is a course that uses the design process to develop ideas and explore the relationship between form and function. The majority of the products that we touch every

day were designed by an industrial designer: a toothbrush, a coffee mug, a backpack, a chair, an iPhone. Through a series of projects and assignments, students will evaluate everyday objects and identify design opportunities in terms of aesthetics, functionality, efficiency, and sustainability. Small skills-oriented projects build up to more complex projects, and the course culminates in a student-chosen final project that implements a comprehensive and accessible design process and utilizes sketches, 2D and 3D models, 3D printing, laser cutting, hand tools, and mixed media to translate a conceptual idea into reality. Prerequisite: Drawing, Sculpture, UrbanX Labs: Design, and/or instructor approval. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th Graders.) (½ CREDIT)

**Painting** is a studio class where students will explore and experience a variety of painting techniques, media and approaches. Painting is both an exploratory and problem-solving course dealing with form, color, texture and composition with an emphasis on both creative risk taking and skill building. Projects in class range from painting people, places and things through the lens of representation, expression and abstraction. Sketchbook work is integral to the course. Students will use sketchbooks to document their creative process, experiment with different imagery and practice their painting skills. The class culminates with an independent project in which students synthesize and apply their skills and knowledge to an idea or image of their choice. Studio work is supplemented with sketchbook assignments, individual

and group critiques, as well as writings and readings. (Open to all grades.) (½ CREDIT)

**Photography** is a studio class, offering students an opportunity to work more independently, deepening their understanding of photography's history and studio practice. The class includes a broad and intensive investigation into the properties of photographs and the meanings created when they are combined into groups, series and sequences. Students may pursue work in traditional black and white, color, or digital photography. Class exercises develop skills in composition, lighting, editing and printing images. Class demonstrations range from traditional processes to alternative techniques with a focus on individual creative expression. The ultimate goal is for each student to further develop their aesthetic vocabulary and to work independently, creating a body of work that demonstrates engagement, commitment and creative vision. Photography also includes outside readings, sketchbook and writing assignments, a research project, visiting artists and field trips. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th Graders.) (½ CREDIT)

**Sculpture: Clay and Mixed Media** is a studio workshop class focused on making 3D sculpture, working with a variety of materials and ways of thinking three-dimensionally. Working in both subtractive and additive manners, students explore the relationship between form and content in materials such as tape, clay, wire, altered books and found object assemblage. Projects investigate representation and abstraction, the body in relation to objects, kinetic and/or mechanical objects, wearable sculpture and environmentally or architecturally inspired installation. Each student creates a life-size clay head over four weeks, working with a study of anatomy and expression. Students develop dexterity with tools, working with their hands and thinking expansively about the alchemical transmutation of unusual everyday materials in order to reveal the conceptual aspects of their work. Weekly homework includes making small sculptures at home by casting, carving and baking, as well as reading, writing and sketchbook assignments. (Open to all grades.) (½ CREDIT)

**Video Production** is a studio class, introducing students to the creative and technical aspects of video arts. Through viewing and studying the techniques employed by contemporary video artists and filmmakers, students will make several short videos practicing different approaches. Class exercises develop skills in story development, video camera operations, composition, lighting, directing, editing and working collaboratively. The ultimate goal is for each student to develop their aesthetic vocabulary further, to work both collaboratively and independently, creating short videos that demonstrate engagement, commitment and creative vision. Video production also includes sketchbook and writing assignments, viewing films outside of class, visiting artists and field trips. (Open to all grades.) (½ CREDIT)



## **Wanderlust: Explorations of an Infinite City**

invites students to engage in walking and mapping as creative practices, both as art forms and modes of inquiry. Initially we will focus on the practice of walking as a means of investigating a wide range of issues — while simultaneously gaining deeper experience of the complex social, political, and ecological dynamics within San Francisco. This form of research is less focused on reading and writing (although there will be some of both) than it is on becoming increasingly aware of one's body as a multi-sensory vehicle for discovering images, stories, materials and urban rhythms. Starting off with Rebecca Solnit's *Infinite City A San Francisco Atlas* as a primary text, students will choose chapters related to different neighborhoods and then create scores and maps to both document their own experience and invite others into an experience of their own. Walking in the city sharpens perceptual and critical observation and can also open up an expanded sense of place, a deeper understanding of story, and possibly social connections or resources for future collaborations. What narratives—both internal and external—are only available to us when we move slowly, with an eye towards becoming increasingly informed about a place's people, histories and contemporary political realities? The class will culminate in an event open to the public featuring walks with scores and maps created by the students. Good walking shoes, a critical sensibility and a sense of adventure are required. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th Graders.) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Advanced Art Exhibition** is a disciplined engagement with the making of art. In class students sharpen their technical skills and demonstrate an understanding of formal elements and conceptual ideas while working toward an exhibition of their

work. Students develop fluency with visual vocabulary, utilizing appropriate materials and techniques to best articulate their ideas. Projects include short preparatory assignments, sketchbook work, journaling, writing, research and readings. The class culminates with a public presentation of their work that includes an exhibition and artist talk. Expanding each student's unique repertoire of methods, materials, and aesthetic and conceptual processes are essential to developing their personal vision in a creative and meaningful manner. NOTE: Advanced Art Exhibition students will be recommended by faculty and then they must submit a proposal for review. The final class roster will be selected from a pool of applicants. Prerequisite: Only with instructor approval and two previous terms of Visual Arts or approval from an art faculty. (Open only to 12th Graders.) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Advanced Media Arts** explores our visual culture where technology is quickly evolving, and emphasizes how visual literacy is all the more imperative for successful communication and cultural engagement. This course approaches media arts — including photography, video and graphic design — as a concept, a process and a set of tools for the communication of ideas. Through the study of the history of artistically engaged social movements, creative exercises and personal projects, students use still and video cameras, as well as editing and design software, to articulate their vision. This course introduces students to the possibilities of working in media arts through the exploration of interactive and collaborative methodologies, digital tools, and a critical study of media culture. We will discover how interactive media, storytelling and social connections determine our public and private identities in personal, fractured and complex ways. With an emphasis on collaboration

and peer feedback, students deepen their knowledge of the tools (both equipment and software) and dig deeper into the content of their work using a structured design process in order to achieve more complex iterations of their ideas. Prerequisite: Photography, Video or Graphic Design. (Open to 11th and 12th Graders — Priority given to those who have not yet taken the course.) (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Printmaking** explores a range of printmaking processes, including monotype, collograph and intaglio (drypoint and etching). Monotype offers spontaneity, collographs explore texture and materials, while drypoint and etching focus on precision of detail and composition. Students work with drawings, collage, color and photographs in creating the plates for their prints. A series of exercises revolve around the creative aspects important to any artistic pursuit, such as developing drawings, considering content, experimenting with composition, and learning what it is to be consistent and diligent with challenging projects. This class expects students to delve into substantial conceptual investigation as well as technical work. We look at pattern, mapping, self-portraiture and identity as well as political activism. The class encourages students to draw upon their own experiences and interests and to translate these into a visual vocabulary that is personally meaningful. Students work toward a final project working with multiple plates, juxtaposing images in layers to conceal and reveal different levels of meaning. This class includes both thematic and technical readings, research, sketchbook assignments, visiting artists and a field trip to a local printmaking studio. Open to 10th, 11th and 12th graders. (½ CREDIT)

**UAS Stone Carving** explores many aspects of sculpture through the process of carving, specifically the reductive process of taking material away to create form. We study the use of stone throughout history around the world. Students make maquettes in clay that are then translated into different types of stone, usually alabaster or soapstone. Students are expected to complete one 3D stone sculpture over 12 weeks and to actively document their paths of inquiry in a sketchbook. This will involve a continual process of drawing as a tool for design, keeping a sketchbook of ideas, changes and discoveries, and the study of the work of other artists who work in stone, both traditional as well as contemporary. The development of appropriate studio skills, effective working habits, and a commitment to one's inquiry is a base level requirement for each student. We will explore resources for stone within the Bay Area and visit with local stone sculptors. This class includes reading, writing, research as well as group critique and discussions. Personal integrity and a high level of commitment are essential. This class requires a lot of endurance, patience and hard work. Prerequisite: Minimum one term of Sculpture or instructor approval. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th graders.) (½ CREDIT)

**Portfolio Prep** meets during the fall term. This class serves as a structured environment in which 12th graders compile a portfolio of their artwork that is included with their college application. The portfolio should reflect, creativity, content and technical abilities. During these meetings, students edit, document, revise and organize their work into a portfolio that meets the individual college requirements. Students are expected to be self directed and productive. Prerequisite: instructor approval. (Open only to 12th graders.) (NO CREDIT)

## Multidisciplinary Courses

Urban offers several classes that span and blend traditional disciplines, encouraging students to connect and apply their skills and knowledge from a range of academic subjects. Many of these courses involve a significant field component, taking advantage of Bay Area resources, and all require substantive independent and/or collaborative projects. Assignments in these classes are frequently hands-on, and analyze contemporary problems in the Bay Area, California, the United States and/or the larger world.



**California Studies** focuses on how water affects the state of California in economic, environmental, political, and daily ways.

This field-based class meets during both B & C periods throughout the term; students spend two full weeks traveling around California in late May. Most of us know little about our water supply beyond what we see fall between the tap and the drain. Where does the water in San Francisco come from? This class will trace San Francisco's water supply back to its source through indoor pipes, city streets, reservoirs, treatment facilities, tunnels, pipelines and along rivers to the snowpack. As we meet with activists and policy makers, we'll use visual art, science, and equity frameworks to interpret the conflicting uses and needs around water in California. (12th Graders only) (Meets during two class periods) (1 credit; fulfills Service Learning 12 requirement) (1 CREDIT)



**Climate Change: Challenges and Solutions** engages students to dive deep into one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. We start by exploring the dynamics of global climate

and climate science. What kind of predictions can we make about how our planet will look in the future? What are the political, economic and social justice implications of action versus inaction? How can we communicate effectively about the challenges and what is at stake? Can we implement real, working solutions through resilience, mitigation and sustainable practices? This course will include field trips to speakers and panels, community events, and community engagement to provide context and depth to the scope of the challenges and solutions. Student-generated final projects will expand upon a curricular theme and the approach and outcomes should reflect the diversity of disciplines covered in the course. Depending on student interest, possible outcomes could include design projects (physical or digital), educational videos, mini-courses or research papers. (11th and 12th Graders only)

(½ CREDIT)

**Homelands: Discovering Diaspora through Oral History + Media** is a multidisciplinary course that examines contemporary trends in the movement of people around the world with a focus on indigenous, immigrant and refugee communities. Through personal interviews, oral histories, media arts, and community based participatory research, students investigate displacement factors



such as war, violence, poverty, and climate change. By engaging with Bay Area community organizations, students will achieve a more nuanced understanding of global migration trends, social issues impacting migration, the practical efforts of local organizations, and grass roots movement building. In addition to academic study and research, students will interview and document local individuals using audio, video and photography, creating a final collaborative and community based capstone project. (fulfills Service Learning 12 requirement for 12th graders) (11th and 12th Graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Journalism** engages students in learning and practicing the fundamentals of news reporting, writing and editing while examining issues such as free speech, censorship, media ethics and the future of multimedia. Students report, write and produce a newspaper and website, including podcasts and video. Texts include *Inside Reporting* and the *Associated Press Stylebook*; students also regularly read *The New York Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as well as essays on journalism ethics and prose style by Tom Rosensteel, Samuel Freedman and Jon Franklin. The course meets all year during E Periods. Open to 10th, 11th and 12th graders. (1 CREDIT)

**Mathematics of Democracy** explores how mathematics can illuminate the ways in which our society pursues the stated and unstated goals of our democracy. From a civics lens, we address the design, history and purposes of the US system of government. Then, blending civics and mathematics, we will investigate how we pursue those purposes and how mathematics helps illuminate the contradictions (stated vs. unstated goals, ideals vs. practice) in our democracy. In particular, students will analyze gerrymandering and the methods

being attempted to measure it (and how they fail), as well as voting rights of minority populations. Finally, we will explore alternatives to our system, including an analysis of how other voting systems work in theory and practice. This class incorporates both reading and mathematical problem-solving; students will be assessed by projects, reports and tests. Prerequisite: Math 3 (11th and 12th Graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Queer Theater History** examines the global history of queer theater. Students will study plays, performances, theory, and scholarship in an exploration of how LGBTQ+ artists have used theater to challenge societal norms and push for political change. The course covers a range of performance styles, from drag shows to experimental theater, and how queer artists have shaped the history of theater over time. Students will also look at the intersections of queer theater with other social movements, such as feminism and anti-racism, and the ongoing struggles for representation and inclusion in the theater world. This course intends to identify key aspects of queer theater and performance, and deepen students' understanding of physical, social, and emotional subtext in history. Prerequisites: US History Sequence (Making/ReMaking America), any Theater class or instructor approval. (11th and 12th graders only) (½ CREDIT)

**Voices of Incarceration** addresses the problem of "attention violence," so named by civil rights activist Reverend William Barber II, describing how we turn our eyes away from the experiences of people who most deserve our attention. More than 70 million Americans bear the marks of the legal system, and they — and their families — have been victims of that "attention violence." This elective aims to turn the light of our shared attention upon them: their individual experiences, as well as the systems, beliefs

and practices that created our current era of mass criminalization. Against a backdrop of racism and mismanaged resources, many forces converge to give America the highest incarceration rate in the world: from policing, to policy, to the legal system, to the emphasis on “correction” rather than “rehabilitation.” As we learn about the root causes and possible solutions for this issue, the content of the course, will come primarily from those directly impacted. We’ll listen to podcasts and interviews, we’ll read first-person narratives, and we’ll meet with speakers who have been released back into their communities after spending decades under the surveillance of the state. Students will also partner with individuals and organizations that are working to change the experience of those impacted by the criminal legal system. (11th and 12th Graders only) (½ CREDIT; CAN COUNT TOWARD ENGLISH REQUIREMENT)

**UAS Rethinking Poverty** looks critically at how different constituencies (artists, academics and activists, among others) have tried to recognize, define and understand poverty. From films like *The Florida Project*

and *Parasite*, to ads for Save the Children, to reports on *Living on \$2 a day in America*, representations of poverty abound – as do prescriptions for addressing it. Through such varied lenses as film, ethnography, literature and economics, we will investigate the virtues – and limitations – of these representations. We will explore the origins of the modern concept of poverty and the ideology of development that has arisen alongside, as well as the metrics used to talk about both. The academic realm offers a variety of differing answers to some key questions: Who defines scarcity? What counts as deprivation? Where does inequality come from? In addition, we will apply a critical lens to our own investigation: Can poverty be defined from the remove of a classroom? How much and how well can we come to understand? How accurate and helpful are universal models and global standards in defining poverty? What assumptions do we bring to this study of what we’re calling poverty? And, finally, what can we actually do? Prerequisite: Completion of *Remaking America* or teacher approval. (11th and 12th Graders only) (½ CREDIT)



## Service Learning

Urban is committed to extending education beyond the walls of the school. The school's pioneering four-year community service learning program encompasses multicultural education, civic engagement and community service. Through classroom discussion, community projects and self-reflection, students become responsible, resourceful citizens with a sense of personal, social and political awareness. Community service learning helps Urban students become aware, responsible and resourceful citizens, often achieving a level of social and political consciousness that is rare among teenagers.

**Service Learning 9: Identity and Ethnic Studies** is a six-week course designed for 9th graders to explore their identity and culture, as well as examine historical factors that shape social constructions such as race, ethnicity, nationality, gender and class. This is an introductory course to the four-year Service Learning Program at Urban. The course provides students with foundational tools, language and concepts for thoughtful and engaged community and global citizenship, which will be explored further during their 10th-12th grade Service Learning courses. Students are expected to understand how identity factors, along with culture, help shape one's identity and experiences. They are expected to further develop their sense of self-awareness, personal responsibility and purpose through the completion of an online journal, daily homework assignments, unit projects and a culminating final social construction media project. **(SIX WEEK COURSE. ¼ CREDIT)**

**Service Learning 10: Identity and Community Partnerships** is a six-week course that prepares 10th graders to become responsible and resourceful citizens who partner with non-profit agencies and organizations working to

serve a range of local needs and issues. The course introduces students to frameworks for effective citizenship, community engagement, and professionalism. Students partner with organizations such as the Institute on Aging, Literacy for Environmental Justice, Nature in the City, The Gubbio Project and Mariposa Kids. There are three key course goals:

- 1)** Introduce students to working with a community partner
- 2)** Prepare students for independent 11th grade service learning internships
- 3)** Review and preview how factors such as race, ethnicity, culture and socioeconomic class, help to shape one's identities and experiences.

Throughout the six weeks of the course, students are expected to participate during in-class activities and discussions, as well as work in small groups to partner with a local agency or organization. Students are asked to explore connections between their independent service sites and their passions, skills and values. Students are assessed on the quality and sincerity of their participation, written reflections, project proposals and presentations. **(SIX WEEK COURSE. ¼ CREDIT)**

**Service Learning 11: Independent Internship and Seminar: Identity at Urban and Beyond** is a 12-week course where 11th graders pursue independent service learning internships in the larger community once a week and engage in a twice-weekly seminar to arrive at new understandings of identity and the influence social identity constructs have on their experiences. Through weekly journals, in-class activities and group discussions, students identify and challenge their initial assumptions and explore their identities in relation to society at large, specifically through the lens of power and privilege. Additionally, students explore mediums for positive community engagement through the inclusion of multiple perspectives. Students are evaluated on the quality and commitment of their endeavors, written reflections, an annotated bibliography coupled with a class presentation, and authentic participation in all aspects of the course. (½ CREDIT)

**Service Learning 12: Understanding Systems of Inequity and Resistance** is a 12-week course in which 12th graders continue to pursue independent service learning internships and engage in twice-weekly synthesis seminars to bring together their previous coursework. The purpose of the course is to serve as a stepping stone for students to become fully and independently engaged citizens beyond the walls of Urban. In these seminars, students will deepen their understanding of the social context and systems as they relate to community engagement. Students will conduct an active inquiry using a variety of research methodologies on a group-elected social issue. Students are assessed through their engagement in participation in class discussions and weekly written reflections. The final assignment consists of a letter of recommendation from their site supervisor, a personal resume, and a group presentation on their topic. (½ CREDIT)





## Health at Urban

**Health 9** focuses on substance use and abuse. Students spend a lot of time thinking about their values and how they pertain to the topics discussed. They have many opportunities to reflect on their values through class discussions, small group work, journal writing and hands-on activities such as looking at scenarios students might find themselves in. Topics include learning about what drugs are, the different ways to approach drug education (just say no vs. just say know), understanding what happens in the brain when someone does substances (difference between “getting high” naturally and with substances), exploring various relationships people might have with substances (including everything between abstinence and addiction), demonstrating the role media has in decision making (be a filter not a sponge) and identifying how to find credible sources about substances. Required for 9th Graders. **(SIX WEEK COURSE. ¼ CREDIT)**

**Health 10** focuses on healthy sexuality and relationships. Over the course of six weeks, students will consider a broad, inclusive definition of sexuality, and acquire medically accurate sexuality information from credible resources on topics such as puberty, reproduction, and safe sexuality practices. Students will also engage in reflection on how to apply that information to the complexities of human relationships through dialogue about consent, sexual decision making, interpersonal relationship dynamics, active listening and effective communication skills. Classroom activities include partnered and small group work, peer to peer instruction and sharing, scenario deconstruction and media literacy. Personal journal work encourages students to think about their own rights and responsibilities in all relationships and the value of caring, loving, authentic connection that is grounded in mutual respect, empathy and dignity. Required for 10th graders. **(SIX WEEK COURSE. ¼ CREDIT)**

# College Matriculation from 2020-2024

American University.....	3	Harvard University.....	1	The University of British Columbia.....	3
Amherst College.....	1	Haverford College.....	1	Trinity College Dublin.....	1
Arizona State University.....	1	Howard University.....	2	Tufts University.....	8
Art Center College of Design.....	1	Indiana University, Bloomington.....	1	Tulane University of Louisiana.....	12
Babson College.....	1	Johns Hopkins University.....	1	United States Air Force Academy.....	1
Bard College.....	4	Kenyon College.....	4	Universitat Hamburg.....	1
Barnard College.....	6	King’s College London.....	1	University College Dublin.....	1
Bates College.....	2	Lehigh University.....	1	University of California, Berkeley.....	11
Bennington College.....	1	Lewis & Clark College.....	6	University of California, Davis.....	7
Boston College.....	6	Loyola Marymount University.....	13	University of California, Irvine.....	1
Boston University.....	11	Loyola University Chicago.....	1	University of California, Los Angeles.....	26
Bowdoin College.....	2	Loyola University New Orleans.....	1	University of California, San Diego.....	2
Brandeis University.....	2	Macalester College.....	4	University of California, Santa Cruz.....	9
Brown University.....	9	McGill University.....	2	University of Chicago.....	2
Bryn Mawr College.....	1	Middlebury College.....	4	University of Colorado Boulder.....	11
California Institute of the Arts.....	1	Muhlenberg College.....	1	University of Connecticut.....	1
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.....	15	New York University.....	19	University of Denver.....	1
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.....	1	Northeastern University.....	19	University of Massachusetts, Amherst.....	2
California State University, Chico.....	1	Northwestern University.....	3	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.....	2
Carleton College.....	1	Oberlin College.....	6	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.....	1
Carnegie Mellon University.....	3	Occidental College.....	17	University of New Mexico.....	1
Case Western Reserve University.....	3	Pace University.....	1	University of North Carolina Wilmington.....	1
Chapman University.....	4	Pitzer College.....	16	University of Oregon.....	14
Claremont McKenna College.....	1	Pomona College.....	6	University of Pennsylvania.....	6
Colby College.....	6	Pratt Institute.....	3	University of Puget Sound.....	1
Colgate University.....	3	Princeton University.....	3	University of Redlands.....	1
Colorado College.....	6	Reed College.....	6	University of Rochester.....	5
Colorado School of Mines.....	1	Rhode Island School of Design.....	3	University of San Diego.....	1
Colorado State University, Fort Collins.....	1	Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.....	1	University of San Francisco.....	1
Columbia University.....	3	Saint Mary’s College of California.....	1	University of Southern California.....	6
Concordia University, Irvine.....	1	San Diego State University.....	1	University of St Andrews.....	5
Connecticut College.....	1	San Francisco State University.....	2	University of Utah.....	1
Cornell College.....	1	San Jose State University.....	1	University of Vermont.....	1
Cornell University.....	2	Santa Barbara City College.....	3	University of Virginia.....	1
Dartmouth College.....	2	Santa Clara University.....	5	University of Washington, Seattle.....	5
DePaul University.....	3	Sarah Lawrence College.....	4	University of Wisconsin, Madison.....	4
Drew University.....	1	School of the Art Institute of Chicago.....	1	University of York.....	1
Drexel University.....	2	Scripps College.....	6	Vassar College.....	4
Duke University.....	1	Seattle University.....	1	Wake Forest University.....	4
Emory University.....	5	Skidmore College.....	5	Washington University in St Louis.....	6
Fordham University.....	1	Smith College.....	1	Wellesley College.....	4
George Washington University.....	4	Sonoma State University.....	1	Wesleyan University.....	10
Gordon College.....	1	Spelman College.....	2	Whittier College.....	2
Grinnell College.....	3	Stanford University.....	5	Willamette University.....	1
Hamilton College.....	2	Syracuse University.....	4	Williams College.....	1
Hampton University.....	1	The College of Wooster.....	1	Yale University.....	4
		The New School.....	8		

For more information about Urban School, please scan this code using your smartphone or tablet camera or visit [urbanschool.org](http://urbanschool.org). For any questions, please contact us at [admissions@urbanschool.org](mailto:admissions@urbanschool.org).



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Urban School of San Francisco is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the Secondary School Admission Test Board (SSATB), the Bay Area Association of Admissions Directors (BAAD), the California Teacher Development Collaborative (CATDC) and the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC). Urban also holds memberships in A Better Chance, Inc. (ABC), the Bay Counties League (BCL), and is a partner and summer locale for Aim High.



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