

# Upper School Curriculum Guide

## Grades 9-12

### 2026-2027

#### **Middle and Upper School**

11811 Olympic Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90064  
(310) 478-7189



**Wildwood School**

## Table of Contents

|                                                               |                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • <a href="#">Introduction .....</a>                          | <a href="#">3</a>  |
| • <a href="#">Graduation Requirements .....</a>               | <a href="#">4</a>  |
| ◦ Course and Graduation Requirement Tracking Tool             |                    |
| • <a href="#">Adding/Dropping Courses .....</a>               | <a href="#">6</a>  |
| • <a href="#">Independent Study .....</a>                     | <a href="#">7</a>  |
| • <a href="#">Honors and Advanced Studies .....</a>           | <a href="#">7</a>  |
| • <a href="#">Humanities .....</a>                            | <a href="#">9</a>  |
| ◦ Humanities                                                  |                    |
| ◦ Literature                                                  |                    |
| ◦ History                                                     |                    |
| • <a href="#">Mathematics .....</a>                           | <a href="#">13</a> |
| • <a href="#">Science .....</a>                               | <a href="#">16</a> |
| • <a href="#">World Languages .....</a>                       | <a href="#">19</a> |
| ◦ Mandarin                                                    |                    |
| ◦ Spanish                                                     |                    |
| • <a href="#">Institutes .....</a>                            | <a href="#">23</a> |
| • <a href="#">Electives .....</a>                             | <a href="#">25</a> |
| ◦ College-Prep Electives                                      |                    |
| ◦ Visual Arts, Music, and Performing Arts Electives           |                    |
| • <a href="#">Physical Education .....</a>                    | <a href="#">32</a> |
| • <a href="#">Community Involvement and Internships .....</a> | <a href="#">33</a> |
| ◦ Community Involvement                                       |                    |
| ◦ Internships                                                 |                    |
| ◦ International Community Involvement                         |                    |



**Wildwood School cultivates reflective scholars, bold innovators and compassionate leaders equipped with the skills, ethics and inspiration to transform their world.**

## Upper School Curriculum: Introduction

Wildwood's upper school is the pinnacle of the K-12 journey, where knowledge gleaned throughout students' time at Wildwood is synthesized, and the resources and support provided throughout their time at Wildwood come together to successfully launch students into the world of higher education, careers, and life beyond.

### ***Synthesizing Knowledge and Expertise***

Essential questions spark dialogue that requires every student to think deeply and participate. Rather than accept one source as an answer, students approach learning through various lenses and perspectives, studying critical theory and conflicting primary sources, gathering their own data, and then comparing it to others. It's through original research and an interdisciplinary approach that they arrive not just at the answer, but their own understanding for why the answer is what it is, a destination that isn't reached via short answer or multiple choice.

### ***Launching Prepared Graduates***

Wildwood coaches students to become experts in their areas of interest and responsible for their intellectual and creative pursuits. The goal? Independent thinkers who know how to collaborate. Confident public speakers who are also good listeners. Each is prepared to take the next steps to college and life.

Wildwood's upper school curriculum engages maturing intellects with core courses and electives. Honors courses and advanced studies are offered for students who wish to pursue additional coursework areas of special interest and abilities, and further their academic record. Our Institutes and upper school arts and academic electives invite students to explore their creativity and nurture talents on campus and in the community.

Advisory meets three to four times per week throughout the upper school. Students also enjoy opportunities to build and strengthen relationships with peers on competitive sports teams, in the performing arts, social action clubs, and science clubs and competitions.

Upper school programs may include off-site internships and local and international community involvement, which test student initiative while engaging students in a variety of experiences beyond the classroom.

We invite you to read on and discover what Wildwood students and families know and expect: intellectual rigor and infinite doorways to knowledge and creativity for every mind.

## Graduation Requirements

Upper school students are required to take a rigorous core curriculum of academic courses in Humanities, Literature, History, Mathematics, Science, World Languages, and Electives and Institutes to meet the requirements for graduation.

|                                         |                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Humanities</b>                       | 2 years (9th and 10th grades)                                     |
| <b>Literature</b>                       | 2 years (11th and 12th grades)                                    |
| <b>History</b>                          | 2 years (11th and 12th grades)                                    |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                      | 3 years (including Geometry and Algebra 2)                        |
| <b>Science</b>                          | 3 years (including Conceptual Physics and Biology)                |
| <b>World Languages</b>                  | 3 years (at least two years of the same language through Level 2) |
| <b>Physical Education</b>               | 1 year (9th grade)                                                |
| <b>Electives and Institutes</b>         | 4 years (1 year must be a UC-approved Visual/Performing Arts)     |
| <b>Community Involvement/Internship</b> | 3 years (10th, 11th, and 12th grades)                             |
| <b>Advisory</b>                         | 4 years                                                           |

## Required Course Load By Year

| 9th grade: (8 credits)    | 10th grade: (8 credits)   | 11th grade: (8 credits)              | 12th grade: (7-8 credits) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Humanities (2)            | Humanities (2)            | Literature (1)                       | Literature (1)            |
|                           |                           | Modern U.S. History (1)              | Senior Seminar (1)        |
| Mathematics (1)           | Mathematics (1)           | Mathematics (1)                      | Choice (1)*               |
| Science (1)               | Science (1)               | Science (1)                          | Choice (1)*               |
| World Language (1)        | World Language (1)        | World Language (1)                   | Choice (1)*               |
| Elective or Institute (1) | Elective or Institute (1) | Elective or Institute (1 )           | Elective or Institute (1) |
| Physical Education (1)    | Community Involvement (1) | Internship/Community Involvement (1) | Internship (1)            |
| Advisory (1)              | Advisory (1)              | Advisory (1)                         | Advisory (1)              |

\*NOTE: Seniors who have completed their graduation requirements for Mathematics, Science, and World Languages may choose to take a free period by dropping either Mathematics, Science, **or** World Language from their course of study. They must, however, maintain a minimum of seven credits, including World Literature, Senior Seminar, Elective or Institute, Advisory, and Internship completed either over the summer or during the school year. Decisions to drop academic courses should always be made in consultation with the College Counselor and the Director of Upper School.

## University of California Freshman Admission Requirements

All of our Humanities, Mathematics, Science, and World Languages courses as well as most of our Elective and Institute courses meet UC approval. Please visit the UC admission website for UC A-G Subject Requirements:

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/freshman-requirements/>.

## Summer School and Courses Taken Outside of Wildwood

Students enrolled at Wildwood who are interested in taking courses at institutions outside of Wildwood may do so for enrichment purposes. Certain institutions (for example, community colleges) may require approval from the Director of Upper School before the student is allowed to enroll in the course. Such approval may take several weeks to obtain, so students and parents/guardians interested in this option should contact the Director of Upper School well in advance of any external deadlines.

Summer School courses and courses taken at institutions outside of Wildwood:

- Are not included on the Wildwood transcript
- Are not included in the student's Wildwood GPA calculation
- Do not fulfill Wildwood graduation requirements
- Do not reduce the minimum number of required courses at Wildwood each year
- Do not allow a student to skip a Wildwood course in a particular course sequence

In very rare circumstances, a student may need to complete a graduation requirement at an institution outside of Wildwood. In such circumstances, special approval must be obtained from the Director of Upper School prior to the student's enrollment in the course. Special approval is a lengthy process, so students and parents/guardians interested in this option should contact the Director of Upper School well in advance of any external deadlines. Special approval is contingent upon the following:

- The course must be taken for the purpose of completing a graduation requirement outside of Wildwood.
  - Please note that students cannot take outside courses to skip a Wildwood course in a particular sequence or to reduce the minimum number of required courses at Wildwood each year unless approved by the Director of Upper School.
- The course must be offered by an accredited institution that will provide its own official transcript, or in some rare cases, can be offered by a curriculum publisher from the following list of vetted and approved options:
  - Global Online Academy
  - ImagineLearning
  - Language Bird
  - One Schoolhouse
- The course must offer a year-long credit.

If special approval is granted, the student must provide Wildwood School with a transcript from the outside institution confirming the student's successful completion of the course. Without a transcript, Wildwood will not consider the graduation requirement completed. However, approved courses from approved curriculum publishers are eligible for inclusion on the Wildwood transcript.

## Course and Graduation Requirement Tracker

[This document](#) is a tool to help students plan their course progression over their time in upper school (grades 9-12). The tracker outlines Wildwood's graduation requirements for each major subject area, and includes spaces to note electives, P.E./athletics, Community Involvement, internships, and Advisory. Students also have space to include the activities they participate in outside of Wildwood so that they have a holistic view of their learning lives each year, which can in turn help them maximize and balance their experiences. Students are encouraged to consult with their advisor and college counselor as they register for courses each spring so that they meet graduation requirements, can explore passions and areas of interest, and prepare to apply to/attend college or university.

## Adding/Dropping Courses

The student may request to add or drop a course for a limited number of days at the beginning of the school year. The Upper School Course Change Request Form (available in August) will be used when adding/dropping elective courses and changing a course from Honors to core.

Course changes from core to Honors can only be completed by the teacher of the course. Please see the teacher to make a change from core to Honors.

Requests to add or drop a course may be made for the following reasons:

- Gaps in the required course load
- Correction due to system errors
- Adjusted placement level for mathematics or World Languages  
Note: Placement level is contingent on departmental approval, placement diagnostic, completion of prerequisite courses, and/or space in the other level class.
- Desire to take a different elective or join an Institute

Requests to add or drop a course cannot be made for the following reasons:

- Requests for a specific teacher
- Requests for a specific block or section
- Requests for a class with specific peer(s)

### Open Add/Drop Period: Up to end of week 3 of the school year

During this period, the student may request to add or drop courses in their schedule without impact to their transcript. Any course that has been dropped or swapped will not appear on the student's transcript; no credit towards graduation will be awarded for the dropped or swapped course; the dropped or swapped course will not be included in the calculation of the student's overall GPA translation. The open period is the only time during the school year when a student may add a new course to their schedule. **Honors Exception:** Students enrolled in an Honors course may request to drop Honors and return to core without penalty through the end of Week 5.

### Late Drop Period: Week 4 to end of week 12 of the school year

During this period, the student may request to drop a course in their schedule with some impact to their transcript. The dropped course will remain on the student's transcript with a "W" (Withdrawn); no credit towards graduation will be awarded for the dropped course; the dropped course will not be included in the calculation of the student's overall GPA. **Honors Exception:** Students enrolled in an Honors course may request to drop Honors and return to core without penalty through the end of Week 5.

### Week 13 and On

After the Late Period closes at the end of Week 12, no courses may be dropped. The school may make exceptions in the following circumstances:

- Extended illness or injury resulting in medical leave from school
- Appropriate placement of new students

Students are encouraged to consider schedule changes carefully. Changes may not be reversed after they have been finalized or may require shifts in the student's other classes to different sections/blocks and/or different teachers. Additionally, the student is responsible for completing work assigned before their arrival in the new class.

## Independent Study

An independent study at Wildwood School is intended to allow a 12th-grade student the opportunity to pursue an area of interest in greater depth or detail than the curriculum currently provides.

The independent study is formally proposed by the student with oversight by a current Wildwood faculty member or administrator with experience in the proposed field of study who is willing to serve as the independent study supervisor. If approved, the student will be expected to design a comprehensive outline of the study, including a bibliography of readings and sources, units of study, a schedule of meetings with the study's supervisor, a culminating project that synthesizes the learning of the year, and a minimum of six clearly-defined standards by which the student's work will be assessed. Like other courses at Wildwood, the mastery levels in the course standards are converted to letter grades at the end of the year that appear on the student's transcript.

An independent study may be proposed under the following circumstances:

- The student is a rising 12th grader with a demonstrated ability and/or investment in the proposed field of study as well as demonstrated strengths in time management, collaboration, and independence.
- No other courses or Institutes afford the student a comparable opportunity for depth or focus of study.
- The independent study identifies a current Wildwood faculty member or administrator with experience in the proposed field of study who has approved the student's proposal and is willing to serve as the year-long independent study supervisor and assessor.
- The independent study is intended to satisfy the elective graduation requirement for 12th grade and does not replace a Humanities, Mathematics, Science, or World Language requirement.

The Director of Upper School will make a decision on approving the proposal based on input from the independent study supervisor and the relevant Department Team Leader.

Rising 12th graders interested in proposing an independent study are strongly encouraged to carefully read the [Independent Study Overview and Process Document](#) and submit the proposal to the Director of Upper School no later than the third Friday of April.

## Honors and Advanced Studies

### Honors Program

The Honors program challenges students with passion for and strengths in a subject to go deeper with their work and their thinking. Honors students engage with more sophisticated material and concepts, work on more complex assignments, and are challenged to demonstrate greater independence and responsibility for their learning. Honors courses are embedded within core sections, which allow opportunities for diverse perspectives and opportunities for leadership and differentiated learning experiences. Students who choose Honors-level work receive Honors designation on their transcripts. Honors-level classes are noted with the course descriptions.

Students apply for Honors enrollment at the beginning of the school year and usually after completing required additional Honors summer work. With their teacher's approval, they are then enrolled in that Honors course on a temporary basis. Permanent enrollment in Honors course(s) is determined by the student's demonstration of growth in Honors course standards and skills, the student's desire to remain in the Honors course(s), and the teacher's approval of the student's Honors course enrollment.

Students may drop Honors without impact to their transcript through the end of week 5 of the school year. Students may drop Honors with some impact to their transcript between the start of week 5 and the end of

week 12. When the Honors course is dropped at the start of week 5 through the end of week 12, the Honors course will remain on the student's transcript with a "W" (Withdrawn); no credit towards graduation will be awarded for the dropped course; the dropped course will not be included in the calculation of the student's overall GPA. Students may not drop Honors courses from the start of week 13 and forward into the school year.

### **Advanced Studies**

Several of our highest level courses are advanced studies, with students engaging with college-level material. These courses do not offer Honors options but are marked on the transcript as advanced with an asterisk. (\*)

# Humanities

The Humanities department encompasses three interconnected but distinct areas of study: Humanities, Literature, and History.

Ninth and 10th grade Humanities courses are designed to bring historic time and place to life through literature and the arts. A strong social-justice component is highlighted as students begin to wrestle with issues beyond their daily lives and lean into the complex adult world. Students often work in small cooperative groups to exchange ideas, peer edit, and debate and discuss critical ideas.

After 10th grade, Humanities classes split into separate literature and history courses to allow students to fine tune discipline-specific skills.

The senior history class provides students with an opportunity to choose between four seminar classes focusing on a particular area of social science including global environmental change and policy; philosophy, ethics and law; politics and government; and media, culture, and society.

Courses such as [Creative Writing, Cinema, and Law](#) do not meet the Humanities requirement but do meet the electives requirement.

## HUMANITIES

### Humanities 9: Global Identities and the Changing World (9th grade)

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Global Identities and the Changing World is an interdisciplinary Humanities course which seeks to address the year-long essential question: "How does Humanities help us navigate a changing world?" Through the exploration of "revolutions" that resulted in global paradigm shifts, students will develop tools to critically evaluate historical events and analyze literature, arts, politics, and philosophy to interpret patterns of change. The discussion and project-based curriculum focuses on developing reading, writing, research, presentation, and analytical skills and is designed to cultivate reflective thinkers and actors, ready to meet the complex challenges of today.

### Humanities 10: American Experience (10th grade)

*Prerequisite: Humanities 9*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Through an analysis of the essential question "What does it mean to be an 'American'?" students launch into a year-long inquiry through American history and literature, which includes reading novels, poetry, plays, essays, and primary and secondary historical texts. Students consider how the struggle for power and aspiration for rights has shaped the American experience since the founding era. Student projects, essays, and seminar discussions illuminate core questions that impact American lives and shape our collective past. Readings include chapters from Stanford's "Massively Open Collaborative US History Textbook," *American Yawp*, the classic American novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the contemporary works *There There* by Tommy Orange and *The Piano Lesson* by August Wilson.

## LITERATURE

### Stories & Self: Global Identities and Perspectives (11th grade)

*Prerequisite: Humanities 10*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Eleventh grade literature invites students to consider how narrative and literary techniques not only express but also shape identity. Students will encounter a wide range of experiences that address the intersections of numerous markers of identity, including gender, class, immigration, race, queerness, and nationality, among others. Throughout these stories by U.S. and international authors, what is universal is the relationships people build with family, friends, partners, their communities, and themselves. Foundational to this work is an understanding of our own identities and positionalities and how those factors contribute to the way each person “shows up”—whether that is when we are approaching a text or the way that we approach one another and the wider world. Texts include novels, short stories, poems, memoir, and essays from primarily contemporary voices offering global perspectives. This course also asks students to consider what it means to be a critical consumer of media in the 21st century. Honors students will have additional and/or differentiated reading and assignments.

### World Literature (12th grade)

*Prerequisite: Literature: Modern American Literature*

*Honors Option: Yes*

*World Literature: Ancient to Modern Classics* tackles one essential question: How can we interpret meaning in literature on its own terms, in dialogue with a text? Students explore the epic, lyric, and tragic modes across a wide range of texts from the earliest recorded imaginative chronicles to modern classics and contemporary global fiction. The goal is to encourage students to set aside the notion that texts reflect the lived experiences of their authors or should be read with our own interests, priorities, and personalities in mind; instead, we approach the structures, designs, and themes of these texts as a dynamic, multi-voiced dialogue, celebrating the interaction of complex ideas and perspectives across time and space. Students first build their “literary competence” by reading Homer’s *Odyssey*, Sophocles’ *Antigone*, and excerpts from Dante’s *Inferno*. They then spend time with texts from the 19th and 20th centuries that question the construction and deconstruction of the modern subject. Key skills to be honed include close reading and critical thinking as practiced in daily seminar discussions and captured in analytical writing. Students electing the “Honors” option will read additional critical and theoretical scholarly sources in conversation with the core texts.

## HISTORY

### Modern U.S. History (11th grade)

*Prerequisite: Humanities: American Experience*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Beginning with the essential question “How does the past influence the present?” Modern U.S. History (MUSH) students read, discuss, and interpret primary documents. Units include the post-WWII world exploring political and military history, social history from the 1960s to 2000, civil rights, and economics. Units culminate in projects that range from the creation of a comic book, a video documentary, research-based writing, and a talk show. Daily writing informs multiple perspectives which lead to student understanding of historical thinking skills like chronological reasoning, cause-and-effect relationships, analyzing documents to make and support arguments, and synthesis.

### Senior Seminar (12th grade)

*Prerequisite: Modern U.S. History*

*Honors Option: No*

Students explore multiple perspectives, clarify their thinking through reading, research, and class discourse with the aim of creating evidence-based solutions to local and global problems. The course

emphasizes critical reading and writing, Socratic discussions, independent research, and oral and multimedia presentations. Students will apply all these methods to daily coursework and activities and a year-long project that engages them in searching for solutions to real-world problems. The separate student-selected sections of Senior Seminar, while retaining the same emphases listed above, investigate the world through four different lenses. The offerings may change, depending on personnel shifts.

- **Global Environmental Change and Policy**

The Global Environmental Change and Policy Senior Seminar will aim to explore the interconnectedness of complex, multi-dimensional environmental issues plaguing our planet. Many of the topics and questions being explored do not have simple solutions and this will allow students to gain a new perspective on the difficulties that scientists, politicians and environmentalists encounter when attempting to induce positive change in the world. Students will also explore the moral and ethical dilemmas that often hinder progress and change. This course follows a path of student-led direction and therefore topics of study are generally dictated by the choices students make as seminar leaders.

- **Government, Politics, and Economics**

In Government, Politics, and Economics (GPE), we explore big questions about society, organization, and governance. GPE asks questions about authority, legitimacy, and sovereignty that form an interrogation of the self and society, calling into question tacit assumptions and unarticulated presuppositions. GPE proceeds historically, examining how these questions were addressed in hunter-gatherer societies, ancient civilizations, modern states, and today's globally connected world by studying how individuals and collectives developed through different ideas, behaviors, cultures, and systems. Students read thinkers ranging from Plato to Hobbes to Machiavelli to Locke to Rousseau to Burke to Marx to Weber to Goldman to de Beauvoir to Arendt to Rawls to Fanon to Habermas to Mills to Graeber to Fisher. Along the way, the course will cover essential skills, concepts, and areas of political philosophy, such as conceptual analysis and logical argumentation, subjectivity, objectivity, and intersubjectivity, and states, liberty, equality, and representation. The course employs a variety of seminar forms, from small-group to large-group, from topic-directed to open discussion, and from student-led to leaderless. By the end of the course, the student will be prepared to take a college-level seminar, engage in informed and meaningful discussions in political philosophy, and write an academic paper. With GPE's grand aim being that the critical and creative disposition developed in the course will aid and advance each student's capacity to confront dogma with dialogue and challenge domination with democracy.

- **Media, Culture, and Society**

We're undergoing a profound shift in our development as humans. Contemporary media, with its faster-than-lightning technological development and its unprecedented reach, is changing how we interact with one another, how societies organize themselves, and even what we consider reality. What does that mean for us? To answer that question, students in MCS investigate concepts such as aesthetics, identity, representation, semiotics, ideology, and power. They then use those concepts to examine the major forms of mass entertainment (movies, TV, popular music) and the event horizon of mass information that is social media and the Internet. Readings include texts by major critical theorists, including Marx, McLuhan, Barthes, Foucault, Althusser, Mulvey, hooks, and Cohen, as well as contemporary writers on digital culture. Students engage regularly in seminars on topics from the strictly academic and theoretical to the real-world, happening-*now*. They develop the ability to write, present, argue, critique, and synthesize complex ideas. Most important—they read media intensively, rigorously, skeptically, and lovingly to make sense, for themselves, of our world.

- **Philosophy, Ethics, and Law**

In Philosophy, Ethics, and Law (PEL), we explore big questions about reality, knowledge, and life. PEL asks questions about existence, nature, and meaning that form an interrogation of the self and society, calling into question tacit assumptions and unarticulated presuppositions. PEL proceeds historically, examining how these questions were addressed in hunter-gatherer societies, ancient civilizations, modern states, and today's globally connected world by studying how individuals and collectives developed through different ideas, behaviors, cultures, and systems. Students read thinkers ranging from Lao-Tzu to Confucius to Gautama to Plato to Hobbes to Marx to Nietzsche to de Beauvoir to MacKinnon to Sen to Anderson to Zizek. Along the way, the course will cover essential skills, concepts, and areas of philosophy, such as conceptual analysis and logical argumentation, subjectivity, objectivity, and intersubjectivity, and ontology, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. The course employs a variety of seminar forms, from small-group to large-group, from topic-directed to open discussion, and from student-led to leaderless. By the end of the course, the student will be prepared to take a college-level seminar, engage in informed and meaningful discussions in philosophy, and write an academic paper. With PEL's grand aim being that the critical and creative disposition developed in the course will aid and advance each student's capacity to confront dogma with dialogue and challenge domination with democracy.

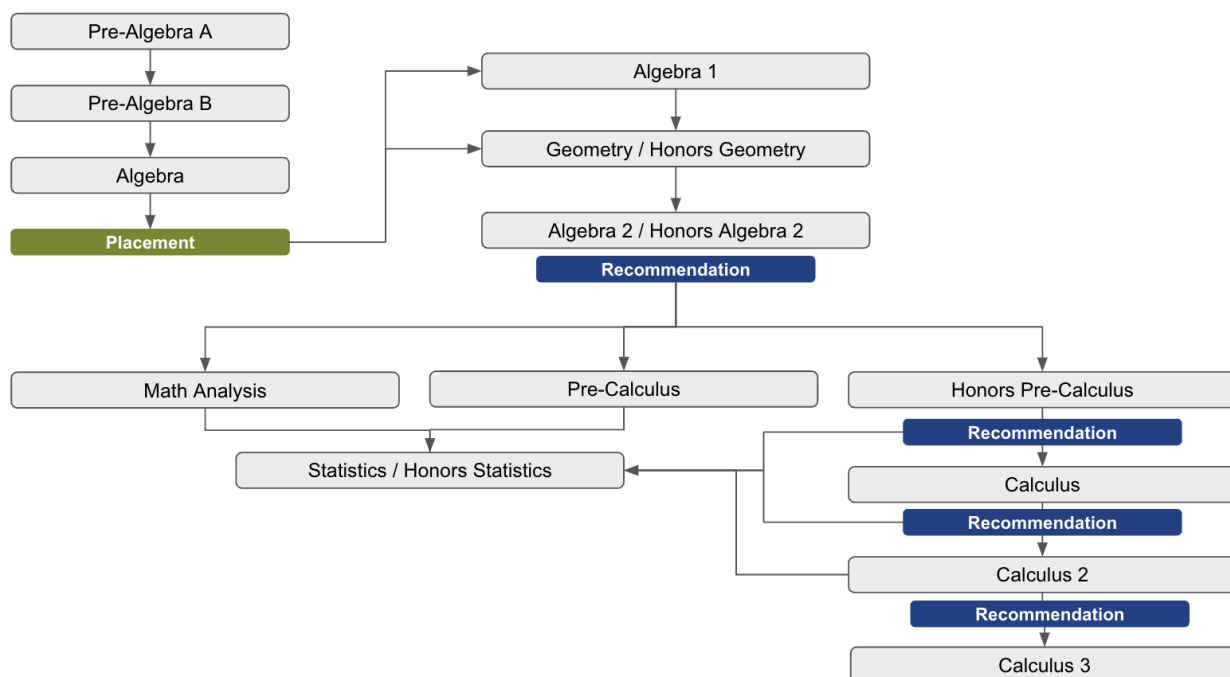
# Mathematics

The upper school math program moves sequentially, from geometry to advanced algebra and through calculus courses. Students progress through the program based on their mastery of skills and individual strengths. Through direct instruction and cooperative group work, students are guided in creative problem-solving and finding multiple means to arrive at correct solutions. Technology is integrated throughout, including Geogebra and Desmos, and programmable calculators. Students gain confidence by mastering concepts through multiple forms of assessment, including peer and teacher feedback, demonstrations of knowledge, and projects.

Math classes emphasize investigations of concepts that range from two-column proofs in geometry to trigonometric relationships of triangles and single-variable calculus problems. Students learn through experiential activities. Working in small groups, students create business profit models with statistical theories and construct the face of a working clock. Project-based learning provides real-world connections to the abstract concepts of Pre-Calculus and Math Analysis. From there, more advanced mathematics courses include Statistics, Calculus, Calculus 2, and Calculus 3. The expectation is that students who are accelerated into more advanced courses will complete the Honors track within that course.

A minimum of three (3) years of Mathematics are required to graduate from Wildwood School, including Geometry and Algebra 2. After Algebra 2, students enroll in higher mathematics courses based on interest, skill level, successful completion of prerequisite courses, and teacher recommendation. Placement for rising 9th graders is determined by a placement diagnostic and teacher recommendation. Note: many 12th graders choose to take a fourth year of math in their senior year. Decisions about continuing in math should be guided by the student's interest and strengths as well as future college or professional plans.

## UPPER SCHOOL MATHEMATICS COURSE PROGRESSION



### Algebra 1

*Prerequisites:* N/A

*Honors Option:* No

This course builds on foundations students have to evaluate expressions, combine like terms, use order of operations, and solve multiple-step equations to interpret patterns in tables and graphs. Working with slope intercept and standard forms of lines, students graph lines from an equation. Students

demonstrate dexterity in writing equations. Students explore multiple algebraic methods to solve systems of equations. Students learn the basic rules of exponents and of exponential functions. Working with polynomials and quadratics, students gain confidence in multiplying binomials and factoring quadratic equations. Finally, students learn to write an equation from the graph of a parabola.

## **Geometry**

*Prerequisite: Algebra 1*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Students will investigate logical proofs and critical thinking when solving problems or evaluating arguments. Geometry provides the necessary mathematical tools for complex reasoning and solving problems in the sciences, technology, engineering, and many skilled trades and professions. Geometry includes an in-depth analysis of plane, solid, and coordinate geometry as they relate to both abstract mathematical concepts as well as real-world problem situations. Topics include logic and proof, parallel lines and polygons, perimeter and area analysis, volume and surface area analysis, similarity and congruence, trigonometry, and analytic geometry. Emphasis will be placed on developing critical thinking skills as they relate to logical reasoning and argument. Students will be required to use different technological tools and manipulatives, such as a compass and straightedge, to discover and explain much of the course content.

## **Algebra 2**

*Prerequisite: Geometry*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Algebra 2 builds on the skills acquired in Algebra 1 and Geometry and prepares students for either Math Analysis or Pre-Calculus. Functions and the use of geometric transformations (reflections, rotations, scale changes, and translations) to relate algebraic and geometric concepts are core components of this course. Transformations are emphasized for the creation of polynomial, rational, exponential, and logarithmic functions. Students will discover how to construct and algebraically manipulate linear, quadratic, and higher degree polynomials in order to develop insight into the key features of these functions, such as finding their x and y-intercepts, minimums and maximums, and end behavior. Students will discover complex numbers through their exploration and work with quadratic equations and will apply this knowledge to solving higher order polynomial equations. Students will also explore key features of rational and transcendental functions, such as asymptotes, as well as the concept of a limit and infinity. The use of technology, especially online graphing utilities and graphing calculators, is integrated throughout the course to promote a greater understanding of all the course topics. Students will complete this course having gained mastery and mathematical depth covering intermediate to advanced algebraic concepts.

## **Math Analysis**

*Prerequisite: Algebra 2*

*Honors Option: No*

This course provides a comprehensive review and extension of core mathematical concepts, bridging foundational Pre-Algebra, Algebra, and Geometry with more advanced topics students need for success in higher-level mathematics. Designed for students who have completed introductory Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 coursework, Math Analysis deepens understanding by revising essential ideas through a more rigorous and analytical lens. Practical problem solving is woven throughout the course through structured applications, helping students connect abstract mathematics to real-world scenarios and develop systematic approaches to multi-step reasoning. By the end of the course, students will have a strong, flexible foundation in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving.

## **Pre-Calculus**

*Prerequisite: Algebra 2*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Pre-Calculus focuses on the study of functions in preparation for Calculus. Students rigorously examine and analyze a variety of functions—conic sections, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric—and their properties, graphs, algebra, and applications. The course places equal emphasis on theoretical (proofs) and applied mathematics. Successful completion of Core Pre-Calculus prepares students for Statistics. Successful completion of Honors Pre-Calculus prepares students for Calculus\*.

## **Statistics**

*Prerequisite: Pre-Calculus or Math Analysis*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Fundamental principles and applications of statistics are explored as students learn how to measure data and/or use data to predict future outcomes. Students learn decision strategies, survey techniques, margin-of-error levels, and normal and standard deviations. They define and use probability, permutations, and combinations. Projects use real-world statistical problems in science, government, business, and economics. In special cases, students completing Algebra 2 junior year may request a teacher's recommendation to enroll in Statistics senior year.

## **Calculus\***

*Prerequisite: Honors Pre-Calculus*

*Honors Option: No*

An introduction to the principles and applications of differential and integral Calculus includes how functions change with time in real-life problems related to business, sports, science, and more. Students increase agility in applying skills calculating derivatives to a function and graph. Emphasis is placed on solving real-world problems in engineering. This course is primarily concerned with developing the student's understanding of the concepts of calculus and providing experience with its methods and applications. The course emphasizes a multi-representational approach to calculus, with concepts, results, and problems being expressed graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally.

## **Calculus 2\***

*Prerequisite: Calculus*

*Honors Option: No*

This course is a continuation of Calculus that includes differentiation, integration, and infinite series. The course is designed for students working toward a college degree in science, mathematics, physics, computer science, and more. The course emphasizes a multi-representational approach to Calculus, with concepts, results, and problems being expressed graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally. Students who sign up for this course must have completed Calculus successfully.

## **Calculus 3\* Prerequisite: Calculus 2\***

*Honors Option: No*

Calculus 3 extends the calculus of scalar-valued single-variable functions studied in Calculus and Calculus 2 to vector-valued multivariable functions. After a review of basic calculus topics, including differential equations and infinite series, students begin by studying curves, surfaces, and vectors in Euclidean space and then expand the concept of a scalar-valued function to a vector-valued function. Next, students extend the concept of a single-variable function to a multivariable function, learning partial differentiation and directional derivatives and applying those techniques to optimization problems using numerical methods and Lagrange multipliers. Now, with a grasp of vector-valued multivariable functions, students extend single integrals along the x-axis to line integrals along a curve, double integrals over a surface, and triple integrals through a volume, eventually encountering Green's Theorem, the Divergence Theorem, and Stokes' Theorem. Throughout the course, students apply these mathematical methods to practical problems in mechanics, fluid dynamics, electromagnetism, plasma physics, and other scientific fields.

## Science

The Wildwood Science program aims to develop each student's knowledge base, skill level, and interest in science through a sequence of courses and other opportunities that increasingly challenge each student. These challenges occur in five main areas: mathematical technique, experimental method, theoretical understanding, problem-solving strategy, and scientific communication.

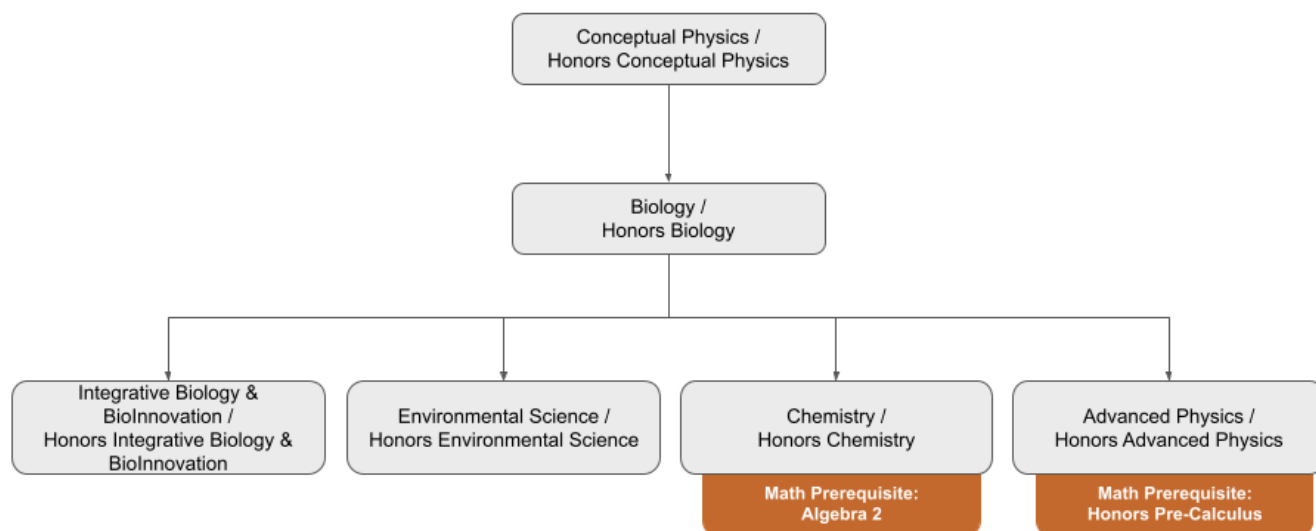
As students move through the program, each course builds on prior courses to offer students the chance to further develop their mathematical sophistication, experimental expertise, conceptual understanding, problem-solving skills, and science-writing ability. Specifically, the program fosters these goals by providing progressive practice with incremental challenges, encouraging and supporting students' grappling with scientific problems, and guiding students to make explicit connections with other disciplines, their lives, and the larger world. Through this approach, students take ownership over their learning, become self-starting investigators comfortable with tackling difficult scientific problems, and develop into young scientists who can communicate their findings and insights to the scientific and broader communities.

In essence, each year in the program students move closer to being able to comprehend, critique, and create scientific contributions and leave the program better prepared to continue this development either on their own or through further study in college.

A minimum of three (3) years of Science are required to graduate from Wildwood School, including Conceptual Physics and Biology. After Biology, students enroll in science courses based on interest, math readiness, successful completion of prerequisite courses, and teacher recommendation. Note: many 12th graders choose to take a science course in their senior year. Decisions about continuing in science should be guided by the student's interest and strengths as well as future college or professional plans.

One additional Science course, [Neuroscience](#), is not part of the course progression below and can be found in our Electives section.

### UPPER SCHOOL SCIENCE COURSE PROGRESSION



#### Conceptual Physics

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Honors Option: Yes*

In Conceptual Physics, students investigate how the physical world works through hands-on experimentation, tangible physical models, guided investigations, mathematical modeling, and written

problem solving. The course begins with the fundamentals of motion—starting with simple straight-line movement—and progresses to more complex phenomena such as falling objects and projectile motion. Emphasis is placed on conceptual understanding, supported by mathematical techniques like interpreting slopes and solving for variables; Honors students extend this work through additional tools such as trigonometry, and complete a long-term independent project. Science as a process is central to the course, with students learning to ask effective questions, define variables, design procedures, analyze data, and communicate their conclusions. Lab work forms the core of the class, and students regularly conduct hands-on investigations and present their findings through both concise and formal written reports.

## **Biology**

*Prerequisite: Conceptual Physics*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Understanding the complexity of life is the main focus of Biology. This course provides an overview of the main micro and macro topics within the subject: experimental basics, biochemistry, cellular biology, cellular processes, genetics, evolution, and ecology. Students in this course will continue to develop their critical thinking skills as they discover connections between what they learn in class and their own lives. Mastering course standards will include safely conducting and communicating the results of lab activities, demonstrating understanding through formal and informal assessments, as well as navigating scientific resources to complete both independent and group research projects.

## **Integrative Biology and BioInnovation**

*Prerequisite: Biology*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Integrative Biology and BioInnovation is a lab-based, research-driven course that immerses students in specialized fields of biology while emphasizing experimentation, scientific communication, and innovation. Through hands-on experiment design and execution, students will engage deeply with biological concepts while developing skills in scientific writing, data analysis, and creative expression through mediums such as art, presentations, and journal-style reports. The course follows the narrative of Deep Time, tracing the evolutionary history of life on Earth. As students progress through evolutionary history, they will explore disciplines including evolutionary biology, aquatic biology, and soil biology, gaining a broader understanding of how life has adapted over time. Beyond content knowledge, this course prioritizes scientific research practices. Students will design and complete independent research projects, analyze their findings, and formally present their work using professional scientific conventions. Honors students will extend their learning by delivering a formal research presentation and developing an independent bioart project, integrating biology, technology, and artistic expression into their scientific exploration.

## **Environmental Science**

*Prerequisite: Biology*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Environmental Science is designed to address the interconnectedness and complexity of Earth systems and how anthropogenic (human) impacts play a role in altering these cycles. This hands-on curriculum brings together biology, physics, chemistry and earth science to investigate environmental issues and long-term solutions. Topics include biodiversity, earth systems, urban environments, resource management, energy use, climate change, and environmental policy. Students will have the opportunity to learn through research, laboratory investigation, and year-long experimental design components. Part of this course will also include participating in community conservation work both on and off campus.

## Chemistry

*Prerequisites: Biology and Algebra 2*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Chemistry is an introductory course preparing students for further studies in chemistry in college while connecting to previous course content from Biology and Conceptual Physics. It is directed toward explaining the composition of matter, chemical principles, energy and essentially investigating how the world functions at the molecular and atomic levels. Students will gain experience in laboratory situations, problem-solving, scientific writing, data analysis and experimental design while building a base-level of knowledge allowing for further study in subsequent courses at Wildwood and beyond. The course relies heavily upon mathematical computation and data collection and analysis in a collaborative environment.

## Advanced Physics

*Prerequisites: Biology and Honors Pre-Calculus*

*Honors Option: No*

In Advanced Physics (ADP), students study the basic laws of nature using physical concepts, mathematical principles, and experimental techniques, with the goal of developing their physical understanding and scientific skills, while instilling curiosity about the natural world and fostering interest in how it works. Accordingly, two overarching essential questions are explored: (a) How does the *physical world* work? and (b) How does the *scientific method* work?

More specifically, during the course, students accomplish the following:

1. Develop physical theories and models and use them to make predictions for specific systems;
2. Design and conduct experiments to test their predictions;
3. Analyze and interpret their experimental results in terms of their models and predictions; and
4. Explain and account for their results and make suggestions for improving their models and experiments.

While doing 1-4, students will also

5. Apply concepts, theories, and mathematical techniques to solve problems, derive formulas, and draw conclusions;
6. Set up and use laboratory equipment, measurement devices, and computer programs; and
7. Create new physical concepts, models, and theories.

Moreover, and significantly, in ADP, emphasis is on the word "Advanced." Therefore, students develop advanced skills and content concerning scientific and physical concepts, mathematical methods, data analysis, and report writing that build on what they learned in previous math and science courses, such as Precalculus, Conceptual Physics, and Chemistry. For example, each student will be expected to work at their highest math level and challenged to extend their mathematical skills and knowledge beyond their current level. Finally, with support and through collaboration, students develop advanced independence in solving problems, running experiments, conducting research, and communicating results.

# World Languages

The ultimate goal of the World Languages study is to acquire linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence in a target language. At Wildwood, our world languages program prepares students to build these competencies by integrating the four language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Throughout their language journey, students engage in activities and tasks that require them to accurately and creatively apply their content knowledge and skills as they develop a cultural understanding.

Wildwood's world languages program offers courses in two languages: Mandarin and Spanish. Our program emphasizes effective communication in real-life situations through project-based learning, the use of authentic resources, and the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational.

Three years in a language are required for graduation, with at least two years in the same language.

## MANDARIN

### Mandarin 1

*Prerequisite: Not required*

*Honors Option: No*

In Mandarin 1, students start their upper school journey focusing on proficiency in the four key language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students engage in interactive activities, developing the ability to communicate effectively through mini-dialogues, role-playing, and video projects. Mandarin 1 focuses on the Chinese Pinyin system: tones, rules of phonetic spelling, and pronunciation drills. As students develop their reading and writing skills they compose simple passages using basic Chinese characters to discuss greetings, family, daily routines, and hobbies. As students explore the similarities and differences between different Chinese celebrations, they develop cultural awareness through projects such as the Mid-Autumn Festival and Thanksgiving, Chinese calligraphy, and cuisine. By the end of the first year, students can introduce themselves using their authentic Chinese names and talk about their families and daily lives.

### Mandarin 2

*Prerequisite: Mandarin 1*

*Honors Option: Yes*

In Mandarin 2 and Mandarin 2 Honors, students strengthen their proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing while communicating with increasing confidence and accuracy. Through conversations, role-plays, and cultural projects, they learn to describe relationships, make plans, express preferences, and discuss daily life using more complex sentence structures. Students explore four thematic units—relationships, time and planning, food culture, and school life—building vocabulary that supports real-world communication. They also deepen their cultural understanding by examining social interactions, dining customs, and educational experiences across Chinese-speaking communities. Throughout the year, students read leveled texts to support fluency and comprehension. By the end of the course, they can discuss visiting friends, making appointments, ordering food and drinks, and describing a day in their life, all while communicating in culturally appropriate Mandarin.

### Mandarin 3

*Prerequisite: Mandarin 2*

*Honors Option: Yes*

In Mandarin 3 and Mandarin 3 Honors, students expand their vocabulary and deepen their command of Mandarin as they engage with increasingly authentic, real-world scenarios. Through interactive tasks, role-plays, cultural projects, and readings, students learn to communicate with better precision and flexibility while exploring how language reflects culture, identity, and daily life. Over the course of four

thematic units—consumer culture, travel and navigation, environment and seasons, and food and culture—students strengthen their ability to interpret meaning, express ideas, and participate in culturally rich conversations.

## **Mandarin 4**

*Prerequisite: Mandarin 3*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Mandarin 4 and Mandarin 4 Honors guide students toward higher proficiency as they apply their language skills to increasingly authentic, real-world contexts. Building on previous coursework, students refine their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities while engaging in tasks that demand greater precision, nuance, and cultural understanding. Across four thematic units—Travel & Navigation, Celebrations & Traditions, Health & Wellness, and Relationships & Social Connections—students deepen their communicative competence and cultural literacy by examining how language reflects the values, practices, and perspectives of Chinese-speaking communities. Through role-plays, discussions, authentic readings, project-based learning, and scenario-based tasks, students develop the confidence to express themselves clearly and appropriately across a variety of everyday and interpersonal situations.

## **Mandarin 5\***

*Prerequisite: Mandarin 4*

*Honors Option: No*

Mandarin 5 is an advanced level course that guides students toward proficiency and independence as communicators, thinkers, and cultural interpreters. Throughout the year, students apply Mandarin in real-world contexts as they explore how living environments shape community life, how sports and recreation express personal and cultural identities, how travel deepens understanding of new places, and how global transportation systems connect people across borders. These themes allow students to use advanced vocabulary and structures to discuss housing and neighborhoods, leisure activities, domestic and international travel, and navigating airports and transit systems. At the same time, students strengthen their literacy skills by learning to read complex texts, write for practical and personal purposes, and craft original stories. Through authentic readings, extended discussions, role-play, and project-based learning, students deepen their understanding of how language reflects cultural experience and gain the confidence to use Mandarin effectively in academic, social, and global contexts.

## **SPANISH**

### **Spanish 1**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Honors Option: No*

In Spanish 1, students start their upper school Spanish journey with an introduction to essential topics relating to their daily lives. They begin exploring how to communicate effectively in Spanish across the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. They develop their linguistic competence through reading a variety of comprehensible texts, listening to authentic sources like songs and videos, writing creative stories and skits, and presenting about themselves and their communities. They also foster their cultural competence through exposure to the perspectives, products, and practices of the Spanish-speaking world, including music, art, food, and the lives of famous figures. Students reflect upon the following essential question: How does language impact and inform our identities? By the end of Spanish 1, students are able to communicate about diverse topics that comprise their daily lives.

## **Spanish 2**

*Prerequisite: Spanish 1/Spanish B*

*Honors Option: Yes*

In Spanish 2, students further develop their foundational language skills and are encouraged to take risks when communicating. They engage with music, a novel, and a biography to deepen their language acquisition and cultural understanding. By the end of the course, students can communicate about the present, their plans for the future, and past events. To start off Spanish 2, students learn to discuss music, with a focus on Latin genres. Later on, they explore the famed Camino de Santiago, as well as the wonders of the Yucatan Peninsula and the Mayan civilization. The course finishes with a deep dive into the life and art of Frida Kahlo. During all units, students demonstrate their comprehension of vocabulary, grammar, and cultural knowledge through class conversations, acting, demonstrations of knowledge, and projects. Students reflect upon the following essential question: How can the Spanish language help me to broaden my ability to communicate with others and expand my understanding of the Spanish-speaking world?

## **Spanish 3**

*Prerequisite: Spanish 2*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Spanish 3 is designed to further students' development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students explore topics, which enable them to discuss concrete events as well as hypothetical situations as they learn to shift between the three different grammatical Spanish moods. As students deepen their reading comprehension and develop their cultural understanding, they immerse themselves in authentic literature and read two novellas and an autobiography that allow them to connect with the past and present of diverse communities in the Spanish-speaking world, locally and globally. Throughout the year, students explore the following essential question: How can learning Spanish deepen my understanding of the world and help me connect with others?

## **Spanish 4**

*Prerequisite: Spanish 3*

*Honors Option: Yes*

Spanish 4 continues to support students' development in the four pillars of language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through a communicative approach in a collaborative classroom environment, students strengthen their linguistic skills and communication strategies to engage in meaningful discussions about societal and global issues. Through practice with advanced grammatical constructions, they refine their ability to express complex ideas with confidence and clarity. Students explore topics such as communities and belonging, health and well-being, customs and traditions, and immigration. Throughout all units, they demonstrate their understanding through presentations, discussions, demonstrations of knowledge, written compositions, and projects. The essential question guiding students' learning is: How can I communicate effectively in Spanish with respect and empathy while considering the thoughts, opinions, and norms of others? Spanish 4 students engage with authentic Spanish-language media, including literature, film, and music, to deepen their cultural understanding.

## **Spanish 5\***

*Prerequisite: Spanish 4*

*Honors Option: No*

Spanish 5 is an advanced level course that allows students to deepen their understanding of the Spanish-speaking world by analyzing various cultural expressions in Latin America and Spain. Students continue to learn strategies to communicate effectively in Spanish as they explore different works of prominent writers, artists, musicians, and filmmakers and historical influences that contributed to shaping cultures that share the Spanish language. The course prioritizes the development of writing and

speaking proficiency across the three modes of communication supported by the study of authentic cultural products. The essential question driving students' learning throughout the course is: How can my cultural understanding of the Spanish-speaking world, past and present, help me enrich my lifelong Spanish journey?

## Institutes

All students interested in joining or returning to one of the Institutes should [complete this application form](#) (accessible to students with their school email address). In the case that the Institute is over-enrolled, the application will be one point of information to help the Director determine the membership of the Institute. Members need to be able to work independently and be self-motivated and disciplined in their work. Repeat enrollment in an Institute requires the Institute director's authorization as well. **The application form must be completed by March 13, 2026.**

### Wildwood Institute for Entrepreneurship (WIE)

The Wildwood Institute for Entrepreneurship (WIE) is a student-driven incubator organized to support members of the Wildwood community as they ideate, prototype, and launch innovative products. Within this collaborative studio environment, course participants work independently and as small teams to develop commercially viable products and businesses. There is no set curriculum; each member (with the support of the community) identifies necessary learning and determines appropriate strategies for acquiring the requisite knowledge and skills. Members have opportunities to develop specialized technical skills (e.g., techniques for rapid prototyping such as laser cutting, CNC milling/machining, direct-to-garment printing, etc.), make authentic decisions with real impact, and practice working autonomously and responsibly. Past projects have included original clothing, board/digital games, jewelry, digital art, and online services.

### Wildwood Institute for Social Leadership (WISL)

Founded in 2019, Wildwood's Institute for Social Leadership (WISL) operates as a collaborative consultancy that helps organizations and individuals working on social issues in Los Angeles problem-solve and strengthen their work. WISL clients primarily consist of local schools, organizations, nonprofits and social enterprises. WISL consultants become experts on issues ranging from animal welfare to mental health/wellness to educational equity based on members' interests. Neither a class nor an elective, like Wildwood's other two institutes, WISL is an actual workplace where all WISL members become proficient in the project management software and online collaboration tool called Basecamp to manage and track their work. WISL's goals for all members are to:

- Efficiently and effectively utilize WISL resources and time (e.g., practices effective time-management, meets deadlines, works respectfully with WISL & other/community mentors, etc.).
- Demonstrate leadership/management skills (e.g. on projects, during consulting meetings, etc.).
- Show initiative, independence, and self-reliance by embodying the institute model (completes reflections, proposes solutions, initiates research, etc.).
- Develop and employ techniques, understandings, and skills as needed in WISL work (e.g., research skills, problem-solving strategies, community outreach, design, implementation & assessment of programs, etc.).
- Collaborate with WISL members (and both internal/external WISL partners).
- Participate in the development of the Institute (e.g., contributing to draft consultancy plans, sharing output for future members, website design/maintenance, etc.).

### Wildwood Institute for STEM Research and Development (WISRD)

The Wildwood Institute for STEM Research and Development is a contextual learning environment based on the standards, methods, and expectations of a research institute. It is designed for students who have strong research and product prototyping interests in science, computers, life sciences, engineering and/or science writing/media productions and the self-drive to follow through with projects. A board of student directors, appointed by WISRD members, is responsible for the oversight and direction of WISRD major research in fields such as Earth/Space, Life Science, Engineering, and AI/AR/VR. These lab facilities are used by members of WISRD who organize themselves into research groups to address specific research questions. Each group has a principal investigator who oversees goal setting, research progress, and group publications, allowing everyone in WISRD to gain experience with research, science literacy, and project management. Members of WISRD are expected to contribute to the STEM Research and Development community and public by maintaining a

research journal, publishing articles, papers, and research results, and participating in outreach events such as Dark Matter Day or the poster sessions, which also provide additional opportunities for sharing research findings. Skills developed may include 3D printing, laser cutting, CNC milling, electronics, coding, Arduino, Raspberry Pi, AR/VR, computer IT, tank maintenance, animal care, and hand tools. Visit <https://wisrd.org> for a list of the latest research groups and their research questions. Job performance reviews are done with formative feedback provided based on six job performance standards developed and adopted by the WISRD Board of Directors.

# Electives

## COLLEGE-PREP ELECTIVES

### Cinema

*Prerequisite:* N/A

*Grades:* 9, 10, 11, 12

What is cinema? Are films artworks, entertainments, consumer goods, or propaganda devices? How do you watch a movie? How do films affect us? How do movies make meaning? What are films really about? More specifically, in *Citizen Kane*, why does Kane say "Rosebud" just before he dies? Why does the camera look down an empty hallway in *Taxi Driver*? What does *Mulholland Drive* say about race and gender in Hollywood? To address such questions, students explore the world of cinema from *Citizen Kane* to *Parasite*, from celluloid to digital, from the silver screen to the iPhone by watching and discussing a variety of scenes, videos, and films during class. Using various conceptual, historical, and critical perspectives, students develop an understanding of the aesthetic, affective, cultural, economic, and political dimensions and implications of cinema. Students investigate basic cinematic techniques, common narrative tropes, vital film genres, important film theories, and key ideological functions. The course allows for a generous amount of student choice in the films analyzed and topics researched for the projects. For instance, in a unit on genre, the class may initially focus on westerns to introduce students to genre studies; however, for the unit project, students pick their own genre to investigate, such as film noir, sci-fi, comedy, rom-com, war film, or horror. For the unit on auteurs, students choose a film director to study for their project. Some films watched in the class over the years include *Citizen Kane*, *Double Indemnity*, *Tokyo Story*, *Vertigo*, *Day for Night*, *Chinatown*, *Do the Right Thing*, *Chunking Express*, *The Thin Red Line*, *Memento*, *In the Mood for Love*, *Donnie Darko*, *Mulholland Drive*, *Cache*, *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*, *Lady Bird*, *Phantom Thread*, and *Lovers Rock*, with 18 films viewed during a year on average. For seniors, the class ends with Senior Choice Films, where each senior picks a film and runs the class for a week, introducing their film, screening it, and leading the discussion. In some years, depending on class size, non-seniors also get the opportunity to do this.

### Creative Writing

*Prerequisite:* N/A

*Grades:* 9, 10, 11, 12

Who's going to write the next great American novel? Or collection of poetry? Or memoir? You are—with the foundations you'll learn in this class. Students unleash their own unique sense of storytelling to craft short writing assignments that culminate in a polished and publishable final project: a short story, a collection of poems, a one-act play, or another creative writing genre of your choice. Students workshop their ideas with fellow classmates and build towards the creation of their ultimate masterpiece. Readings, movies, music, and honest communication will be provided to help guide and inspire the work. This course may be repeated for credit upon approval by the instructor. Repeated courses are numbered (e.g., Creative Writing 2).

### Law, Individuals, and Societies

*Prerequisite:* N/A

*Grades:* 9, 10, 11, 12

What is law? What is it for? Who says what it is? Who makes it? Who enforces it? When should it change? What are the essential human rights? If you kill someone while sleepwalking, are you a murderer? Does a police dog sniffing your car constitute an illegal search? What limitations are there to freedom of speech? What constitutes torture? When is it legal to go to war? These are some of the broad and narrow questions that may be addressed in this class. At the high level, the class explores how the law considers and impacts individuals and how it structures and reflects society. At the ground level, the class tackles tough issues in specific areas of the law through practical activities where students play roles in the legal system. For instance, students will play the roles of a juror, an attorney

arguing before an appellate court, a law clerk advising a judge, a lawyer cross-examining a witness, a mediator trying to settle a lawsuit, and a public defender making a closing argument. Through this role-playing, students will develop skills in legal analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, mediation, and trial advocacy. Students will also have opportunities to delve into areas or aspects of the law that interest them through several student-driven projects, and the course culminates in a Mock Trial involving the entire class. Finally, throughout the year, the class will watch and analyze several films that will allow them to observe criminal trial preparations, military court proceedings, the Supreme Court appeals process, and the legal systems in different nations.

## **Neuroscience**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 10, 11, 12*

Neuroscience is a multidisciplinary, lab-based elective that explores the inner workings of the nervous system, from individual neurons to complex neural circuits that shape our perception of reality. This course challenges students to examine their own unique sensory experience and compare it to the Umwelt, the distinct perceptual world, of other animals, fostering an understanding that there are many ways to experience reality beyond our own. Through hands-on experimentation and research, students investigate sensory systems, engaging in activities that reveal how organisms interpret their environments. They also explore electronics and Arduino programming, drawing parallels between biological and electronic circuits to understand the fundamentals of information processing in both systems. Additionally, students delve into bioelectronics, an emerging field that integrates biology and technology to record and utilize the electrical signals of living organisms. The course culminates in an independent bioart research project, where students creatively apply their knowledge of bioelectronics and neuroscience to develop an innovative work that bridges science, technology, and artistic expression.

## **VISUAL ARTS, MUSIC, AND PERFORMING ARTS ELECTIVES**

### **VISUAL ARTS ELECTIVES**

#### **Drawing and Painting**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

In a world full of digital images, what can drawing and painting do that changes the way we see, think, and feel? This course invites students to develop and deepen their skills in drawing and painting while exploring how image-making remains relevant in a digital age. Working with a range of materials, including graphite, ink, acrylic and oils, collage, printmaking processes, and digital tools while emphasis is placed on process, reflection, and creative problem-solving. Through observational studies, material experiments, and concept-driven projects, students engage with mark-making, layering, color relationships, and composition. Projects incorporate traditional media alongside collage, printmaking, and digital processes, expanding students' understanding of what drawing and painting can be. By examining artists past and present, students consider how their own work participates in an ongoing visual conversation and begin to cultivate a personal voice and articulate a point of view. Ultimately, students will strengthen their craft and gain confidence in expressing meaningful ideas through visual art.

#### **Art History in the Making**

*Prerequisites: None*

*Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

How does contemporary art reshape our understanding of history, and how does history shape contemporary art? Offering a fresh and engaging approach to the study of art history by blending research with hands-on artmaking, this course deepens students' understanding of the vital role art plays in shaping, and reflecting, the human experience. Investigating key movements, genres, and ideas in modern and contemporary art, students will examine how artists have responded to social, cultural, and historical transformation, engaging with political shifts, emerging technologies, mass production, and the rise of popular culture. Projects thoughtfully balance research and studio work, giving students various ways to explore ideas and present their understanding. Through creative-research based assignments, students will be invited to think critically about how and why artistic choices communicate meaning while developing analytical and creative skills through inquiry, artmaking, discussion, curation and reflection. By examining how visual meaning is constructed students will ultimately see how the past continues to inform the present.

## **Graphic Design and Publications**

*Prerequisites: None*

*Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

How can we use text and images to tell stories, convey meaning, and create designs that engage and impact the real world? Graphic design is everywhere, from screens and posters to packaging and social media. In this course, students explore how text and images work together to communicate ideas and shape how we see the world. Through hands-on projects, students learn typography, layout, composition, branding, and visual storytelling while developing technical skills and their own design voice. Using tools like Photoshop and InDesign as well as traditional cut and paste, students move from research and concept development to refined final designs. Students will also study a range of designers, artists, and everyday visual culture to understand how design functions as a powerful visual language while applying their skills to real projects in both print and digital forms. From the production of the Yearbook to school magazines and personal projects, students will engage in creating authentic publications from concept to print.

## **Photography**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

How does photography shape as well as reflect the world as we know it and how we want to see it? This course introduces the principles, techniques, and creative processes of digital photography to strengthen visual communication skills. Emphasis is placed on operating a manual DSLR camera, working with a variety of lenses, and using both natural and studio lighting. Core photographic concepts explored include exposure, composition, color theory, depth of field, lighting design, visual storytelling, and conceptual development. Images are further developed using industry-standard Photoshop editing software to enhance technical and conceptual outcomes. Through a balance of technical instruction and creative exploration, personal aesthetics are refined while building a professional-quality portfolio. The creative process begins with envisioning, ideation, and preproduction planning, progresses to studio and on-location shooting, emphasizing experimentation and revision, and concludes with critiques and presentations. The first semester emphasizes structured technical units designed to scaffold skills and deepen understanding. In the second semester, a personally meaningful theme and essential question guide the development of a cohesive body of work that demonstrates mastery of technical and conceptual practices. Research and writing are integral components of the course, including visual analysis, self-assessment, and artist statements. Studio production, critiques, discussions, field experiences, visiting artists, and field trips foster collaborative learning and professional growth. The course culminates in a cohesive, college-preparatory portfolio.

## **Introduction to Motion Picture Studies**

*Prerequisites: Highly Suggested Photography and Graphic Design*

*Grades: 10, 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

Introduction to Motion Picture Studies provides students with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the filmmaking process. The course's essential question is: "What is a film's intention and how is it communicated through storytelling, setting, character development, cinematography, editing, and sound?" The course is a broad introduction to film aesthetic, traditions, theory, and criticism such as narrative, documentary, multimedia, and experimental as well as hands-on production. The course includes film viewings and analysis, learning various phases of filmmaking such as pre-production, camera, lighting and sound production, and post-production editing in Premiere Pro. Skills will be demonstrated through hands-on projects ranging from a 30-second character sketch film to a short 2-minute student-directed film. Students will learn various roles from director to cinematographer to sound designer. Through this course, students will gain a unique insight into the world of filmmaking from creative, historical, and technical perspectives. Student work will meet course and college portfolio requirements.

## **Script, Pitch, and Produce**

*Prerequisite: Introduction to Motion Picture Studies*

*Grades: 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

This course dives deeper into the filmmaking process begun in the MoPic Elective. Students will continue studies in film aesthetic, traditions, theory, and criticism as well as hands-on production while exploring a more student driven essential question: "What is my film's intention and how is it communicated through storytelling, setting, character development, cinematography, editing, and sound?" Coursework will focus heavily on developing individual student generated concepts through pitching ideas and scriptwriting workshops. Well-developed scripts and shooting schedules will support the collaborative process of filming and editing. Films will range from 2-5 minutes in length. Student work will meet course and college portfolio requirements.

## **Advanced Studio Art**

*Prerequisites: Drawing and Painting, Photography, Graphic Design and Publications, or Art History in the Making*

*Grades: 10, 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

How does sustained creative inquiry and artistic dialogue shape an artist's work and deepen understanding of art's place in the world? Advanced Studio Art is a dynamic elective for students ready to expand their creative practice through sustained inquiry and research. Designed for independently driven artists, the course provides the community, structure, and space to develop a cohesive body of work culminating in a public exhibition and portfolio. Within a committed studio cohort, students explore a range of media - drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, mixed media, and digital processes - selecting approaches that best support their ideas. Ongoing critiques and feedback foster meaningful dialogue, collaboration, mutual support, and creative rigor. Emphasizing idea development over time, students engage in experimentation, practice, revision, and reflection. Researching contemporary and historical artists and visiting museums and galleries situates their work within broader cultural and artistic conversations. The course culminates in a final exhibition showcasing sustained investigation, technical growth, and conceptual clarity, highlighting not only what students create, but how they have evolved as artists.

## **MUSIC ELECTIVES**

### **Introduction to Music Performance and Composition**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 9, 10*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

### **Music Performance and Composition**

*Prerequisites: Introduction to Music Performance and Composition*

*Grades: 10*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

Introduction to Music Performance and Composition and Music Performance and Composition are the band classes for 9th and 10th graders. These classes comprise two distinct levels of the same year-long course. The essential questions are:

*What is my musical voice?*

*How do I express myself through the language of music?*

*How do I collaborate and support other musicians who are with me on the same path?*

This is a performance class in which students engage and learn how to interact musically and effectively in a collaborative band setting. Students have the opportunity to play one or more instruments as they discover their musical passions or dig deeper into their instrument of choice. Students develop practice routines that support their individual growth and performance needs. Students learn repertoire with a strong emphasis on African American and contemporary popular music and create original compositions. They work together to arrange, rehearse, and perform music in concerts throughout the year. Students play and sing together, experiencing differing musical roles in the ensemble by learning to play various instruments. They acquire improvising skills to become more comfortable with improvisation in various styles. The musicians learn to execute more complex arrangements with deeper attention to groove, dynamics, and accuracy. The musicians learn and improve reading skills by reading and playing music notation. Through singing, writing short compositions, and playing, they learn music theory, intervals, scales and develop their understanding of chord construction. Students create, notate, and arrange original compositions that are performed by the band for peers and parents at the year end concert. Students integrate music technology into their compositions and performances whenever appropriate and learn about recording and editing music as well. They learn to appreciate music and make connections between music, history, and cultural values through research, analytic discussion and listening. All performances, rehearsals, set ups and breakdowns are part of the course. Reflecting on the learning through discussions and in writing is an integral part of the course. Students will engage in mindfulness practices and learn to connect these practices to music. Come with an open mind and open ears, ready to learn, and have fun!

### **Introduction to Jazz Ensemble**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

## **Jazz Ensemble**

*Prerequisite: Introduction to Jazz Ensemble*

*Grades: 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

Introduction to Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble are the band classes for juniors and seniors. These classes comprise two distinct levels of the same year-long course. The course includes all styles of music with a strong emphasis on Jazz repertoire and improvisation. In this year-long course students play and sing music together, refine composing skills and notation skills, and deepen their understanding of music theory. They work on improvising, using modes and advanced chord structures. Students learn repertoire and work together to arrange, rehearse, and perform music in concerts *throughout* the year. Students create original compositions that are performed in small ensembles for peers and parents. They also learn to appreciate music and make connections among music, history and cultural values through research, analytic discussion, and listening. In addition to concerts, the band performs in Open House events, the graduation ceremony performance, elementary exchange performances, and other Wildwood events. All performances, rehearsals, set-ups and breakdowns are part of the course.

## **PERFORMING ARTS ELECTIVES**

### **The Actor and the Stage**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 9, 10*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

### **The Actor and the Stage 2**

*Prerequisite: The Actor and the Stage*

*Grades: 10*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

The Actor and the Stage and the Actor and the Stage 2 comprise two distinct levels of the same year-long course. This elective offers in-depth exploration and skill building as a theatre artist with an emphasis on the craft of acting. Whether students are continuing to refine and deepen skills built in previous years or new to acting, this course will challenge them to explore and express their unique artistic voices. Training will include acting technique, improvisation, voice, movement, scene study, audition technique, as well as directing, and dramatic writing. Students will work on scenes and monologues designed to expand their acting and directing skills and foster a new understanding of their creative capacities. Class curriculum includes participation in DTASC, a Southern California Theatre Festival, guest artist visits and in-class readings and analyses of plays that change each year. Upon completion of this class, students will have a strong actors' toolbox of skills to take forward if they choose to further their craft as theatre artists.

### **Theatre and Performance**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

### **Theatre and Advanced Performance**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

Theatre and Performance and Theatre and Advanced Performance are courses that build on the skills acquired in the Actor and the Stage levels of study. With a continued emphasis on the craft of acting,

students will continue to refine and deepen their acting technique skills and develop and expand their unique artistic voices. Training will include acting technique, improvisation, voice, movement, scene study, as well as directing, and dramatic writing. Students will work on more complex and nuanced scenes and monologues designed to expand their acting and directing skills and foster a new understanding of their creative capacities. Class curriculum includes participation in DTASC, a Southern California Theatre Festival, guest artist visits, and in-class readings and analyses of plays that change each year. Upon completion of this class, students will have added to their actors' toolbox of skills to take forward if they choose to further their craft as theatre artists after Wildwood.

## **Stagecraft**

*Prerequisite: N/A*

*Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12*

*Satisfies UC requirement for 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts (Subject Area F)*

This year-long after-school course provides an introduction to technical theatre and stage design with opportunities for students to progress to more advanced skills. Students will learn:

- Set building and painting
- Lighting: hanging, focusing, programming, and managing lighting
- Sound: setting up equipment, proper mic'ing, and operating sound systems
- Elements of theatrical design (lighting design, sound design, costume design, etc.)
- Stage and scene shop equipment use
- Project management, organization, and production processes

Students will actively participate in:

- Performing Arts Department productions
- Music concerts
- School-sponsored evening events

Additionally, students can focus on a specific area of interest within Technical Theater (set, lights, costumes, etc.), taking ownership of their assigned responsibilities for the year or parts of the year.

### **AFTER-SCHOOL CLASS DETAILS**

- Students are expected to complete a total number of hours over the school year equivalent to a school-day course.
- Regular attendance is required; however, the schedule can be adjusted to accommodate athletic seasons and other after-school commitments.

This course may be repeated for credit upon approval by the instructor. Repeated courses are numbered (e.g., Stagecraft 2).

## Physical Education

The upper school Physical Education program at Wildwood School is designed to educate minds, develop healthy bodies, and promote positive attitudes towards physical activity, fitness, and sports. Our students will learn the physical, mental and emotional skills that will provide them the confidence, ability and desire to be physically active for life in a wide range of activities.

In 9th grade PE, students will select semester long classes of either Self Defense, Lifetime Fitness, and Lifetime Games. In Self Defense, students will focus on both proactive and reactive skills that will help them avoid dangerous situations, as well as what to do when those situations arise. In Lifetime Fitness, students are taught the importance of goal setting and personal bests, learning how to compete with themselves to be better than they were yesterday. Students will dive deeper into fitness concepts such as overload, progression and specificity, as well as the health and skill related components of fitness. In their Lifetime Games unit, students will go through a variety of recreational games and activities that they will be able to participate in for the rest of their lives, in college and beyond.

One (1) year of Physical Education is required to graduate from Wildwood School. Students take Physical Education in 9th grade. Physical Education is assessed as a pass/fail course in student transcripts.

# Community Involvement and Internship

Three (3) years of Community Involvement and Internship are required to graduate from Wildwood School. Tenth grade Community Involvement is assessed as a pass/fail course in student transcripts. Eleventh grade Internship/Community Involvement and 12th grade Internship are graded courses and earn points toward the student's overall GPA. Note: 12th grade Internship is most often completed during the summer before the student's senior year.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Wildwood empowers its students to become passionate advocates for local and global communities. Through a variety of community involvement experiences, Wildwood students gain perspective and come to understand the impact one individual can have on the world.

Wildwood School's Service Learning/Community Involvement and Internship program is based on our mission of helping our students change the world. We view service as an important part of our curriculum, so we dedicate time during the school day for our students to serve others.

Tenth graders work with Wildwood Elementary School kindergarten and 1st grade students as reading buddies. Through this involvement, students develop their social, emotional, and interpersonal skills. Tenth graders initially receive training on how to be a good mentor, and then they go to their site every Wednesday afternoon throughout the school year.

Eleventh grade students give back to their school community by assisting at the elementary, middle, or upper school or by volunteering at an outside service agency of their choice. Within the school community, students can write articles for school publications, help in classrooms, or assist in various departments. Outside nonprofits include the Skirball Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Westside Children's Center, Heart of Los Angeles, and many other nonprofits. Eleventh graders serve their community for one semester.

## INTERNSHIPS

Internships are part of the core curriculum for Wildwood 11th and 12th grades, and students are assessed on their participation. Juniors and seniors intern at various locations throughout Los Angeles, such as film and television studios, doctor's offices, schools, art museums, dance studios, with working artists, nonprofits, research labs, animal care facilities, architecture firms, law offices, design firms, hospitals, etc.

Wildwood's unique Internship program provides juniors and seniors with professional experience. Internships enrich students' education by extending their learning experience beyond the classroom. Through this program, students explore careers of interest, develop social skills for a professional setting, and build their college resume.

Each student researches and selects a site aligned with personal and career interests and chooses from a range of settings. Eleventh graders spend three hours each week working with a mentor on industry specific projects. Students support the work of the organization while learning communication skills, problem-solving, and meeting challenges set by the supervisor. Work-site supervisors provide regular feedback on students' work. Rising 12th graders may complete their internship hours during the summer prior to senior year.

Examples of recent Internship sites include Teen Line, Lawrence J. Ellison Institute of Transformative Medicine, Alpha Next Investments, Takadjian and Sitkoff Law Offices, Cannes Film Festival, and Shiloh Veterinary Hospital.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (ICI)

Today's technology delivers different cultures and ideas literally into the palms of our hands. We can text, email, or Zoom our messages around the world. But can we really understand another culture by reading about it

online? Can we truly distinguish the subtleties of a society through screens? The reality is nothing forges meaningful connection and growth better than being in community and working towards a shared goal.

Wildwood's International Community Involvement (ICI) Program provides upper school students with a unique opportunity to spend spring break living, working, and learning abroad. Hands-on experiences such as teaching in local schools or building houses in disenfranchised communities give participants a distinct perspective about the country's social, political, and economic reality.

ICI trips allow students to put their Wildwood education into action, drawing on language skills, and lessons from the life skills and Portrait of a Lifelong Learner to face challenges and enjoy unforgettable experiences. Through interaction, exploration, and reflection, students return with a better understanding of their world—and their role within it.