



CURRICULUM GUIDE 2026 - 2027

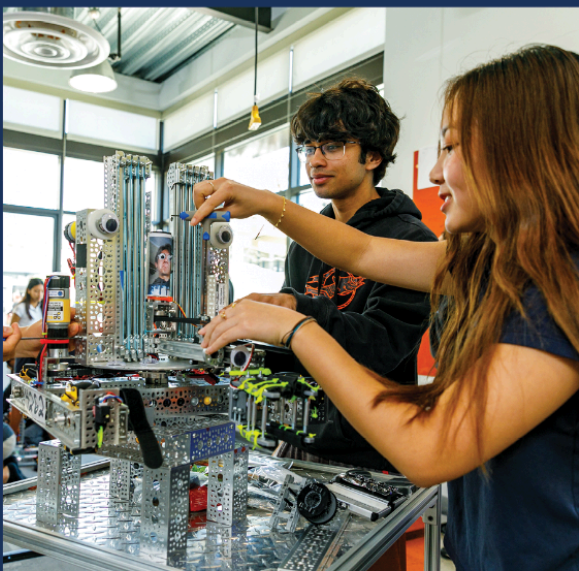


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Graduation & Diploma Requirements

A Pacific Ridge School diploma requires that students complete a minimum of 22 units of credit, 18 of which must be distributed as articulated in the table below. The remaining four credits may be fulfilled from any subject area or through any combination of electives from full-year or trimester-long courses. The requirements for the Pacific Ridge School diploma meet and exceed the requirements for entry to the University of California system.

SUBJECT	GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS
English	4 years	Students must take English every year
History	3 years	Students must take one year of World History and 1 year of U.S. History
Laboratory Science	3 years	Students must take Science 9 and Science 10
Mathematics	3 years	Students must take three years through Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry
Visual or Performing Arts	2 years	Students must complete the Arts requirement by the end of the sophomore year
World Language	3 years	Students must take three years in a single language

In addition to the core academic requirements outlined above, students must take two years of Physical Education/Health and two years of Service Learning by the end of the sophomore year. The Physical Education/Health requirement is satisfied by one trimester of Health and five trimesters of Physical Education or sports.

All Pacific Ridge School students are expected to carry a minimum of five core academic courses during each school term. While students are encouraged to carry a rigorous course-load, they should carefully consider the demands of their intended combination of classes and extracurricular commitments. Balance is important! Teacher recommendations are the primary determinant for enrollment in honors and AP classes. Juniors may take up to three AP courses; seniors may take up to four.

Students who enter Pacific Ridge School after 10th grade may have their graduation requirements adjusted as necessary by the Academic Dean.

Honors and Advanced Courses at Pacific Ridge School

Classroom instruction at Pacific Ridge School centers on the foundational belief that students thrive in learning environments that are at once challenging and supportive. Challenging environments maintain high expectations for learning and growth; supportive environments provide students with the tools and confidence to meet those expectations. Striking the right balance of challenge and support is the goal of every PRS classroom.

Each student enters the classroom with a unique set of experiences and competencies and thus unique needs around challenge and support. Advanced and Honors courses exist at PRS where a differentiated curriculum is best suited to meet the full range of needs in a given grade level.

All courses at Pacific Ridge School—College Preparatory, Advanced, and Honors alike—challenge students by expecting them to explore topics at depth, apply their knowledge and skills to novel contexts, and demonstrate initiative and independence in their learning. In this regard, all Pacific Ridge School courses follow a rigorous curriculum, meet and/or exceed UC A-G requirements, and prepare students for success in college.

Advanced and Honors courses differ from their College Preparatory counterparts in that they:

- Engage course topics at greater depth and a faster pace, as appropriate
- Allocate less time to review or reinforcement and more time to the novel application of content and skills
- Expect a higher level of student independence and initiative in the face of novel applications

College Preparatory courses aim to assign an average of no more than 45 minutes of homework per class meeting. Advanced and Honors courses may require a greater amount of time for assignment completion and class preparation. However, Advanced and Honors courses are distinguished primarily by the characteristics listed above and not by the quantity of work assigned.

PRS Honors and Advanced Course Recommendation Criteria

While each subject may have unique priorities and processes for movement into Honors or Advanced courses, the following are schoolwide recommendation criteria. Students recommended for an Honors or Advanced courses should meet many, if not all of these criteria. The way in which departments unpack and apply these criteria may vary.

Pacing	Foundational Knowledge & Transfer	Self-Motivated Learning
<i>Advanced and Honors courses differ from their College Preparatory counterparts in that they:</i>		
Engage course topics at greater depth and a faster pace, as appropriate.	Allocate less time to review or reinforcements and more time to the novel application of content and skills.	Expect a higher level of student independence and initiative in the face of novel applications.

Students who are ready to learn in an Honors or Advanced course exhibit, with greater frequency and independence, the ability to:

Make connections between concepts and skills required to engage course content at greater depth. Effectively incorporate new knowledge and skills into existing schema. Maintain the pace of the course independent of difficulty level.	Demonstrate strong foundation of knowledge and skills in discipline (e.g., consistently strong performance on assessments). Leverage understanding to generate ideas, develop claims, and/or solve problems in novel contexts. Pose questions and share ideas that extend and connect the concepts at hand.	Demonstrate sustained willingness to take risks. Persevere when challenged by consulting appropriate resources and iterating. Take responsibility for learning by asking questions, researching, and collaborating. Contribute to groups by taking an active leadership role and inviting contributions from others. Demonstrate metacognition, reflecting on learning, seeking out and learning from feedback.
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Last updated March 5, 2025

ENGLISH

Pacific Ridge School's Department of English provides our students an exposure to an array of genres in both reading and writing to develop and sharpen their understanding of how language works and how that language translates to art with literature. Our reading curriculum mixes texts from various time periods to display the evolution of the English language. With our reading material, we promote voices from various worldviews and walks of life so as to represent the multicultural and global world that awaits students beyond PRS. Not only does our reading selection render rich and meaningful topics for our Harkness discussions, but it also offers an opportunity to write. Our writing program focuses on developing students' voices to write for a myriad of purposes for different audiences. We prepare students to write for academic settings to be applied across disciplines, as well as encourage students to playfully take risks with writing in different literary genres so as to develop an appreciation of the craft of writing as an art form. In the classroom, students engage in cooperative, student-led dialogue that stimulates critical thinking and reflection at the Harkness table.



Graduation Requirements and Course Selection

Pacific Ridge School requires that students take an English course in each of their four years of Upper School. Students may additionally opt to take more than one English course in their 11th and 12th grade years.

All students take English 9 and English 10 in grades nine and 10, respectively. In their 11th and 12th grade years, students may choose from a variety of English courses to meet their graduation requirement. Any AP or Honors course requires a teacher recommendation (see our [Honors and Advanced Placement Philosophy](#)).

Overview of English Courses

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade & 12th Grade
English 9	English 10	African American Literature American Literature Honors American Literature* Genre Studies Rhetoric and Composition Women in Literature World Literature AP Language and Composition* AP Literature*

* Indicates teacher recommendation is required

Upper School English Courses

ENGLISH 9

English 9 explores three essential questions: Who am I? What do I want to say to the world? And how do I harness the power of language to do so? We practice an interdisciplinary, skills-based approach to persuasive essay writing, Harkness discussion, public speaking, and close reading. In written and oral assignments, students learn to develop an argument, support it with evidence and analysis, and speak confidently to a live audience. Additionally, students participate in a year-long grammar study, focusing on parts of speech and sentence, pronoun case, subject/verb agreement, and punctuation with quotations. The reading for the year includes a variety of genres in verse: drama, lyric poetry, and the novel. Throughout the year, we focus on how authors produce meaning and effects through their literary choices and consider how these works explore the relationship between the individual and society, paying special attention to social categories such as race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class, gender identity, and sexuality. At the same time, we explore the role of art as a form of liberation and self-expression, as well as how art can help us process difficult social issues, such as the prison-industrial complex and racial violence. Finally, during the grade-level project, Orations, students write and deliver a persuasive speech on a topic of their choosing, sharing their passion, research, and position with our school community.

Prerequisites: None

ENGLISH 10

In English 10, students read a variety of texts from both literary and non-literary genres and continue to develop reading skills in textual analysis, critical thinking, and active annotating. Students develop their written skills for language and literary analysis through a variety of writing voices, perspectives, and text types, as well as incorporate and apply lessons from grammar designed to develop coherence and command in written expression. English 10 constructs upon prior foundations with knowledge of literary and rhetorical devices to encourage personal writing style and flair. Through Harkness discussions of the texts and supplemental texts provided throughout the year, English 10 seeks to explore the themes of how non-fictional and fictional narratives are framed and how this framing of narratives influences the societies they affect. Texts that have been studied in previous English 10 courses include *1984* by George Orwell, *What the Fact* by Seema Yasmin, *How Much of These Hills is Gold* by C Pam Zhang, *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi, *Night* by Elie Wiesel, among other selections.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 9.

AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

This course examines the evolving narrative of African American identity, resistance, and cultural expression as reflected in literature from the 18th century to the present. Students will explore how African American writers have responded to and reshaped dominant narratives of race, freedom, and belonging through various literary forms—including autobiographies, poetry, essays, novels, and plays. By engaging with these various texts, students will consider essential questions: How has African American literature functioned as a tool for social and political change? In what ways have writers challenged or redefined mainstream American ideals? How do themes of race, gender, class, and resistance intersect in these works? What stories remain untold?

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10.

AMERICAN LITERATURE

This course examines the grand narrative that comes to define “America:” its ethos and mythos – and the representations of who Americans are and aspire to be. These are evidenced by the output of literature that is a product of its time and place, and which has invariably shaped attitudes, values, and beliefs today. Students explore different facets of the “American Dream” to answer the following questions: What stories have been told? Who is telling the story? Who is part of the story? How have these stories been told? Who has the right to the American Dream? How have these stories changed? What stories are being told today? What stories remain untold? Through studying various genres and examining American Literature from representative regions of the nation, students build an understanding of how writers have tried to challenge conventions and create disruptions that have given rise to a distinct American expression and tradition in literature.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10.

HONORS AMERICAN LITERATURE

This course approaches American literature from the 18th to the 21st century with the objective of exploring the idea of what it is to be American and who “counts” as American. Building on the reading and writing skills fostered in earlier courses, Honors American Literature provides sustained practice in formal analytical writing with occasional creative assignments. Although the reading list varies from year to year, students commonly study works by Ta-Nehesi Coates, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Tim O’Brien, Nathaniel Hawthorne, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Toni Morrison, Emily Dickinson, Amanda Gorman, and others. This class is distinguished from American Literature by a heavier reading load and higher expectations for written work.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10 and approval from the student’s current English instructor.

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION

This course develops proficiencies in close reading, critical thinking, timed writing, and effective linguistic persuasion. The curriculum differs from other English courses insofar as it predominantly features non-fiction texts and examines them through the lens of rhetoric rather than literary analysis. Students encounter a variety of texts, written and visual, which enrich their study of language, rhetoric, and argument. This course is skill-based and designed for student success on the AP exam; however, students work beyond the test, participating in in-depth conversations on cross-disciplinary topics and current events, as well as learning how to speak to and write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Major texts include collections of non-fiction essays, memoirs, and full-length non-fiction texts. Previously studied titles include *The Anthropocene Reviewed*, *Revenge of the Tipping Point*, *Cultish*, *Unspun*, *Evicted*, and *The Best American Food and Travel Writing*.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10 and approval from the student’s current English instructor.

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION

This course aims to prepare students to excel in college-level English and humanities courses by reinforcing the content and skills they have learned in their prior courses. By pairing literary texts with theoretical ones, this course demands that students make a paradigmatic shift in the ways they read and analyze literature. The course includes challenging material such as Franz Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*, Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*, Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Zora Neale Hurston’s, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and Henrik Ibsen’s, *A Doll’s House*. These texts, in conjunction with writing instruction that includes timed essays and papers of varying lengths, prepare students for the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition examination in the spring. However, this course extends beyond the prescribed AP curriculum, and there will be opportunities for creative and personal writing.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10 and approval from the student’s current English instructor.

GENRE STUDIES

Genre Studies explores how language becomes word art. In the course, students study word art through the genres of poetry, drama, and short fiction by reading, annotating, and discussing mentor texts that exemplify the conventions of each genre and highlight how word artists have crafted their style and technique. Apart from reading mentor texts and analyzing the authors' style, students will employ features and techniques utilized in the mentor texts into their own writing through Writer's Workshop, where they draft, edit, and revise their work through sessions of peer critique. Through writing exercises such as freewrites, brainstorming, reflections, and rationales about the work produced, students learn how to harness their creativity and articulate their ideas into finished products. At the end of the course, students celebrate their word art in a class publication showcasing their most workshoped creations of the course. This course is designed for students who like to write and who seek to grow in their creativity.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10.

RHETORIC & COMPOSITION

This course is designed for students who want to focus on the skills needed to write successfully in college and professionally. Students enrolled in this class learn to effectively read, interpret, and analyze various nonfiction texts in order to develop a clear and refined written voice. Using provided models and instructions, students improve their reading and annotating skills, formulate effective and clear thesis statements, and confidently work through the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing. The reading load in this course is light and modern, but there are regular in-class and homework writing assignments as well as out of class essays that require multiple drafts. The major assessments of this class include literary analysis essays, persuasive letters, a magazine-style profile, personal narratives, and a year-long creative Writer's Portfolio Project. This course is recommended for students who need more deliberate training in academic writing, or who want to focus on a wide variety of genres. It is not suggested for students who have successfully taken an AP course, or Honors American Literature.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10.

WOMEN IN LITERATURE

This course examines the experiences particular to womanhood through the perspective of women writers. The course explores women's lives and writer's aesthetic choices from a variety of socioeconomic, cultural, and racial backgrounds, while also considering what it means to be a woman in U.S. society. The texts, films, and related discussions dive into themes such as girlhood, gender, family, standards of beauty, sexuality, discrimination, violence against women, and women's rights. The course will also consider how women writers have responded to being marginalized throughout history. An important part of the course is an overview of the American feminist movement and representative texts (Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, and Alice Walker) that have informed writers, thinkers, and readers. The reading list will include a diverse range of writers and works, including poetry, prose, essays, novels, nonfiction narratives, memoirs, and a feminist manifesto. Students will write analytical essays as well as creative pieces, and they will also create presentations about women in the news, poetry, and phenomenal women. All voices and points of view are welcome, though in the spirit of critical thinking, we will query suppositions and assumptions about women and society.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10.

WORLD LITERATURE

This course seeks to understand the human condition from a global perspective. It celebrates the human struggle in adversity, whether through resistance, humor, adaptation, or resilience. By studying a variety of literary and media sources from different historical and cultural contexts, students examine how individuals exercise agency and make choices amidst a confluence of factors: oppressive regimes, cultural conflict, changing familial relations, generational differences, gender norms, racial tensions, migration, displacement, and the enduring impact of colonialism. The worlds we explore in these texts have themes that are intimate and personal and also politically charged and universal. In the first two trimesters, students are challenged to examine texts from a variety of theoretical and disciplinary approaches - anthropological, psychological, feminist, Marxist, postcolonial, and more. Students craft analytical essays and develop advanced writing skills, with an emphasis on the lens essay. For the final trimester, students undertake a group activity in which they choose a source from a curated list, which they research and analyze through any appropriate theoretical lens introduced in a previous unit, eventually culminating in a class presentation.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 10.

HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

The goal of the Pacific Ridge History and Social Sciences curriculum is to cultivate engaged citizens capable of informed and responsible problem solving in their communities and the world. To achieve this end, Pacific Ridge history and social sciences students practice and refine the skills of inquiry, research, historiography, recognition of perspectives, critical reading, dialogue, connecting past and present events, short and long-form analytical writing, and verbal and written advocacy. Harkness, a form of student-led discussion, is an especially important pedagogical tool used within our department to encourage critical thinking and collaborative problem solving. Harkness often works in conjunction with persuasive writing and research as the discussion stimulates deep thinking and encourages students to develop their arguments.

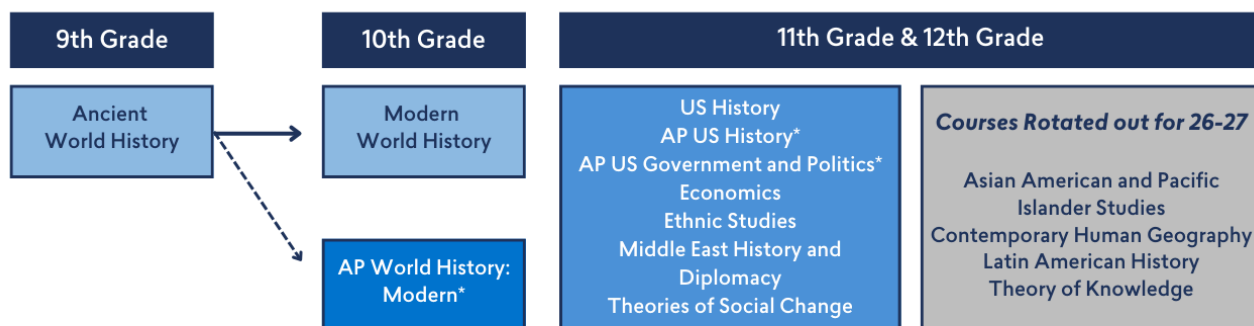


Graduation Requirements and Course Selection

Pacific Ridge School requires that students take a minimum of three years of History & Social Science courses, including Ancient World History, Modern World History, and one year of USHistory.

In ninth grade, all students take Ancient World History, while in tenth grade students have the choice between Modern World History and AP World History: Modern. In 11th and 12th grades students have the opportunity to select from a variety of history and social science courses and may choose to take more than one history or social science course simultaneously. However, **all** students must take either U.S. History or AP U.S. History in either their junior or senior year. Any AP or Honors course requires a teacher recommendation.

Overview of History & Social Sciences Courses



Upper School History & Social Sciences Courses

ANCIENT WORLD HISTORY

Ancient World History is the first course in a two-year sequence of coursework in World History. This two-year sequence merges the histories of different regions of the world into a coherent human story emphasizing the processes and concepts behind the journey towards “civilization.” Ancient World History introduces ninth grade students to the breadth and depth of human history across the planet. Topics are selected thematically and range from human origins to the development of societies and empires and their collapse and restructure. This illustrates some of the most important developments that have led to the world we live in today. As learning is centered around inquiry, units are framed around open-ended questions and students are expected to be active participants in the learning journey. Nightly homework assignments help students acquire the requisite reading and writing skills needed to understand challenging academic material, while an emphasis on Harkness discussions and critical discourse in the classroom assures the students of regular opportunities to develop reasoning and communication skills.

Prerequisites: None

MODERN WORLD HISTORY

Building on the analytical frameworks and historical inquiry methods of Ancient World History, the Modern World History course continues and extends students' understanding of history as a dynamic narrative shaped by the material conditions and social structures that influence human development. In this second year of the World History sequence, 10th grade students learn how to apply frameworks of communities, networks, production, and distribution to evaluate historical processes. In doing so, students build skills and understandings that enable them to explain how changing economic interests and motives drove the creation of early-modern, world-wide trade networks, including the rise and fall of European empires, and how the use of extractive and enslaved labor production fueled Europe's Industrial Revolution. The course also considers the World Wars as a nearly 30-year period of imperialist power struggles and as a reorganization of global ideological and power structures. Similarly, students engage with the Cold War as a time of ideological competition between capitalist and socialist systems, while decolonization movements, like those in Algeria and India, are studied as struggles for national liberation against imperialist domination. Through research, writing, discussions, and presentations, students continue to develop the ability to create and support arguments grounded in evidence, contributing to their understanding of how the historical development of human societies has led to the interconnected global world we live in today.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Ancient World History

AP WORLD HISTORY: MODERN

AP World History: Modern is an introductory college-level modern world history course. This course is open to highly motivated 10th grade students who are ready for an increased challenge in their study of history. In this course, students cultivate their understanding of world history from c. 1200 CE to the present through analyzing historical sources and learning to make connections and craft historical arguments. Throughout the course, students explore concepts like humans and the environment, cultural developments and interactions, social organization and governance, various economic systems, and technology and innovation. Each unit of study culminates with a variety of assessments to test students' knowledge of world history and historical thinking skills. Students in this course should expect a fast-moving and demanding workload, as a central aim is to prepare students for a successful performance on the AP exam.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Ancient World History and approval from the Ancient World History instructor.

US HISTORY

This course traces the making of modern America, from pre-Columbian Indigenous peoples to the country's complex experience in the world today. Recognizing that history is a multifaceted discipline, the class examines the social, economic, political, constitutional, geographic and religious factors that have contributed to the story. As there is more than one perspective on US history, this class makes every effort to explore diverse experiences and narratives. Students consider the many ways in which race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity have impacted the nation's history and contributed to a wide range of experiences within the overall story. Beyond content, students in US History work hard to improve their academic skills. Students strive to grow as writers, critical readers, media-literate researchers, listeners, speakers, debaters and collaborators. By the

end of the course, students are better able to understand the modern-day United States, having examined the journey that the nation has undertaken up to this point in history.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

AP US HISTORY

This course is a detailed and comprehensive survey from pre-Colombian times through the present day, designed to inform and stimulate students regarding the history and issues most important to our democratic republic, while also imparting college-level exam skills to prepare students for the AP US History Exam. Students examine both primary and secondary sources, and are encouraged to pay particular attention to the ways in which primary sources reveal the multifaceted nature of American history and the multiple perspectives from which it has been experienced and can be viewed. In addition to studying American history through the lens of themes such as identity, citizenship, reform, and economic transformation, we focus on how conflicting viewpoints and themes have influenced the study of American history and how diverse contributions have shaped and strengthened our society. The final unit of the course is a deep dive into research, analysis, and presentation on a special topic in US history chosen by the individual student in consultation with the class teacher.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History and approval from a current History & Social Sciences instructor.

AP US GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

In this introductory college-level course, students cultivate their understanding of U.S. government and politics through analysis of data and text-based sources as they explore topics like constitutionalism, liberty and order, civic participation in a representative democracy, competing policy-making interests, and methods of political analysis. Students connect political concepts to real-life situations, read and analyze textual and visual sources, analyze data to find patterns and trends and then draw conclusions, and further build their skills towards supporting a claim in an essay. Examples of the challenges and learning opportunities in the course are to explain the impact and possible future implications of landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions like *Marbury v. Madison*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *US v. Lopez*. This course covers a significant level of content at a steady pace, and students should expect to dedicate a corresponding amount of time each homework night to reading and writing. Over the year, students employ their developing knowledge and skills in both hypothetical and experiential contexts, deploying their learning about political concepts and processes both in and out of the classroom.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History and approval from a current History & Social Sciences instructor.

History & Social Science courses offered on rotation and available in Academic Year 2026-2027

ECONOMICS

This course is divided into four sections: microeconomics, macroeconomics, international economics, and development. Microeconomics includes the fundamentals of supply and demand, the principles of how to run a business, and the role of government in correcting market failures. Macroeconomics deals with challenges faced by national economies, including unemployment, inflation, and income distribution, along with how to use effective policies to address those. International economics considers how cross-border trade can help or hurt various groups in a country and how exchange rates are determined. Finally, development looks at the experience of developing countries and examines economic strategies to improve the quality of life therein. The course culminates with a study of the modern stock market. Throughout the course, students read excerpts from influential economists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Jeffrey Sachs and Milton Friedman, as well as current articles about modern economic phenomena from sources like the Harvard Business Review.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is offered in odd graduation years and is available in Academic Year 2026-27.

ETHNIC STUDIES

What does “ethnic” even mean? Scholars have long discussed whether ethnicity is determined by heritage, cultural markers, solidarity, nationality or self-identification. Designed to activate student knowledge, and appreciation of the communities that make up the United States of America, the curriculum encourages students to cultivate their civic, leadership, and communication skills. By requiring students to apply course concepts through Youth Participatory Active Research (YPAR), this course disrupts ‘traditional’ adult-led action, empowering students to move toward purposeful advocacy for their local community. Students will expand their knowledge on the experiences of racialized and disenfranchised peoples. Students will engage in academically rigorous content centered on identity, history and movement, systems of power, social movements, and equity.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is offered in odd graduation years and is available in Academic Year 2026-27.

MIDDLE EAST HISTORY AND DIPLOMACY

This course explores one of the most pivotal and strategically contested regions in the world. Students in the course experience the culture of the Middle East and investigate the historical, political, economic, social, religious, and environmental factors that shape its modern reality. Key topics include: gender roles, climate change, human rights, refugees, the role of outside actors like the United States and Russia, the fight for regional hegemony between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This seminar-style class emphasizes inquiry, honest dialogue, verbal/written argumentation, and experiential learning. Along the way, students learn basic negotiation skills and put them to the test in a Model UN-style simulation.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is offered in odd graduation years and is available in Academic Year 2026-27.

THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

This course provides students with the knowledge and tools to help create a more just and equitable world. Many Americans engage in direct service: serving meals to the homeless, collecting books for donation, or pulling weeds. While valuable contributions, these charitable actions solely address the symptoms of inequality. Theories of Social Change seeks to provide students with the theoretical framework and analytical tools necessary to dissect, investigate, and address inequality at its roots. Students first explore social action through historical and theoretical lenses, then they learn about the history of volunteerism, social movement theory, considering a variety of case studies such as the Civil Rights Movement and the fight for marriage equality. This theoretical foundation is followed by an introduction to numerous practical tools for creating social change, such as community organizing, philanthropy, nonviolent protest, and research into neglected data and perspectives. In addition, students have opportunities to interact with and learn from social justice advocates and activists from the San Diego community throughout the course.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is offered in odd graduation years and is available in Academic Year 2026-27.

History & Social Science courses offered on rotation and NOT available in
Academic Year 2026-2027

ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER STUDIES

This course highlights the extensive contributions to the American fabric made by Chinese, Hawaiian, Indian, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Samoan, and Vietnamese peoples. Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies (AAPIS) begins with first arrivals, exploring legal records of earliest economies, tracing historical exchanges and conflicts, and concluding with the history and significant social issues of recent decades. Reconstructing American history by observing cultural systems, patterns of migration, and economic relationships provides students with assorted and vital perspectives. Students will exercise their analysis skills by inspecting primary and secondary sources to delve into socio-cultural and economic events. This process supports the students in their year-long inquiry as they investigate what it means to be an American within the context of these historical legacies. During the year, students will demonstrate their learning through individually and collaboratively written essays, research projects, class presentations, and class discussions. By the end of the year, students will apply their learnings to illuminate a topic through a research project of their choice.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is typically offered in even graduation years and is anticipated to be offered in Academic Year 2027-28.

CONTEMPORARY HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

This course prepares students to make sense of the world around them and to understand the interconnectedness of the physical world, including how and why humans interact with it. Geography provides the link between the physical and human world that helps to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and empathy to make informed decisions as future

global citizens. During this course, students focus on the study of places, primarily focusing on the cause-and-effect relationships of the physical world and how humans interact with it. Students immerse themselves in the study of complex issues that face upcoming generations in our highly connected world. Themes and topics include climate change, global warming, food production, drought, desertification, land degradation, water resources, human well-being, aging populations, urban growth, ethnic conflicts, the reasons for migration and refugees, natural disasters, the spread of disease, and globalization. The study of such topics allows students to make sense of the connections among countries, cultures, cities, regions, and among regions within countries, while also opening pathways to many emerging 21st Century career paths.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is typically offered in even graduation years and is anticipated to be offered in Academic Year 2027-28.

LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY

This course offers a critical exploration of the history of Latin America and the Caribbean by emphasizing the underlying material and social dynamics that have shaped and been shaped by the region's development. Students build an understanding of how social and economic forces impacted the following major themes and topics in the course: the cultural, political, and social features of the pre-Columbian civilizations of the Andes and Mesoamerica; the Atlantic World and the Encounter; transculturation and the crucible of colonization; postcolonialism and nation-building; neocolonialism and nationalist resistance; and, finally, neoliberalism and possible futures for the region. Through case studies on these topics, students explore how class struggles, foreign interventions, and changes in the modes of production influenced the lives of individuals and shaped macro-regional patterns of change and continuity. Students engage with primary materials such as written sources, art, literature, music, and film to analyze how cultural expressions reflect and challenge material realities throughout the history of Latin America and the Caribbean. This course equips students with the skills to interrogate historical narratives, connect regional histories to global systems, and understand the persistent inequalities and power dynamics that continue to shape Latin America and the Caribbean.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is typically offered in even graduation years and is anticipated to be offered in Academic Year 2027-28.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

The Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course provides an opportunity for students to reflect on the nature, scope and limitations of knowledge and the process of knowing. The course encourages students to critically examine the nature of knowledge, how we acquire it and the implications of different ways of knowing across various disciplines. The class prompts students to question assumptions, analyze different perspectives and evaluate the validity of knowledge claims, and claims about knowledge, across various fields like science, history, arts and ethics. Does knowledge require certainty? What is the relationship of knowledge to truth and facts? What is the relationship of knowledge to power, justice, and identity? How do we know that we know? Do we need to know what we know in order to have knowledge? Or, in practice, is knowledge a matter of "justified true belief"? TOK is not only about students acquiring new knowledge, but about them understanding more deeply what they already know, or if they actually know what they think they know. Students in TOK are

assessed through essays, journals, research projects and classroom demonstrations of their understanding of the key TOK concepts. Readings are taken from philosophers, scientists, theologians and other thought leaders around the world and throughout history, with topics ranging from the nature of existence and the basis for ethics to the impact of social power structures and new technology like A.I.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Modern World History.

This course is typically offered in even graduation years and is anticipated to be offered in Academic Year 2027-28.

MATHEMATICS

The Pacific Ridge School Mathematics Department's approach to teaching and learning is largely influenced by our small class size and the manner in which we utilize Harkness discussions to kindle the spirit of inquiry. Students learn how to persevere when tackling challenging problems, construct viable mathematical arguments, and ultimately communicate clearly about their mathematical knowledge. Classes are student-centered, allowing for students to engage, discover, and practice mastery of mathematical concepts with their peers. The teacher acts as a guide and facilitator through this process. Students regularly present their work to the class and discuss various methods of solving problems. They become active participants in their own learning and understanding of mathematical content, both as engaged listeners and vocal contributors to class discussions.

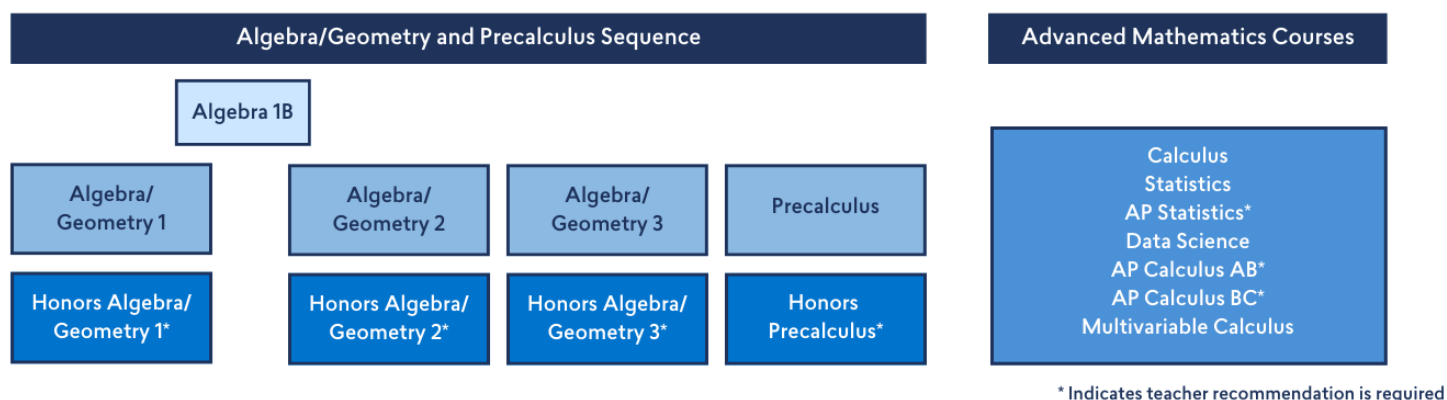


Graduation Requirements and Course Selection

Pacific Ridge School requires that students take a minimum of three years of Mathematics; students must successfully complete Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry.

Course selection in mathematics is based on student readiness. Placement for students new to Pacific Ridge School is based on: a placement test, student performance and prior coursework, and the recommendation from the referring institution. Once a student is placed into a mathematics course, they typically progress to the next course in the sequence. Students may move from a college preparatory course into an honors course between grade levels with teacher approval and after completing any required summer work to ensure readiness for the next course.

Overview of Mathematics Courses



Upper School Mathematics Courses

ALGEBRA / GEOMETRY 1

The first year of a three-year math sequence, this course helps students form a solid algebraic foundation while introducing several geometry concepts. Students collaboratively discover key concepts, then practice mastery of skills both in class and independently at home, with emphasis on both analytical and mechanical skills. The curriculum provides a study of number sense, while introducing linear functions and models. The study of linear functions is addressed from a multi-faceted point of view; namely, algebraically, graphically, numerically, and contextually. Emphasis is placed on making connections between these facets. The course also explores systems of equations and inequalities. Coordinate geometry is integrated within topics, covering: midpoint and distance formula, Pythagorean Theorem, area, and rigid and nonrigid transformations. Other major class objectives include developing perseverance to grapple with problems, using technology appropriately and strategically, constructing models, reasoning abstractly, learning to appreciate real-life applications of the concepts, and recognizing interdisciplinary connections.

Prerequisites: None

ALGEBRA 1B

This course reinforces and solidifies concepts taught primarily in the second half of Algebra/Geometry 1. The goal of the course is to develop and strengthen students' computational, procedural, and problem-solving skills in order to provide a solid foundation in algebraic concepts that supports the learning of more complex topics that will be seen in Algebra/Geometry 2. The course is designed to engage students in the content as they further develop their problem-solving strategies. Students learn how each new skill applies to solving problems in the real world, continue the development of their mathematical vocabulary, and engage in work collaboratively. Students in this class are either recommended by their Algebra/Geometry 1 teacher or placed into this class as a new student.

Prerequisites: None

HONORS ALGEBRA / GEOMETRY 1

This is the first course in the honors math sequence. Using a problem-centered approach to learning, this course includes all topics included in Algebra/Geometry 1 in addition to the study of absolute value functions and radicals. Students in this course examine the content in greater depth, emphasizing the connection between procedure, understanding, and application. The pace of this course is demanding, and students are expected to engage in discussion about the topics, work together to solve challenging problems, build strong mathematical arguments using evidence to support their ideas, and make connections between concepts. Students begin to create a strong, well-developed algebraic and geometric foundation for their future math courses. They learn the skills to grapple with challenging problems, appropriately and strategically use technology, construct models, and reason abstractly. Students in this course should enjoy the rigor of problem-solving and feel comfortable being challenged.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introduction to Algebra with a recommendation from the current PRS mathematics instructor.

ALGEBRA / GEOMETRY 2

The second in a three-year math sequence, this course continues to help students form a solid algebraic foundation while introducing more geometry concepts. Students collaboratively investigate key concepts, and then practice mastery of skills both in class and independently at home with an emphasis on analytical and mechanical skills. The course builds upon Algebra/Geometry 1, extending and reinforcing the study of linear functions, while incorporating a general introduction to function transformations and an in-depth study of quadratic equations and functions. Students engage with functions and algebraic concepts through a multi-faceted point of view; namely, algebraically, graphically, numerically, and contextually. This course continues to build student understanding of geometry topics through the study of parallel lines and the properties and angle relationships within triangles, polygons, and circles. This course also contains a data analysis unit that builds on the data analysis that students saw in Algebra/Geometry 1. In addition to mastery of these concepts, other major class objectives include developing perseverance to grapple with problems, using technology appropriately and strategically, constructing models, reasoning abstractly, learning to appreciate real-life applications of the concepts, and recognizing interdisciplinary connections.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Algebra/Geometry 1.

HONORS ALGEBRA / GEOMETRY 2

The second in the honors math sequence, this course offers a problem-centered approach to learning all the algebra and geometry topics included in Algebra/Geometry 2. Students explore quadratic functions at a deeper level, which includes deriving the quadratic formula, completing the square, and eventually comparing and contrasting the characteristics of linear, absolute value functions, and quadratic functions. Students also study circles centered anywhere on the coordinate plane and discover properties about their inscribed angles. Points of concurrency are also explored in this course. As was the case in Honors Algebra/Geometry 1, students examine the content in greater depth, emphasizing the connection between procedure, understanding, and application. The pace of this course is demanding, and students are expected to engage in discussion about the topics, work together to solve challenging problems, build strong mathematical arguments using evidence to support their ideas, and make connections between concepts. They continue to strengthen their skills in grappling with challenging problems, appropriately and strategically use technology, construct models, and reason abstractly. Students in this course should enjoy the rigor of problem-solving and feel comfortable being challenged.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Algebra/Geometry 1 or a strong performance in Algebra/Geometry 1 with a recommendation from the current mathematics instructor and completion of supporting work.

ALGEBRA / GEOMETRY 3 WITH TRIGONOMETRY

The third in the three-course Algebra/Geometry sequence, this course helps students strengthen their algebraic foundation by putting into practice what they have learned about functions and extending this to the study of exponential, logarithmic, polynomial, and trigonometric functions. All functions studied within the Algebra/Geometry sequence are addressed from a multi-faceted point of view; namely, algebraically, graphically, numerically, and contextually. The geometry topics introduced focus on the study of right triangles and their relevance to the unit circle. In addition to mastery of these concepts, class objectives include developing perseverance to grapple with problems, using technology appropriately and strategically, constructing models, reasoning abstractly, learning to appreciate real-life applications of the concepts, and recognizing interdisciplinary connections. Students collaboratively investigate key concepts and develop mastery of skills through practice both in class and independently at home, with an emphasis on analytical and mechanical skills.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Algebra/Geometry 2.

HONORS ALGEBRA / GEOMETRY 3 WITH TRIGONOMETRY

The third course in the honors math sequence, this course incorporates a student-centered approach to learning and extending the content covered in Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry. It is further distinguished from Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry by the inclusion of a deeper exploration of exponential, logarithmic, polynomial, and trigonometric functions. The course also covers additional topics including: derivation of the Law of Sines and Cosines, the proof and use of trigonometric identities and reciprocal trigonometric functions, and the exploration of polar coordinates. As in previous honors courses, the pace of this course continues to be demanding, and students are expected to engage in discussion about the topics, work together to solve challenging problems, build strong mathematical arguments using evidence to support their ideas, and make connections

between concepts. Students continue to strengthen a variety of skills, including: abstract reasoning, modeling, appropriate and strategic use of technology, and overall problem-solving skills. Above all, students in this course should enjoy the rigor of problem-solving, as they are on track to pursue more complex mathematical topics found in Honors Precalculus.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Algebra/Geometry 2 or a strong performance in Algebra/Geometry 2 with a recommendation from the current mathematics instructor and completion of supporting work.

PRECALCULUS

Building off of Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry, this course provides students with a rigorous preparation for the subsequent study of calculus and other college-level courses. This course emphasizes the connection between procedure, understanding, and application. Students engage in an in-depth study of functions, identifying features such as symmetry, asymptotes, end behavior, and continuity. This learning is applied and deepened through exploring analytical trigonometry, reciprocal trigonometric functions, exponential and logarithmic functions, and rational functions. Other topics include sequences and series, the natural constant e together with natural logarithms, an introduction to limits, and data analysis. In addition to mastery of these concepts, other major class objectives include developing perseverance to grapple with problems, using technology appropriately and strategically, constructing models, reasoning abstractly, learning to appreciate real-life applications of the concepts, and recognizing interdisciplinary connections.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry.

HONORS PRECALCULUS

This course provides students with a rigorous preparation for the subsequent study of AP Calculus BC. The pace of this course is extremely demanding, and students are expected to: engage in and lead each other in discussions about mathematical topics, work together to solve challenging problems, build strong mathematical arguments using evidence to support their ideas, and make connections between concepts. The central theme of this course is functions as models of change, and the students move from looking at function behavior through an algebraic lens to examining it from a calculus perspective. Students build on their knowledge to develop conceptual understanding of polynomials, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions, and use these concepts as a springboard to develop an understanding of complex numbers, sequences and series, rational functions, and limits. In the final trimester, students begin their study of differential calculus as preparation to take on either AP Calculus AB or AP Calculus BC in the following academic year.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry or a strong performance in Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry with a recommendation from the mathematics instructor and completion of supporting work.

STATISTICS

This course covers the fundamental principles of descriptive statistics, relationships in data, experimental design, and statistical inference. Emphasis is placed on developing statistical reasoning and the practical application of statistical techniques to draw meaningful conclusions from data. Topics include probability distributions, sampling techniques, binomial distributions, and the study of the normal distribution and standardized scores. The course extensively explores hypothesis testing, confidence intervals, and the role of probability in decision-making. Students will learn to measure and interpret probability and apply it in various contexts, including games of chance, business, medicine, policy-making, the natural and social sciences, and sports. Through real-world examples and hands-on activities, students will enhance their ability to analyze data critically and apply statistical concepts to solve problems.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry.

AP STATISTICS

AP Statistics is an advanced, college-preparatory course designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of statistical concepts and methods. This course delves into the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, emphasizing conceptual understanding and real-world application. Students will explore key topics such as probability theory, data distributions, confidence intervals, hypothesis testing, linear regression, and experimental design. Through collaboration with peers, engaging problem-solving activities, hands-on projects, and the use of statistical software, students will develop critical thinking skills and learn to draw meaningful conclusions from data. As a tool for preparing for the AP Statistics exam, students will regularly work with past AP exam questions, strengthening their ability to apply statistical reasoning and problem-solving strategies. An in-depth study of statistical concepts will allow students to analyze and interpret data collected within the course, enhancing their ability to apply statistics in real-world situations. This course is ideal for students interested in fields such as mathematics, science, economics, psychology, and the social sciences.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Precalculus and approval from the student's current mathematics instructor.

DATA SCIENCE

This course gives students the opportunity to explore data, develop their understanding of data science, and how it is used to solve real problems. Students learn to analyze and visualize data with a variety of models. They use these models to predict future observations and learn how data scientists measure the success of these predictions. Students explore the use of data in our lives and how it may impact them and others. Is the data used fair and just? Does it leave room for human error and emotion? How can it impact social injustice? This course also introduces students to data researching tools, programs, and software that provide sampling, probability, and modeling examples infusing mathematics with computer science. Students in this course will engage in meaningful conversations about the data that they are studying and how it applies and connects to the world around them.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Precalculus.

CALCULUS

This course provides students with a foundation in limits, derivatives, and integrals. With an emphasis on real-world problem solving, students learn how calculus is a powerful tool to solve problems in the world of business, the physical sciences, engineering, and the social and biological sciences. This course strikes a balance between theory and modeling as well as paper-and-pencil manipulation and the use of technology. Students work both individually and in groups while they acquire problem-solving, mathematical reasoning, and mathematical communication skills. This class is ideal for those students who would like to maintain a rigorous mathematical track without the rapid pace of the AP Calculus courses offered at Pacific Ridge.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Precalculus.

AP CALCULUS AB

Throughout this course, students develop a clear understanding of limits, derivatives, integrals, approximations, and the applications of these calculus concepts. Students work both individually and in groups while they acquire problem solving, mathematical reasoning, and mathematical communication skills. As a tool for preparing for the AP Calculus exam, students regularly see and solve past AP exam questions. Finally, students discover the connections between calculus and the world around them when they study its influences in physics, engineering, economics, and biology.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Precalculus and a recommendation from the current mathematics instructor.

AP CALCULUS BC

This course extends the material of AP Calculus AB, covering one more quarter of work. In both classes, students develop a clear understanding of limits, derivatives, integrals, approximations, and the applications of these calculus concepts. In AP Calculus BC, students also dive deep into the calculus of parametric functions and polar curves. The curriculum ends with the study of infinite series, including the geometric, harmonic, and Taylor/MacLaurin series. Students work both individually and in groups while they acquire problem-solving, mathematical reasoning, and mathematical communication skills. As a tool for preparing for the AP Calculus exam, students regularly see and solve past AP exam questions. Finally, students discover the connections between calculus and the world around them when they study its influences in physics, engineering, economics, and biology.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Precalculus or AP Calculus AB and approval from the student's current mathematics instructor.

Mathematics courses offered on rotation

MULTIVARIABLE CALCULUS

Multivariable Calculus is an advanced mathematics course that extends the principles of single-variable calculus to functions of multiple variables. Designed for students with a strong foundation in calculus, this course explores the deeper complexities of calculus in higher dimensions, with applications in physics, engineering, economics, and other fields. Topics include limits and continuity, vector calculus, partial derivatives, multiple integrals, and the fundamental theorems of calculus in higher dimensions. Students will engage with concepts such as gradient vectors, directional derivatives, surface integrals, and line integrals, and apply these tools to solve problems involving multivariable functions. The course also covers key theorems, including Green's Theorem, Stokes' Theorem, and the Divergence Theorem, which are critical in understanding physical phenomena such as fluid flow and electromagnetic fields. Through problem-solving, applications, and the use of technology, students will develop both conceptual understanding and technical skills to solve complex real-world problems.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of AP Calculus BC and approval from the student's current mathematics instructor.

This course is offered in odd graduation years and is available in Academic Year 2026-27.

DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS

This course will focus on ordinary differential equations. Ordinary Differential Equations is an advanced mathematics course that focuses on the study of equations involving functions and their derivatives. This course introduces students to the methods used to solve both linear and basic nonlinear differential equations, which model a wide range of phenomena in science, engineering, economics, and other fields. Topics include first-order differential equations, higher-order linear differential equations, systems of differential equations, Laplace Transforms, and a brief introduction into partial differential equations. Instruction in this course emphasizes the connections between procedure, understanding, and application. Students will learn analytical techniques, including separation of variables, integrating factors, and the method of undetermined coefficients, as well as numerical methods for solving more complex equations. This course is ideal for students pursuing careers in mathematics, physics, engineering, computer science, and other STEM fields. It is offered in alternating years with Multivariable Calculus.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of AP Calculus AB and approval from the student's current mathematics instructor.

This course is offered in even graduation years and will be offered in Academic Year 2027-28.

SCIENCE

Pacific Ridge aims to inspire and prepare students for a future built on STEM. Through design, experimentation, discussion, and critical evaluation of evidence, students develop curiosity, learn to communicate ideas clearly, and make informed decisions about the impact of science and technology on society. Our science curriculum is grounded in an integrated approach that empowers students to analyze complex real-world problems and design meaningful solutions. In grades six through ten, this comes to life through a phenomena-based, project-oriented curriculum that weaves together life, physical, earth, space, and computer science — much of it rooted in design and engineering practices. This interconnected approach helps students see science not as isolated facts, but as a dynamic, interrelated system. In grades eleven and twelve, students can pursue honors or AP-level courses across various science disciplines, or choose from exciting electives such as Marine Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Biotechnology, and Engineering Design. Across all levels, ethical issues in current research, laboratory investigations, and scientific collaboration are explored through the Harkness method—a discussion-based approach that puts student voices at the center of learning.

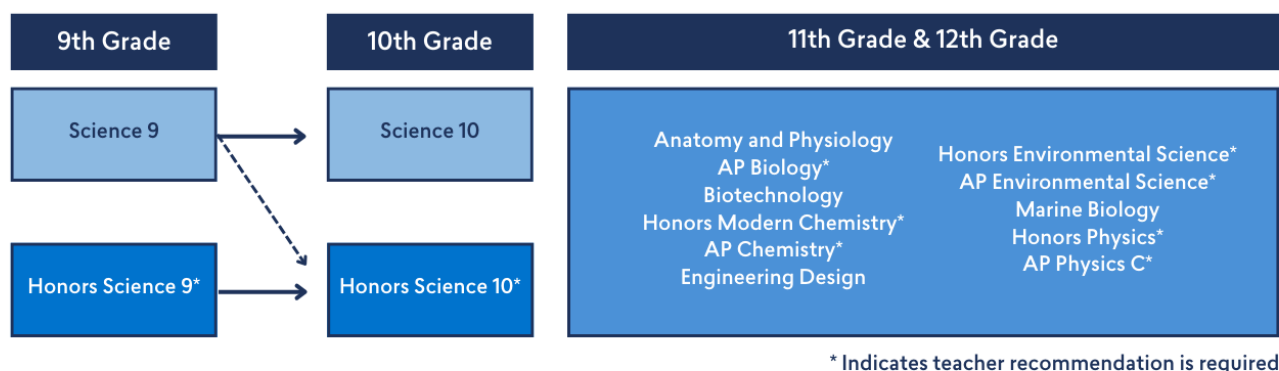


Graduation Requirements and Course Selection

Pacific Ridge School requires that students take a minimum of three years of Science courses, including Science 9 and Science 10.

Students in ninth grade take Science 9 or Honors Science 9, while students in Science 10 take either Science 10 or Honors Science 10. Students in grades 11 and 12 have the opportunity to select from a variety of Science courses. Any AP or Honors course requires a teacher recommendation.

Overview of Science Courses



Upper School Science Courses

SCIENCE 9 / HONORS SCIENCE 9

Science 9 and Honors Science 9 are integrated science courses that lay a foundation for high school science by encouraging students to explore, design experiments and pose testable questions. The design of these courses employs physical, chemical, engineering, and computer science to challenge students to ask big questions such as "How and why do we see the colors that we see?" and, subsequently, "How does our understanding of light allow us to understand our place in the universe and the nature of matter?" Exploration of phenomena and complex systems such as the big bang, electricity, and climate change are emphasized throughout both courses. Through the use of experimental design, data collection, analysis, and modeling (both physical and computational), students are challenged to see the interconnectedness and interdependence between scientific fields. While Honors Science 9 covers all of the concepts and skills included in Science 9, it goes into greater depth, moves at a faster pace, and includes additional topics. The Honors Science 9 course makes greater use of mathematical modeling and data analysis and development; therefore, strong skills in mathematical thinking are beneficial. The honors course is ideally suited to the student who demonstrates a higher level of independence and initiative in the face of novel applications.

Prerequisites: All 9th grade students may enroll in Science 9. Enrollment in Honors Science 9 requires approval from the student's Science 8 instructor.

SCIENCE 10 / HONORS SCIENCE 10

Building upon the foundation created in Science 9, these courses continue to use an interdisciplinary scientific lens to investigate the science of life on Earth as well as the mechanisms that govern living systems. Students will explore topics such as thermodynamics by examining the flow of energy through the biosphere, and its role in maintaining order and function in ecosystems and the organisms that live within them. Special focus is given to contemplating the impact humans have on the natural environment. Modeling, designing experiments, data analysis, and scientific reasoning remain a focus in the Science 10 courses. Students tackle big questions such as “How can our understanding of chemical properties and reactions inform our problem solving with regard to anthropogenic impacts on our planet?” and “What forces have shaped the diversity of life, and which cellular mechanisms preserve it?” While Honors Science 10 covers all of the concepts and skills included in Science 10, it goes into greater depth, moves at a faster pace, and includes additional topics. The Honors Science 10 course makes greater use of mathematical modeling and data analysis; therefore, strong skills in mathematical thinking are beneficial. The honors course is ideally suited to the student who demonstrates a higher level of independence and initiative in the face of novel applications.

Prerequisites: Students may enroll in Science 10 with successful completion of Science 9. Students may enroll in Honors Science 10 with a strong performance in Science 9 and approval from the student’s science instructor.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

This course provides an understanding of the structure and function of the major human organ systems. Homeostatic control mechanisms, disease states, and adaptive physiological responses to stress, exercise, and nutrient intake are considered throughout the course. Laboratory activities, dissections, and case studies are essential components of this course.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10.

AP BIOLOGY

In this course, students develop a conceptual framework for modern biology that prepares them for the AP exam. Essential to this conceptual understanding is a grasp of science as a process and a practice rather than simply an accumulation of facts. Content, inquiry, and reasoning (i.e. lab work and critical thinking), application of biological knowledge to environmental and social concerns, and recognition of unifying themes that integrate the major topics are all equally important in AP Biology. There are four major themes, or ‘Big Ideas’, on which the course is focused: evolution, cellular energy and communication, genetics and information transfer, and interactions. These themes weave in and out of the curriculum throughout the year. Students in AP Biology primarily spend class time on lab work, lecture and reading discussions, activities, and problem solving.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10 or above and approval from the student’s current science instructor.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Biotechnology is a core component of numerous fields, including health and medicine, agriculture, energy production, data science, diagnostics, and forensics. This course provides a foundation from which to understand and discuss the essential role biotechnology plays across many such fields. Additionally, this course includes a deep dive into the applications, ethics, and societal implications of current and emerging technologies. Reading and discussion topics range from recent advances in medicine, reproductive cloning, and genome editing, to emerging pandemics, viral spillover, and privacy issues related to genomic data. Students utilize a number of tools in hands-on experiments, including extraction and analysis of DNA, Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), viral diagnostics, gene editing, genotyping, bioinformatics, and more. Lab and project work is supplemented by class readings and discussions, conversations with research scientists, and visits to local research labs. In this course, students learn tangible lab skills that will help prepare them for first-year college coursework and/or summer internship work in the sciences.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10.

HONORS MODERN CHEMISTRY

This laboratory-intensive and project-oriented course explores foundational chemical principles through the lens of modern applications and emerging areas of the chemistry industry. The curriculum emphasizes chemistry as both a conceptual framework and a practical tool for understanding and addressing real-world challenges. Students apply core chemical concepts to extended laboratory investigations and project work, reinforcing the view of science as a process of inquiry, analysis, and ethical decision-making, rather than a collection of isolated facts. Each major unit is organized around a local, national, or global challenge, helping students connect chemical principles to issues in health, materials, energy, and the environment. Through partnerships with community professionals, students explore chemistry as a tool for purpose-driven work while pairing high academic expectations with an emphasis on ethical responsibility. In this role, students examine both the historical impacts of chemical innovations and the implications of future developments.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10 or above and approval from the student's current science instructor.

AP CHEMISTRY

This rigorous course prepares students for the AP Chemistry exam and for subsequent advanced chemistry courses in college. The curriculum emphasizes chemical calculations and the mathematical formulation of principles as they appear on the AP exam. Topics include reactions, periodic trends, intermolecular forces, the Ideal Gas Law, thermodynamics, reaction rates, reaction mechanisms, acids and bases, and electrochemistry. Students conduct sophisticated laboratory exercises and report their findings through formal lab reports. This course employs an integrated approach, challenging students to analyze chemical concepts that have broad applications in the modern world.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10 or above and approval from the student's current science instructor.

ENGINEERING DESIGN

This introductory course exposes students to some of the major methods of thinking encountered in the discipline of engineering. It focuses on habits of mind and problem-solving techniques rather than on computations or analytical content. Students develop an understanding of concepts and hone creative, communication, and problem-solving skills through the collaborative completion of challenges. The course exposes students to the practices of and specialized fields within several major branches of engineering, including chemical, mechanical, aerospace, and civil. Students who are considering engineering as a career, who are curious about what it means to be an engineer, or who are interested in learning how to better identify and solve real-world problems will enjoy this course.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10.

HONORS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Everything we do, from drinking a cup of coffee to driving our cars, has an environmental impact. This course takes an in-depth look at how people have rights and responsibilities with regard to the world's resources and begins by using scientific principles to understand the interrelations of the natural world and the impact of humans on natural systems. Students carefully evaluate the risks and realities associated with environmental problems while working towards analysis of potential solutions through the three pillars of sustainability: environment, economy and society. Throughout this course, students investigate environmental topics and issues unique and important to California.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10 or above and approval from the student's current science instructor.

AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

AP Environmental Science is an interdisciplinary, college-level course, in which students engage with the scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies required to understand natural systems, human impacts, and sustainable practices. Topics of study include the importance of biodiversity, natural resource management, environmental toxicology and climate change. Through the curriculum topics, students identify and analyze natural and anthropogenic environmental problems, evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and examine potential solutions for resolving or preventing them. Students also investigate environmental challenges experienced acutely in California, such as air quality in urban areas, secondary succession due to wildfires and water allocation in the Central Valley. Hands-on and virtual investigations encourage students to collect and analyze meaningful data in addition to giving students experience in the field of environmental science. Success in AP Environmental Science requires strong skills in data analysis, graph interpretation, scientific method application, and proposing evidence-based solutions. Students must be comfortable with analytical reading, algebra-based math, and field/lab investigation techniques.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10 or above and approval from the student's current science instructor.

MARINE BIOLOGY

This is an introductory course in marine biology and marine ecology that integrates and applies concepts from biology, chemistry, and ecology to cultivate an understanding of how marine ecosystems function. The course begins with a study of ocean chemistry and the interaction of abiotic and biotic factors in the ocean. Students then learn about various types of organisms that inhabit our oceans, beginning with marine producers and microbes and continuing through the invertebrate phyla, fish, marine mammals, birds and reptiles. The class concludes with an investigation of different marine ecosystems, such as kelp forests and coral reefs. Throughout the course an emphasis is made on local marine ecosystems and environmental concerns, such as erosion, climate change and habitat loss. The class visits various coastal ecosystems in San Diego County to observe the marine life in the intertidal zone and learn how to properly survey the flora and fauna.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Science 10.

HONORS PHYSICS

This course is designed to provide a rich, hands-on, laboratory-based experience in secondary school physics, with an emphasis on algebraic and quantitative problem-solving. Students learn to use experimentation and inquiry to discover the functional relationships that exist in the physical world, and to apply graphical and mathematical analysis to enhance further understanding. Classes are taught in a collaborative environment, with students working together on labs, problems, and discussions. Students design and carry out labs to enhance and demonstrate their understanding of the subject. Honors Physics may be taken as a standalone introductory physics course or as part one of a two-year physics sequence with AP Physics C. This course is recommended for students who are considering majoring in math, science, or engineering in college, or for any student who wishes to gain a solid mathematical foundation in physics.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of both Science 10 and Algebra/Geometry 3 with Trigonometry and approval from the student's current science instructor.

AP PHYSICS C

AP Physics C is a year-long, calculus-based physics course that covers material required for students who plan to major in the physical sciences or engineering in college. The course is a comprehensive survey of Mechanics and prepares students to successfully take the AP exam at year's end. Mechanics covers the following: kinematics, Newton's laws of motion, work, energy, and power; systems of particles and linear momentum, circular motion and rotation, and oscillations and gravitation. The student laboratory experience in AP Physics is designed to help students explore each topic with a hands-on experience relevant to the phenomena and concepts being studied. Some labs involve following a detailed procedure, collecting, and then analyzing data while others are more open-ended to allow students the opportunity to design their own experiments. This course may be taken as a stand-alone course or as the second year of physics after Honors Physics. This course does not cover material to prepare students for AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism exam.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of both Science 10 and one year of Calculus and approval from the student's current science instructor. If a student has not completed a calculus course, they may still enroll in this course if they have met other prerequisites and are concurrently enrolled in AP Calculus AB or BC.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The World Languages Department at Pacific Ridge strives to connect students to their local and global communities through the gift of language. The curriculum in all Spanish, French, and Chinese courses is designed around immersion instruction, with students fully engaged and interacting in the target language beginning with their very first class. In addition to speaking, reading and writing are emphasized so that students are equipped to interpret and express ideas in both oral and written form. Cultural competence and cultural appreciation are presented as an integrated and essential part of our mission to connect students to the world around them. Our language classes are lively and student-centered, as we believe that the best learning takes place in an engaging, positive, and stimulating environment. At the upper level, students are able to defend and support a thesis, debate ideas, hold Harkness discussions, and analyze text, film, and dialogue in the target language. Lastly, our immersion-based homestay trips, offered through Pacific Ridge's Global Travel program, as well as our extensive exchanges with our sister schools in Mexico, France, and Taiwan, provide an abundance of opportunity to connect with others on a profound level—making the language-learning journey both relevant and deeply meaningful for our students.

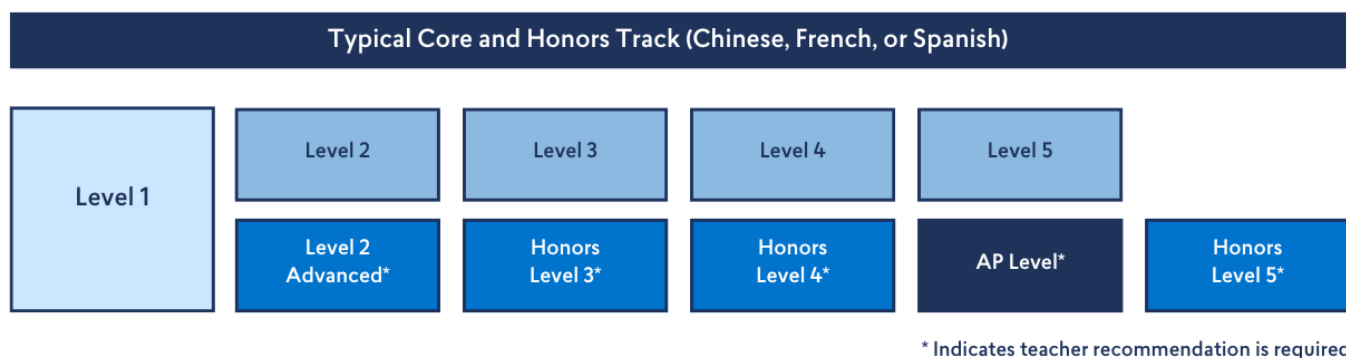


Graduation Requirements and Course Selection

Pacific Ridge School requires that students take a minimum of three years of study in a single world language: Chinese, French or Spanish.

Course selection in world languages is based on student readiness. Placement for students new to Pacific Ridge School is based on: a placement test, student performance and prior coursework, and the recommendation from the referring institution. Once a student is placed into a language course, they typically progress to the next course in the sequence. Students may move from a college preparatory course into an honors course between grade levels with teacher approval and after completing a placement test.

Overview of World Languages Courses



Upper School World Languages Courses

CHINESE

CHINESE 1

This class introduces students to elementary Mandarin Chinese. Students build foundational knowledge and skills through developing skills in basic grammar, vocabulary, idioms, phrases, and sentence patterns. Students practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing fixed, short sentences in Chinese. Each lesson in the textbook has a topic that introduces everyday life experiences such as greetings, family, nationality, friends, and making a phone call. Texts and discussion topics are related to school life, daily life, and Chinese culture.

Prerequisites: None

CHINESE 2 / CHINESE 2 ADVANCED

This course is a continuation of Chinese 1, and supports students beginning their study of Mandarin Chinese with improving their basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing Chinese for everyday communication. While emphasis is placed on the communicative skills of listening and speaking, students continue learning to read and write Chinese characters, and write short essays on topics such as shopping, transportation, weather, and dining. Different aspects of Chinese culture and society are introduced through

activities such as Chinese films, dining at a Chinese restaurant, and visiting a Chinese supermarket.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Chinese 1. Students may enroll in Chinese 2 Advanced with a strong performance in Chinese 1 and approval from their instructor.

CHINESE 3 / HONORS CHINESE 3

This course is a continuation of Chinese 1 and Chinese 2. Students gain more sophisticated skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing Chinese for daily communication. A broad variety of expressions and complicated sentence structures are introduced so that students can participate in conversations on various topics related to modern Chinese society such as seeing a doctor, renting an apartment, and dating. Students also write essays in Chinese to describe preferences, travel, sports, and other topics about personal experiences. Activities related to Chinese society are organized to facilitate both language learning and cultural knowledge.

Prerequisites: Chinese 3 requires successful completion of Chinese 2. Honors Chinese 3 requires successful completion of Chinese 2 Advanced and approval from the student's current Chinese instructor.

CHINESE 4 / HONORS CHINESE 4

As the continuation of Chinese 3, this course teaches a variety of expressions and complicated sentence structures so that students can participate in conversations on various topics related to modern Chinese society. Each lesson is a dialogue that focuses on a specific topic, such as school and dorm life, dining in restaurants, shopping, choosing classes, relationships, and technology. This course continues to focus on fine-tuning the essential language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing Chinese for daily communication. This fourth-year course provides a survey of Chinese culture, deepening the students' immersion into the language and culture of the Chinese-speaking world. Class is conducted in Chinese, including student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions. The honors course requires additional reading and essay writing assignments as well as the expectation to make formal class presentations. Honors students are expected to immerse themselves in the language through supplementary authentic materials such as written texts, films, online materials, and Chinese music.

Prerequisites: Chinese 4 requires successful completion of Chinese 3. Honors Chinese 4 requires successful completion of Honors Chinese 3 and approval from the student's current Chinese instructor.

CHINESE 5 / HONORS CHINESE 5

This course gives students an opportunity to further develop their four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This course also provides further development of proficiency and knowledge of the Chinese language and culture, with a specific focus on communicative skills by introducing topics concentrated on Chinese festivals, travel, economics, health, and environmental protection. Emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary learning through integrating language and culture with real-life task-based activities and projects. Chinese is the primary language used in the classroom, and students have a platform to totally immerse themselves in the richness of Chinese language and culture. In the classroom, the students communicate in Chinese through trial and error to gain confidence to use Chinese in real-life situations. The honors course requires additional

reading and essay writing assignments as well as formal class presentations. Honors students are expected to immerse themselves in the language through supplementary, authentic materials, such as written texts, films, online materials, and Chinese music.

Prerequisites: Chinese 5 requires successful completion of Chinese 4. Honors Chinese 5 requires successful completion of Honors Chinese 4 or AP Chinese; in both cases, students need approval from their current Chinese instructor.

AP CHINESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE

This is an advanced Chinese course aimed at preparing students to communicate successfully in Chinese, linguistically and culturally, within and beyond the school setting. Students further develop communicative skills in Chinese across the three communicative modes (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) and prepare for the AP Chinese Language and Culture examination. This course provides a practical, interactive, and engaging language learning experience for students to perform at an advanced level of proficiency. Students' core language skills and cultural proficiency in the Chinese-speaking world are expanded and deepened. Chinese is the primary language used in the classroom, where students communicate through trial and error, preparing for real-life scenarios. Additional authentic materials, such as alternative textbooks, films, online materials, and online one-on-one speaking with native speakers are used to supplement learning and proficiency.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Chinese 4 and approval from the student's current Chinese instructor.

FRENCH

FRENCH 1

French 1 introduces students to the French language and francophone cultures around the world. This course provides the foundation to make and respond to greetings and introductions, engage in simple conversations, express likes and dislikes, make requests, and obtain information. Over the course of the year, students write short paragraphs, read short stories, and listen to various materials. Students are also taught to recognize and appreciate French cultural and historical concepts as they learn vocabulary and grammar that will prepare them for the next level of French. This is a beginner course and does not require any prior study of French.

Prerequisites: None

FRENCH 1B

French 1B is a course designed to strengthen the foundational-level content and skills introduced in French 1 to build superior preparedness for entrance into French 2. French 1B focuses on the more complex present tense grammatical structures from the first level of French, emphasizing skill development in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the target language. Students refine their abilities to describe and compare, express important ideas, understand expressions using emotion, and use a variety of verb tenses. Students write short paragraphs, read excerpts from authentic French texts, and watch films and videos displaying cultural content from francophone regions around the world. While there is no specific prerequisite course, some prior experience studying French is expected.

Prerequisites: None

FRENCH 2 / FRENCH 2 ADVANCED

In French 2, students build their vocabulary through the study of thematic units centered on the home, food, health, and technology in an immersive environment. The textbook is supplemented with online activities, short stories, articles, videos, and films that expose students to various facets of French history, culture, and current events. As with all levels of French, emphasis is placed on integrating new grammar and vocabulary into spoken and written expression. To this end, students converse solely in French when in class. They perform skits, give oral presentations, and engage in group discussions to practice pronunciation, oral comprehension, and expression. Writing starts in the form of short answers, gradually building to longer paragraphs, and short stories.

Prerequisites: French 2 requires successful completion of French 1 or French 1B. Students may enroll in French 2 Advanced with a strong performance in French 1 and approval from their French instructor.

FRENCH 3 / HONORS FRENCH 3

In French 3 and French 3 Honors, students reinforce their understanding of the past, present, and future tenses and are introduced to more advanced grammatical structures. They explore such themes as personal relationships, the influence of media on society, and social and civic engagement. Online activities, texts, articles, videos, and films supplement each of the thematic units. Students converse solely in French, developing their pronunciation, oral comprehension, and expression through group discussions and individual presentations. Emphasis is also placed on adding complexity to written expression through a variety of writing activities. Writing starts in the form of short answers, gradually building to longer paragraphs, short stories, and essays. When possible, connections are made to topics studied in other classes, especially World History and English.

Prerequisites: French 3 requires successful completion of French 2. Honors French 3 requires successful completion of French 2 Advanced and approval from the student's current French instructor.

FRENCH 4 / HONORS FRENCH 4

In this immersive course, students engage in cross-cultural comparisons between the Francophone world and the United States while increasing their ability to express more complex thoughts and opinions in French. Students read, discuss, and write about authentic texts chosen from a variety of sources. Students focus on balancing verb forms and grammar points across major forms of communication: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The novels and films studied in French 4 deepen their cultural understanding of the francophone world. The French 4 Honors course prepares the students for the rigors of the AP French program. Honors students must demonstrate a high level of linguistic proficiency and be self-motivated, independent learners.

Prerequisites: French 4 requires successful completion of French 3. Honors French 4 requires successful completion of Honors French 3 and approval from the student's current French instructor.

FRENCH 5

French 5 is offered as an alternative to AP French Language and Culture. The course focuses on broadening students' understanding of francophone cultures around the world through exposure to authentic sources which include novels, plays, films, and news articles. Speaking solely in French, students engage in class discussions, role-play, and complete a variety of group and individual projects. While the emphasis is on oral communication, students also devote time to learning new vocabulary and reviewing grammatical structures.

Prerequisites: Students may enroll in French 5 after successful completion of French 4.

AP FRENCH LANGUAGE & CULTURE

This course is a French immersion class that prepares students for the AP exam. Over the course of the year, students refine their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through discussions, writing activities, oral presentations, and simulated AP exam exercises. Emphasis is on the mastery of advanced grammatical structures and specialized vocabulary and on broadening student understanding of the francophone world through exposure to authentic content.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors French 4 and approval from the student's current French instructor.

SPANISH

SPANISH 1

This beginner course is the first of a three-year sequence of college preparatory Spanish and introduces students to both the Spanish language and its various cultures. Students acquire basic thematic vocabulary sets and introductory grammatical structures in the present tense as they embark upon their path toward proficiency in the four basic language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students read two short novels in Spanish, progress from writing sentences to composing simple essays, and begin to comprehend, interpret, and produce oral language within a given context.

Prerequisites: None

SPANISH 1B

This course is designed to strengthen the foundational-level content and skills introduced in Spanish 1 in order to build preparedness for entrance into Spanish 2. Spanish 1B focuses on the more complex present tense grammatical structures from the first level of Spanish, namely stem-changing verbs, the irregular verbs *ser*, *estar*, *tener*, and *ir*, verbs with irregular *yo*, present progressive, direct and indirect object pronouns, and reflexive verbs. The students read two short novels in Spanish and progress from writing isolated sentences to composing short paragraphs about specific themes. Additionally, they begin to comprehend, interpret, and produce oral language within a given context. The course provides additional time for students to practice and master the cultural and skills-based benchmarks of the first level before moving into the second level of Spanish. Spanish 1B consistently utilizes student-centered, communicative activities that simulate real-life scenarios and linguistic exchanges to increase proficiency with core concepts and skills. Some prior experience studying Spanish is expected.

Prerequisites: None

SPANISH 2 / SPANISH 2 ADVANCED

In the Spanish 2 courses, students build upon the reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills acquired in the first year of Spanish, while expanding and deepening their cultural awareness of the Spanish-speaking world. New thematic vocabulary units are presented within rich, meaningful contexts designed to nurture greater precision and fluidity of language interpretation and expression. Students advance beyond the present tense to gain proficiency in two past tenses (preterite and imperfect). The advanced course is enriched with additional resources to further enrich the Spanish 2 curriculum and engage the students in a more complex immersion environment. Novels, projects, writing assignments, and communicative tasks complement the grammatical content learned in class and reflect second-year proficiency goals. Classes are conducted in Spanish within a level-appropriate immersion environment.

Prerequisites: Spanish 2 requires successful completion of Spanish 1. Spanish 2 Advanced requires a strong performance in Spanish 1 and approval from their Spanish 1 instructor.

SPANISH 3 / HONORS SPANISH 3

In the third-year courses, students build upon the reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills acquired in Spanish 2 or Spanish 2 Advanced, while further expanding and deepening their cultural awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the Spanish-speaking world. Students take on more in-depth presentations and classroom discussions on a wide variety of linguistic and cultural topics. Emphasis is placed on advanced grammatical structures — most notably the compound tenses of the indicative mood, the future and conditional tenses, and the subjunctive mood. Expanded and more detailed vocabulary sets are emphasized to increase proficiency. The honors course is enriched with numerous resources to supplement the core curriculum and engage the students in a more complex immersion environment. Novels, projects, writing assignments, and communicative tasks complement the grammatical and cultural content learned in class and reflect the more rigorous third-year proficiency goals. Class is conducted exclusively in Spanish within an advanced immersion environment and students communicate in the target language in both their prepared and spontaneous exchanges.

Prerequisites: Spanish 3 requires successful completion of Spanish 2. Honors Spanish 3 requires successful completion of Spanish 2 Advanced and approval from the student's current Spanish instructor.

SPANISH 4 / HONORS SPANISH 4

In the fourth-year courses, students transition from the grammar-focused content of the foundational levels of Spanish to a curriculum centered on refining proficiency in the four core language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students in Spanish 4 sharpen and expand the complex grammatical structures and vocabulary sets acquired in previous years through a wide variety of full-immersion activities including formal and informal presentations, debates, analysis of articles, audio clips, literary selections, research-based essay writing, and daily Harkness discussions. The novels and films studied in Spanish 4 further develop linguistic skills and deepen cultural understanding and appreciation of the Spanish-speaking world. The Honors Spanish 4 course is designed to prepare the students for the rigors of the AP Spanish program. Students in honors courses

must demonstrate a high level of linguistic proficiency and be self-motivated and independent learners.

Prerequisites: Spanish 4 requires successful completion of Spanish 3. Honors Spanish 4 requires successful completion of Honors Spanish 3 and approval from the student's current Spanish instructor.

AP SPANISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE

This course is the equivalent of a college-level course in advanced Spanish writing, reading, listening, and conversation. The course devotes significant attention to preparation for the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam. AP Spanish places emphasis on developing high-level spoken and written communicative proficiency. There is a rigorous environment of constant discussion, analysis, and debate as well as extensive training in the organization and writing of persuasive essays and letters of inquiry. Students are further exposed to the world of literature and current events in Spanish-speaking countries through written materials, such as newspaper and magazine articles, literary texts, and other non-technical writings that develop their reading and comprehension abilities. Multiple films and audio clips are used throughout the course to practice listening skills, improve cultural knowledge, and create conversation. Given that this course is a college-level course and that many of the readings and activities are completed outside of class time, students need to be self-motivated and independent learners.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Spanish 4 and approval from the student's current Spanish instructor.

SPANISH 5 / HONORS SPANISH 5

Spanish 5 is an advanced conversation course designed for students to improve communicative abilities and increase proficiency and fluidity in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The course is taught within the context of international studies that highlights connections between the United States and the Spanish-speaking world. The course has the following objectives: to develop the ability to understand spoken Spanish in various contexts; to develop a vocabulary sufficient for reading newspapers and magazine articles, literary texts, and other non-technical writing; to develop a greater appreciation of Spanish and Latin American cultures; and to develop the ability to express oneself in conversations, dialogues, and discussions on academic topics. The course is conducted entirely in Spanish and students are expected to participate fully in the target language. In Honors Spanish 5, students develop their communication skills within political, historical, cultural, and social contexts involving U.S.-Latin American and Spanish relations. To practice their communication, students participate in a variety of activities such as dialogues, conversations, interviews, film reviews, group discussions, and presentations. While the emphasis of the course is on oral communication, writing composition is also studied. The Honors Spanish 5 course is best suited for the student who has already completed AP Spanish.

Prerequisites: Spanish 5 requires successful completion of Spanish 4. Honors Spanish 5 requires approval from the student's current Spanish instructor and successful completion of either Honors Spanish 4 or AP Spanish.

ARTS

PERFORMING ARTS: Pacific Ridge offers a comprehensive and vibrant range of performing arts studies, including vocal and instrumental music, dance, and theater courses, as well as several co-curricular productions. Within the performing arts program, students develop and refine artistic techniques and understandings with the help of expert instructors. Through the rehearsal and performance process, students learn to communicate and collaborate while developing their own unique ideas. Each performing arts discipline explores the relationship between its art forms and other subject areas through research, interpretation, and sharing perspectives in Harkness discussions. Students investigate how the performing arts, society, culture, and history connect with each other. Arts faculty encourage students to draw from personal experiences to inspire and deepen their artistic work.

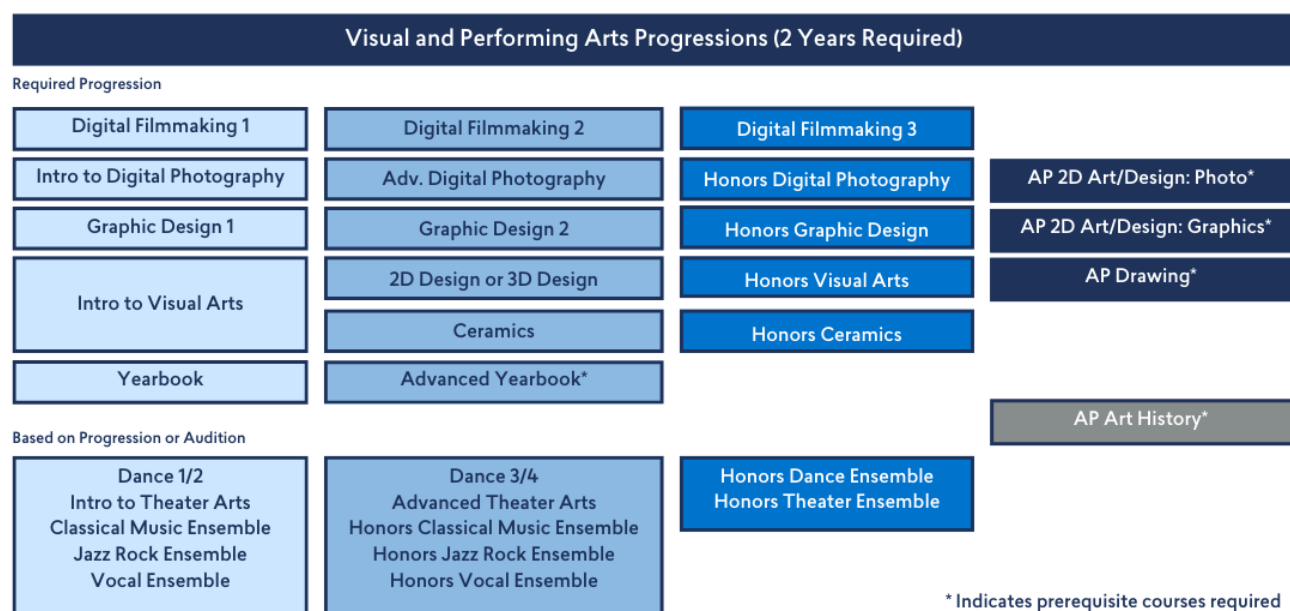
VISUAL ARTS: Pacific Ridge engages students in a wide variety of stimulating visual arts opportunities including studio art, welding, ceramics, graphic design, mixed media, filmmaking, and photography. Using the elements and principles of art, students learn foundational concepts and creative strategies to develop personally expressive artworks. Teachers guide and inspire students through individual instruction and group critiques based upon the round-table Harkness approach. The visual art curricula are designed to meet each student's desire to pursue various levels and forms of creativity. Students make connections across the academic program and think critically about how art influences and reflects traditions and innovations around the world. This student-centered approach to art-making allows young artists to understand the broader implications of their work and enables them to apply what they have learned to creative endeavors in college, careers, and beyond.



Graduation Requirements and Course Selection

Pacific Ridge School requires that students take a minimum of two years of Arts courses from either performing arts, visual arts, or a combination of performing and visual arts. If students decide to switch from one visual arts pathway to another, they must begin again at the introductory course for the new pathway they have selected.

Overview of Arts Courses



Upper School Arts Courses

DIGITAL MEDIA ARTS

DIGITAL FILMMAKING 1

Students learn the process of videography by developing original story ideas and creating and editing digital video. In addition, students study film and video concepts and engage in film critique, a form of Harkness discussion. Students acquire not only technical skills such as lighting, the use of production software, and camera craft, but also aesthetic knowledge to make intriguing and innovative films. In the creative workflow process, students learn how videographers use various strategies to achieve certain effects while shooting and editing footage. They also expand their software skills throughout the video production process. Students view film and video examples and then engage in discussions about creative approaches and different genres. Students also discuss the role of filmmakers in society and how their creations can make a positive impact in the world.

Prerequisites: None

DIGITAL FILMMAKING 2

This course builds on the skills and concepts from Digital Filmmaking 1. Students learn advanced techniques while producing several projects in a variety of formats and genres: documentary, fiction, public service announcements, experimental, poetry, music videos, and documentary news items. This course emphasizes the development of writing skills through pre-production including scripts, storyboarding, production charts and shot lists, and screenwriting software, such as Final Draft. Students continue to develop their skills in camera work, framing/composition, tripod/dolly use, backgrounds, and audio, with special focus on studio lighting using three-point light kits. Students expand their knowledge of Adobe Premiere and Media Encoder with an emphasis on refined editing techniques. This course also continues to engage students in sharing feedback, growing media literacy, and developing critical thinking skills.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Digital Filmmaking 1.

DIGITAL FILMMAKING 3

This course is designed for dedicated film students ready to build upon the foundational skills developed in Digital Filmmaking 1 and 2. In previous courses, students explored the fundamentals of short film and documentary production, from pre-production to post-production, followed by critical class critiques. Digital Filmmaking 3 elevates the creative and technical challenges, emphasizing artistic intent, visual literacy, and conceptual storytelling. Students engage in long-form, collaborative projects, focusing on abstract and thematic narratives rather than purely literal storytelling. The course also incorporates an in-depth study of film theory, genre, history, and contemporary filmmaking, with written and oral presentations.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Digital Filmmaking 2.

INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

What makes a photograph good? Astonishing? Evocative? Memorable? It takes far more than pointing and shooting a camera. Every day we see hundreds or thousands of images, but we rarely consider how and why they were made. This course challenges students to use DSLR camera controls competently and creatively, manipulate and enhance images using industry-standard Adobe software, and confidently present and discuss their visual choices during in-class critiques.

Prerequisites: None

ADVANCED DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

This course expands on the fundamentals taught in Introduction to Digital Photography. Students learn more complex methods of shooting and manipulating images, as well as sophisticated conceptual approaches to extended projects. Each major project requires students to produce a series of cohesive images and a written artist's statement. The course includes both digital and analog media and emphasizes the development of a personal creative vision.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introduction to Digital Photography.

HONORS DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

In the third course of the photography sequence, students craft self-directed projects to develop their personal vision, creative confidence, and technical fluency in digital media. This course builds on Advanced Digital Photography and prepares students for the challenges of college-level work in AP 2D Design: Photography. Honors Digital Photography requires a commitment to taking creative risks, honing advanced skills such as studio lighting and Photoshop editing, and thinking critically about historical and contemporary issues in visual media.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Advanced Digital Photography and a portfolio interview with the instructor.

AP 2D ART AND DESIGN: PHOTOGRAPHY

This course requires college-level quality of work and extensive shooting time outside of class in preparation for submitting the AP Portfolio. Outstanding technical skill, creative confidence, and written expression are necessary for students to keep pace. In addition to extended projects, frequent critiques, and Harkness discussions, the class includes current topics in the digital media world and encourages students to enter juried shows in the San Diego area.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Digital Photography, a portfolio interview, and approval from the Digital Photography instructors.

GRAPHIC DESIGN 1

This course explores both practical and creative applications for graphic design as an essential form of contemporary two-dimensional art and communication. Students learn the basics of creating digital art, typography, layout, and logo design, as well as effective presentation skills. Emphasis is placed on imaginative brainstorming, addressing visual challenges, and creating projects and publications using Adobe software.

Prerequisites: None

GRAPHIC DESIGN 2

This course is designed for students ready to master advanced design applications. Students challenge themselves with more complex design projects, integrating photography, printmaking, and web design, while seeking out creative problems that are of personal interest. The curriculum focuses on skill-enhancing design issues, individually designed projects, and work that serves the community. The class assignments vary widely and enhance the range of skills each designer has, helping them produce portfolio-worthy work.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Graphic Design 1.

HONORS GRAPHIC DESIGN

A continuation of the graphic design sequence, this course emphasizes conceptual depth. Focusing on conceptual qualities in their work, students examine contemporary art and media challenges to analyze real-world examples to then create dynamic design solutions of their own. Students more closely consider the social and ethical implications of their work, the role of design in society, and the obligations of artists to their communities. Projects are individualized and larger than in previous design classes, relying on students' outside interests and experiences to guide their content. With a concentration on digital illustration and professions-quality work, students engage with a diverse range of products in a variety of mediums. This provides authentic opportunities for creative problem solving in a range of contexts.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Graphic Design 2, a portfolio interview, and approval from the Graphic Design instructors.

AP 2D ART AND DESIGN: GRAPHIC DESIGN

In this course, students use goal-setting and informed decision-making to pursue original artistic interests. Students produce a comprehensive body of work that satisfies the Sustained Investigation and Selected Works requirements of the AP portfolio.. Group critiques benefit the whole class by allowing students to view work by their peers and consider fresh perspectives on their own portfolios. The body of work submitted for the portfolio can include art created prior to and outside of the AP 2D course and must include a minimum of 20 works meeting the AP requirements.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Graphic Design, a portfolio interview, and approval from the Graphic Design instructors.

YEARBOOK

This course guides students through the production of the school yearbook and the literary magazine, both of which are published at the end of the year. Students explore the basics of visual design and journalistic writing in the introductory portion of the course. During the first trimester, students master professional publishing software, such as InDesign and eDesign and apply this knowledge throughout the school year. Every student is also introduced to photography with the opportunity to refine their skills while creating images the entire school will enjoy. Working as a cohesive staff, collaboration and teamwork are essential for success in creating the yearbook. Students develop a strong aesthetic for clean, coherent, unified design while gaining experience in large-scale project management.

Prerequisites: None

ADVANCED YEARBOOK

This course continues the development of advanced skills in content creation, layout editing, and copy editing. Designed for students who wish to lead a creative team and oversee the final synthesis of the yearbook, this course is available to students who excelled in the initial Yearbook course and demonstrated outstanding leadership potential. Students take on greater responsibility for managing deadlines, motivating peers, and collaborating with faculty. While any student may enroll in Yearbook for consecutive years, the Advanced Yearbook course is reserved for students who have demonstrated excellence in design and leadership in the Yearbook course.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of the Yearbook course and permission of the instructor.

VISUAL ARTS

INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL ARTS

This foundational course helps students develop their artistic sensibilities by exploring the elements and principles of design, art history, and the application of a variety of techniques to create original artwork. Students maintain sketchbooks and create original 2D drawings, paintings, and 3D forms using clay and paper-mâché. Formal assessments include written and group critiques. Visual arts projects enhance discussion of philosophical questions being studied across the Upper School curriculum, helping students make personal connections to their learning, develop problem-solving skills, and refine their artistic expression. Introduction to Visual Arts is a prerequisite for 2D Design, 3D Design, and Ceramics.

Prerequisites: None

2D DESIGN

Students focus primarily on the use of two-dimensional materials, including pencil, charcoal, pastel, colored pencil, watercolor, acrylic paint, collage, and printmaking. The curriculum emphasizes sketching, composition design, and execution. Formal assessments include written and group critiques, addressing a wide range of styles and techniques to help students develop their unique artistic voice.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introduction to Visual Arts.

CERAMICS

This course gives students who have mastered basic handbuilding skills and techniques an opportunity to further explore the three-dimensional form. This hands-on experience focuses primarily on clay but also incorporates wood, wire, and metal objects for more experimental projects. Students create functional pieces (mugs, bowls, vases, etc.) and sculptural works of art. Students learn how to center and throw on the wheel to produce cylinders, mugs, and vases. This course requires students to work with the instructor to set goals in terms of research and art production. In addition, students develop greater strength and ability to articulate and investigate the significance of their own work and the work of other artists. Art history is discussed in terms of how the work can be placed in the context of contemporary art and understood in relation to works from different cultures. Students who take Ceramics may enroll in Honors Visual Arts or Honors Ceramics the following year.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introduction to Visual Arts.

HONORS CERAMICS

This course continues the ceramics sequence, challenging students to deepen their skills and understandings while exploring more self-directed avenues in ceramics. Designed for motivated students committed to personal expression, this course requires students to set individual goals with the instructor and demonstrate progress through assembling a comprehensive portfolio of work. This third-year studio class allows for the creation of advanced projects that require more time and space than in the previous Ceramics course.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of the Ceramics course.

HONORS VISUAL ARTS

Designed for students ready to develop individualized portfolios, this course emphasizes the creation of a body of work that reflects a personal artistic style. Students investigate the foundations of visual arts, visually interpreting historical works that influence contemporary practice. Throughout the course, students assemble a body of work that demonstrates growth in subject matter and content and the development of specific techniques. Individual portfolios are further strengthened through group critiques which allow students to gain fresh perspectives on their work and develop empathy for others.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of 2D Design, Ceramics, or 3D Design.

AP DRAWING

This course focuses on creative problem-solving, materials investigation, and the interpretation of processes and ideas. Students produce a portfolio that satisfies the Sustained Investigation and Selected Works requirements of the AP Drawing exam. The Sustained Investigation consists of 15 images documenting the final artworks, creative investigation, and the student's artistic inquiries, while five high-quality works comprise the Selected Works section. The final portfolio may include art created prior to and outside of the AP Drawing course. Students participate in weekly group critiques and should be prepared to devote significant time outside of class to their portfolios.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Honors Visual Arts, a portfolio review and interview, and approval from the Studio Art instructors.

MUSIC

JAZZ ROCK ENSEMBLE / HONORS JAZZ ROCK ENSEMBLE

Jazz Rock Ensemble is open to students with intermediate experience on any instrument. Students perform various styles of music, such as jazz, rock, soul, swing, funk, and fusion, with the periods of music ranging from early jazz through contemporary and rock tunes. In addition to learning to play in an ensemble, students focus on improvisation skills, ear training, reading music, and understanding music theory. Class performances are scheduled throughout the year during which students focus on active listening and response. Students learn about the artists associated with each work of music performed and study their cultural, social, and historical significance. Students in the Honors section complete additional music theory assignments and pre-approved projects such as solo transcriptions

and original compositions. All students perform in all school-sponsored arts performances and take on leadership roles in class.

Prerequisites: Proficiency on a musical instrument. Honors Jazz Rock Ensemble requires successful completion of Jazz Rock Ensemble and/or a successful audition with the instructor.

CLASSICAL MUSIC ENSEMBLE / HONORS CLASSICAL MUSIC ENSEMBLE

This performing ensemble focuses primarily on classical music and often incorporates other musical styles as well. Students must demonstrate proficiency on their instrument in order to join this ensemble. The group performs in school concerts, the annual Showcase, and other events. Students explore the historical and cultural background of classical music. Students in the Honors section demonstrate advanced proficiency on their instrument, engage in high-level study of music theory, and complete additional projects that integrate music and other disciplines.

Prerequisites: Proficiency on a musical instrument. Honors Classical Music Ensemble requires successful completion of Classical Music Ensemble and/or a successful audition with the instructor.

VOCAL ENSEMBLE / HONORS VOCAL ENSEMBLE

In this class, students learn the technical aspects of singing well: maintaining breath support, creating a good tone, expanding range, and singing in various languages. The class repertoire comes from a variety of genres including classical, pop, Broadway, Renaissance, gospel, folk, and jazz. Students read music, improve their aural skills (their “musical ear”), sing in four-part harmony, and learn some basic music theory. Vocal Ensemble performs a cappella music as well as music accompanied by piano or the Jazz Rock Ensemble. The group sings at school concerts, coffee houses, and community outreach events. Students in the Honors section engage in advanced study in music theory and participate in integrated projects that connect music with other disciplines.

Prerequisites: No prior experience is required for Vocal Ensemble. Honors Vocal Ensemble requires successful completion of Vocal Ensemble and/or a successful audition with the instructor.

THEATER

INTRODUCTION TO THEATER ARTS

This is a foundational course in which students use their voices, bodies, and scripts to tell stories onstage. They develop skills in play reading and character analysis and learn basic acting techniques. Projects include monologues, scene studies, short devised plays, and a one-act play the whole class performs together. Above all, students work as an ensemble and create theater collaboratively. Previous theater experience is welcome, but not required; this course challenges experienced theater students and novices alike. In addition to in-class performances, students have opportunities throughout the year to share their work with the larger school community.

Prerequisites: None

ADVANCED THEATER ARTS

This course is designed as an advanced introduction to actor training. Students explore realistic acting using the tools and methods first described by the Russian theater artist, Konstantin Stanislavski, at the turn of the 20th century. Throughout the year, students rehearse and perform a variety of scenes and monologues while learning practical skills, such as how to analyze and score a script. The first trimester focuses on dramatic acting, encouraging students to develop and explore an emotional connection to the text and characters while expressing their unique perspective authentically and without censorship. During the second trimester, students apply their new understanding of tactics, objectives, and emotional connection to comedic scenes, where the stakes and challenges are even higher. The third trimester resembles a collegiate level “special topics” seminar and is reserved for exploring the skills and techniques as requested by students. By the end of the school year, students have a firm understanding of the principles of acting and the Stanislavski Technique and are ready to move into increasingly complex roles onstage.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introduction to Theater Arts.

HONORS THEATER ENSEMBLE

Building upon the fundamental knowledge and training students received during Advanced Theater Arts, students continue to broaden their skills and experience as actors. Lessons and projects in this course remain flexible and are hand-tailored to suit the needs of the students. They may focus on areas such as: vocal technique, physical theater, devised theater, playwriting and story structure, directing and script analysis, period styles of acting, absurdist and post-modern theater, and Shakespeare and classical theater. Working in close collaboration with the instructor, students propose and pursue areas of study of interest to them. Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to high standards of discipline and artistic excellence throughout the class.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Advanced Theater Arts and an audition with the instructor.

DANCE

DANCE 1

Students learn foundational technical aspects of dance, including the traditional foot, arm, and body positions, fundamental locomotor and non-locomotor movements, rhythm and musicality, basic dance stretches and strengthening exercises, and dance performance. The curriculum includes the history of Western dance, exposure to world dance forms through video and choreography, and research of contemporary approaches to dance. Students learn various styles of choreography, begin experimenting with improvisation, and start choreographing their own combinations. Students are required to perform at one or more events on campus.

Prerequisites: None

DANCE 2

At this intermediate level, students progress beyond basic body positions and delve into complex combinations and choreography. The course explores present-day world dance forms and the work of specific influential choreographers. Students choreograph, stage, and perform original pieces for the Spring Dance Concert.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Dance 1 or an audition with the instructor.

DANCE 3

This advanced course focuses on developing technique and improvisational skills to help students explore their unique voice as dancers and choreographers. Students create original works, making every decision about choreography, music, costuming, and staging, and they participate in works created by other students. Students will focus on commercial dance by putting together a dance film that is shared with the PRS community.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Dance 2 or an audition with the instructor.

DANCE 4

Dance 4 prepares students for potential careers as dancers, choreographers, educators, or other professional dance-related endeavors. This curriculum emphasizes the art of teaching dance and choreographing for various dance levels. Students collaborate on a trimester-long commercial dance project. Dancers will have the opportunity to be involved in the making of their own dance film and will collaborate with their peers and teacher on all aspects of the production. The final project will be shared with the greater PRS community.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Dance 3 or an audition with the instructor.

HONORS DANCE ENSEMBLE

Designed for the most advanced and dedicated dancers, this course prepares students for college-level dance programs and potential careers in the Arts. Students must demonstrate exceptional technical skills, artistic vision, and versatility across genres. Students are responsible for learning and performing choreographic works, maintaining a rigorous technical foundation, and creating original student compositions to be performed at one of our dance concerts. Students collaborate on a trimester-long commercial dance project. Dancers will have the opportunity to be involved in the making of their own dance film and will collaborate with their peers and teacher on all aspects of the production. The final project will be shared with the greater PRS community. The course culminates with the development and presentation of a fully produced concert performance of completed works for a live audience.

Prerequisites: Dance 2 or 3 and a successful audition with the instructor.

ART HISTORY

AP ART HISTORY

What secrets are hidden under the Taj Mahal? Which painting created a scandal at the 1865 Paris Salon? Why did the Ancient Puebloans abandon their cliff dwellings in Colorado? In this college-level survey of global art, students explore a wide range of visual expressions, from prehistory through the present day, as well as their origins in the context of political, social, scientific, and religious trends. Traditions from all parts of the world factor prominently into the course and provide crucial opportunities for the discovery of cross-cultural influences. Through reading and writing assignments, Harkness discussions, presentations, slideshows, and field trips, students develop keen powers of observation, critical analysis skills, and global cultural competency. This course is open only to juniors and seniors who have successfully completed Ancient World History and Modern World History courses. Taking the AP exam at the conclusion of the course is required.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Ancient World History and Modern World History.

Arts courses offered on rotation and NOT offered in
Academic Year 2026-2027

3D DESIGN

This course is geared toward students who are interested in developing their three-dimensional artistic sensibilities. Students work on sketches and sculptural models, design and execute 3D compositions, and participate in written and group critiques as part of their formal assessments. By touching on many time periods and cultures, students come to understand different movements in art and the artists that influenced the changes we see today. Students are challenged to use familiar materials in new ways as well as learn more about ceramics and mixed media sculpture.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Introduction to Visual Arts.

GENERAL ELECTIVES



AP ART HISTORY

What secrets are hidden under the Taj Mahal? Which painting created a scandal at the 1865 Paris Salon? Why did the Ancient Puebloans abandon their cliff dwellings in Colorado? In this college-level survey of global art, students explore a wide range of visual expressions, from prehistory through the present day, as well as their origins in the context of political, social, scientific, and religious trends. Traditions from all parts of the world factor prominently into the course and provide crucial opportunities for the discovery of cross-cultural influences. Through reading and writing assignments, Harkness discussions, presentations, slideshows, and field trips, students develop keen powers of observation, critical analysis skills, and global cultural competency. This course is open only to juniors and seniors who have completed Ancient World History and Modern World History courses. Taking the AP exam at the conclusion of the course is required.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Ancient World History and Modern World History.

AP PSYCHOLOGY

The AP Psychology course introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. While considering the studies that have shaped the field, students explore and apply psychological theories, key concepts, and phenomena associated with major units of study, including biological bases of behavior, cognition, development, learning, social psychology, personality, and mental and physical health. Throughout the course, students apply psychological concepts and employ psychological research methods and data interpretation to evaluate claims, consider evidence, and effectively communicate ideas. As a college-level elective, this course requires a high degree of analytical thinking, independent reading, and a commitment to the fast-paced academic rigor of the Advanced Placement curriculum.

Prerequisites: None

FINANCIAL LITERACY

This course orients students to the basics of personal finances through a primarily project-based curriculum. With an intentional focus on the immediate needs of students about to venture into the quasi-adult world of college, considerable time and attention are spent on practical topics, such as opening and managing bank accounts, managing expenses and credit on a very limited budget, and creating professional materials needed for successful job hunts. There is a focus on creating income streams beyond traditional employment, as the second half of the academic year opens with an in-depth unit dedicated to investing in both stock markets and real estate, followed by another deep dive into the process of starting a business. Both units employ a number of simulations and real-world applications of financial principles, knowledge and strategies studied in class. The year concludes with an independent project for which students select a topic connected to financial literacy, engage in an in-depth exploration, and report back to their classmates in a creative format. This last project demands that students synthesize a holistic understanding of the course materials.

Prerequisites: None

JOURNALISM & MEDIA STUDIES 1

In this course, students learn about journalism and media as both scholars and practitioners in today's globally networked, information-driven world. Students consider the impact of journalism and media on democracy, freedom, and human rights, including the strategic and practical choices that journalists make as they find and tell stories in their community via today's media and technology. Students demonstrate their learning through contributing to the PRS student newspaper and hosting town hall public forums on important issues; they seek to practice "student community journalism for the public good." In doing so, students forge their identities and voices as writers and editors, learning about the writing techniques, research and interview skills, ethical guidelines, and communication strategies that are at the core of the journalistic profession. Readings include *The Medium is the Message* by Marshall McLuhan, ongoing study of both legacy and social media from around the world, and practical instructional texts and videos on journalistic writing, multimedia technology, and newspaper production. Photojournalism training is also a part of this course. Students publish their stories in the PRS online student newspaper, *The Egg*. (<https://prsegg.com>)

Prerequisites: None

PROGRAMMING 1

This course is an introduction to programming concepts and code development fundamentals. Students learn basic computer science principles through application, by writing and executing programs in Java, following the workflow of the following: designing, coding, debugging, and maintaining the source code of a computer program. Students progress from linear script-like solutions to well-designed and developed object-oriented programs. By the end of the year, students should be able to understand and solve various computing challenges through their programming skills. Students learn to read and write code, and design solutions in a modular, efficient manner. To this end, they work both individually and in groups. Finally, the students work on a project of their own design, individually or in pairs, using their skills to develop something that is of interest to them.

Prerequisites: None

PROGRAMMING 2

This course is intended to further students' understanding of the general concepts and thinking practices of computing, computer science, and information science. Students are challenged to think of a real-world problem to solve and the goal will be to develop a solution. Instead of a series of small programs, students work on a larger scale through an iterative project management process to design, build, and modify their code to suit the needs of an authentic audience. Students explore and utilize a variety of applications, languages, programming interfaces, frameworks, and external libraries to build and create.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Programming 1 or approval from the Programming instructor.

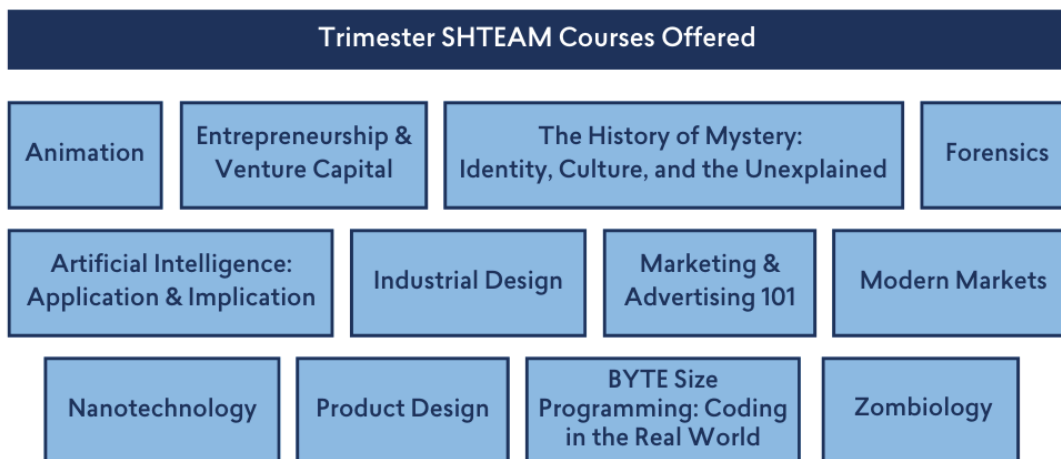
Elective courses offered on rotation and not offered in Academic Year 2026-27

JOURNALISM & MEDIA STUDIES 2

In this course, students continue building their journalism and media skills, along with taking a leadership role on the PRS student newspaper, The Egg. (<https://prsegg.com>) Students also mentor their peers in Journalism & Media Studies 1. Observing, analyzing, and sharing news about PRS and the surrounding community, students act as investigative journalists to create longer feature stories and incorporate multimedia forms into their news reporting, such as podcasts and video clips. Students also build partner relationships with journalism and media entities beyond PRS, whether at other schools or in the world of professional journalism, both domestically and internationally. Students continue to practice “student community journalism for the public good” by hosting town hall forums on important issues at PRS and beyond. The media studies aspect of this course includes reading and reflecting on notable books about journalism and the media, such as *Life on the Screen* by Sherry Turkle and *The Selling of the President* by Joe McGinniss. By the end of this course students are ready to participate in university-level programs and internships with professional news media organizations.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Journalism & Media Studies 1

SHTEAM



SHTEAM courses combine the disciplines of Science, Humanities, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics to promote innovative thinking and problem-solving skills. These courses give you the opportunity to explore the convergence of these fields, with an emphasis on hands-on learning and often in a project-based, problem-solving format.

Individual trimester electives can be combined to create unique year-long experiences, building upon skills gained in each and ideas explored throughout each course. This allows students to deep dive into larger topics, as well as learn from a variety of teachers who bring varied expertise and perspectives to the student experience. Students can build a year based on a specific goal, or pick and choose unique courses that will offer a wide spectrum of experiences. Take a look and see how students might **CREATE THEIR OWN YEAR**. Students may choose to take a single trimester course or sign up for two or three.

Possible SHTEAM Pathways – Mix and match to customize this elective experience!

Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
<i>Free Period</i>	Product Design	Industrial Design
Modern Markets	Marketing & Advertising 101	Entrepreneurship & Venture Capital
Nanotechnology	<i>Free Period</i>	Zombiology
<i>Free Period</i>	The History of Mystery	<i>Free Period</i>

SHTEAM Trimester Offerings

ANIMATION

Dive into the high-energy world of motion graphics, visual effects, and media arts! This comprehensive course introduces the fundamentals of pre-production, production, and post-production, learn the magic of movement through the eyes of Disney's classic animation principles and apply these concepts to a variety of creative projects. Beyond learning software, the curriculum focuses on foundational skill-building, ensuring students understand the entire animation process. By the end of the term, students possess the technical and creative tools to bring any original idea to life.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: APPLICATION & IMPLICATION

From Turing Machines to ChatGPT, humanity's relationship with artificial intelligence is as complex as it is transformative. This course explores both the technical and ethical dimensions of AI. Students engage with industry and academic leaders to deepen their understanding of current applications and future possibilities. Through hands-on experience with machine-learning systems, students develop practical skills in creating and working with AI tools. While looking "under the hood" of the technology, the class also explores the "head and heart" of what a world powered by AI means for the future of human expression.

BYTE SIZE PROGRAMMING: CODING IN THE REAL WORLD

Coding is not just for computer scientists or software engineers - it is a universal toolkit for curious minds. The field is found in most modern professions in some capacity. This course will allow students to practice computational thinking and its application of decomposition, pattern recognition, abstraction, and algorithm design. Come explore the fundamental structures of logic, variables, and functions, immediately applying these concepts to diverse fields such as data science, digital art, environmental modeling, and financial analysis.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & VENTURE CAPITAL

Turn a business dream into a reality by leveraging social media, stakeholders, and strategic capital. This course focuses on business development and the mechanics of the "pitch." Working in teams, students experience the launch of a new venture by researching logistics, drafting a formal business plan, and presenting proposals to potential investors. The curriculum covers executive summaries, market analysis, and financial projections, emphasizing the vital role venture capital plays in launching a business.

FORENSICS

Step into the crime lab to solve mysteries using the power of chemistry, biology, and physics. This interdisciplinary course applies scientific problem-solving skills to criminal justice. Students learn real-world analytical techniques to characterize blood, fiber, textiles, and DNA. By utilizing chromatography, spectroscopy, PCR, and gel electrophoresis, the class works to solve a hypothetical crime. The PRS Crime Lab challenges students to think like investigators and act like scientists.

THE HISTORY OF MYSTERY: IDENTITY, CULTURE AND THE UNEXPLAINED

Uncover the hidden stories and cultural traditions that shape what society believes to be true. By investigating superstitions and unexplained phenomena, students adopt a sociological approach revealing roots in folklore and legends. The course explores how different communities define truth and challenge dominant ideas across generations. Along the way, students reflect on their own backgrounds and beliefs, gaining insight into how identity influences their perception of the world.

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

Bridge the gap between art and engineering to solve complex creative problems. In this hands-on course, students develop skills in metalworking, 3D modeling, and iterative design. Working with steel, copper, glass, and wood, students gain proficiency with professional equipment, including plasma cutters and welders. Through the creation of scale models and prototypes, the class utilizes the same three-dimensional modeling techniques used by professional industrial designers and sculptors to reach innovative outcomes.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING 101

Break through the noise of modern media by mastering the art of a national advertising campaign. In this course, students evaluate various types of marketing and their specific impact on society. Working in groups, students create innovative advertising messages, plan media strategies, and learn how to measure consumer impact. The course provides the opportunity to develop, create, and direct a multimedia campaign, culminating in a real world experience: a professional presentation to a local advertising agency.

MODERN MARKETS

From Wall Street stocks to the frontier of cryptocurrencies and NFTs, building wealth requires a strategic lens. This course focuses on investment principles through the research of bonds, real estate, and emerging digital assets. Students apply this knowledge by managing an investment portfolio in a classroom competition. The curriculum includes the analysis of cash flow, market capitalization, and growth strategies, with a specific focus on long-term value investing and market trend analysis.

NANOTECHNOLOGY

Small scale, massive impact: explore the frontier of science at the nanoscale. This project-based capstone course investigates the unique properties of materials between 1 and 100 nanometers. Students explore how these properties lead to innovations in textiles, health, energy, and electronics. The curriculum bridges multiple disciplines, such as size and scale, quantum effects, self-assembly, and forces, building an understanding of the vital relationship between the structure of matter and the future of technology and society.

PRODUCT DESIGN

Identify a real-world problem and build the solution from the ground up. This course is a unique blend of art, design, craft, and business. Students learn design and making skills in 2D and 3D to create consumer products through hands-on studio projects and professional experiences. Through a rigorous design process, students refine and prototype their ideas using 3D design software and printing technology. Acting as both artists and engineers, students iterate and test their designs to reach meaningful, functional outcomes.

ZOMBIOLOGY

When the dead walk, biology is the only way to survive. This course explores zombies in popular culture in conjunction with the biology of infectious diseases. This course lays the ground rules for the zombie apocalypse world that is created by three different graphic novel series, and it will use concrete biology to attempt to explain the near-total absence of scientific evidence in most of these narrative universes. This course examines the undead features of zombies, such as reanimation, metabolic reactions, evolution, and response to stimuli, and considers mathematical modeling of the spread of new and emerging diseases. Following this, a Neuroscientist from UC San Diego will present his work on the zombie brain, and his current research on neural oscillations, cognition, and disease. The course culminates in a final project on the material learned throughout the course.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Graduation Requirements

Pacific Ridge School requires that students take a minimum of five trimesters of Physical Education and one trimester of Health. Students who play a sport at PRS earn one trimester of Physical Education credit for each trimester of sports they play.

Upper School Physical Education & Health Courses

UPPER SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Pacific Ridge Physical Education program intends to give students a basic understanding (rules, terminology, etiquette, etc.) of how to engage in a variety of lifetime activities. The primary goal of this course is to help students appreciate the physical and mental benefits of physical activity throughout their lifetime. Skills for each sport activity are broken down so that students are able to participate in game play. In addition to these activities, students have the option to participate in lifelong physical fitness activities, such as cardiovascular conditioning, plyometrics, agility, and strength training.

Prerequisites: None

HEALTH

This course is designed to promote students' overall well-being by cultivating physical, mental, and social health. Through a comprehensive exploration of various topics, students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt lifelong positive attitudes and behaviors related to health. Throughout the trimester, students delve into essential areas including mental, emotional, and social health; substance use and abuse; human growth and development; nutrition and physical activity; as well as sexual health and wellness. By engaging with these topics, students not only enhance their understanding of personal health, but also develop practical strategies for maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle. This course aims to empower students to make informed decisions and prioritize their well-being in all aspects of their lives.

Prerequisites: None