SYA
SCHOOL YEAR ABROAD



SYA Course Catalog 2026-2027

SYA COURSE CATALOG 2026-2027

All SYA students are required to take six courses, including host country language instruction, the Experiential Language course, English and in almost all cases, mathematics.

At SYA, English and math are taught in English. All other courses are taught in the target language. In the case of Italy, where most students arrive as beginner Italian learners, non-Classic elective courses start in English and evolve progressively to Italian.

Note: the availability of all elective courses will be subject to interest and enrollment numbers.

Important abbreviations:
H = Honors
AP = Advanced Placement
YL = Yearlong

The SYA transcript lists the courses taken, designated level if applicable (AP or H), final semester grades, credits earned and an indication on the courses taught in the target language. SYA transcripts are sent directly to the sending school after the student concludes the SYA program. Grades and comments are made available to students, parents and sending schools after every marking period.

COURSES OFFERED AT ALL SYA CAMPUSES

English (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

SYA offers a well-defined and comprehensive English course that prepares students to return to their home school English curriculum or to enter a competitive university program. The SYA English program is distinctly geared towards the study abroad experience and works in tandem with the overall program's mission to create globally aware, divergent thinkers prepared for a 21st-century reality. The SYA curriculum is structured to reflect the various stages of the study abroad experience and facilitates a cultural immersion experience with a series of assignments and readings created with this goal in mind.

SYA English provides a home base for student intellectual and intercultural growth abroad and is specifically designed to complement the immersion experience presented by the host country. Chosen texts challenge students to improve their critical reading and analytical writing skills and cover a variety of literary movements. The readings engage with themes of alienation, isolation, foreignness or self-discovery, as well as the notion of place and identity, both geographic and internal. Texts selected also support the students in contextualizing both their collective and individual experience throughout the program. In addition to working toward becoming closer readers and more successful writers, SYA English students also reflect on the study abroad experience in a more explicit and sophisticated way, through both informal and formal journaling and expository writing.

MATHEMATICS

NOTE: SYA will reach out to the home school math chair of all students enrolled at SYA for the 2026-27 year in May, share the topics covered in each course and request them to recommend the most appropriate SYA math class for their student. A math skills assessment may be given to students upon arrival to SYA to confirm their placement.

If none of the math courses offered at SYA is an adequate replacement for what the student would have taken at their home school, an online option will be pursued.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR SPRING SEMESTER STUDENTS: In order to enroll in any math course in the spring, the student must have completed the first semester of the same course. To enroll in an AP math course, the student must have completed the first semester of the same AP course.

Algebra 2 (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester)

This course is intended for students who have had one full year of geometry and one full year of algebra. Successful completion of this course prepares students to enter a standard precalculus course when they return to their home school. Concentration is on functions and their transformations. The standard parent functions are studied from the perspective of shifts, domain and range, as well as multiplication and division. Preliminary results from rational functions, inequalities, exponents and logarithms are explored.

Precalculus (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester)

The Precalculus course is intended for students who have successfully completed Geometry and an Algebra 2 course (or its equivalent). This is a standard level course covering polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic and introductory trigonometric functions. The goal of this course is to prepare students for a regular Calculus course or a lateral math course such as Statistics.

Precalculus Honors (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

The Precalculus Honors course is intended for students who have successfully completed Geometry and an honors level Algebra 2 course (or its equivalent). This fast-paced and demanding course will cover the functions covered in the regular Precalculus course with a more in-depth expanded curriculum which includes polar functions. The goal of this course is to prepare students for an AP Calculus AB course or its equivalent.

AP Calculus AB (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) AP

The prerequisite for this course is successful completion of an honors level Precalculus course or its equivalent. This course offers a rigorous introduction to differential and integral calculus, covering all topics included on the Calculus AB outline. The course aims to have the students understand the theory that underlies the various rules and applications of differentiation and integration treated in the

course. All major theorems are proved and their derivations discussed in class. Students must explore the calculus concepts from multiple perspectives: algebraically, graphically and numerically, and in the context of a variety of applications. Students are expected to be able to offer clear justifications of their work that show a deep understanding of the fundamental ideas. Students are eligible to take the AP Calculus AB exam in May.

AP Calculus BC (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) AP

This course will be offered online through one of our online partners.

The prerequisite for this course is successful completion of AP Calculus AB or an advanced and comprehensive Precalculus course including natural logarithms, series / sequences, parametric / polar functions, vectors, and limits. The AP Calculus BC course is roughly equivalent to both first- and second-semester college calculus courses and extends the content covered in Calculus AB to different types of equations and expands upon the topic of sequences and series. The course covers topics in differential and integral calculus, including concepts and skills of limits, derivatives, definite integrals, the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus and series. The course teaches students to approach calculus concepts and problems when they are represented graphically, numerically, analytically and verbally, and to make connections between these representations. Students are eligible to take the AP Calculus BC exam in May.

Courses listed by campus are found in the following pages.

SYA FRANCE

LANGUAGE COURSES

Experiential French (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

Experiential French is a place-based course that provides students with opportunities to practice their growing language and cultural skills in real-world contexts at school as well as via experiences within the city and region on fieldwork days. This interdisciplinary course begins with an in-depth immersion into the host city and region, focusing on the use of resources of the host country and its unique and challenging learning environments. The immersion continues throughout the course with weekly experiences outside the classroom called fieldwork. This course leads up to a culminating project at the end of semester 1 and builds up to a Capstone project at the end of the year.

French Language (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

The goal of this language course is for students to achieve a degree of fluency and spontaneity in French that enables them to have meaningful interactions with their host families and others in the community. In doing so, students come to know the French people and their culture. The learning process consists of a variety of activities both in and out of the classroom, including speaking with locals, writing in various genres, researching contemporary topics and deciphering news from a selection of Francophone media. Through these experiences, students apply language skills and learn to express their opinions about cultural and social issues that matter to them.

ELECTIVES

Art History (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

Throughout this course, students will learn about many aspects of art history from the Middle Ages to present-day France. The aim of the course is to help students not only exercise their eyes, but also to develop their analytical and critical thinking skills. Part of this course will involve visiting museums, monuments and other historical sites, in order to take advantage of local resources and better understand the environment in which they are living.

Environmental Science (1 credit Yearlong, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This is an interdisciplinary course set up to appeal to a wide range of student interests, relevant to their everyday lives, both in France and at home. The dual goal is for students to analyze current environmental issues globally and locally and to design and implement small-scale investigations using a hands-on, exploratory approach with Rennes and the environs as their field. Through lectures, readings, videos, field trips, discussions and debate, students learn about important environmental issues while conducting scientific investigations. Topics include biodiversity and environmental systems, demographics and populations, local and global resources of water, food and energy, global change and sustainability. Students who would like to use this course to fulfill a science requirement at their home school are advised to check with their school's Academic Office.

Political Science and Global Issues (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This course introduces students to political issues that are currently discussed on the news and in the media. It is designed to enable students to better understand many of the concepts which are shaping the world today such as globalization, fundamentalism, nationalism or terrorism. The themes explored in this course include but are not limited to: education, cultural exception, immigration, the European Union, feminism, political institutions, modern wars, new colonialism and fair trade and local economy. The course looks mainly at how France and Europe are dealing with these issues at the dawn of the 21st century and how their perspective might differ from the rest of the world. Coursework takes place both in and outside the classroom with the opportunity for the students to attend special exhibits, lectures and conferences. Students are expected to participate on a regular basis in class. The course also facilitates the students' participation in collaborative projects with French high school students and members of local organizations.

French Cinema (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

In this course, students explore the history of French cinema, from its origins in the 19th century to the present day. We travel back in time to the birth of cinema, its technical and artistic innovations, and we meet the key movements that have shaped its evolution. By studying major directors and actors, we also immerse ourselves in different periods of French society. A selection of films and numerous extracts will be screened in class, providing the basis for in-depth group and individual analyses. We will decipher the most striking aspects of each work to better understand their aesthetic and historical significance. The students will develop their film analysis skills by closely examining scenes and sound sequences. By detailed observation, they will master precise tools and sharpen their critical thinking, while becoming aware of the impact of images. Finally, creative exercises will give students the opportunity to explore their own artistic sensitivity and apply the concepts learned in class. Through writing, visual storytelling and imaginative reinterpretation of scenes, they will experiment the cinematic language in a personal way. They will be encouraged to observe their environment with a filmmaker's eye, taking inspiration from the city of Rennes to develop short narratives, visual compositions or analytical reflections.

SYA ITALY

LANGUAGE COURSES

Experiential Italian (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

Experiential Italian is a place-based course that provides students with opportunities to practice their growing language and cultural skills in real-world contexts at school as well as via experiences within the city and region on fieldwork days. This interdisciplinary course begins with an in-depth immersion into the host city and region, focusing on the use of resources of the host country and its unique and challenging learning environments. The immersion continues throughout the course with weekly experiences outside the classroom called fieldwork. This course leads up to a culminating project at the end of semester 1 and builds up to a Capstone project at the end of the year.

Italian Language (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

The goal of this course is for students to achieve a degree of fluency and spontaneity in Italian that enables them to have meaningful interactions with their host families and others in the community. In doing so, students come to know the Italian people and their culture.

The learning process consists of myriad activities both in and out of the classroom, including speaking with locals, writing in various genres, deciphering news from countless media and researching contemporary topics in order to debate political, ethical and economic topics. Through these experiences, students learn to express their opinions about cultural and social issues that matter to them.

Latin Reading (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester)

Depending on enrollment, SYA will offer the following course or its equivalent.

This course is designed for students who have completed at least one year of Latin. It aims to facilitate reading skills to the point in which students can read primary texts in the original language. Emphasis will be placed on reading comprehension and deeper understanding of the texts rather than rote translation. The class affords an excellent opportunity to appreciate some of the classical masterpieces in the original language.

Advanced Topics in Latin (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

Depending on enrollment, SYA will offer the following course or its equivalent.

This course is designed for students with a strong background in Latin grammar who have completed at least two years of Latin who are not quite ready to enroll in AP Latin. Prerequisites are a solid foundation in Latin grammar, syntax and vocabulary, some background in rhetorical and metrical analysis, some exposure to Roman political history and at least one year of experience reading authentic Latin texts.

AP Latin (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) AP

Depending on enrollment, SYA will offer the following course or its equivalent. Students will take a skills assessment test to ensure readiness.

The AP Latin course focuses on continued Latin language acquisition, with the inclusion of textual analysis and contextualization skills. The course features selections from two influential works of Latin literature: Vergil's Aeneid and Pliny the Younger's Letters. Significant time is also dedicated to the reading of non-syllabus texts chosen by teachers, as well as four Course Project passages, many of which will extend beyond the authors of the early imperial era of classical Rome. Students will prepare and translate the readings and thus further refine their knowledge of the Latin language. Students will also place these texts in a meaningful context, which will help students develop their critical, historical, and literary sensitivities. Throughout the course, students will consider the main ideas, effects or purposes, and points of view expressed in these works to gain a deeper understanding of the content and the culture in which they were created.

Introductory Greek (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester)

Depending on enrollment, SYA will offer the following course as an Independent Study. Course only available for Fall and Year-long students. Students attending SYA in the Spring may enroll only if they are taking Intro to Greek at their home school in the Fall. Prerequisite is one semester of Intro to Greek.

This course provides an introduction to Ancient Greek language, history and culture. The primary text, *Athenaze I*, gradually introduces students to all the basic Ancient Greek grammar while reading and learning about the social and political context that led to the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta. Students also read and translate excerpts from Sappho, Herodotus, Sophocles, the New Testament, Homer and others.

Greek Reading (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester)

Depending on enrollment, SYA will offer the following course as an Independent Study.

This course begins with a review of topics from the Greek grammar text, *Athenaze II*, to ensure firm footing before reading Ancient Greek text selections. A thorough outline of Greek literature and mythology will accompany and complete the original texts. The aim of the course is to read, understand and translate a variety of texts, ranging from historians to tragedians to epic poetry. Readings are chosen to suit students' initial skills and progress throughout the year.

ELECTIVES

Art History (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This course explores the production of art history during the Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods that influenced the local territory. Students read, analyze and comment on written primary sources, archaeological remains and artifacts of the area in order to refine critical thinking skills. Students explore topics in the European tradition by building a chronology and content background combined with student-centered work and research. Students also learn to become more confident public speakers through re-enactments, presentations and group activities, while interacting with Etruscan tombs, Greek statues, Medieval churches and Renaissance monuments as vehicles to better understand modern Italian people, culture and language.

Applied Agroecology (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This course combines such science disciplines to examine rich agricultural traditions and processes that make Italian food known the world over. With a focus on sustainability, students will experiment to understand the role of food locally. Viterbo's fertile soil, 12-month growing season and rich culinary customs will provide systematic comparisons between age-old practices and the applications of modern science in order to cultivate many of the local products Italy is known for, such as olive oil, wine, bread, cured meats and cheese. Students will ask research questions and employ laboratory methods in order to understand problems that present both local and global challenges. The course methods will concentrate on inquiry, hands-on experimentation, observation, statistical analysis and discovery.

Local Global Perspectives (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This course introduces students to the most pressing challenges faced by Italy, Europe and the world: economic crises; technological transformations; conflict; human rights and discrimination; migration and demographic change; education, political systems; environmental issues. Students examine these topics through various lenses – local (Viterbo), national (Italy vs. United States) and global– and learn a valuable reality: different cultures view "problems" in very different ways. Coursework takes place both in and outside the classroom. Students have the opportunity to visit national institutions in Rome and around Italy. The course seeks to help students better understand the challenges facing all of us.

SYA SPAIN

LANGUAGE COURSES

Experiential Spanish (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

Experiential Spanish is a place-based course that provides students with opportunities to practice their growing language and cultural skills in real-world contexts at school as well as via experiences within the city and region on fieldwork days. This interdisciplinary course begins with an in-depth immersion into the host city and region, focusing on the use of resources of the host country and its unique and challenging learning environments. The immersion continues throughout the course with weekly experiences outside the classroom called fieldwork. This course leads up to a culminating project at the end of semester 1 and builds up to a Capstone project at the end of the year.

Spanish Language (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

The Spanish Language course at SYA emphasizes communication in real-world contexts so that students can improve their proficiency level and have increasingly meaningful interactions with their host families and the community at large during their time in Spain. The learning process consists of myriad activities both in and out of the classroom, including speaking with locals, writing in various genres, deciphering news from varied media outlets and having debates and discussions about current events. Grammar and vocabulary are taught and learned in context and communication is emphasized so that students gain confidence in their abilities and are motivated to grow their skills both in and outside of the Spanish Language classroom.

ELECTIVES

Art History (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This course lays a foundation of historical art movements up to the time of Goya and then shifts focus to contemporary art movements such as Impressionism, Cubism, and Surrealism, which began as reactions to or revivals of prior art movements. Students learn to approach Contemporary Art with an open mind and also have the opportunity to do creative exercises in class. Visits to museums and monuments in and around Zaragoza plays an important role in the class.

Environmental Science (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This course examines how the world works and how people can alter the delicate balance of the earth's life-support systems. It is set up to appeal to a wide range of student interests, relevant to their everyday lives, both in Spain and at home. Through readings, videos, lectures, discussions, projects, debate and field trips, students learn about important environmental issues while conducting scientific investigations. *Students who would like to use this course to fulfill a science requirement at their home school are advised to check with their school's academic office.*

Macroeconomics and the Global Consumer (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This course introduces students to the basic principles of macro- and microeconomics and their application to national and international public policy. Students examine the development of the contemporary economy and use basic theoretical tools to analyze current issues. Classes consist primarily of discussions, although the course also employs role-playing, films, lectures, case studies and student reports and projects. This course does **not** directly prepare students for the AP Microeconomics or Macroeconomics exam in May.

Spain: A Global Political History (1 credit YL, 0.5 credit Semester) H

This interdisciplinary course is built around four deeply interconnected pillars designed for students seeking to explore a new country through the lens of global understanding. These pillars are History, Politics, Society, and Culture. Using Spain—and specifically Zaragoza—as a living classroom, students will explore how centuries of Spain history and civilization have shaped current societal norms, political landscape, and global interactions. The course also addresses global themes and analyzes key issues confronted, comparing policies established to respond in different countries and regions across time periods, as well as their outcomes, understanding the changes that have taken place. Through readings, debates, presentations, field trips, and conversations with experts, students will engage with these areas from both local and global perspectives. Importantly, this course is grounded in meaningful, student-centered, and experiential learning. It emphasizes active engagement, personal reflection, and critical thinking based on students' experiences during their time in Spain.