

CURRICULUM & INFORMATION GUIDE

2026-27



Urban School
of San Francisco

WELCOME TO URBAN!



This Curriculum Guide is a roadmap for the next years of your life. It reflects Urban’s core values, from innovation, creativity, and curiosity, to celebrating teenagehood as a distinct, meaningful time when you start to discover what really drives you as a person — now, and maybe for life.

So let this guide *guide* you.

Don’t read it as a “scientist” or an “artist,” or with any other title in mind. Read it as someone curious. Wander into classes that don’t fit your current story. Follow threads that surprise you. Because the world is always changing, and Urban was founded on the idea that there’s no *one* thing to be. Instead, we believe high school should be about deep curiosity, a willingness to push boundaries, and the lifelong skills that grow from both.

So highlight what sounds cool (or new, or unexpected, or just right). Question limits you place on yourself. And when you’re ready, talk to your advisor and your grade dean about how to prepare for your Urban journey, what courses lead to what courses, and what paths lead you deeper.

Let that curiosity be your compass.

Go Blues!

Quinton P. Walker
Head of School

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Are You a Curious Applicant?

We’re impressed you’re reading this guide! It’s a sign that Urban might be a good fit for you. If you want to skip to the fun part, go right to the course descriptions.

Remember that 9th and 10th grades have a good number of core courses that everyone takes before you get to an upper level “Urban Advanced Study” class (check out the department notes and graduation requirements if you want a sense of what your first few terms at Urban might look like). This is where foundational learning and skills-building come into play. Don’t worry though: those required classes are some of our most memorable, led by our most colorful and collaborative faculty teaching some of the subjects they are most passionate about. They will leave you not just thirsty for more, but ready to take it on.

Are You a Curious Current Student?

You’ve probably got a pretty good handle on how Urban works, and so you’re looking for a little inspiration. Don’t forget that some of the most exciting courses here are not always offered every year, so be sure to check with your advisor, grade dean, or a department head if there’s a class that’s captured your imagination. There might be prerequisites (listed below the course description), and so you’ll need to consider timing as you map out your high school journey. That’s what these folks can best help you with.

Are You a Curious Educational Peer?

We trust you know what kind of information is in here already — but Urban does things a little differently so we suggest starting with “Understanding Urban” to get a sense of our unique schedule and program (three terms, four classes a term, long blocks for fieldwork and field trips, some special requirements like art and service), and how our rich course offerings build on this structure to support the strengths of our faculty while developing each student’s sense of agency, accountability, comfort with complexity, and a genuine joy in learning.

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MISSION

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

URBAN'S CORE VALUES

- » **Learning is an active, joyful process** of discovery where students are challenged to ask essential questions, solve problems in disciplined and creative ways, and construct substantive understandings under the guidance of passionate and inspiring teachers.
- » **Academic excellence is demonstrated by depth** of conceptual understanding and achieved through rigorous engagement, comprehensive assessment and thoughtful self-evaluation.
- » **We honor the uniqueness of each individual** and embrace diverse backgrounds, values, and points of view to build a strong, inclusive community and to prepare students for lives in a multicultural society.
- » **Students best grow in personal responsibility and self-worth** in a school characterized by trust, honesty, and mutual respect among students and teachers.
- » **We are committed to reflection, evaluation, evolution, and innovation** as means to improve teaching and learning.
- » Learning extends beyond the classroom to instill in students a sense of mission and purpose as citizens of the larger community and world.

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



ABOUT URBAN SCHOOL

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

So keep those progressive and innovative ideals in mind as you dig into this Curriculum Guide. Note the commitment to dialogue about complex topics, the freedom to follow your curiosity, an openness to change and new ideas, lots of space for collaboration, and a real emphasis on equity and social justice.

These values are why Urban’s academic program seeks to involve students in their broader community — the school, the city, the world — and develop for themselves a sense of civic responsibility. Shaped by this philosophy, **all Urban courses share a common approach based on the following principles:**

- » The expectation that students be active participants in their education.
- » A commitment to collaboration and cooperation among students.
- » An understanding and respect for the achievements, experiences, and perspectives of people of diverse backgrounds and identities.
- » Use of the Bay Area’s rich environmental, cultural, and intellectual resources to extend learning beyond the classroom.

UNDERSTANDING URBAN: CURRICULUM, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY

Three Term Schedule | The academic year is divided into three 12-week terms (Fall, Winter, Spring). One term is equal to one semester’s work, and two terms equal one year of a subject.*

Immersive Coursework | Students take four classes per term and all classes are college preparatory, with extended periods multiple times each week allowing for concentrated learning, interdisciplinary projects, and college-like labs.

Academic Evaluation | Written reports are provided twice per term: at the midpoint and at the end of each 12-week term. A final letter grade is given at the end of every term. Cycles of ongoing teacher feedback, as well as an emphasis on student self-reflection integrated into this evaluation process, emphasize a growth mindset, collaboration, and self-advocacy.*

Excellence in Instruction | Exceptional faculty are drawn to our mission, and many of them build long careers here. Teaching both core courses and diverse, innovative electives energizes teachers — scholars, scientists, writers, and artists in their own right — whose passion deeply inspires students.*

Four-Year Service Learning | Structured four-year service curriculum engages students in conversation about identity, equity, and community impact via on-site placements across the San Francisco Bay Area.*

Four-Year Arts Program | Core visual, musical, and performing arts are built into our academic requirements across all four years and taught by practicing artists.

Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) | Dozens of honors-level courses designed by Urban faculty, UAS courses are the most rigorous on offer and are recognized as “honors level” by all colleges, including the University of California system.**

Integrated Fieldwork | Extended class periods allow for regular excursions into the city so that museums, artist studios, natural (and human-made) ecosystems, archives, courthouses, prisons, shelters, community centers, theaters, and more become essential curricular components.

Science | Urban’s science program moves students through Science 1 and 2 using a “spiral” method that revisits key concepts in increasing depth. The required science curriculum includes Biology, Chemistry, and introductory Physics.

Mathematics | Urban’s math program is organized around integrated Math 1, 2, and 3 courses (which are close to traditional Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2), and Functions equates to precalculus. Urban elective offerings include highly conceptual options, such as the honors-level UAS Infinity and UAS Space (both as rigorous as UAS Calculus), and our Advanced UAS Computer Science 2 and 3 are college-level classes that prepare students for programming in any language.

Wellness Embedded in Schedule | Tutorials, advising, and mental health supports are intentionally structured into the week, along with dedicated time to recharge, connect with friends, and participate in activities beyond the classroom.

Advising and Personal Development | From the moment they arrive, each student is supported by a faculty advisor and grade-level Dean who provide consistent academic and social guidance and partner closely with families. Because they stay with a class for all four years, they develop a deep understanding of each student’s growth and experience.

Academic Support | Our Learning Strategies team ensures that students and families have ready access to guidance when needed. We also train students as peer tutors and counselors, fostering a culture where students can turn to one another for support, perspective, and shared wisdom passed down year after year.

Student-Led Culture | With 40+ student clubs, leadership roles across campus, direct input into school decision-making, peer-to-peer education, and a thriving journalism program with multiple publications, students help shape the life of the school every day. Longstanding traditions — from outdoor education adventures to spontaneous lunchtime concerts — create shared experiences across grades.

Affinity and Ally Spaces | More than 15 identity-based groups forefront belonging and inclusion, culminating each year in the student-led “Month of Understanding” — a school-wide series of events, discussions, performances, and celebrations.

Athletics | Movement is a requirement, and 74% of students participate in sports, fostering teamwork, resilience, and school spirit no matter the level of ability.

* Read more about this unique Urban feature in the following pages.

** Urban does not offer AP courses, though we do support students interested in AP testing with prep, study resources, and test administration.



GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

By fulfilling Urban’s graduation requirements, students exceed the University of California’s A–G admissions standards while engaging in coursework designed by the people who know them best: their teachers. For instance, instead of following a one-size-fits-all AP model built around standardized exams, Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) courses give faculty the freedom to create rigorous, college-level learning experiences that open up students’ curiosity, encourage deep inquiry, and build the skills colleges value most, like strong writing, critical thinking, and independent and collaborative research.

Graduation Requirements	22 academic credits <i>(a typical course is 1/2 credit; two courses in a single subject make up 1 full credit, equal to one year of coursework.)</i>
English Requirement	4 years
History Requirement	2 years <i>(including 1 year US History; 1 year World History)</i>
Math Requirement	3 years
Science Requirement	2 years <i>(including Biology and Chemistry)</i>
World Language Requirement	3 years of the same language
Arts Requirement	4-year program with 2 required credits in visual or performing arts
Service Learning	4-year program with 2 required credits
Health Education	Required 9th and 10th grade <i>(pass/fail)</i>
Physical Activity	Required for all students <i>(non-credit)</i>

The Power of the Three Term Schedule

Urban has a unique alchemy, which flows from organizing the school year into three, 12-week terms rather than using a two-semester system. This schedule means only taking four classes at any one time (across A, B, C, and D blocks) and makes room for longer periods of instruction. The result? Hands-on, in-depth learning, creative teaching methodologies mixed with next-generation technologies, college-like labs, and time to explore subjects from a variety of angles that resonate with different viewpoints and study styles. A single class might see independent writing, transition to a teacher presentation, followed by collaborative group work on a long-term project, and conclude with student-led discussion and Q&A. Or you might spend a double period at the beach doing fieldwork, or at the 9th Circuit Court interviewing judges.

With fewer classes to juggle each night, homework becomes more focused and manageable. Having multiple terms also opens the door to a huge range of electives, especially in 11th and 12th grade when core requirements are completed, giving students and teachers the chance to really dive into the subjects and ideas they care most about — or explore new ones sparked by their time at Urban.

Keep in mind that our longer class periods mean **the content of a one-term class is equivalent to a one-semester course in a traditional semester system, and a two-term class is equivalent to a year-long course.** Things move fast, but we’ve built tutorials, office hours, and study halls into the schedule — including mandatory ones for 9th and 10th graders — so Urban students graduate with both the ability to manage time and the confidence to seek out help when they need it. Critical skills for college, careers, and life.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE EXAMPLE

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

E periods are for performing arts rehearsals, journalism, and other electives, and “U” periods are homework-free courses where students pursue curiosities ranging from tarot reading to bicycle maintenance, and beyond.

Tutorials are study hall periods with dedicated open office hours hosted by every department. Students can meet with teachers, coordinate group projects, or seek out peer tutoring.



SAMPLE 9TH GRADE SCHEDULE

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

SAMPLE 11TH GRADE SCHEDULE

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

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

Feedback and Assessment: De-emphasizing Grades, Cultivating Self-Reflection

What happens when you don’t receive letter grades until the end of a class? Assessment at Urban has always focused on personal narratives, not one-size-fits-all grading. That’s how students grow into their strongest selves as learners: through detailed teacher feedback, self-reflection, and opportunities to keep improving over time rather than focus on the finality of a single letter.

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

We work hard to de-emphasize grades to reduce anxiety and competitive pressure among students and to focus them on: fully grasping what kind of learner they are, the real-world relevance of what they’re studying, the excitement of discovery, and the deep, enduring satisfaction of self-motivation and improvement.

The final course report at the end of a term is when teachers share a conventional letter grade for each class (“A,” “A-,” “B+,” “B,” etc.), which will appear on a traditional transcript for college applications. The grade comes with another rubric similar to the interim report, a written evaluation of the student’s work in the class from the teacher, and — just as important — a student self-evaluation recognizing their own successes and areas for growth.

This approach may feel different from what students or families have experienced before, but generations of Urban alumni say it not only prepared them well for college, graduate school, and beyond, but that it also helped them develop a lasting love of learning and the confidence to keep exploring new ideas throughout their lives.

Service Learning: Identity, Awareness, Action

Urban’s nationally-recognized four-year Service Learning program blends rigorous classwork with impactful volunteering. In 9th grade, students explore issues of their own identity and culture, and examine the impact of historical factors like race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic standing. It’s not only a chance to strengthen relationships among students, but it paves the way for 10th through 12th graders to engage in internships and projects that align their passions and values: Service Learning at Urban aims to solve real problems, in real time, beyond our school walls.

By the end of four years, students become genuinely able to connect across differences, understand the stories and perspectives around them, and step thoughtfully into conversations that don’t have easy answers. Along the way, they use what they learn in the classroom to support real community organizations and causes — developing not just empathy and awareness, but the confidence and resourcefulness to engage meaningfully with the world around them.

Technology at Urban: Enrich Learning, Not Replace It

Urban's never been shy about new technology. We were a leader in developing many of the school-issued laptop practices now seen across the country — and even internationally — when we launched our program more than 25 years ago. Since then, we've prioritized the careful inclusion of digital tools across the curriculum when they can deepen and extend student learning, not simply because they're the latest trend.

Importantly, Urban works to nurture a sense of digital citizenship among our students, helping them navigate the opportunities, but also the pitfalls, of social media and smartphone use. Like everyone, Urban has also been engaging in a lively discussion and evaluation of the role generative AI will be playing in all of our lives, both within the school and beyond. We've developed dynamic guidelines to support students and teachers in using these technologies ethically and creatively, so they enrich rather than replace learning. Because both the technology and its uses are constantly changing, the guidelines are regularly updated and readily available across our digital platforms, with teachers helping students navigate the gray areas along the way.



The College Process: Rooted in Self-Discovery

The college process is an opportunity for students to better understand themselves — their interests, strengths, goals, and ways of learning — so they can make thoughtful, confident decisions about what comes after high school. With a focus on finding the right fit, Urban's college counselors work closely with students and families over time to identify colleges and universities that reflect their unique aspirations and talents.

Though formal college counseling begins early in 11th grade, Urban's deeply self-reflective approach to course feedback — combined with an emphasis on critical inquiry and strong writing — means that students begin preparing for the college application process from their very first class here. By the time they reach Senior year, their voices have become powerful and precise.

In 11th grade, students and their parents/guardians attend a school-sponsored event designed to introduce families to the various steps in college admissions, including testing. Later, families meet with their assigned college counselor to develop an initial list of schools for further exploration. During Senior year, counselors work closely with students to support them throughout the application process. By getting to know students through one-on-one conversations, drop-in visits, writing exercises, and opportunities for self-reflection, our counselors help them identify the environments where they will thrive academically, socially, and personally.

Once decisions are released in the spring, counselors help students evaluate their options and select the school they'll attend in the fall.

Increasingly, colleges are placing value on the very skills an Urban education emphasizes: depth of reading and analysis, independent and collaborative research, and meaningful engagement with the broader world and diverse perspectives. Every year, Urban Seniors are accepted to a variety of schools, including Ivy League and highly selective public and private colleges and universities, as well as specialized schools for those skilled in science, engineering, and visual and performing arts.

BIG QUESTIONS, INNOVATIVE ANSWERS

MULTIDISCIPLINARY CLASSES

Often our most important conversations don't fit neatly into one subject. That's why at Urban, you'll find electives that cross boundaries and mix perspectives — classes like *Voices of Incarceration*, *Global Migration*, and *Infectious Disease*. They bring together literature, sociology, science, and more to explore real-world issues that don't have simple answers. Multidisciplinary classes inspire deeper inquiry by grappling with larger social issues that have an immediate relevance young people both crave and need as they mature into engaged citizens of the world.



URBANX LABS

Prize-winning robots, catapults in Golden Gate Park, soldering your own motherboard: our interdisciplinary approach to design, technology, and engineering flourishes in UrbanX Labs. With offerings like *Electronics and Robotics*, *Materials Science*, *Advanced Computer Science*, *Industrial Design*, *Architectural Design* and more, we're teaching students how to develop, design, and build. In our recently expanded UrbanX lab space, we teach students the fundamentals of "how": discovery, innovation, creativity, and problem solving. It's the joy of bringing your ideas to life.



CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Some questions can't be answered from a desk. Urban's environmental classes invite you to step outside — into the Bay Area's tide pools, rock formations, ecosystems — and then bring those experiences back into the classroom. Courses like *Marine Biology*, *Geology*, and *Ecology* connect science with history, storytelling, and place, helping students see the natural world from multiple angles. *Cal Studies* is iconic for just this kind of potent mix: a two weeks of bussing and backpacking across California to explore hydrology, the issues of water management, and the competing demands of farmers, cities, indigenous communities, and, yes, Mother Nature, too (it's a throwback to the days when the whole school could cram into a single school bus for overnights to the state's deserts, forests, mountains, and beaches). Along the way, students in these classes build not just knowledge, but a deeper connection to the environments they study, and a clearer sense of what's at stake.

READY TO EXPLORE?

So far, we've talked about how learning happens at Urban. The pages that follow explore what students actually study. Each department introduction is written by the faculty and instructors who teach those courses, with their goals, teaching philosophies, and unique approaches in mind. We hope they give you a sense not only of what you'll learn, but also of the people who will help guide you along the way.



English

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

Literature is also the province of culture, offering wonderfully wide-ranging and intimate means of exploring the human experience. Diversity and range are important to us, whether it’s exploring the roots of human storytelling in *Gilgamesh*, or exploring American history and dialect in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. In every case, we choose texts that warrant the sustained attention we give them, in classes designed to be rich, engaging and appropriately challenging.

English Requirements:

Though Urban English courses vary in theme and subject, all share common goals: students learn to read carefully, to question actively and to think clearly. The curriculum includes courses in the classics, in the literature of non-European cultures, and in modern fiction and essays. The classes required of 9th and 10th graders, The Journey and American Voices, include a blend of literary traditions and cultural experiences. Both 11th and 12 graders choose among electives. **Four credits are required for graduation.**

In **Urban Advanced Studies (UAS)** English classes, the students are expected to go beyond the fundamental reading, writing and critical thinking skills taught in the core and commit to the more rigorous, daily habits necessary for success in advanced elective classes. UAS courses challenge students to apply these prerequisite skills and habits with confidence to new contexts: texts that are more demanding in depth and narrative structure and/or writing assignments that require students to develop and pursue their own questions with a great degree of self-sufficiency. Students engage in increasingly independent and substantive intellectual inquiry whether in reading or in writing. They deepen their understanding by making rigorous thematic connections within and between texts and should expect to commit to more in-depth preparation in response to reading and writing assignments. While all upper division English electives are challenging and intellectually engaging, UAS courses will include a heavier workload than non-UAS electives.

REQUIRED COURSES

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

- » **English 1A** is an exploration of stories and storytelling as cultural, social and spiritual awakenings of self. Students examine how these stories can be “mirrors and windows” that enable complex understandings of the world. From Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, to Belle Yang’s graphic memoir *Forget Sorrow: An Ancestral Tale*, to the stories of their childhoods, students will dive into the cyclical nature of storytelling and why these story types persist. Students will practice generating claims and ideas primarily through Socratic discussions and small group activities. Writing will emphasize arguable, clear thesis statements and topic sentences, as well as selecting and integrating textual evidence to strengthen literary analysis.
- » **English 1B** examines themes and problems related to the ways that departures, journeys and homecomings influence the formation and development of character and identity. Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* forms the foundation of this exploration into the travels and travails of journey-making, as characters manage obstacles, friendships, family and their sense of home.

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

- » **English 2A** explores the how and what of writing—through essays, poetry, and a Shakespeare play. The content of the course will span centuries from Shakespeare’s Early Modern plays to contemporary, living poets. We will read, analyze, and consider how a text is written as a means of understanding and appreciating an author’s voice, vision, and work. Students will also develop their own writerly voices through a variety of assignments: creative, personal, and analytical.
- » **English 2B** explores how writers interpret and challenge our ideas about power, love and the intersection of the two. F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the two anchoring novels, speak to broader human experiences while examining a distinct era, region and subculture: The course will also include a short story unit, building off themes explored in the novels. English 2B demands reflection — on universal values, on the conflicts between the individual and society, and on how power and agency shape our choices and are shaped by our choices.

ELECTIVE COURSES, OFFERED IN ALTERNATIVE YEARS

UAS American Romanticism delves into a body of literature that emerges from 19th century New England but concerns itself with the “true places” that aren’t written down on any map. We’ll study the distinct styles, motifs, themes, problems and ideas in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short stories, Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, and the poems of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. While these works may seem, at first, to have little in common, we’ll endeavor to find the threads that connect them as they lead us into unmappable mysteries: life’s origin, meaning, and destination; the vast universe outside of us and the vast universe within us. We readers — like our authors and their characters — will explore such mysteries, as well as the limits of our ability to understand them. (½ CREDIT)

UAS British Literature: Breaking Boundaries explores the work of British writers of the late 19th and 20th centuries who were the inheritors of a literary tradition that included gender-bending Shakespeare

and the wild Romantics. Partly through the influence of these writers, the word “queer” began to shift in meaning; while social conventions might be rigid, literature and life suggested a more fluid, complex reality. In 1928, Virginia Woolf published a novel with a gender-shifting protagonist whose various lifelines span four centuries; as Orlando puts it, “I’m sick to death of this particular life. I want another.” Using Orlando as the central text, we will explore questions and definitions of identity, agency, self-expression, gender and sexuality in the works of authors who resisted easy or reductive labels and rejected comfortable conventions. We will place these authors in the context of their times, addressing historical and literary game-changers who pushed against boundaries and binaries to find more authentic, less defined spaces. We will explore contemporary writers who navigate these spaces with the added dynamics of race and intersectionality. Authors and works in addition to Woolf’s Orlando may include: *The Buddha of Suburbia* by Hanif Kureishi and short fiction by E.M. Forster and the Somali British writer Diriye Osman. (½ CREDIT)

Children’s Literature Analysis invites students to use their amassed literary abilities and heightened consciousness to read with a childlike wonder. Answering the questions: What were the books you wished you read as a child? How did the texts you encountered as a child inform your understanding of the world? And, how has your relationship to reading evolved since childhood? Students will “celebrate the vitality of adolescence” by reading, imagining, and creating children’s literature of their own. Additional areas of study will be: the historical, political, and contemporary role of children’s literature; censorship and banned books; accessing literacy practices; the creation and publication of children’s literature; theoretical lens of viewing children’s literature; the role of libraries and librarians; the distinction between young adult and children’s literature and more! Our intention will be to use the joy of revisiting children’s literature to reignite a passion for reading. (½ CREDIT)

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

UAS Creative Writing is a multi-genre introduction to the art of creative expression

through language. How do we create realistic characters? What are the essentials of convincing dialogue? How do we write stage directions? What role does language play in creating tone and mood? How do I work with perspective and point-of-view in crafting narrative? In answering these and other writing-related questions, this course will explore the conventions of writing fiction, poetry, plays, and screenplays while offering students the skills they need to tap into their creativity within these genres. Through critical reading, writing exercises, peer workshops, and instructor feedback, students will develop techniques that support effective drafting, editing, and revising; they will also explore their creative strengths, develop a vocabulary with which to articulate those strengths, and experiment with their emergent personal voice. To support our work, we will read from Stephen King’s *On Writing* and *The Art of Series* to explore elements of craft, from syntax to plot development, from cultivating creativity to exercising professional responsibility. We will also read, analyze and critique our own work with an eye toward iterating and revising to develop a sizable portfolio of polished writing by the end of the term. (½ CREDIT)

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



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

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

Note: offered every year, this course does not fulfill the Urban English requirement.

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

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

Literature and Film explores how visual media, primarily film, has responded to literature. We will examine what adaptation means, and how adaptations function as both commentary on an original text and revelation of a time period's interests and concerns. Our theme for this class is “shaped by setting”: how do our characters, in print, on screen, in other forms of art, exist in their settings and spaces? When do they resist

their placement in their society or culture? And how is this theme carried over into other mediums — how do the spaces and places of film, television, sculpture, painting (and more) respond to themes and ideas in written works? Possible texts include Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Kafka's *The Trial*, Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, James Baldwin's *If Beale Street Could Talk*, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, alongside short stories by Elmore Leonard, Flannery O'Connor, Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, Annie Proulx and more. (½ CREDIT)

UAS Modern American Literature will closely examine the roles resilience, strength, and community play in healing within the context of some of the most innovative and influential American novels of the past century. Our texts will focus on characters coping with the ways they have been shaped by their past. We will explore and deconstruct how their coping and survival can manifest, and glean a better understanding of the lived realities in communities impacted by the history of The United States. We will draw from both contemporary and classic 20th and 21st century writers; works may include Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and Tommy Orange's *There There*. (½ CREDIT)

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



UAS Nigerian Literature explores the literature and cultural forms of a nation with remarkable diversity: languages (Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, English, among many others), ethnicities (more than 250), and religious belief systems. This region hosted some of humanity’s earliest civilizations, its recent history includes colonialism and civil war, and Nigeria is now the largest economic power on the continent of Africa — these factors contribute to the content and complexity of its literature. As we dive into the diverse perspectives of this nation, we will read works by authors such as Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Wole Soyinka, Mfoniso Udofia, and Noo Saro-Wiwa, as well as other artists whose works exist outside of conventional publishing formats. Through these literary voices we will listen to how some Nigerian writers dramatize and express their inner and outer landscapes; how they inherit and integrate the legacies of their past; and how they view themselves against the broader backdrop of other African nations and the increasingly globalized world. (½ CREDIT)

Poetry: Form and Meaning uncovers some of the mystery in reading and analyzing poetry by exploring a variety of poetic forms, from traditional sonnets to experimental performance art. The goal of this course is to engage in active study of the exciting and complex worlds that poems create. We’ll investigate the freedom found in structure and the limitations of working without meter and rhyme. We’ll write critically about poetry and honing our skills of poetic analysis; at the same time, we will grapple with the challenge of writing our own poems. Readings may include poems by William Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, Elizabeth Bishop, e. e. cummings, Allen Ginsberg, Anne Carson, Michael Ondaatje, Sharon Olds, Derek Walcott and many others. (½ CREDIT)



UAS Russian Literature will have students read Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, short stories by Anton Chekhov, and the poetry of Anna Akhmatova. All three authors are grappling with the dissonance between modern and traditional ideas in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th century, and all of them are at the same time grappling with timeless questions of human nature. We begin with Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, about the journey towards love and humility of an anxious, isolated, arrogant student who has killed someone for the benefit of “humanity” (and of himself). We continue the term with the short stories by Anton Chekhov, which will also wrestle with what 19th century Russians called the “accursed questions”— questions like: Should we believe that our suffering is meaningful? What about others’ suffering? Can we endure life without believing in anything? And what kind of social order do we need, if any? We end with the more personal voice of Akhmatova as she contends with these lingering questions in the context of Stalin and the USSR. (½ CREDIT)

Stories on Stage In this class, we will explore plays as literature, reading a wide range of stories from ancient Greece to contemporary Great Britain. From the massive theater festivals of the ancient Greeks to the rowdy theater in Shakespeare’s day, to the plays and screenplays we experience now, we are drawn to stories in performance. No matter where they are located or when they were written, all plays focus on one of the most fundamental needs of being human: the desire to understand and to be understood. How are we understood, and how do we understand others? How do we reckon with external forces whether imposed by gods, by systems, or by circumstances? We will consider how the conventions of theater allow for the creation of character, tension and drama, responding to the reading both critically and creatively. We will also watch productions, addressing how directors and actors interpret the words on the page as well as how production choices, including sound and visual design, impact our understanding. Playwrights will reflect a variety of perspectives including Ancient Greek, LatinX/Latine, Irish, and British South Asian. (½ CREDIT)



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

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

UAS The Unconscious: Stories and Theories

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

Voices of Incarceration addresses the problem of “attention violence,” so named by civil rights activist Reverend William Barber II, describing how we turn our eyes away from the experiences of people who most deserve our attention. More than 70 million Americans bear the marks of the legal system, and they — and their families — have been victims of that “attention violence.” This elective aims to turn the light of our shared attention upon them: their individual experiences, as well as the systems, beliefs and practices that created our current era of mass criminalization. Against a backdrop of racism and mismanaged resources, many forces converge to give America the highest incarceration rate in the world: from policing,

to policy, to the legal system, to the emphasis on “correction” rather than “rehabilitation.” As we learn about the root causes and possible solutions for this issue, the content of the course will come primarily from those directly impacted. We’ll listen to podcasts and interviews, we’ll read first-person narratives, and we’ll meet with speakers who have been released back into their communities after spending decades under the surveillance of the state. Students will also partner with individuals and organizations that are working to change the experience of those impacted by the criminal legal system. (½ CREDIT)

UAS William Faulkner and Marlon James:

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

Math

The math program at Urban draws from both traditional and contemporary approaches and content. Our core classes are Math 1, 2, 3 and Functions. Our approach to teaching these courses is state-of-the-art and reflects the professional consensus as expressed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Principles and Standards. In content, the courses are close to the traditional *Algebra 1*, *Geometry*, *Algebra 2*, and *Precalculus* sequence; Math 1,2, and 3 integrate algebra and geometry topics to connect across mathematical concepts, deepen problem-solving skills, and reinforce understanding.

We navigate between multiple representations of concepts to reach different types of learners and to provide more depth of understanding to all. This includes graphical, hands-on, technological, geometric, numerical and symbolic approaches whenever possible. Foundational concepts (such as equations, functions and trigonometry) are investigated and practiced each year at increasing levels of challenge. On a number of topics, our curriculum goes much deeper than tradition requires, and many of our lessons serve as the backbone of a syllabus for the professional development of high school math teachers.

Our elective courses include unusual offerings for high school students. We offer an exceptionally broad selection of electives, including accessible introductory courses in *Computer Science* (three levels) and *Statistics*, as well as more advanced theoretical courses such as *UAS Space: Group Theory* and *UAS Infinity: Theory of Infinite Sets and Chaos Theory*. This extraordinary range of classes makes it possible for students to be exposed to a wide range of mathematics and select courses that are appropriate to their interests, abilities and priorities.



Math Requirements:

Urban requires three years of math, taken in high school, for graduation. Students planning to apply to competitive colleges should take four years of math. Students considering a career in math, science, computer science or engineering should take four or more years of math, including *Functions* and challenging electives, such as *Analytic Geometry*, *Calculus*, *Computer Science*, *Infinity* or *Space*.

In **Urban Advanced Studies (UAS)** math classes offer coursework appropriate for students preparing for advanced and college level work in mathematics or the mathematically based sciences. These UAS electives include many college level topics taught in a pace and style accessible to high school students. In these advanced electives students are expected to have mastered the content, skills and habits from the core course sequence of Math 1, 2 and 3, and to be able to apply these with confidence to more complex conceptual domains. UAS math courses move at a faster pace and involve more challenging, rigorous problems than our core sequence or regular elective courses. Students are expected to be able to sustain focus on concepts and problems over significant periods of time, working productively and creatively both independently and in small groups. Students are also expected to take responsibility for mastering any prerequisite skills and concepts via self-study, as class time will be reserved for exploration of new material and deeper investigation of key topics.

REQUIRED COURSES

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

- Principal topics:
- » Linear equations and graphs
 - » Introduction to the graphical representation of a variety of functions: continuous, discontinuous, step, linear, quadratic, exponential
 - » Equation solving by several methods: graphical intersection, numerical (systematic guess and check), “cover-up,” algebraic symbol manipulation
 - » Number Sense
 - » The distributive rule and factoring
- (1 CREDIT)

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

- » Angles, polygons, parallel lines, circles
- » Linear functions and systems of equations
- » Distance and the Pythagorean Theorem
- » Construction and dynamic geometry with GeoGebra software
- » Scaling, proportions and variation functions
- » Similarity and congruence
- » Computer programming in Snap! : scripts and variables
- » Sine, cosine, tangent in the right triangle
- » Transformations: isometries and dilations
- » Simultaneous equations
- » Quadratics
- » Exponential functions

(1 CREDIT)

Math 3A and 3B continues and deepens our work with algebraic manipulation and graphical representation of functions as mathematical models. The practices developed in previous courses are expected to be in place so that the focus is on understanding concepts and demonstrating mastery. In particular, we expect fluency with algebraic symbols and notation. As the last course required for all students, Math 3 rounds out the basics of mathematical literacy, intensifies the challenge for students, and provides the foundation for upper level electives. Principal topics:

- » Unit Circle trigonometry
- » Logarithms
- » Law of Sines and Cosines
- » Arithmetic and geometric sequences and series
- » Composition of functions and inverse functions
- » Families of functions
- » Construction
- » Formal proof
- » Polar coordinates and vectors
- » Complex numbers

(1 CREDIT)



ELECTIVES

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

- » Ratio, proportion and scientific notation applied to astronomical and sub-atomic scales
- » Applications of linear, exponential, variation, quadratic and trigonometric functions in science
- » Review and extension of logarithms including a mastery of the laws of exponents
- » Applications of triangle trigonometry
- » Unit circle trigonometry and radians applied to mapping, astronomy and basic physics
- » Logarithms and logarithmic scale
- » Mathematical language and notation, algebraic thinking, solving equations, and graphing

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 3

UAS Calculus A and B seeks to provide students with a solid foundation for subsequent college level courses in mathematics and other disciplines. The course is focused on differentiation, integration and their relationship. The math concepts are enhanced by applications relating to geometry, physics, economics, ecology and medicine. Students are expected to take full responsibility for their learning by using the text and applying all the

skills and content learned in previous courses. They are expected to navigate between graphical, numerical, analytical and verbal representations of problems and to use the graphing calculator appropriately. Principal topics:

- » Differentiation
- » Limits
- » Integration
- » Graphical analysis
- » Introduction to differential equations and slope fields

(1 CREDIT) Prerequisite: Functions



Computer Science 1 is an introduction to programming concepts using Snap!, a computer language developed at UC Berkeley. Snap! makes it possible for students to

program images, animation and interactions and learn about algorithms, data handling and other fundamentals of computer programming, in a visual context. Principal topics:

- » Variables and scoping
- » Passing parameters, returning values
- » Functions and modularity
- » Looping and conditionals
- » Data structures (lists)
- » List mutability
- » Abstract data types
- » Introduction to recursion

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 2



UAS Computer Science 2 focuses attention on the central idea of abstraction, makes heavy use of the idea of functions as data, and discusses relevant topics in

Computer Science such as functions as data, complexity and graph theory. It will also focus on some of the “Big Ideas” of computing such as recursion, concurrency, and the limitations of computing. Principal topics:

Algorithms, both classic and heuristic

- » Algorithm Complexity: constant, linear, quadratic, exponential, and logarithmic run times
- » Recursion
- » Higher Order Functions and using functions as data
- » Graphs: paths, cycles, cliques

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisites: Math 3, Computer Science,1 or instructor approval



UAS Computer Science 3 continues the Computer Science sequence, focusing on more advanced principles of software engineering, data structures and algorithms,

emphasizing computability and feasibility. Topics in computer science such as Game Theory and Machine Learning will be discussed. Principal topics:

- » Fundamental dynamic data structures including linear lists, queues, trees, arrays, and dictionaries
- » Computational complexity of algorithms and the key difference between denotation, computability, and feasibility
- » Basic ideas and techniques underlying the design of intelligent computer systems
- » Decision trees, pruning, and graph algorithms

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Computer Science 2

Discrete Mathematics: Puzzles and Graphs is a survey course, covering many topics in mathematics that are relevant in today’s world. Students will be introduced to and study practical applications of graphs and networks, theories about numbers, and formal logic. They will also be exposed to more abstract concepts deriving from these topics. Principal Topics:

- » Simple graphs and trees, networks, paths and isomorphisms
- » Graph coloring, planar graphs, and polyhedra
- » Theorems and conjectures about prime numbers, and prime factorizations
- » Divisibility, modular arithmetic, and cryptography
- » Truth tables, truth values and logic puzzles

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 3

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

- » Functions: increased depth on composition, inverse and general fluency
- » Functions: transformations, odd and even, limits and end behavior
- » Trigonometric functions, equations and identities – radians
- » e and natural logarithms
- » Polynomial and rational functions.

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 3 (and in some cases, Advanced Math Applications)

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

- » Introduction to set theory and infinite sets
- » Different-sized infinities, transfinite numbers
- » Cardinals and ordinals arithmetic
- » Proof by contradiction, proof by induction
- » Iteration and recursion
- » Fibonacci numbers
- » Dynamical systems and the Mandelbrot set

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 3

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

- » Use of software to demonstrate and interpret data
- » Analyzing the association of two variables from graphs
- » Use of least squares line
- » Pascal's triangle and binomial distribution
- » Simulations with dice and with software
- » Sampling and sources of bias

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 3

COURSES OFFERED IN ALTERNATE YEARS

UAS Analytic Geometry introduces complex topics at the precalculus level that are challenging and useful for advanced students but not a prerequisite for the standard calculus course. The daily problems can be more substantial than the standard work in the core curriculum. There is a focus on moving fluently back and forth from a variety of algebraic forms to graphing in different coordinate systems in two and three dimensions. Students build models, do constructions, and derive equations from definitions and general principles. Central topics:

- » Vectors in three dimensions
- » Conic sections
- » Polar coordinate equations and graphs
- » Parametric equations and graphs

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 3

Data Science is an interdisciplinary course using programming and mathematics to analyze and understand very large amounts of unstructured data. This course is an introduction to the foundations of data science from three perspectives: inferential thinking, computational thinking, and real-world relevance. Students will use programming to analyze real-world datasets and use data visualization to communicate information. They will also delve into the social and legal issues and impacts surrounding data science such as privacy and data ownership, ethics, bias, and the misuse and misinterpretation of data. The course assumes prior knowledge of computer programming (abstraction, iteration, data types) and focuses on critical concepts and skills in statistical inference, in conjunction with hands-on analysis of diverse real-world datasets, e.g., UC admissions by high school, COVID-19 cases in the world or penguins in Antarctica.

Principal topics:

- » Creating and extending tables/table fundamentals: row manipulation, grouping and pivoting, joining
- » Data visualization
- » Randomness and simulations
- » Testing and assessing models
- » Machine learning, training dataset

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Computer Science 1

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

- » Geometric transformations
- » Symmetry groups, tessellation, Escher – art projects
- » Matrices
- » Three-dimensional geometry, especially polyhedra
- » Flatland and the fourth dimension
- » Zome System construction kit
- » Computer labs, using Cabri and Cabri 3D software

(½ CREDIT) Prerequisite: Math 3



World Languages

Urban’s World Languages Department aims to inspire students to become proficient in Mandarin Chinese, French or Spanish by their Senior year and to continue their language learning beyond Urban in order to make a positive impact in a world changing exponentially due to technological innovation, globalization, and migration.

The tools of proficiency encompass both form (grammatical precision, extensive and expressive vocabulary, near-native accent and intonation) and content (authentic and spontaneous communication exchanges, critical, analytical, and interpretive thinking skills). Our students learn to access and balance these two domains of language production from their first year onward by immersion in the target language, avoidance of English, and both instruction and assessment practices that require daily and active participation.

World Languages Departmental Requirements:

Urban’s World Language immersive program offers students the opportunity to achieve advanced level proficiency in French, Spanish or Chinese. Three years of study are required but most students continue for a fourth year. Classes are conducted in the target language and students are expected to avoid the use of English with the instructor and each other at all times. A written and oral exam is offered for incoming students who wish to enroll in Level 2 or 3. If students choose not to take the exam, they are automatically placed in Level 1. Urban’s World Languages students are not only proficient in their chosen language of study, but also value and avail themselves of the cross-cultural knowledge that linguistic proficiency unlocks and fosters.

In **Urban Advanced Studies (UAS)** World Languages courses give students the opportunity to pursue advanced (UAS Level 4) or superior (UAS Level 5/6) proficiency in Chinese, French or Spanish. In these courses, students must be able to process (listening and reading) and produce (speaking and writing) messages characterized by their length, depth and detail; by advanced and superior grammatical structures; precise and expressive vocabulary and idioms; and communicative authenticity. Critical, analytical, and interpretive thinking skills are central in these courses. These levels of proficiency require absolute, attentive inquiry and engagement in class, and rigorous, independent practice outside of class. Students finish the UAS program with a solid level of proficiency that prepares them for life beyond Urban.

Chinese 1 introduces students to foundational Mandarin Chinese through high-frequency language used in everyday contexts. At this level, students learn how to greet others, introduce themselves, exchange personal information, talk about family, describe daily activities, express likes and preferences, and discuss basic school life. Instruction emphasizes accurate pronunciation, pinyin mastery, essential sentence structures, and the recognition and writing of basic Chinese characters. By the end of Chinese 1, students can participate in simple, predictable conversations. **(1 CREDIT)**

Chinese 2 builds on foundational Mandarin skills and guides students toward more sustained communication in familiar contexts. In these lessons, students learn to talk about school life, daily schedules, dates and time, food and dining, transportation, weather, and leisure activities, while beginning to describe experiences and make simple plans. Instruction expands students’ control of sentence patterns, question formation, and functional vocabulary, while increasing expectations for listening comprehension, reading, and character use. By the end of Chinese 2, students are able to create original sentences, sustain short conversations, and handle everyday situations with growing confidence. **(1 CREDIT)**

Chinese 3 builds students’ ability to communicate beyond basic daily exchanges and into more detailed, connected discourse. Across these lessons, students learn to describe personal experiences, relationships, health, housing, school life, and routines while beginning to express opinions and reasons. Instruction introduces more complex grammatical structures and discourse connectors, enabling students to narrate events and handle conversations on familiar topics with greater independence. **(1 CREDIT)**

UAS Chinese 4A focuses on familiar and practical life themes, particularly sports and leisure activities, travel experiences, and communication scenarios at airports. Students will learn to describe their exercise habits and interests, share travel plans and experiences, and communicate effectively in real-life situations such as airports, asking questions, explaining situations, and handling unexpected events. The course further strengthens narrative and explanatory skills, guiding students to use more complete sentence structures and conjunctions for cross-temporal expression and paragraph-based oral and written production. Through situational dialogues, role-playing, and reading exercises, students will improve their language fluency and practicality, with overall performance corresponding to intermediate mid/high level abilities. **(½ CREDIT)**

UAS Chinese 4B: Communication and Culture: Campus Life and Social Situations focuses on three main themes closely related to student life: new student registration and campus administration, dormitory life and interpersonal interactions, and dining in restaurants and social etiquette. Students will learn to use Chinese to explain, ask questions, express needs, and share experiences in real-life and campus settings. The course emphasizes developing students’ language organization skills in longer conversations and paragraphs, guiding them to use more natural, appropriate, and culturally conscious expressions. Through role-playing, situational tasks, reading comprehension, and oral discussions, students will improve their integrated listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and deepen their understanding of campus life and social interactions within Chinese-speaking culture. **(½ CREDIT)**

UAS Chinese 5/6A: Consumption, Academics, and Interpersonal Relationships focuses on three themes relevant to students’ daily lives and campus settings: shopping and transactions, course selection and planning, and campus romance and interpersonal interactions. Through reading, discussion, oral practice, and written expression, students will learn how to communicate in Chinese in daily life, share personal experiences and perspectives, and discuss values and decisions. The course emphasizes practical language expression, opinion articulation, and interactive skills, while expanding students’ advanced vocabulary and grammar. Upon completion, students will be able to engage in sustained conversations, describe events, and express opinions in familiar and semi-familiar situations. (½ CREDIT)

UAS Chinese 5/6B: Modern Life: Technology, Work, and Education focuses on three themes closely related to high school students: computers and the internet, work experience, and the education system and learning concepts. Through reading, discussion, and oral expression, students will learn how to describe the impact of technology on life in Chinese, share work experiences and responsibilities, and explore the relationship between education and future development. The course emphasizes expressing opinions, explaining reasons, and comparing viewpoints, cultivating students’ ability to use more formal language for extended narratives and paragraph-based expression as well as expanding students’ advanced vocabulary and academic writing. Through thematic learning and task-oriented activities, students will improve their integrated listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, and develop critical thinking and intercultural understanding. (½ CREDIT)

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

French 2 reviews the basics covered in French 1 and deepens students’ understanding of the material. In addition, students acquire and use the simple and compound past tenses and are introduced to the subjunctive mood and to the conditional and future tenses. Short and extended readings such as *Le Petit Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry supplement the basic textbook and are discussed in French. Students improve their creative writing skills and work on oral skills through presentations, communicative activities, games, cultural activities and reading-centered discussions. (1 CREDIT)

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

UAS French 4A: Post-Colonial Africa / Indochina and Neocolonialism examines political, socioeconomic and cultural challenges in a post colonial and globalized world. The class exposes students to the relationship between France and its former colonies from the first encounters to the

current discourses about the “France Afrique,” as well as to post-colonial theory and immigration literature. Students will be introduced to the diversity of Francophone Cultures through the diverse media, including documentaries, films and texts. We explore the Poets of the Negritude literary movement with essays and texts by Léopold Sédar Senghor and Aimé Césaire. Students review advanced grammar, write analytical essays, and work on multiple research projects. (½ CREDIT)

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

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

UAS French 5/6B: The Heroine in Literature and Films examines the problematic themes of identity, gender roles, equality, societal norms and social constructionism from the mid 20th century to today in literature and movies through the lens of female protagonists. We engage with novels by Marguerite Duras, Dai Sijie and Shan Sa, and films by Yamina Benguigui and Agnès Jaoui. Students explore how gender and ideas of masculinity and femininity structure space and shape mobility. We also discuss the changing social and historical contexts in which these heroines evolve. Both in terms of form and content, we investigate the following two genres: autofiction and autobiography, striving to understand how the narrative forms blur the line between memoir, autobiography and fiction. (½ CREDIT)

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

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

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

UAS Spanish 4A: Immigration in the US: New Identities in a Globalized World examines the complex and sometimes contradictory experiences of new identities, whose thought and literature are not bound by national, racial or linguistic borders, but instead transit through them. We'll investigate how these new subjectivities exemplify the positive and negative effects of living in a globalized world. We'll explore fiction by Yuri Herrera, Tomás Rivera, essays by Gloria Anzaldúa, poems by Reinaldo Arenas, films such as *La Ciudad* or *¿Cuál es el camino a mi casa?*, works that explore the border-defying experiences of immigrant, refugee and exiled subjects. Students will discuss texts, review advanced grammar, write analytical essays, and conduct a final composition and podcast project. (½ CREDIT)

UAS Spanish 4B: 20th Century Latin America: What is modernity? Asks the question: what is modernity and what does it mean for Latin America and for Latin American writers of the mid 20th century? We will investigate the power and sway of historical reputation on the individual, the national, and even the continental scale. We will study the genealogy of the dichotomy "Civilization and Barbarism" as it pertains to Latin America, and interrogate its subsequent reappearances and reinscriptions. We'll see the extent to which it appears in art, fiction and film as a kind of haunting or phantasmagoric subtext, even as Latin American countries hurl themselves into modernizing projects and visions of an ascendant future. We'll look at art by Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Fernando Botero, read short stories by Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Juan Rulfo, Isabel Allende, and watch the film *También la lluvia*. (½ CREDIT)

UAS Spanish 5A/6A: España: historia, sociedad, identidad, arte y cultura(s) will provide an examination of literary and artistic movements in Spain in the 20th century, beginning with the country's critical response to the loss of its world empire in 1898, the burgeoning of modernism and the avant-garde in the 20s and 30s, the total reversal of these movements in the aftermath of the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship through 1975, and their dynamic regeneration and reinterpretation in the 1980s and 90s up to the present day. We'll engage with poetry by Federico García Lorca, films by Pedro Almodóvar, fiction by Ana María Matute, art by Picasso and Miró, architecture by Gaudí and Calatrava, journalism and essays as we experience the dynamic shifts of a society grappling with its history, its present, and future direction. (½ CREDIT)

UAS Spanish 5B/6B: Historia, sociedad, identidad, arte y culturas en América Latina will offer students the opportunity to read and view 20th and 21st century Latin American short stories and full-length films, respectively, within their historical and cultural contexts. For short stories, we will begin with the texts of the classic "Boom" authors of the 20th century such as Augusto Monterroso, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Gabriel García Márquez, and Isabel Allende. We will then move on to contemporary authors such as Samanta Schweblin and Claudia Hernández. Films include "Amores Perros" (Alejandro González Iñárritu, México, 2000) and "Machuca" (Andrés Wood, Chile, 2004). We will also regularly track and interrogate current political developments and trends as they affect the future and dynamics of the region. (½ CREDIT)



History

At the core of our History Department is a commitment to developing intellectually curious, critically engaged citizens who understand the complexities of the past and its profound implications for our present and future. Our program cultivates students who approach historical inquiry with rigor and nuance, equipping them with the analytical tools to evaluate diverse sources and perspectives. Students learn to craft well-reasoned historical arguments through close reading of primary and secondary texts, developing sophisticated understandings of causation, continuity, and change over time. Beyond analytical skills, we emphasize the human dimension of history by fostering empathy and perspective-taking that allows students to meaningfully connect with different historical contexts while recognizing the distinctiveness of past societies.

Our department fosters collaborative learning environments where students engage in thoughtful discourse about challenging historical topics, practice active listening, and develop their unique historical voices through various forms of expression. Through independent research projects, debates, and creative presentations, students learn to communicate complex ideas effectively while synthesizing evidence from diverse sources. We believe that learning history prepares our graduates to apply historical thinking to contemporary issues, recognize patterns across time, and participate meaningfully in civic life with an informed understanding of how our shared past shapes our collective future.

History Requirements:

Urban students must take two years of history for graduation. Ninth graders take World History A and B. The US history requirement is fulfilled in the 10th or 11th grade by taking both UAS Making America and UAS Remaking America. All other history classes are electives, which deepen and enrich the student’s understanding of particular societies and topics. The University of California system requires two semesters of non-US history in addition to the US history requirement. Many selective colleges expect that students take the equivalent of three years of history; many out-of-state public universities require three years.

Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) history classes tackle complex topics that require a significant level of independent intellectual investigation on the part of the students. The readings may be more challenging in complexity, whether lengthy primary sources or college-level secondary works. Students are expected to read for an argument, as well for the factual information, and make considerable progress in unpacking analysis on their own. Writing assignments prioritize developing original analysis thoroughly supported by evidence, and students are expected to have experience and skill in presenting such arguments. Students should be able to apply themes and ideas to new material, making connections independently in reading, writing and discussion. Expectations around research, when a major component of a course, emphasize independent and original work.

REQUIRED COURSES

World History (A) begins by examining the structure and systems of power within the Ottoman empire as it expanded across vast swaths of territory. Students will evaluate the extent of the Ottoman Empire’s tolerance and inclusion of the diverse peoples under its control in the first half of its rule. Then, students will examine the changes made under increasing pressure in the 19th century, as Ottoman rulers and residents adapted their society, with varying amounts of success. Students will debate the most influential people and moments of this Era of Transformation. We then study the outbreak of World War I, the genocide of Armenian peoples, and the outcomes of the war. Students will chart the impact of post-war treaties which culminated in the empire’s dissolution when borders were drawn hastily, nationalist and independence struggles ensued, and modern Turkey was created. (½ CREDIT) (9th Graders only)

World History (B) shifts its focus to the Asian-Pacific region and the modern Japanese empire. We begin with foundational belief systems from the pre-modern era and then examine Japan’s unification under its last feudal military government, which led to two and a half centuries of peace during the Tokugawa Era. The flourishing of arts and culture, as well as the structure of government, guide our study in this period. We then examine Japan’s conflicted relationship with the West that led to the modern era, including the Meiji restoration, an embrace of certain Western ideals, and the rise of Japan as a world power throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. The course culminates with an independent research project about an aspect of Japanese culture in the post-World War II era. (½ CREDIT) (9th Graders only)

UAS Making America explores the foundational events and dynamics that shaped early American history. We begin by exploring the intercultural alliances and challenges that emerged from British expropriation of indigenous lands and the resistance of regional Native nations. The course then examines the economic development of North America, which developed through an increasing dependence on the enslaved labor of African peoples. Resistance to enslavement and protests against British governance then serve as the foundation for analyzing the nation’s founding, its new government, and the escalating conflict between peoples and states over the expansion of slavery. Required to fulfill US history requirements. (½ CREDIT) (10th and 11th Graders)

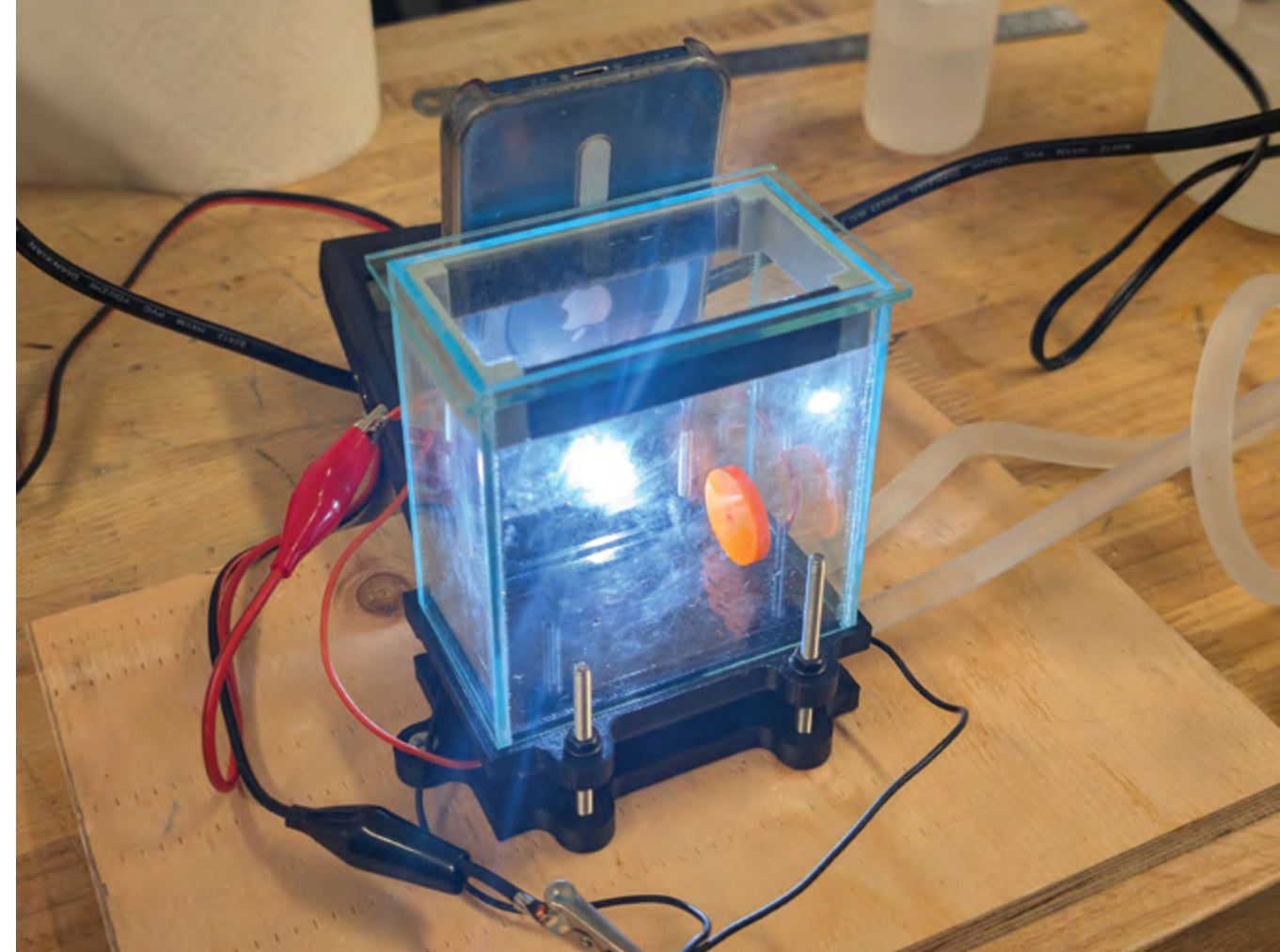
UAS Remaking America challenges students to understand and interpret the evolution of the nation — politically, economically, socially — in the 20th century. This course begins by covering the changing relationship between the federal government and the American public during the Great Depression and the New Deal. Students then examine WWII and the Cold War as creating the conditions for the Civil Rights movement and attendant social movements in America’s cities, campuses and households, setting the stage for the conservative counter-revolution that crystallized around the rise of the New Right. Students complete an independent research paper in this course. Required to fulfill US history requirement (½ CREDIT) (10th and 11th Graders).

ELECTIVE COURSES

Birth of Modern China closely examines three distinct periods of Chinese history: the end of Imperial China (1842–1911), Republican China (1911–1949), and Chairman Mao’s China (1949–1976). In 100 years, China transformed from an isolated and independent empire to a key player on the world stage. Students in this course gain a clear understanding of how Western imperialism brought 2,000 years of dynastic rule to an abrupt end. Students also explore China’s vibrant and contested political landscape in the first half of the 20th century, which culminated in the largest civil war in history. The course concludes with an investigation of the turbulent rise of the communist state, in which students have the opportunity to pursue an independent research project on the challenges it faces today. This course features an array of remarkable primary resource materials,

such as political speeches, propaganda art, literature and film. (½ CREDIT) (10th Graders Only)

Civics and Society is an introduction to democracy and the political, economic and social systems that support it. With a focus on systems and power, students will develop an understanding of government structures and consider how effective change makers assess, plan and carry out actions to make a lasting impact. Key topics include: the purposes and functions of government, the evolution of democracy in the USA, and this nation’s history of voting rights. Students will create a culminating research project on a topic of their choosing. This course pays particular attention to reading, writing and research skills, providing multiple opportunities for students to practice summarizing, synthesizing the information and ideas they encounter. (½ CREDIT) (10th Graders Only)



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

South African History introduces students to different approaches and methodologies of the study of history through the lens of South Africa. The course begins with a close study of historiography of Mapungubwe, exploring the challenges of studying a time and place without written records. The course moves on to investigate the colonial period and the emergence of new racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities through migration, land and labor. Students will then examine the era of apartheid through a historiographic lens to determine how different stories of oppression and resistance reveal divergent messages for their audience. The class will end with an opportunity for students to conduct their own research about the challenges South Africa is facing today and the corresponding solutions South Africans are developing. (½ CREDIT) (10th Graders only)

UAS Asian American History introduces students to the diverse narratives of Asian diasporic communities in America. The course opens with an exploration of the local history of student protest that led to the development of the political identity of “Asian American,” and concludes with a documentary research project that uses oral histories to explore the relationship between history and current issues facing Asian American communities. Students will explore themes related to individual and community action, immigration and exclusion, race and resistance, citizenship and the law. When possible, we take advantage of San Francisco’s local history with off-site field trips and independent projects to better see the multicultural roots of our city and society. This course includes independent research. (½ CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)

California History examines both the events and stories that created contemporary California. Students will start by visiting museums that tell various parts of California’s story to discover what is revealed and concealed in different narratives. In conjunction with the museum visits, students will examine the contested contributions of archaeologists and the continuing controversy over Native American artifacts. Students will then create their own museum exhibits that re-examine narratives about California’s economy, environment, laborers and communities in the nineteenth century. Next, the class will turn toward an analysis of historical and contemporary maps that narrate the evolution of land and labor in twentieth century California. Students will use GIS mapping systems to research the intersection of topics such as marketing, migration, music and money in the twentieth century. Finally, students will end the course with a research project informed by their own collection of oral histories and primary

sources to produce a map that tells a story about California in the twenty-first century. (½ CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)

UAS Constitutional Law examines how the Constitution has been interpreted and applied to major issues including the powers of Congress and the President, equal protection cases including school desegregation and sex discrimination, and privacy rights and substantive due process cases involving reproductive rights and marriage equality. Students primarily rely on The Constitution and U.S. Supreme Court judicial opinions as the core texts for the course. The course emphasizes concise and organized writing as well as developing public speaking skills. When possible students also visit courts and meet with lawyers. The goals of the course are for students to develop constitutional literacy, gain a deeper understanding of how the U.S. government works, and consider how Courts and the Constitution shape important issues they care about. (½ CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)

Economics balances a study of theory and concepts in micro- and macroeconomics by covering essential vocabulary along with an array of team projects in which students apply their understanding to real geopolitical contexts. The course starts by examining key economic concepts such as trade-offs, opportunity costs, marginal analysis, and externalities before applying a cost-benefit analysis to a proposed plan to build a dam in central Africa. Next, we study microeconomics, supply and demand and equilibrium price before applying these concepts through an analysis of the history of oil and other commodity prices. We then compare economic systems and examine macroeconomic indicators like GDP, unemployment, inflation, and HDI

before partnering up to compare a variety of national economies. Diving deeper into macroeconomics, we gain an appreciation for the role of central banks in steering a nation’s economy by looking at their critical role in targeting interest rates. We end the term by studying four broad topics in personal finance through a student-teaching unit: saving and investing, insurance, taxes, and credit. (1/2 CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)

History of US Foreign Policy will examine the evolution of the nation’s role in the world. From young upstart to global police force, the United States underwent a massive transformation in the scope and scale of its participation in international politics in the 20th century. Who and what drove foreign policy decisions? The course begins by tracking the expansion of the United States across the continent and relationships with sovereign Native nations. Students will explore the continuity and change in policy in the late 19th century as the US reaches its influence beyond the continental United States. After assessing the shifting geopolitical realities brought about by two world wars, students will then examine both the rationale behind and the effects of the decades-long conflict with the Soviet Union known as the Cold War. After identifying the major policies since the fall of the Berlin Wall, students will also explore current and future choices for US foreign policy. Prerequisite: US History Sequence (1/2 CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)

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

UAS Race in Latin American History examines the significance of race in the region from the colonial era through the 20th century. We’ll begin with a theoretical exploration of the concept of race before moving on to efforts by the Spanish and Portuguese crowns to establish a specific racial regime to accompany colonialism and the response of the popular classes to those efforts. We’ll move on to the wars for independence and the 19th century, when Latin Americans generated new ideologies in association with attempts to forge new national identities. We then move on to the 1920s and 1930s, when a sea change in thinking about race resulted in the emergence of the ideologies that are prevalent in the region today. Students will then pursue independent research projects examining the current significance of race in the region. Major themes to be explored include: the importance of race in the Spanish colonial project, the impact of the wars of independence on race relations, the influence of international currents of thought, and the relationship between ideology and actual conditions. (½ CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)



UAS History of South Asia introduces students to the history of modern South Asia (including the formation of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). It begins with the history of ancient India, with a focus on the rise of Hinduism, the caste system, and ascetic traditions such as Buddhism. Coming to the modern period, students investigate the coming of Western colonialism while considering the challenges posed by the study of other cultures and identities (gender, caste, and religion) in culturally sensitive ways. For example, were the British justified in outlawing the ritual self-immolation of widows? Students also confront the complex historiography of South Asian Islam — namely, how and why historians have diverged so dramatically in their accounts of it. We conclude by tracking the ways in which different nationalist factions under leaders like M. K. Gandhi — divided by caste and religion — agitated for and finally won independence. Our work culminates in a reflection on the tragic Partition of 1947 and an intensive exploration of a topic of contemporary significance, such as the fate of Kashmir or the rise of Hindu nationalism. (½ CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)

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

COURSES OFFERED IN ALTERNATE YEARS

UAS America Transformed: 1865-1929 is a thematically (rather than chronologically) organized course, which examines social, cultural and economic changes from the perspective of the “common” man and woman rather than that of the national political leadership. Through the lenses of race, class and gender, students explore the following topics: construction of racial identity and race hierarchies; the rise of big business and the ensuing battles between capital and labor for control of the industrial economy; urbanization; immigration and its impact on American culture; marriage and family; and the development of a consumer-driven, leisure-oriented culture. The ultimate aim of the class is for students to construct rich connections between each of the above topics. (½ CREDIT) (11th and 12th Graders only)

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



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

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

Screening History uses popular Hollywood films as vehicles to analyze US society through the 20th century. Students will study clips of films, research relevant historical context, and analyze how films reflect economic realities, social movements or geopolitical maneuverings of a particular time period. We begin with the rise of the medium. We bookend our historical study of the film industry with analysis of its approach to representations of war and its consequences. First, we look at early 20th century depictions of the Civil War and Reconstruction; we conclude in the 1970s by examining how filmmakers engaged with the American role in Vietnam. The course includes an independent research project. (½ CREDIT) (10th Graders Only)

Science

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

All Urban students take the same core integrated 9th and 10th grade classes, uncovering the connections between physics, chemistry and biology. During 11th and 12th grade, students may choose from a wide variety of science electives based on their interests. These include challenging UAS courses, field-based courses that use the Bay Area as their classroom, and project-based UrbanX Labs courses that allow students to engineer their own creations.

Science Requirements:

Although two years of integrated science constitute the Urban science requirement, the Science Department advises in addition one-half credit of physics and one-half credit in an elective course to be essential to a well-rounded college preparatory program.

Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) science classes lay the groundwork for our students to succeed in college classes intended for science majors. These courses require independent inquiry and capacity for a high volume of work at a faster pace. Students are expected to acquire foundational knowledge and learn concepts and skills via self-study (including textbook and other readings and resources), reserving class time for deeper inquiry and problem solving. Topics are often open-ended, requiring students to apply and transfer concepts to new and challenging contexts. Accordingly, labs often introduce new content instead of reinforcing material that was previously taught. In many classes, topics are treated more quantitatively, and students are expected to read and accurately interpret primary scientific sources.



REQUIRED COURSES

Fundamentals of Science 1A and 1B

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

Fundamentals of Science 2A and 2B

continues the sequence begun in the first year with a greater emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving, both in the laboratory and in analyzing academic problems. More is expected of students, in terms of their level of critical thinking, laboratory fluency and tenacity in grappling with challenging concepts. Major topics in 2A include genetics, heredity, and evolution. The topics in 2B include a review of atomic structure and chemical naming, stoichiometry, gas laws, equilibrium, acids and bases, and electricity and power. In both classes, the scientific concepts are connected to real-world issues and concerns. (1 CREDIT)

ELECTIVE COURSES



Applied Biology:

Biotechnology How can a tiny leaf, strand of hair, or drop of blood reveal a species? How are life-saving therapies like insulin or vaccines made from

living cells? In this course, students explore questions like these through hands-on lab techniques — DNA extraction, PCR, gel electrophoresis, ELISAs, and microbial culture — while considering ethical, ecological, and cultural contexts. We explore how scientific practice can move toward relationality: learning from the wisdom of the natural world, honoring diverse ways of knowing, and designing technologies that support the well-being of ecosystems, communities, and future generations. Students engage in inquiry-based labs, examine current research and ethical critiques, and complete projects that connect biotechnology to real-world challenges. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)



Applied Chemistry:

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

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



Applied Physics: Electronics

& Robotics is a project-based course that applies the fundamental concepts of analog and digital circuits to a variety of devices ranging

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



Applied Physics: Motion &

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

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



Marine Biology

is a field course that examines a wide variety of life forms inhabiting the oceans and their adaptations to specific habitats. Focusing on coastal California ecosystems,

students will gain an appreciation for the abundance and diversity of marine life and complex food web relationships. The course will provide a brief introduction to the circulation and structure of the ocean, but the primary emphasis will be on ecological relationships among species. Students consider human impacts, particularly overfishing, on the marine environment throughout the course. The course emphasizes the application of scientific methods in various field studies along the northern California coast. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)

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

UAS Advanced Biology: Genetics offers students an in-depth look into one of the most exciting and rapidly expanding fields of biology. The course encompasses learning about complex modes of inheritance, as well as performing cutting-edge labs and bioinformatics activities that offer students a chance to master practical techniques widely used in research today. We begin first by exploring the structure and function of DNA, and how complex gene regulation is crucial to building an organism. This sequence is followed by learning about phylogenetics, the genetic basis of common diseases, human evolution and population genetics, and modern biotechnology techniques including PCR, sequencing, and CRISPR. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B and instructor recommendation. (½ CREDIT)

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

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



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

UAS Advanced Physics: Mechanics is an in-depth exploration of some fundamental topics in classical mechanics. The class begins by using equations to precisely describe the motion of objects in one and two dimensions. Then students study Newton's laws of forces and motion, and see how they can be applied to the real world. Students investigate circular motion, gravity, and the conservation of energy, both in the context of motion and in broader systems. At the end of the course, students take a flying trapeze lesson, gather data, and analyze the physics of their flight. As an advanced class, Mechanics demands strong mathematical problem solving skills and abstract conceptual reasoning. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B, Math 3B and instructor recommendation (½ CREDIT)

UAS Advanced Physics: Waves & Light continues to develop major themes and concepts from prior physics coursework. New topics include simple harmonic motion, sound waves, physics of music, electromagnetic waves, light and optics. The study of light also leads to a survey of modern physics, including quantum mechanics, high-energy physics and relativity. Students in this class will continue to investigate both abstract physics concepts and real-world applications. A significant amount of time is dedicated to experimental and procedural design, so that students become more adept in laboratory situations. Throughout the term, the science is linked to specific technologies and real-world situations. Prerequisites: Successful completion of UAS Advanced Physics: Mechanics and instructor recommendation. (½ CREDIT)



UAS Environmental Science: Ecology introduces students to the principal concepts and processes that operate in ecological systems. Beginning with simple interactions between water,

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



UAS Environmental Science: Physical Resources explores the complex relationships between humans and their environment. Recurring themes include interconnection of the systems that constitute our environment, material and energy cycling, and the question of what is sustainable. Specific topics include water resources, energy sources, local air pollution and global climate change. This class involves a field component, augmented by in-class labs and modeled simulations. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B and instructor recommendation. (½ CREDIT)

COURSES OFFERED IN ALTERNATE YEARS

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

Human Anatomy and Physiology is an in-depth study of the design and function of the human body that gives students the knowledge and tools to understand how the human body operates in health and disease. The primary emphasis will be organ systems, and students will enjoy the opportunity to be the subjects of several laboratory exercises. This course will focus primarily on

the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Within these broader topics, we will investigate the fundamental mechanisms that regulate homeostasis. In addition, students will explore various interruptions in homeostasis caused by diet and exercise, lifestyle, diseases, infections and environmental agents. Coursework will include laboratory exercises, supplemental readings, case studies, collaborative group work and student presentations. Prerequisites: Science 2A and 2B. (½ CREDIT)

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

Multidisciplinary Courses

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

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

Homelands: Discovering Diaspora through Oral History + Media is a multidisciplinary course that examines contemporary trends in the movement of people around the world with a focus on indigenous, immigrant, refugee communities, and other intersectional borderland experiences. By engaging with Bay Area community organizations and individuals, students will achieve a more nuanced understanding of global migration trends, social issues impacting migration, the practical efforts of local organizations, and grass roots movement building. Students investigate displacement factors such as war, violence, poverty, and climate change through storytelling, oral histories, media arts, archives, and community-based participatory research. Students will interview and document individual stakeholders using audio, video and photography, creating a final collaborative and community based capstone project. (½ CREDIT; FULFILLS SERVICE LEARNING 12 REQUIREMENT FOR 12TH GRADERS) (11th and 12th Graders only)



Voices of Incarceration addresses the problem of “attention violence,” so named by civil rights activist Reverend William Barber II, describing how we turn our eyes away from the experiences of people who most deserve our attention. More than 70 million Americans bear the marks of the criminal legal system, and they — and their families — have been victims of that “attention violence.” This elective aims to turn the light of our shared attention upon them: their individual experiences, as well as the systems, beliefs and practices that created our current era of mass criminalization. Against a backdrop of racism and mismanaged resources, many forces converge to give America the highest incarceration rate in the world: from policing,

to policy, to the legal system, to the emphasis on “correction” rather than “rehabilitation.” As we learn about the root causes and possible solutions for this issue, the content of the course will come primarily from those directly impacted. We’ll listen to podcasts and interviews, we’ll read first-person narratives, and we’ll learn from speakers who have been released back into their communities after spending decades under the surveillance of the state. Students will also partner with individuals and organizations that are working to reduce the harm caused by the criminal legal system, as well as to change the system itself. (½ CREDIT THAT CAN COUNT TOWARD ENGLISH REQUIREMENT 11TH AND 12TH GRADERS ONLY)



Service Learning

Urban School is committed to extending education beyond the walls of the school. Urban’s pioneering four-year community engaged learning program encompasses service learning, social justice education, and ethnic studies. Through classroom discussion, community based projects and self-reflection, students become responsible, resourceful citizens with a sense of personal, social and political awareness. Community engaged learning at Urban supports students on their journey to becoming responsible, humble and resourceful members of the greater community.

The following courses are required for all students at Urban School:

Service Learning 9 - Self: Identity and Ethnic Studies is a six-week course designed for 9th graders to explore their identity and culture, as well as examine historical factors through the lens of social construction theory. This is an introductory course to the four-year Service Learning Program at Urban. The course will provide students with foundational tools to prepare them for critical community engagement. Identity, empathy, justice, and resilience — the conceptual and practical pillars of the Service Learning department — are reflected upon frequently. Through the guiding question, “How have social constructs impacted my beliefs about myself and my community?” students are expected to understand and explain how identity factors, along with culture, shape one’s concept of self and experiences. Through the completion of journal, homework assignments, unit projects and a culminating social construction media project, 9th graders have the opportunity to further develop their sense of self-awareness, personal responsibility and purpose. (SIX WEEK COURSE. ¼ CREDIT)

Service Learning 10 - Stories: Empathy in Community is a six-week course that prepares and supports 10th graders in the development of sustained partnerships with local non-profit agencies and civic organizations. The course introduces students to frameworks for effective community engagement and social responsibility. Students work in small groups of peers, partnered with organizations, to serve a variety of communities and initiatives. Throughout this six week course, students are expected to participate during in-class activities and discussions. They are encouraged to invest in self-reflection practices around their work with community partners with an eye towards preparing them for their independent 11th grade service learning experience. Students continue to examine how factors such as race, ethnicity, culture and various forms of capital, shape one’s identities and experiences. A key project in Service Learning 10 is an interview with an elder. Students are assessed on the quality and sincerity of their participation, written reflections, and presentations. (SIX WEEK COURSE. ¼ CREDIT)



Service Learning 11 - Social Movements: Organizing for Justice is a twelve-week course where 11th graders pursue independent service learning internships in the larger community once a week, and engage in a twice-weekly seminar to arrive at new understandings of identity, equity, institutions, and social justice movements. Through journals, seminar activities, and classroom discussions, students identify and challenge their initial assumptions and explore mediums for positive engagement through the inclusion of multiple perspectives. Coursework explores concepts of intersectionality, providing opportunities to connect their personal and social identities, specifically through the lens of power and privilege. Additionally, students learn about family as an institution, generative community engagement, and seek to consider a diversity of justice frameworks. The term includes student presentations on a community changemaker, ending with student-led mini-workshops and annotated bibliographies on an individually selected equity oriented topic. Students are evaluated on the quality of their commitment to service partners, comprehensive research, written reflections, lesson facilitation and authentic participation in all aspects of the course. (½ CREDIT)

Service Learning 12 - Systems: Solidarity + Narratives of Resilience is a twelve-week course in which 12th graders continue to pursue independent service learning internships and participate in twice-weekly synthesis seminars to incorporate and metabolize their previous coursework. The purpose of the course is to serve as a stepping stone for students to become fully and independently engaged in the greater community beyond the walls of Urban. In these seminars, students will deepen their understanding of the social context and systems as they relate to community engagement, equity and justice through discussions, journal writing, and meetings with guest speakers. Students nourish their curiosity by using a variety of research methodologies on a group-elected social issue. They will look at existing models to investigate how to build resilience in order to facilitate authentic coalitions, stay motivated in the face of setbacks, and bridge solidarity across division. The term ends with an evaluation from their site supervisor, a podcast about a historical or contemporary social movement, and a comprehensive service learning portfolio that tells the story of their four year journey. (½ CREDIT)

COURSES OFFERED IN ALTERNATE YEARS

Homelands: Discovering Diaspora through Oral History + Media is a multidisciplinary course that examines contemporary trends in the movement of people around the world with a focus on indigenous, immigrant, refugee communities, and other intersectional borderland experiences. By engaging with Bay Area community organizations and individuals, students will achieve a more nuanced understanding of global migration trends, social issues impacting migration, the practical efforts of local organizations, and grass roots

movement building. Students investigate displacement factors such as war, violence, poverty, and climate change through storytelling, oral histories, media arts, archives, and community-based participatory research. Students will interview and document individual stakeholders using audio, video and photography, creating a final collaborative and community based capstone project. (½ CREDIT; FULFILLS SERVICE LEARNING 12 REQUIREMENT FOR 12TH GRADERS) (11th and 12th Graders only)



Music

Central to the philosophy of music education at Urban is the idea that music is a language everyone can learn, and that with proper support and guidance, even young musicians are capable of excellence. Students with a wide variety of musical experience — from beginners to seasoned musicians — are encouraged to participate in Urban’s ensembles. The Urban Singers Chorus, Lab and Advanced Jazz Bands, and the Chamber Orchestra serve as ambassadors for the school community and perform at school functions, neighborhood outreach centers, other Bay Area schools and regional music festivals. The ensembles hold two annual concerts at the Performing Arts and Community Center and winter performances at the school.

Urban’s **Advanced Jazz** and **Lab Jazz Bands** and their small combos play in a variety of styles, from swing to rock, pop, fusion and funk. In recent years, the Jazz Band has also become a source of talent for the highly regarded SF Jazz High School All-Stars program. Through its ongoing relationship with SF Jazz, Stanford and the greater Bay Area jazz community, the Jazz Band continues to enjoy access to workshops with nationally acclaimed artists.

Urban Singers is a dynamic vocal ensemble where students discover their voices and grow as artists. Through an exciting mix of classical, pop, contemporary, and spiritual music, singers develop confidence, creativity, and expressive power. Small student-led combos offer space to explore personal musical interests and bring fresh artistry to every performance.

Chamber Orchestra is an ensemble that explores repertoire from the past and present, some in its original form and others arranged or commissioned specifically for the ensemble. The ensemble performs two large concerts per year as well as two concerts where students perform in smaller chamber groups. Many Seniors take the opportunity to play concertos or other solos with the orchestra, and others have conducted or composed new compositions for the group.



Music Requirements:

The goal of the Performing Arts Department is to introduce students to the discipline and the creative process of the performing arts. We stress ensemble work in our classes and productions, creating a trusting environment that allows students to free their imaginations and develop self-confidence and spontaneity. Our classes accommodate students with no performing experience, as well as those interested in pursuing performing arts professionally.

Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) classes in the Performing Arts Department are designed to challenge students to deepen their practice in a given discipline and understand its dynamic connection to society. The primary expectation of advanced performing artists is serious involvement with their creative pursuit in a disciplined manner, with a commitment to exploring the practice with curiosity, conviction and technical mastery

Advanced musicianship in ensembles (Advanced Jazz Band, Urban Singers and advanced chamber music groups) involves performance demonstrated at or near a collegiate level. A student in an advanced musical ensemble or class must have achieved proficiency with their instrument. Proficiency is determined based on the following criteria: an understanding of phrasing, intonation, tonal beauty, ensemble blend, dynamic variance, rhythmic accuracy, and beginning-level sight-reading, as well as agility and precision with virtuosic passages.

For students in Urban Singers and Chamber Orchestra, the ability to blend and balance their parts with others, demonstrate technical proficiency, and to connect emotionally with the material is paramount to success. Jazz instrumentalists will be required to improvise solos over chord progressions as well as interpret parts and melodic material. In theory classes, students must achieve fluency in the following skill areas: sight-reading of beginning-level literature, interval recognition, intonation, basic melodic and rhythmic dictation, harmonic analysis, scales and melody/harmony relationships, classification of basic musical forms, instrument timbres, and creation of short-form compositions.

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

Urban Singers is a performance-oriented vocal group committed to musical excellence and the building of skills and community through ensemble. The concert repertoire is drawn from a broad range of styles, including contemporary, classical, pop, and spirituals. The ensemble is a musical ambassador for the school community, performing at school functions and neighborhood outreach centers. Students participate in small combos every other Thursday after school, focusing on music of their choosing. Participating students earn one full arts credit and a letter grade at the end of their year-long commitment. (Year Long commitment, meets for three E periods) Prerequisite: Intro to Urban Singers, audition or instructor approval. Incoming 9th Graders enter this yearlong class after week 6 of Fall Term. **(1 CREDIT)**

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

Lab Jazz Band is a large ensemble focusing on development of the basic technical and conceptual skills required for participation in the Advanced Jazz Band. Previous experience on an instrument is recommended, but not required. Students will also perform in small combos incorporating non-jazz styles such as rock, pop, fusion and funk, depending on their experience. Combos will meet every other Thursday after school for the entire school year. Participating students earn one full arts credit and a letter grade at the end of their yearlong commitment. (Yearlong commitment; meets for three E periods a week.) Prerequisite: Audition or instructor approval. Incoming 9th Graders enter this yearlong class after week 6 of Fall Term. **(1 CREDIT)**



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

Introduction to Chamber Orchestra is a performance-oriented class preparing new Urban musicians to successfully assimilate into Chamber Orchestra in a creative and supportive environment. Students will explore instrumental technique and basic musicianship skills including rhythm, intonation, ear training, sight-reading, practice techniques and fundamental principles for successful performance in an orchestral

environment. The class will learn excerpts as an ensemble in addition to practicing music from Chamber Orchestra. Students in this class will join Chamber Orchestra for the entirety of the school year starting the second half of Fall term, which includes a yearlong combo (smaller group) commitment every other Thursday afterschool and performing in the Winter, Spring and Combo (smaller group) Concerts. This class is open to musicians of all levels with experience on their instrument. (Open to 9th Graders and other interested students; meets during Fall term). Prerequisite: Intro to Chamber Orchestra students are required to join Chamber Orchestra. **(½ CREDIT)**

Chamber Orchestra is an ensemble exploring repertoire from the past and present, some in its original form and others arranged or commissioned specifically for the ensemble. The ensemble performs two large concerts per year. Previous experience on an instrument is required, and some students add instruments during their tenure in the group. Opportunities to conduct or compose for the group are also available.

Through rehearsal preparation, all students work to develop technical knowledge of their instrument, enhance their rhythmic and reading skills, and learn to listen and respond to other parts in the ensemble. Additionally, students will rehearse in small chamber groups with coaching sessions every other Thursday after school. In these small groups, students will learn how to rehearse independently, communicate effectively, and perform a variety of chamber music. Assignments for the course will take the form of recordings of practice sessions and in-person playing tests with other musicians. Participating students earn one full arts credit and a letter grade at the end of their year-long commitment. (Year-long commitment; meets for three E periods per week.) Prerequisite: Intro to Chamber, audition or instructor approval. Incoming 9th Graders enter this yearlong class after week 6 of Fall Term. **(1 CREDIT)**

Music Theory 1 answers the questions “How does music work?” and “How does one create original music?” Music Theory 1 is geared toward achieving a greater understanding of and facility with the music that we listen to, perform and create. This course accommodates multiple experience levels; no previous experience is necessary. Students with previous experience will explore topics on a deeper, more challenging level. Topics include solfege, notation, intervals, scales, melodic writing, Roman numeral analysis, chords, basic chord progression, and musical forms. This course is a prerequisite for UAS Music Theory 2: Composition, UAS Applied Music Theory and UAS Music Production and Engineering. (Open to all grades. *9th Grade Students Note: this is a mixed grade level class.) **(½ CREDIT)**

UAS Music Production and Engineering will actively explore the roles and responsibilities of music producers and engineers from idea inception to finished product. Students will immerse themselves in basic studio technologies and recording procedures, focusing on digital audio technology. Students will learn about types of microphones, pre-amplification, compression, equalization, microphone placement, tracking, digital effects, mixing and editing, as well as talent management, pre-production and problem solving. There will be in-class evaluation of commercial recordings and student work. The class culminates in student-produced final recording projects, utilizing the skills taught throughout the class. Prerequisite: Music Theory 1 or instructor approval. **(½ CREDIT)**

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



COURSES OFFERED IN ALTERNATE YEARS

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

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

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

Theater

Urban's Theater Arts Department helps students build confidence, access creativity and practice collaboration as they engage in storytelling through the art of theater.

Through a range of classes and productions, students have opportunities to explore the various crafts of theater, as performers, writers, designers and technicians. By learning to perform for their peers in a safe environment, students build confidence and self-awareness as they develop physical poise and vocal clarity. Through improvisation, character development, circus arts, original writing and scenic design, students access creativity and explore multiple modes of self-expression. Throughout our program, students practice collaboration, from in-class work with partners to full ensemble productions, and actively engage in empathy — both with their artistic partners and with the dramatic characters they encounter.

Our program accommodates students with no performing experience, as well as those interested in pursuing theater professionally. Foundational classes introduce artistic habits of mind and give students opportunities to explore the elements of theater in low-risk environments. Advanced classes train students in a range of performance techniques and expose them to the uses of dramatic tools in wider community settings. Our production classes mount two major productions each year, a play and a musical, and the year ends with a festival of short plays written and directed by Urban Seniors.

Theater Requirements:

The Urban Theater Program teaches skills and mindsets relevant to a range of social and professional contexts. We emphasize and encourage the development of: confidence and self-awareness; creativity, improvisation and risk-taking; collaboration, empathy and ensemble; technical craft and problem-solving; as well as curiosity and flexibility. We offer students avenues for personal exploration and creative expression, and opportunities to connect theatrical work to larger social concerns. We also expose students to a range of professional performance that demonstrates virtuosity, ingenuity and cultural breadth. For students who seek to pursue ongoing theatrical studies, we promote the habits, skills and knowledge necessary for collegiate, technical, or professional studies in theater.

Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) classes in Theater are designed to sharpen students' theatrical skills and widen their perspectives on applying them. This work includes the pursuit of physical and vocal control, ability to self-reflect and work collaboratively, and capacity to portray complex characters and circumstances. Students study a wide variety of theatrical techniques, styles and contexts, and are expected to execute sophisticated physical and conceptual work with care and discipline. All UAS classes culminate in public performances.

Students taking UAS Theater classes are expected to build on foundational concepts and skills, to develop nuanced analysis and sophisticated performance across a variety of styles. Students in UAS production classes must demonstrate skills in acting, singing and/or dancing, and be prepared to actively participate in demanding rehearsals beyond the school day.



UAS Advanced Theater: Musical Production is a full-scale ensemble production in collaboration with the music program at Urban. We spend approximately 10 weeks in rehearsal, culminating in public performances in the Gumption Theater. Production work may involve guest artists in choreography, design and instrumental accompaniment. This class requires an understanding and ability to engage in acting and singing techniques, as well as strong dedication, energy and mutual support. Students will analyze and rehearse a scripted musical, including engaging in rigorous practice of acting, singing and dancing, both in rehearsal and independently. Students will also engage with creative work in other aspects of production, including design, construction and publicity. Please note: this class includes rehearsals after school multiple days a week throughout the term, and every afternoon during Weeks 9-11. Students may not participate in an Urban athletics team while taking this class. Prerequisite: Intro to Urban Singers, Theater 1 or Essentials of Comedy. Peer Education Theater can count with instructor approval. (½ CREDIT)

UAS Advanced Theater: Theater Production is an advanced acting class that stages a full-scale ensemble production. We spend approximately 10 weeks in rehearsal, culminating in public performances in the Gumption Theater. This class requires an understanding and ability to engage in acting technique, as well as strong dedication, energy and mutual support. Students will analyze and rehearse a scripted play, delve into research on the play's themes, and engage in rigorous practice of acting and movement, both in rehearsal and independently. Students will also engage with creative work in other aspects of production, including design, construction and publicity. Please note that this class includes rehearsals after school multiple days a week throughout the term, and every afternoon during Weeks 9-11. Students may not participate in an Urban athletics team while taking this class. Prerequisite: Theater 1, Essentials of Comedy, Musical Theater Production, Peer Education Theater, or instructor approval. (½ CREDIT)

One Acts Festival is an advanced theater seminar that produces a festival of short, student-written plays for public performance. In this class, students will engage in workshops on directing techniques, engage with writings by theater professionals, and regularly reflect on rehearsal progress. They will hold auditions, develop rehearsal plans and direct their own rehearsals with actors not enrolled in the course, conducted outside of class hours. Students will also actively participate in other aspects of production, including design, construction and publicity. Please note that this class requires attendance at rehearsals after school, especially for technical rehearsals near the end of the term. Students interested in writing a play eligible for inclusion in the festival are required to enroll in the weekly Playwriting class that meets during T1 in the winter term, led by a local professional playwright. To complete a stage-ready script by the end of the winter term, playwriting students will be expected to meet writing deadlines and submit several script revisions. If a director wishes to take the class without writing a play, they can either find a student collaborator to enroll in the Playwriting class in the winter or select a one-act play to direct. Students are also able to write in pairs if they so choose. Interested students with no prior theater production experience must consult with the instructor before enrolling. (12th Graders only) (½ CREDIT)

Peer Education Theater is a class, a performance event and an Urban tradition. Through a daily stream of journal prompts and performance projects emphasizing self-discovery and collective exploration, we write and perform constantly. Students mine their lived experiences, emotions and imaginations to produce solo and group scenes for each other. The ensemble practices a series of listening and witnessing

skills, as well as collaborative decision making in group projects. We acquire stagecraft through regular improvisation and exercises for body and voice. In the second half of the term, focus shifts toward the production of a show, where students compile a script from their original written work and collective visions. The course concludes in a series of community performances and discussions.

NOTE: Newly enrolled Peer Resource students are required to take this class in 10th Grade. However, required for students in Peer Resource leadership team. Open to 10th, 11th and 12th graders; no previous experience required. (½ CREDIT)

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



UAS Theater 2: Performance Ensemble

is the second in a sequence of classes that helps students develop the skills and habits of mind required for performance. Students will broaden their knowledge of theatrical approaches, develop strategies for analyzing scripts, learn to create complex dramatic characters, learn to listen to and follow their instincts, and gain experience in creating, guiding and performing work in a variety of styles. Students will analyze and perform or direct scripted scenes and monologues from a range of plays, and investigate a selection of genres from the theatrical canon. The course includes a field trip to see a play at a local professional theater. Theater 2 culminates in a showcase performance of scenes and monologues developed entirely in class time for the school community. Prerequisite: Theater 1, Theater Production, Peer Education Theater, or instructor approval. (½ CREDIT)

COURSES OFFERED IN ALTERNATE YEARS

Circus Techniques teaches students to go upside down, juggle, and balance on different objects; in other words, to expand their physical vocabulary by developing skills in a variety of traditional circus arts. In class we perform basic acrobatics, human pyramids, juggling and aerial work. These techniques enhance flexibility and build strength while teaching students timing, spatial orientation and coordination. Work in circus arts is, above all, fun, and requires discipline, collaboration and imagination. It provides a strong foundation for anyone interested in learning new skills, expanding creativity and developing courage. The course culminates in a circus performance that is developed entirely during class time for the school community and public. (No previous experience required.) (½ CREDIT)

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

Visual Arts

Urban's Visual and Studio Art program is designed to stimulate and develop students' facility with and enthusiasm for creative visual expression in a variety of media. In a range of courses, Urban introduces students to the vast potential of the visual arts as a means of self-expression and as a way to engage their imaginations in giving their ideas aesthetic form.

We encourage independent and flexible thinking, as well as discipline and perseverance. We ask students to reflect inward; to demonstrate commitment, curiosity and craft in creating their work; and to be courageous in the process of shaping and re-shaping their aesthetic impulses. A hallmark of Urban School is the abundant artwork on display throughout the school during much of the year. A culminating experience for many students is the Senior Winter Art Show.

Visual Arts Requirements:

The goal of the Visual Arts Program is to develop in students a familiarity with creative visual expression, moving beyond speaking and writing. Through different media and materials, we seek to introduce students to the vast potential of the visual arts as a means of self-expression and to engage their imagination and curiosity in giving their ideas aesthetic form. Our classes are hands-on, designed to foster independent and flexible thinking, as well as discipline, risk-taking and perseverance. We ask students to reflect inward, to demonstrate commitment, curiosity and craft in creating their work, and to be courageous and trust the process of experimentation. Students may develop a rich and deep level of inquiry in each class, as all the classes relate to each other, and also by advancing in a medium by taking a class more than once. Classes include outside readings, sketchbook and writing assignments, a research project, visiting artists and field trips.

Urban Advanced Studies (UAS) visual arts classes offer students an opportunity to sharpen their technical skills and to approach more complex domains through open-ended assignments as well as independent inquiry. Advanced work in visual arts asks students to explore, critique and express complex personal ideas beyond basic principles in a given discipline. The creative process necessary for this articulation involves iteration, re-working and re-making. Students exercise agency and build proficiency; they tackle rigorous problems; and they engage in increasingly independent and substantive intellectual and artistic investigation. Students also research and explore, using online resources, texts, videos, as well as the larger cultural terrain of the city through museum and gallery visits. Class time is primarily dedicated to in-depth studio work, as well as artist talks, demonstrations, discussions and group critiques. Students produce a coherent project or body of work for a public audience.



UAS Architectural Design is a project-based studio class in which students learn the principles of architectural composition. Through a number of shorter projects

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

Drawing/Mixed Media focuses on developing observational skills, drawing techniques and creative thinking using a range of drawing media that includes charcoal, graphite, ink, watercolor, and mixed media. The course is structured thematically by: Materials/ Process, Objects, Identity, Place and Narrative. The process of drawing engages the student in quieting the mind, connecting the eyes with the hands and the imagination. Students will develop both technical abilities and creative responses to materials, ideas, feelings and imagery. Working abstractly, from their imagination and from observation, they will embark on a variety of projects that include drawings inspired by music, figures, landscapes, contour line drawing,

self-portraits, objects, and personally meaningful subject matter. The class culminates with a final independent project in which they synthesize and apply their knowledge of ideas, tools and processes, to an idea or image of their choice. In addition to a daily studio practice, this class includes structured brainstorming, outside readings, viewings, writings, and regular sketchbook assignments. (Open to all grades.) (½ CREDIT)



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

the need to be visually literate and design savvy becomes imperative for successful communication. Through practical and personal projects, we learn to use Adobe design software including Illustrator and Photoshop. Assignments begin with the nuts and bolts of design principles. Students learn about traditional and experimental design, layout techniques, and basic graphic design through smaller projects. Each project offers an invitation to think outside the box in terms of scale, materials, and formats to solve different real-world design problems. The course ends with an individual project either in printed or digital online format. Students will design original and elegant solutions that strategically move audiences to feel, think and act. Each project will explore questions that broaden our perceptions as image producers and consumers. Prerequisite: Drawing, Painting or instructor approval. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th Graders) (½ CREDIT)



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

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

UAS Media Arts explores our visual culture where technology is quickly evolving, and emphasizes how visual literacy is all the more imperative for successful communication and cultural engagement. This course approaches media arts — including photography, video and graphic design — as a concept, a process and a set of tools for the communication of ideas. Through the study of the history of artistically engaged social movements, creative exercises and personal projects, students use still and video cameras, as well as editing and design software, to articulate their vision. This course introduces students to the possibilities of working in media arts through the exploration of interactive and collaborative methodologies, digital tools, and a critical study of media culture. We will discover how interactive media, storytelling and social connections determine our public and private identities in personal, fractured and complex ways. With an emphasis on collaboration and peer feedback, students deepen their knowledge of the tools (both equipment and software) and dig deeper into the content of their work using a structured design process in order to achieve more complex iterations of their ideas. Prerequisite: Photography, Video or Graphic Design. (Open to 11th and 12th Graders) (½ CREDIT)

Painting is a studio class where students are introduced to a variety of painting techniques, materials, tools, approaches, concepts, and artists to ignite their artistic passions. This hands-on studio experience allows learners to dive into acrylic paints, focusing on essential skills such as form, color, and composition, while expanding their knowledge of painting's possibilities. Through engaging projects, they will explore different genres — from portraits and landscapes to abstract works — drawing inspiration from both observation and imagination. Central





to the course is the sketchbook, serving as a vital tool for brainstorming, experimentation, and documenting the creative process. Students will culminate their learning with independent projects that showcase their unique visions and understanding of the medium. The class not only emphasizes daily studio practice but also includes structured brainstorming sessions, critiques, and outside readings, all designed to enhance their creative growth while developing technical and problem-solving skills. (Open to all grades.) (½ CREDIT)

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

UAS Printmaking explores a range of printmaking processes, including monotype, collograph, and intaglio (drypoint and etching). Monotype offers spontaneity, collographs explore texture and materials, while drypoint and etching focus on precision of detail and composition. Students work with drawings, collage, color and photographs in creating the plates for their prints. A series of exercises revolve around the creative aspects important to any artistic pursuit, such as developing drawings, considering content, experimenting with composition, and learning what it is to be consistent and diligent with challenging projects. This class expects students to delve into substantial conceptual investigation as well as technical work. We look at pattern, mapping, self-portraiture and identity as well as political

activism. The class encourages students to draw upon their own experiences and interests and to translate these into a visual vocabulary that is personally meaningful. Students work toward a final project working with multiple plates, juxtaposing images in layers to conceal and reveal different levels of meaning. This class includes both thematic and technical readings, research, sketchbook assignments, visiting artists and a field trip to a local printmaking studio. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th Graders.) (½ CREDIT)

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

UAS Stone Carving explores many aspects of sculpture through the process of carving, specifically the reductive process of taking material away to create form. We study the use of stone throughout history around the world. Students make maquettes in clay that are then translated into different types

of stone, usually alabaster or soapstone. Students are expected to complete one 3D stone sculpture over 12 weeks and to actively document their paths of inquiry in a sketchbook. This will involve a continual process of drawing as a tool for design, keeping a sketchbook of ideas, changes and discoveries, and the study of the work of other artists who work in stone, both traditional as well as contemporary. The development of appropriate studio skills, effective working habits, and a commitment to one's inquiry is a base level requirement for each student. We will explore resources for stone within the Bay Area and visit with local stone sculptors. This class includes reading, writing, research as well as group critique and discussions. Personal integrity and a high level of commitment are essential. This class requires a lot of endurance, patience and hard work. Prerequisite: Minimum one term of Sculpture or instructor approval. (Open to 10th, 11th and 12th Graders.) (½ CREDIT)

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

12TH GRADE ONLY COURSES

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

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

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

Health

Welcome to Health Education at Urban. Urban's program is one of a kind in how it offers students opportunities to engage in learning and meaningful dialogue about the landscape and cultural context of high school.

The Health Education program at Urban is an integrated, holistic, skills-based, socially and culturally responsive approach that encourages self-awareness, healthy relationships, and informed decision-making that encourages the safety and well-being of students and their friends. The program includes various workshops, classes and peer-to-peer leadership opportunities that promote the well-being of individual students and the community as a whole.

A student's Health Education journey at Urban begins with a required 6-week course dedicated to a harm reduction approach to substance use and abuse.

The following courses are required for all students at Urban School:

9th Grade

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

10th Grade

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

11th Grade & Seniors

Health Initiatives for Peer Education

(HIPE) is a leadership opportunity for Urban 11th and Seniors. The purpose of HIPE is to support Health Education within the Urban community. It complements the Health Education program by supporting the Health 9 and Health 10 curricula and assisting in planning and participating in additional health learning opportunities over the academic year. HIPE maintains a Blog, Healthy Blues, that includes FAQs, student-written information, and an opportunity for students to ask anonymous questions or to

get personal responses from HIPE members/faculty. HIPE also administers an annual health survey across all grades and hosts panels on pertinent/relevant topics. The Health Education team plans and implements additional Health workshops throughout a student's four years at Urban. Topics may include, Sex in the Media, Mental Health & Self Care, Know More, Physical Health: Nutrition, Movement and First Aid/CPR, Alcohol and Title IX in College, #MeToo, and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention.



Co-Curricular - E/U/T Period Courses

Co-curricular activities are many and varied at Urban. In addition to the four academic courses and lunchtime clubs, students may take co-curricular electives that meet during periods reserved for year-long classes, as well as physical activities, U Periods, Tutorials and/or study halls. The credit for these activities and courses varies.

Urban's **Green Team** is a student group that aims to analyze and shift Urban's institutional practices toward greater environmental sustainability. The group focuses primarily on addressing physical/plant sustainability, rather than how sustainability is addressed within the curriculum, as well as environmental justice within our communities. In addressing these issues, Green Team will consult with local nonprofits, city organizations and other Bay Area high schools. A large part of the group's goals is to educate the Urban community about how to make our institutional and personal choices and habits more sustainable. **(MEETS DURING ONE E PERIOD)**

HIPE The purpose of Health Initiatives for Peer Education (HIPE) is to support health education within the Urban community. It complements the Health program by helping support 9th and 10th grade Health curriculum, and assisting in the planning of and participation in additional health learning opportunities and health days over the course of the academic year. **(MEETS DURING ONE E PERIOD)**

Library Leaders is a student group committed to making the Urban Herbst Library a better place for the Urban community. Group members will support library usage at Urban in order to promote a lifelong love of reading. Activities include working with the librarians to figure out what

the best books are, create book displays, plan library activities, and determine the best ways to increase library usage. Members will be expected to write book reviews, collaborate with other student groups and clubs, and market the library and library events.

(MEETS DURING ONE E PERIOD)

The MultiCulti Leadership Team

(MultiCulti) is committed to identifying, exploring and working on multicultural issues to create a more inclusive school community. It serves as a home base for Urban affinity and ally groups to find support, share ideas and work together as a cohesive entity. MultiCulti strives to create a safe and brave space for all students to meaningfully engage in these issues through events such as all-school meetings, panels, discussion forums, interactive activities, film screenings and guest speaker presentations. MultiCulti hosts the Month of Understanding in January, and various celebrations and educational events throughout the year. Our goal is to create a sense of belonging for all community members at Urban, and embrace the intersectional and diverse identities that make us who we are. In doing so, we develop the tools to digest and openly confront multicultural issues at Urban and beyond. We are dedicated to working on topics relevant to all students to ultimately build a more socially aware and inclusive student body. **(MEETS DURING U1 PERIOD)**

The Peer Resource group is devoted to social/emotional/mental health inquiry, projects and community service. We explore our own personal psychology and growing up experiences, and create forums for community education and discussion. Our themes and projects vary year to year; there are also traditions that reprise each year. We strive to provide resources and companionship to peers across an array of teen experience and struggle. All PR members take the Peer Education theater class in their sophomore Fall term and also help host smaller storytelling forums in the Winter for the Peer Ed Theater show. We meet once a week and more when we are planning events. We also do a day-long retreat where students continue to build community with each other as well as discuss topics and themes for Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM) in the Spring. (MEETS DURING U2)

The Peer Tutoring Program is available to all Urban students who are having difficulties in a class due to challenging material, gaps in their preparation, or absences. In weekly one-on-one meetings, 10th, 11th and 12th graders who have performed well in specific academic areas help their peers develop learning strategies, understand concepts, clear up misconceptions and complete homework in all subjects. Peer tutors complete several hours of training before they begin weekly tutoring sessions, which typically take place during study halls. Peer tutors possess a high degree of approachability and patience, as well as the ability to listen, ask questions, maintain confidentiality and problem-solve — without necessarily solving any problems themselves. (Training is held during one lunch period per term) (MEETS DURING E AND/OR T PERIODS)

The Playwriting Workshop is for 12th graders and meets during winter term. Through writing exercises, play readings, regular deadlines, and individual feedback, the workshop provides a framework for students to complete an original 10-minute play by the end of the term. This workshop is required for 12th graders who want their plays to be eligible for inclusion in the spring One Act Festival. (12th Graders Only)
(MEETS DURING T2)

Portfolio Prep meets during the fall term only. This class serves as a structured environment in which 12th graders, who have an experienced art background, compile a portfolio of their artwork to be included with their college application. This is not a studio class. During these meetings, students document their work, scan and take photos if needed, build an online portfolio or website, and edit and organize their work in a way that meets the various individual college requirements. Students are expected to be self directed and responsive. (12th Graders Only)



UrbanX Labs: Design is an introduction to the UrbanX Lab and is open to all students. Major topics include the essential principles of engineering, problem solving, and the fundamentals of iterative design. Students learn skills such as computer assisted design, 3D modeling, systems analysis, and proper use of advanced tools and lab equipment. (MEETS DURING U2)

UrbanX Labs: Research and Development (RnD) is an advanced level applied science module for 11th and 12th graders. Students apply their foundation of scientific knowledge to engineer solutions to practical problems. Students explore project challenges of their own choosing as they are exposed to major applied science and engineering topics, including mechanical, electrical and systems engineering. Emphasis is placed on student project choice, documentation, and presentation of ideas. (MEETS DURING E2)

ADDITIONAL E PERIOD OPTIONS INCLUDE:

Chamber Orchestra
(GRADED, YEARLONG COURSE)

Advanced Jazz Band
(GRADED, YEARLONG COURSE)

Lab Jazz Band
(GRADED, YEARLONG COURSE)

Urban Singers
(GRADED, YEARLONG COURSE)

Journalism / Urban Legend Student Newspaper
(GRADED, YEARLONG COURSE)

Yearbook
(PASS/FAIL, YEARLONG COURSE)

To learn more about admissions and how to become an Urban Blue, visit us at www.urbanschool.org/admission or scan the QR code below.



Urban School of San Francisco admits students without reference to race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Urban does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, financial assistance program, athletic and school-administered programs.

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



1563 Page Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
415 626 2919

info@urbanschool.org
www.urbanschool.org

 @UrbanschoolSF