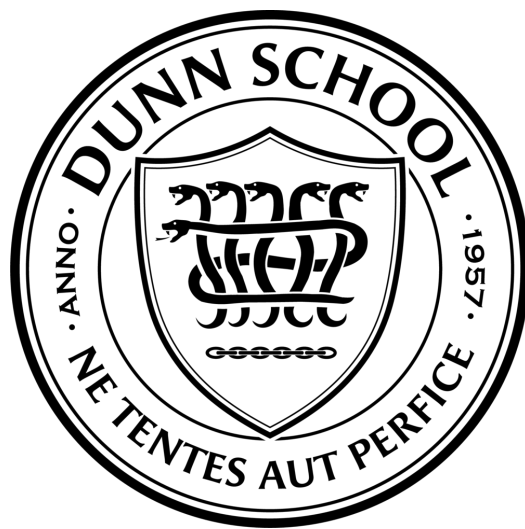




UPPER SCHOOL

Curriculum Guide





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Do Not Just Attempt — Achieve



Founded in 1957, Dunn School is a co-ed boarding and day school for grades 6 through 12, set on a scenic 55-acre campus in the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara County — one of the most beautiful settings in California.

CONTACT US

ADMISSIONS

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REGISTRAR

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Mission

Dunn School's mission is to educate the whole student to their fullest potential in preparation for a life of learning and responsible leadership in society.

Educational Framework

In the Dunn School community, we as students, teachers, staff, parents, trustees, and friends are committed to understand and to live by the following values:

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

PHYSICAL READINESS

INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

MORAL COURAGE

Accreditation & Memberships

Dunn School is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). We are proud members of the National Association of Independent Schools, The Association of Boarding Schools, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, the Western Boarding Schools Association, the Small Boarding Schools Association, and the Enrollment Management Association.



SCHOOL PROFILE

WHOLE STUDENT EDUCATION

At Dunn School, education is never confined to the four walls of a classroom. Our commitment to Whole Student Education is a daily, intentional practice that fosters a dynamic balance across our five core values: Emotional Wellness, Physical Readiness, Intellectual Growth, Social Responsibility, and Moral Courage. We believe that true academic excellence goes hand-in-hand with nurturing every facet of a young person's development.

Nestled in the inspiring landscape of the Santa Ynez Valley, our campus serves as a living laboratory for these values. Intellectual Growth is sparked through rigorous, inquiry-based academics and entrepreneurial thinking, while Physical Readiness is forged on our athletic fields and through our robust outdoor leadership programs. Crucially, Emotional Wellness is prioritized through our dedicated advisory networks, ensuring every student is deeply known, heard, and supported as an individual.

At the heart of the Dunn experience is the profound, caring connection between our faculty and our students. Because our teachers also serve as coaches, club advisors, and dorm parents,

they understand exactly how each student learns best. This 360-degree mentorship empowers students to confidently step outside their comfort zones to master new skills and gain a profound understanding of themselves and the world around them.

We do not just teach students what to think; we give them the space, tools, and confidence to ponder truth and boldly ask why. Whether they are designing a business model, navigating a backcountry trail, or engaging in local service projects, Dunn students learn to solve problems with critical thinking, genuine empathy, and a collaborative spirit. They learn that Social Responsibility and Moral Courage are not just ideals, but daily actions. Above all, they are taught that character matters.

All of this unfolds within a challenging yet profoundly nurturing environment. Dunn is a place where students do not just prepare for the rigors of higher education—they discover their truest capabilities, ignite lifelong passions, and step into their limitless potential as well-rounded leaders of tomorrow.

STUDENT GOALS & EXPECTATIONS

1. Qualify for admission to a college or university commensurate with the student's interests and ability

2. Acquire a strong base of knowledge and understanding in diverse areas through study and experience

3. Develop essential skills necessary for academic, social, and personal success

4. Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills using inductive and deductive methods

5. Exhibit curiosity, active learning, multicultural sensitivity, and appreciation of intellectual endeavors

6. Develop independent thinking by taking responsibility for one's own learning

7. Develop and show respect, empathy, and care for all community members

8. A commitment to service as a community norm and responsibility to family and society

THE FIVE EDUCATIONAL PILLARS OF WHOLE STUDENT EDUCATION AT DUNN

<div>1</div> <div>Emotional Wellness</div> <div>Advisory networks ensure every student is known, heard, and supported as an individual.</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Physical Readiness</div> <div>Athletic fields and outdoor leadership programs build health, energy, and resilience.</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Intellectual Growth</div> <div>Rigorous, inquiry-based academics and entrepreneurial thinking spark a love of learning.</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Social Responsibility</div> <div>Service projects and collaboration turn genuine empathy into everyday action.</div>	<div>5</div> <div>Moral Courage</div> <div>Students gain the confidence to step outside their comfort zones and do what is right.</div>
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A photograph of a graduation ceremony taking place under a large white tent. Numerous graduates in black gowns and caps are visible, many with their arms raised in celebration. The scene is outdoors, with trees and a building visible in the background. The image has a red overlay.

GRADUATION & SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS

Upper School students must meet departmental requirements and be enrolled in a minimum of five academic classes each semester, four of which must be core academic classes. Students supplement their program with a variety of electives. Dunn grades on a semester calendar totaling 34 weeks; to receive credit, students must earn a grade of C- or better and meet an 85% attendance minimum. **Dunn School does not rank or report students according to GPA.**

PROGRAM / DEPARTMENT	REQUIREMENT
English	4 years
History & Social Sciences	3 years, to include World History and U.S. History
Mathematics	3 years, to include Integrated Math 3 or Advanced equivalent
Science	3 years, to include Chemistry and Biology
World Language	2 years of one language, to include the second level
Arts	1 year — completion of one year-long course
Experiential Term	Annual participation (one week each November)
Outdoor Education	Up to 4 years — a class trip annually
Athletics	3 seasons per year; at least 1 competitive sport each year
Wellness	Seminars including Nutrition, Sexual Education, Alcohol & Drug Use, Healthy Relationships, and Managing Stressors
Residential (boarding)	Curriculum focusing on respect & responsibility, emotional and physical health, and community living
Community Service	Minimum 10 hours per year, with at least 3 hours each semester
Global Citizenship	On-campus cultural events; optional travel experiences with service components

ADVANCED COURSES

Advanced courses carry recommended eligibility criteria due to their rigor; each request is reviewed by faculty to determine appropriate placement based on teacher recommendations and grades. Advanced courses are not required and are not necessary for college admission — we encourage students to pursue advanced work in courses of authentic interest, balancing academic rigor with physical and emotional wellness.



DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH

Dunn School's English program develops confident, critical readers and expressive writers across all four years of Upper School. Students engage deeply with literature from diverse traditions and cultures, learning to articulate ideas clearly, construct persuasive arguments, and find their own authentic voice — skills that serve them well beyond the classroom.

English 9

This course introduces students to the study of literature and the development of foundational skills in reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking. Students explore novels, short stories, poetry, and nonfiction while learning to identify patterns, themes, and underlying meanings within literary works. The course emphasizes thoughtful discussion, careful reading, and clear written expression as students consider how literature reflects both individual identity and the broader communities in which people live.

English 10

This course develops students' abilities in reading, writing, thinking, and speaking through the study of novels, nonfiction works, poetry, short stories, and essays. Students examine literature through the guiding questions: What does it mean to be human? and How does place shape the human experience? The course emphasizes close reading, identifying authorial intent, and developing personal interpretations of texts supported by textual evidence.

ADVANCED

Advanced English 10

This course builds on the core curriculum of English 10 while moving at a faster pace and expecting a higher level of independence in reading and analysis. Students engage with a wide range of literary and nonfiction texts connected to the themes of human identity and the influence of place. Greater emphasis is placed on sustained close reading, detailed textual analysis, and well-structured analytical essays.

English 11

This course focuses on strengthening students' abilities as critical readers and effective writers. Students learn to read texts carefully to understand not only what an author is saying but how choices in language, structure, and style shape meaning. A central component is the development of the argumentative essay — constructing clear claims, supporting them with relevant evidence, and organizing ideas persuasively.

ADVANCED

Advanced English 11

This course extends the goals of English 11 through deeper analytical reading and more demanding writing expectations. Students examine complex texts and analyze how authors craft arguments, develop ideas, and influence readers through deliberate stylistic choices. The course places strong emphasis on argumentative writing, requiring sustained essays that integrate textual evidence, analysis, and clear reasoning.

English 12

This course focuses on the study of World Literature while continuing to develop advanced reading, discussion, and writing skills. Students explore fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama from a variety of cultures and historical periods while examining how literature reflects global perspectives and human experience, in preparation for college-level work.

ADVANCED

Advanced English 12

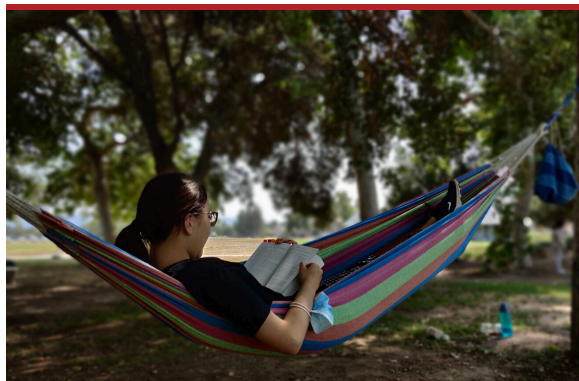
This course offers an advanced study of World Literature while emphasizing the development of sophisticated analytical and writing skills. Students engage with a wide range of literary genres and cultural traditions while examining how authors address universal themes. The course emphasizes deep reading, sustained discussion, and analytical writing that considers purpose, audience, and rhetorical strategy.

Creative Writing

This course provides students the opportunity to explore imaginative writing across multiple genres, including short fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students read and analyze works of creative literature to understand how writers use language, structure, and voice. Through regular writing, discussion, and critique, students experiment with different forms and develop their own creative style.

Multilingual Support

Designed to support multilingual students as they strengthen their skills in academic English. Instruction focuses on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, writing, listening, and speaking to help students succeed across a wide range of academic subjects, building the skills necessary for success in English-medium learning environments.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Advanced sections** at every grade — Advanced English 10, 11 & 12
- **Creative Writing** across fiction, poetry, nonfiction & drama
- Senior-year focus on **World Literature**
- **Multilingual Support** for academic English



DEPARTMENT

HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Our History and Social Sciences program challenges students to think as historians — interrogating primary sources, constructing evidence-based arguments, and developing a nuanced understanding of the forces that shape human societies across time and cultures. From ancient civilizations to contemporary global issues, students build the critical literacy skills essential for engaged citizenship.

Ancient History

This course examines the development of early civilizations from the beginnings of human society through the early Middle Ages. Students explore major cultures across the world while analyzing how geography, cultural exchange, and historical events shaped early societies. Through reading, discussion, and written analysis, students develop foundational historical thinking skills and learn to interpret evidence within global contexts.

World History

This course examines major developments in global history with particular attention to interactions among societies and cultures. Students explore themes such as global trade networks, industrialization and imperialism, nationalism, and the political transformations of the twentieth century. Primary source analysis serves as a central component as students learn to interpret evidence and construct informed arguments about the past.

ADVANCED

Advanced World History

This course builds upon the foundations of World History while moving at an accelerated pace and emphasizing deeper historical analysis. Students engage in more extensive primary source interpretation, research, and historical writing. Greater emphasis is placed on evaluating competing historical perspectives and constructing sustained analytical arguments with increased independence.

United States History

This course surveys the development of the United States from the colonial era through the early twenty-first century. Students examine major political, social, economic, and cultural developments while analyzing how different groups have shaped and experienced American history, with particular emphasis on evolving ideas of freedom and citizenship.

ADVANCED

Advanced United States History

This course builds on the foundations of United States History while emphasizing deeper analysis, more extensive historical writing, and a faster instructional pace. Students engage more intensively with primary and secondary source materials, evaluating historical arguments, comparing interpretations, and constructing sustained analytical essays with strong independence.

United States Government

This course introduces students to the foundations of the American political system, including constitutional principles, political institutions, and the development of public policy. Students examine the structure and functions of government, the roles of the three branches, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens through readings, discussion, and analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Modern World History

This course examines major global developments from the late eighteenth century to the present, focusing on the political, economic, social, and technological transformations that shaped the modern world. Students study revolutions, industrialization, imperialism, the World Wars, the Cold War, decolonization, and globalization. Emphasis is placed on historical inquiry, critical reading, discussion, and analytical writing.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Advanced World & Advanced U.S. History**
- Inquiry grounded in **primary-source analysis**
- Sequence from **Ancient History** to **U.S. Government**
- Electives in **Modern World History**



DEPARTMENT

MATHEMATICS

Dunn School's mathematics program blends algebraic, geometric, statistical, and analytical thinking through an integrated, problem-based approach. Students progress through a coherent three-year integrated sequence before choosing from advanced courses in precalculus, calculus, and statistics — developing both the conceptual understanding and quantitative reasoning needed for success in college and beyond.

Integrated Math 1

This course introduces the first year of Dunn's integrated mathematics sequence, combining key ideas from algebra, geometry, and statistics through a collaborative, problem-based approach. Major topics include linear and exponential functions, solving equations and inequalities, analyzing bivariate data, and investigating geometric transformations and congruence.

ADVANCED

Advanced Integrated Math 1

This course builds on Integrated Math 1 while moving at a faster pace and expecting greater depth of analysis and independence. Students explore functions, equations and inequalities, geometric transformations, and statistical relationships through more challenging problems, with greater emphasis on reasoning, justification, and clear communication.

Integrated Math 2

This course continues the integrated sequence by extending students' understanding of algebraic and geometric relationships. Students investigate quadratic functions and equations, extend the number system to complex numbers, and explore similarity, transformations, circles, right triangle trigonometry, and probability.

ADVANCED

Advanced Integrated Math 2

This course builds upon Integrated Math 2 at a faster pace and with deeper conceptual understanding. Students engage in a rigorous study of quadratic functions, complex numbers, trigonometric relationships, and geometric reasoning through challenging investigations and analytical problem solving.

Integrated Math 3

This course completes the Integrated Math sequence by synthesizing concepts from algebra, geometry, and statistics. Students study advanced function families — polynomial, rational, radical, and logarithmic — alongside trigonometric relationships, statistical distributions, and the design of statistical studies.

ADVANCED

Advanced Precalculus

This course prepares students for calculus by developing a deeper understanding of functions and mathematical modeling. Students investigate trigonometric, exponential, and logarithmic relationships, and the behavior of polynomial and rational functions, alongside analytic geometry, vectors, sequences and series, and introductory ideas related to limits.

ADVANCED

Advanced Calculus 1

This course introduces the central ideas of calculus through the study of limits, derivatives, and integrals. Students learn how calculus describes rates of change and accumulation while applying these ideas to problems involving motion, optimization, and modeling, emphasizing analytical reasoning.

ADVANCED

Advanced Calculus 2

This course extends the study of calculus by developing greater fluency with integration and additional concepts related to change and accumulation. Students learn advanced integration techniques and explore parametric equations, polar coordinates, and the study of sequences and infinite series.

Statistics

This course introduces the principles used to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Students study methods for describing and visualizing data, designing statistical studies, and understanding probability, drawing meaningful conclusions from evidence through investigations, projects, and real-world examples.

ADVANCED

Advanced Statistics

This course explores statistical reasoning and data analysis in greater depth. Students investigate methods for exploring data, designing studies and experiments, understanding probability models, and drawing conclusions through statistical inference, developing the skills needed to evaluate complex data and communicate evidence-based conclusions.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Integrated Math 1–3** with advanced tracks
- **Advanced Precalculus** through **Advanced Calculus 2**
- **Statistics & Advanced Statistics**
- Emphasis on reasoning & real-world modeling



DEPARTMENT

SCIENCE

Dunn's science program cultivates the curiosity and analytical skills of every student through hands-on laboratory investigation, inquiry-based learning, and rigorous engagement with scientific ideas. From biology to chemistry to physics, students develop the capacity to design experiments, interpret evidence, and think independently about the complex natural world.

Biology 1

This course introduces students to the fundamental concepts that govern living systems and the diversity of life on Earth. Students examine key themes in modern biology, including cellular structure and function, ecosystems, heredity and genetics, and evolutionary processes. Through laboratory investigations, data analysis, and inquiry-based activities, students develop skills in scientific reasoning and experimental design.

ADVANCED

Advanced Biology 1

This course builds upon foundational scientific skills while introducing the fundamental concepts that govern living systems at a more rigorous and analytical level. Students engage more deeply with scientific practices, emphasizing precision in experimental design and interpretation of results, developing the ability to analyze biological evidence and think critically about complex systems.

ADVANCED

Advanced Biology 2

This course builds upon the knowledge developed in Biology 1 and Chemistry while exploring biological systems at a deeper and more analytical level. Students examine evolution, energy transformation in living systems, the storage and transmission of genetic information, and interactions within biological systems. Laboratory investigations and inquiry-based research play a central role.

Chemistry 1

This course introduces students to the foundational principles that explain the structure and behavior of matter. Students investigate atomic structure, chemical bonding, reactions, stoichiometry, acids and bases, thermodynamics, equilibrium, and electrochemistry while exploring how these concepts apply to natural and engineered systems through laboratory experiments and inquiry-based investigations.

ADVANCED

Advanced Chemistry 1

This course builds on Chemistry 1 while moving at a faster pace and emphasizing deeper conceptual understanding and quantitative analysis. Students engage in more rigorous laboratory work, complex problem solving, and extended investigations of chemical phenomena, with greater emphasis on interpreting data and applying mathematical models.

ADVANCED

Advanced Chemistry 2

This course extends the study of chemistry through a rigorous exploration of chemical structure, reactions, and the principles that govern chemical systems. Building on Chemistry 1 or Advanced Chemistry 1, students examine atomic structure, chemical bonding, reaction kinetics, thermodynamics, and equilibrium in greater depth, preparing for further study in chemistry and related fields.

Anatomy

This course examines the structure and function of the human body and the relationships among its major organ systems. Students investigate how the body maintains stability through the coordinated action of the skeletal, muscular, nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, and endocrine systems, connecting biological structure to physiological function through laboratory activities and case studies.

ADVANCED

Advanced Environmental Science

This course explores the complex interactions between living organisms and the physical environment. Students investigate ecological systems, natural resource use, environmental challenges, and the scientific principles that guide environmental decision-making, integrating perspectives from history and social systems to develop informed approaches to sustainability.

ADVANCED

Advanced Physics

A rigorous, algebra-based college-level physics course introducing the fundamental principles governing motion, forces, and energy. Students study kinematics, Newton's laws, work and energy, momentum, rotational motion, simple harmonic motion, mechanical waves, and fluid mechanics through problem solving, laboratory investigations, and analysis of experimental data.

Conceptual Physics

This course introduces the fundamental ideas that explain how the physical world works, emphasizing conceptual understanding over advanced mathematics. Designed primarily for 11th- and 12th-grade students seeking a fourth-year science experience, the course builds intuitive understanding through demonstrations, experiments, discussions, and real-world examples covering motion, forces, energy, waves, and electricity.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Advanced Biology, Chemistry & Physics**
- **Lab- and inquiry-based** investigation
- Electives: **Anatomy & Environmental Science**



DEPARTMENT

WORLD LANGUAGES

Dunn School's World Languages program immerses students in Spanish and French through a communicative, proficiency-focused approach. Students develop authentic fluency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing — gaining not only language skills but deep cultural understanding. Our sequential program supports students at every stage from beginner through advanced.

SPANISH

Spanish 1

This course introduces students to the Spanish language through listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with particular emphasis on listening comprehension and meaningful communication. Instruction uses storytelling and interactive activities to help students acquire language naturally while building confidence through a consistent classroom routine.

Spanish 2

This course continues the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while strengthening students' ability to understand and communicate in Spanish. Students expand vocabulary and grammatical knowledge through structured practice, readings, and discussions, with cultural topics and short literary selections introducing broader aspects of the Spanish-speaking world.

ADVANCED**Advanced Spanish 2**

This course builds on Spanish 2 while moving at a faster pace and requiring greater independence. Students deepen their reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities through more challenging texts, extended discussions, and additional writing assignments, with literary readings and cultural exploration playing a larger role.

Spanish 3

This course strengthens students' ability to communicate in Spanish through continued development of speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills. Students write compositions, give short oral presentations, and engage in discussions that encourage greater fluency, with readings that expand vocabulary and understanding of idiomatic expressions.

ADVANCED**Advanced Spanish 3**

This course builds on Spanish 3 while challenging students to engage with the language at a more advanced and analytical level. Students read more demanding texts, participate in extended discussions, and produce longer written and oral responses, with emphasis on precision in grammar, expanded vocabulary, and nuanced expression.

SPANISH (CONTINUED) & FRENCH

Spanish 4

This course strengthens students' command of Spanish through sustained practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students engage with longer texts, including short novels and authentic materials, developing the ability to express ideas clearly and thoughtfully in both spoken and written Spanish.

ADVANCED**Advanced Spanish 4**

This course builds on Spanish 4 by challenging students to use Spanish with greater sophistication and independence. Students engage in deeper analysis of literary and cultural texts while refining their ability to communicate complex ideas, with the course conducted primarily in Spanish.

French 1

This course introduces students to the French language and the cultures of the French-speaking world. Students develop foundational skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing while learning to communicate in everyday situations, emphasizing meaningful communication and gradual development of grammatical understanding.

French 2

This course continues the development of communication skills in French while strengthening vocabulary and grammatical understanding. Students practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening through guided activities and cultural exploration in preparation for more advanced language study.

French 3

This course builds on earlier study by strengthening students' ability to communicate clearly in spoken and written French. Students write short compositions, participate in discussions, and read literary selections that expand vocabulary and cultural understanding, emphasizing increasing fluency and confidence.



DEPARTMENT

THE ARTS

The arts are a cornerstone of the Dunn School experience. Our program spans studio art, ceramics, photography, videography, and music — giving students the freedom to develop their creative voice across multiple disciplines. Whether building a portfolio for college, performing on stage, or discovering a new passion, students are guided by expert faculty with a genuine love of their craft.

STUDIO ART

Studio Art 1

This course introduces students to the fundamental processes of visual art-making. Students explore the elements of art and principles of design while experimenting with a variety of media and techniques. Emphasis is placed on observation, creativity, and the development of personal ideas, with critique helping students analyze and articulate ideas about their own work and the work of others.

Studio Art 2

This course offers students who already have a foundational understanding of the elements of art and principles of design an opportunity to deepen their artistic practice. Students experiment with a wider range of materials and techniques while exploring new approaches to visual expression, using personal experiences and ideas as inspiration.

Studio Art 3 (*Portfolio Development*)

Designed for students preparing for college-level study in the visual arts or serious independent work. Students refine their technical skills across multiple media while developing a cohesive body of work that reflects their emerging artistic voice, emphasizing conceptual development, experimentation, and critical reflection.

Studio Art 4 (*Portfolio Completion*)

This course continues the advanced portfolio process begun in Studio Art 3. Students complete a refined, cohesive portfolio demonstrating technical proficiency, conceptual depth, and personal artistic direction, while developing an understanding of copyright and the importance of originality.

CERAMICS

Ceramics 1

This course introduces the design and creation of three-dimensional forms using clay. Students explore sculpture, installation, and both functional and decorative objects through demonstrations, extensive studio time, and critique, emphasizing craftsmanship, problem solving, and the principles of form, space, volume, and design.

Ceramics 2

This course builds on Ceramics 1 and encourages students to expand their technical and conceptual understanding of ceramic art. Students continue exploring hand-building and other techniques while developing greater control over form and design, beginning to develop a more individual artistic voice.

Ceramics 3 (*Portfolio Development*)

This course focuses on refining technical skill and personal expression in clay. Students explore advanced techniques in hand-building, wheel-throwing, glazing, and firing while developing a cohesive body of work — a portfolio that reflects each student's artistic voice and technical ability.

Ceramics 4 (*Portfolio Completion*)

This course continues the advanced work begun in Ceramics 3, focusing on completing a polished portfolio of ceramic artwork. Students refine their technical processes and conceptual ideas while producing work that demonstrates artistic growth, craftsmanship, and creative independence.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Photography 1

This course introduces the foundations of digital photography, focusing on exposure, light, composition, and post-processing. Students make intentional creative decisions using ISO, shutter speed, and aperture while learning to create a cohesive body of work and operate digital SLR or mirrorless cameras effectively.

Photography 2

This course expands on the technical and creative skills developed in Photography 1. Students produce intentional, expressive images across photographic genres, emphasizing precise manual exposure and advanced exploration of light, composition, and post-processing while refining their creative voice.

Photography 3 (*Portfolio Development & Completion*)

This advanced course focuses on creating a cohesive photographic portfolio. Students evaluate complex lighting using tools such as histogram analysis, emphasizing visual storytelling, conceptual development, and intentional composition to produce a portfolio demonstrating their highest level of skill and artistic vision.

Videography 1

This course introduces visual storytelling through video production. Students learn the creative and technical foundations of filmmaking — framing, lighting, composition, and editing — while creating original video projects and developing confidence in producing visual media.

Videography 2

This course builds on Videography 1, challenging students to create more complex and intentional video projects. Students develop visual storytelling, editing, lighting, and cinematic composition while exploring advanced production techniques and refining their creative vision.



Music Fundamentals

This course uses the piano as the primary tool for exploring the theory and mechanics of melody, harmony, and rhythm. Through composition and improvisation, students create original music and interpret contemporary works. While the piano is the starting point, students may choose another instrument later in the course. Strongly recommended for students who wish to build a solid musical foundation.

Ensemble 1

This course introduces the small ensemble or combo format, in which each instrument plays an important and collaborative role. Students perform a variety of repertoire — jazz, pop, rock, and other contemporary styles — while developing foundational skills in listening, collaboration, and improvisation. The combo setting encourages communication, teamwork, and basic musicianship.

Ensemble 2

This course builds on Ensemble 1 and expands students' experience with small ensemble performance. Students perform more sophisticated repertoire including jazz standards, with greater emphasis on musical fluency, listening across the ensemble, and developing a stronger improvisational vocabulary.

Ensemble 3 (*Advanced Performance*)

This course represents the most advanced level of the ensemble sequence. Students take increased responsibility for their musical goals, practice habits, and artistic direction while performing challenging repertoire across a variety of styles, refining their expressive vocabulary and developing a more personal musical voice. Prior ensemble experience expected.

Vocal Ensemble 1

This course introduces students to group singing and the development of healthy vocal technique. Students explore a wide range of musical genres from traditional and contemporary vocal repertoire, with emphasis on listening, blend, musical expression, and ensemble collaboration. No prior singing experience is required.

Vocal Ensemble 2

This course builds on Vocal Ensemble 1, offering students the opportunity to refine their vocal technique and ensemble performance abilities. Students continue exploring a variety of musical styles while focusing on vocal control, musical interpretation, and collaborative performance, with increased independence expected.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Music Fundamentals** — theory, composition & improvisation
- **Instrumental ensembles** in jazz, pop, rock & contemporary styles
- **Vocal Ensembles I & II**
- Performance-based, collaborative musicianship



DEPARTMENT

INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Robert W. Jurgensen Entrepreneurship Program is one of Dunn School's most distinctive offerings — a hands-on, project-based sequence that prepares students to think and act as innovators, investors, and leaders. Paired with our Innovation and Engineering courses and dual-enrollment college partnerships, this department offers an unmatched pathway for students eager to shape the future.



Entrepreneurship & Business Management

An introduction to the free market system through entrepreneurship, business management, and investment decision-making. Students engage in project-based learning that challenges them to analyze real business problems and develop practical solutions, exploring how businesses are created, organized, and sustained while emphasizing initiative, teamwork, and responsible decision-making.

Investors and Philanthropists

Building on earlier business study, this course focuses on the principles of investing and the social impact of capital. Students examine how financial markets function and how thoughtful investment strategies influence economic outcomes and philanthropic initiatives, analyzing investment opportunities and evaluating risk and return.

EntreX Lab

An experiential learning model developed with the University of Delaware. Students explore how ideas become viable ventures — identifying problems, investigating opportunities, and developing solutions through an evidence-based process, gaining experience in design sprints, venture development, and pitching their ideas.

♦ DUAL ENROLLMENT · UNIV. OF DELAWARE · 3 CREDITS

ADVANCED

Advanced Economics

An in-depth study of economic principles through a dual-enrollment partnership with Syracuse University's SUPA program. Students build a foundation in microeconomics before expanding to macroeconomics, applying an Aggregate Demand and Aggregate Supply framework. Successful completion earns three units of college credit.

♦ DUAL ENROLLMENT · SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY · 3 CREDITS

Innovation and Entrepreneurship 1

An experiential, design-centered introduction to applied engineering and entrepreneurship. Using the LAUNCH Cycle design-thinking framework, students observe real-world needs, generate ideas, and develop working prototypes — combining creative thinking with hands-on fabrication and prototyping tools while presenting their ideas to authentic audiences.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2

Building on Innovation and Entrepreneurship 1, students pursue more complex engineering and entrepreneurial projects. They expand their technical skills using advanced tools while refining problem identification, product development, and value creation, culminating in fully developed prototypes that address real-world problems.

Strategic Innovation & Project Mastery

Students apply innovation and project management to design solutions for real clients and community partners, moving from concept to finished deliverable by balancing scope, schedule, and resources. Working with advanced fabrication tools, they learn to manage people, processes, and products within a structured project framework.

Computer Science Principles

An introduction to the foundational ideas of computer science. Students develop programming skills through block-based environments such as Scratch before transitioning to Python, designing algorithms, using variables and control structures, and applying abstraction — emphasizing computational thinking and problem solving.



ONE IMMERSIVE WEEK EACH NOVEMBER

EXPERIENTIAL TERM

Dunn School believes the most significant learning happens through experience. For one week each November, the entire Upper School sets aside its traditional schedule for **Experiential Term** — immersive courses, expeditions, and project intensives designed around Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, each connecting to at least three academic disciplines. Students don't just do things; they reflect, synthesize, and carry that understanding forward.

ON-CAMPUS COURSES

Auto Mechanics & Engineering

Francisco Martinez

Bronze Casting & Ancient Technology

Mike Franke

Culinary Science / Art of Cooking

Helena Avery

Hunger and Homelessness

Ulises Castañeda

Internships

Alex Westcott

Robotics

Duarte Carreiro

The Wonders of Watercolor

Nancy Yaki

Writing about Place / California History

Meg Watson & Kal Balaven

OFF-CAMPUS EXPEDITIONS

American History, Universities & Boston

Terri Devine & Gina Plastino

Central Coast Outdoor Adventures

Mike Chapman

Outdoor Leadership: Rock Climbing & WFA

Tommy Jackson

Rwanda: Summits, Safari & Silverbacks

Kelsey Sullivan

Spain: Language, Art, and Culture

Wes Hensley

Visions of Southwestern Canyons

Eric & Melissa Escalante

THE FRAMEWORK

Every course is built on Kolb's cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

ELIGIBILITY

Overnight travel courses are reserved for 11th and 12th graders; local and regional programs are open to 10th graders as well.

SELECTION & COST

Students rank five or more courses. On-campus courses are included in tuition; travel courses carry an additional cost, with financial assistance available.



PINCHER PRIDE · GO EARWIGS

ATHLETICS

Athletics are an essential part of the Dunn community. Students participate in at least one season of interscholastic competitive athletics each year, with practices held for 90 minutes daily. Through practice, training, and competition, Dunn students gain an appreciation for **teamwork, sportsmanship, perseverance, and healthy habits** — character traits transferable to life far beyond the field.

FALL

- Boys Cross Country
- Girls Cross Country
- Girls Volleyball
- Girls Tennis
- Baseball (Co-Ed)
- Soccer (Co-Ed)
- Ultimate Frisbee (Co-Ed)
- Speech & Debate / Forensics

WINTER

- Boys Soccer
- Girls Soccer
- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Surfing (Co-Ed)
- Speech & Debate / Forensics

SPRING

- Boys Baseball
- Boys Tennis
- Boys Volleyball
- Girls Beach Volleyball
- Swimming (Co-Ed)
- Track & Field (Co-Ed)
- Drama (Co-Ed)





Some of the most powerful lessons happen far from the classroom. Dunn School's **Outdoor Education program** harnesses the natural beauty of California's Central Coast and the wider West — turning mountains, coastlines, and trails into classrooms where students build resilience, leadership, and a lifelong connection to the natural world. Each grade embarks on its own signature adventure and shared rite of passage.



Adventure as Curriculum

Guided by experienced faculty, students head into the field for multi-day expeditions that challenge them physically and mentally while fostering teamwork, self-reliance, and confidence.

Skills & Stewardship

Students develop practical wilderness skills — navigation, Leave No Trace ethics, risk management, and outdoor living — alongside a deep respect for the environment and a commitment to protecting it.

A JOURNEY FOR EVERY YEAR

NINTH GRADE

LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST · TWO TRIPS

Freshmen take to the trail twice. An early-year adventure trip in the nearby Los Padres National Forest breaks the ice and forges a brand-new class into a community, while a late-year backpacking expedition sends them deeper into the same rugged backcountry to test the resilience and skills they've built over their first year.

TENTH GRADE

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND

Sophomores set out for the Channel Islands to camp beneath the stars, hike wind-swept ridgelines, and sea-kayak among the sea caves and kelp forests of Santa Cruz Island — one of California's last truly wild places.

ELEVENTH GRADE

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Juniors head to the high desert to backpack beneath towering granite monoliths and learn to rock climb on Joshua Tree's world-famous formations, building technical skill, focus, and trust in one another.

TWELFTH GRADE

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Seniors close their Dunn careers with a capstone backpacking expedition through the high country of Yosemite — a fitting rite of passage amid some of the most breathtaking wilderness on Earth.



STUDY ABROAD · GLOBAL EXCHANGE

ROUND SQUARE

Dunn School is a proud member of **Round Square**, a global network of more than 200 schools across 50 countries united by a shared commitment to character education and experiential learning. For Dunn students, Round Square opens the door to a life-changing opportunity: **studying abroad** and immersing themselves in a different culture, language, and school community.

WEEKS THAT BROADEN A WORLDVIEW

Round Square exchanges are short-term and immersive — typically six weeks. Dunn students live and learn as members of a partner school abroad, attending classes, joining teams and clubs, and living with a host family. In just a few transformative weeks, students return home with a broadened global perspective, new friendships that span continents, and the confidence that comes from thriving far outside their comfort zone.

The program embodies Round Square's IDEALS — Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership, and Service — and aligns naturally with Dunn's commitment to educating the whole student.

HOW THE EXCHANGE WORKS

A 10th-Grade Opportunity

The exchange is designed for sophomores. Interested students apply in 9th grade and embark on their exchange during 10th grade — a well-timed chapter of growth and independence.

A Reciprocal Welcome

Exchange is a two-way street. Day families in the program host a visiting student from the partner school in return, bringing the world to Los Olivos and forging lasting international friendships.

RECENT EXCHANGE DESTINATIONS

Australia

South Africa

Germany

Colombia

New Zealand

Japan

& more



PERSONALIZED LEARNING

THE LEARNING STRATEGIES PROGRAM

At Dunn School, we believe that understanding *how* you learn is just as important as *what* you learn. Our **Learning Strategies program** represents a proactive, empowering approach to education that recognizes every student's unique cognitive strengths while equipping them with the practical tools to navigate complex academic challenges.

This signature program embraces a vibrant, neurodiverse student body. It is designed not just as a support system, but as an optimization tool used by students across the academic spectrum — including scholars in our most demanding courses, competitive student-athletes, student government leaders, and dedicated artists.

A PERSONALIZED ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

At the core of the program is individualized mentorship. Each student is thoughtfully paired with an experienced learning specialist who serves as their academic coach, primary support person, and personalized course advisor. These specialists do not work in a silo; they collaborate intimately with classroom teachers, advisors, and dorm parents — ensuring individualized accommodations are seamlessly integrated into the student's daily life and that parents receive ongoing, meaningful feedback on their child's progress.

TWO LEVELS OF PERSONALIZED SUPPORT

One-to-One Learning Strategies

Students are paired individually with a dedicated learning specialist, with strategy sessions built into the daily schedule like any other class. Regular one-on-one meetings deepen each student's self-knowledge, sharpen executive-functioning skills, and strengthen student-teacher-family communication.

BUILDING SKILLS FOR COLLEGE & BEYOND

Rather than simply tutoring students through a specific assignment, we focus on building a sustainable, transferable toolkit of executive functioning and academic skills:

- **Executive Functioning:** time management, long-term project planning, and customized organizational systems.
- **Academic Mastery:** reading comprehension and fluency, analytical writing, and collegiate-level research methodologies.
- **Performance & Output:** strategic test preparation and dynamic presentation skills.

Ultimately, the true triumph of the program is **self-advocacy**. We graduate self-aware young adults who understand their own learning profiles, know exactly what resources they need to succeed, and carry the confidence to advocate for themselves in university lecture halls and their future careers.

Executive Group Program

Students receive tailored support in a small-group setting that fosters collaboration while honoring individual needs. Specialists work closely with advisors and classroom teachers outside the program to ensure holistic, coordinated support for every student.



GUIDANCE · MENTORSHIP · RIGHT-FIT

ADVISORY & COLLEGE COUNSELING

THE ADVISOR PROGRAM

The role of the Dunn advisor is to support and guide student advisees in all aspects of Dunn life and to serve as the main conduit for communication between families and Dunn School. While each advisor/advisee relationship is unique, all advisors seek to develop relationships based on mutual respect and trust — facilitating open communication, mentoring, and the ongoing development of students' growth and autonomy. Advisors take a special interest in their advisees' lives both inside and outside of the classroom, and regularly communicate with families about their child's academic standing, social and behavioral comportment, dorm life, athletics, and general orientation to the Dunn community.

THE COLLEGE COUNSELING TEAM HELPS STUDENTS

- Design a course schedule that is appropriately challenging and has college interests in mind
- Take ownership of the college search process
- Understand the myriad of college options that exist
- Develop a well-balanced list of colleges for consideration

COLLEGE COUNSELING

At Dunn, college counseling is highly personalized. Counselors do not subscribe to one approved list of schools. Rather, by knowing students well and deeply understanding their strengths and areas of growth, they help students develop their own personal criteria to identify colleges where they will thrive — academically and socially. From large public universities to small liberal arts colleges, the focus is on helping each student make authentic choices and find their right-fit college through campus visits with admissions representatives, college tours, small-group instruction, and individual application support.

- Create an authentic and compelling application
- Manage the admissions process
- Decide between college offers, including reviewing financial aid and scholarships

NEXT STOP: EXCELLENCE

DUNN SCHOOL COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES · LAST THREE YEARS

Dunn School graduates are accepted to outstanding colleges and universities across the country and around the world. Our individualized college counseling helps each student find the "right fit" — a school commensurate with their interests, talents, and aspirations. The following institutions have admitted Dunn students over the past three years.

- Abilene Christian University
- Alaska Pacific University
- Albion College
- Allan Hancock College
- American University
- American University in Bulgaria
- Amherst College
- Arizona State University
- Arizona State University, Polytechnic
- Babson College
- Barnard College
- Baylor University
- Belmont University
- Beloit College
- Berklee College of Music
- Boise State University
- Boston College
- Boston University
- Brown University
- Butler University
- California Lutheran University
- California Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo
- California Polytechnic, Pomona
- California Polytechnic, Humboldt
- California State University, Chico
- California State University, Fullerton
- California State University, Long Beach
- California State University, Los Angeles
- California State University, Monterey Bay
- California State University, Northridge
- California State University, Sacramento
- California State University, San Bernardino
- California State University, San Marcos
- California State University, Stanislaus
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Chapman University
- Chatham University
- Colorado Mesa University
- Colorado Mountain College
- Colorado State University, Fort Collins
- Columbia University
- Connecticut College
- Cuesta College
- Denison University
- DePaul University
- Drexel University
- Duke Kunshan University
- Emerson College
- Fairfield University
- Fordham University
- Fort Lewis College
- Franklin University Switzerland
- George Washington University
- Gonzaga University
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- Hampden-Sydney College
- Howard University
- Hult International Business School
- JCA | London Fashion Academy
- John Cabot University
- Knox College
- La Salle University
- Lafayette College
- Lehigh University
- Lewis & Clark College
- Long Island University
- Loyola Marymount University
- Miami University, Oxford
- Montana State University
- Mount Saint Mary's University
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- New York School of Interior Design
- Northeastern University
- Northern Arizona University
- Ohio State University
- Oklahoma State University
- Oregon State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Pepperdine University
- Pratt Institute
- Princeton University
- Providence College
- Richmond American University London
- Rhodes College
- Roosevelt University
- Rutgers University, New Brunswick
- Rutgers University, Newark
- Saint Mary's College
- Saint Mary's College of California
- San Francisco State University
- San Diego State University
- San Jacinto College
- San Jose State University
- Santa Barbara City College
- Santa Clara University
- Sarah Lawrence College
- Savannah College of Art & Design
- School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- Seattle University
- Soka University of America
- Sonoma State University
- Southern Methodist University
- St. John's University, New York
- Stanford University
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- Stonehill College
- Syracuse University
- Temple University
- Temple University, Japan Campus
- Texas A&M University, College Station
- Texas Christian University
- The American University of Paris
- The Catholic University of America
- The New School
- The University of Alabama
- The University of Montana
- The University of Montana-Western
- The University of Tampa
- University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
- The University of Texas at Austin
- The University of Texas at Dallas
- Tulane University
- Union College
- University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- University of Arizona
- University of Arkansas
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Merced
- University of California, Riverside
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of California, Santa Cruz
- University of Colorado Boulder
- University of Denver
- University of Florida
- University of Glasgow
- University of Hawai'i at Manoa
- University of Idaho
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of New Hampshire
- University of Oklahoma
- University of Oregon
- University of Puget Sound
- University of Redlands
- University of Rochester
- University of San Diego
- University of San Francisco
- University of Southern California
- University of Tulsa
- University of Utah
- University of Washington, Seattle
- University of Wyoming
- Washington State University
- Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Western Colorado University
- Western Washington University
- Whittier College
- Woodbury University



Los Olivos, California · Since 1957

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