



# Curriculum Guide

2023-2024

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# Middle School Overview

The Middle School academic calendar is divided into semesters:

1. Fall Semester
2. Spring Semester

Students in the Middle School share essential, formative experiences with their peers through much of the core curriculum, but also have some flexibility regarding how they fulfill requirements.

## COURSE OF STUDY

### Sixth Grade

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Literature & Writing - Rules and Structures of Storytelling (and When to Break Them)	Literature & Writing - Stories as Artifacts of Our Collective Memory
History - The Origins of Humanity	History - The Rise and Fall of Ancient Empires
Science - Understanding Matter: Chem 101	
Math - Foundations of Mathematics: Our Number System	
Language - <i>Spanish course varies based on experience and proficiency*</i>	
Music - Band	Visual Art - Ways of Seeing
Physical Education	Religion - Hebrew Bible / Physical Education

## Seventh Grade

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Literature & Writing - Home and Family	Literature & Writing - Literature as Witness
History - Power, Culture, and Change in the Medieval Era	History - Afro-Eurasia: Civilizations and their Legacies
Science - Matter in Motion: Physics 101	
Math - Foundations of Mathematics: Problem Solving and Proportionality	
Language - <i>Spanish course varies based on experience and proficiency*</i>	
Visual Art - Art Through Different Lenses	Music - Band
Physical Education	Religion - Ethics & Physical Education
Elective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Computer Science</li> <li>● Engineering</li> <li>● French</li> <li>● Self-Defense</li> <li>● Statistics</li> </ul>	Elective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Computer Science</li> <li>● Engineering</li> <li>● French</li> <li>● Self-Defense</li> </ul>

## Eighth Grade

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Literature & Writing - Growing Up, Making Choices: Using Literature to Craft our Perspectives	Literature & Writing - Speculative Fiction: Using Fantasy to Envision Reality
History - US History I: Pre-Colonial America through the Revolutionary Era	History - US History II: The Civil War and the 20th Century
Math - Integrated Mathematics I: Algebra and Introductory Geometry	
Science - Living Systems: Biology 101	
Language - <i>Spanish course varies based on experience and proficiency*</i>	
Arts - Students choose between: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visual Art - Drawing</li> <li>2. Music - Band</li> <li>3. Theater - Ensemble</li> </ol>	Arts - Students choose between: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visual Art - Sculpture</li> <li>2. Music - Band</li> </ol>
Religion - Building Beloved Community / Physical Education	Physical Education

Elective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer Science</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• French</li> <li>• Music Production</li> <li>• Self-Defense</li> <li>• Statistics</li> </ul>	Elective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer Science</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• French</li> <li>• Self-Defense</li> </ul>
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**\*LANGUAGE COURSES**

- Spanish I
- Spanish II
- Spanish III

**\*\*ELECTIVE OFFERINGS**

- Creative Writing
- Intro to French
- Math Exploration
- Speech & Debate

**HONORS DISTINCTION**

Students demonstrating exceptional academic performance can earn a yearly Honors distinction. To earn the rigorous Honors distinction, students must earn a GPA of 4.04 or higher for the academic year. Students who earn the Honors distinction every year they are enrolled at SLA also earn a special, cumulative Honors designation on their diploma.

# Middle School Literature & Writing

## LITERATURE & WRITING 6, FALL SEMESTER

### Rules and Structures of Storytelling (and When to Break Them)

This course introduces students to the elements of form and genre and explores the ways that both influence meaning. Students read novels and short stories that challenge familiar structures of storytelling. Through disassembly of the hero's journey (*The Graveyard Book*) to the reframing of memoir as poetry (*Brown Girl Dreaming*), students examine and identify the traditional frameworks of storytelling while asking themselves questions like: How do form and genre influence meaning? What are the rules that govern storytelling? How and why can we subvert these rules, and what impact does that have on the reader?

Throughout the semester students write analytically to explore literary elements like theme, mood, and symbolism. Narrative pieces are creatively crafted to play with form and explore genre, allowing students to create writing that mirrors and expands upon the mentor texts read in class. The writing process is anchored by one-on-one teacher conferencing paired with peer revision workshops. Culminating projects exploring plot, setting, and genre accompany each unit. By the end of the semester, students can identify and discuss the impact of point of view, genre elements, form, mood, author's purpose, and theme.

## LITERATURE & WRITING 6, SPRING SEMESTER

### Stories as Artifacts of Our Collective Memory

In the second semester of sixth-grade English, students explore the ways stories contribute to our understanding of history. This course poses and seeks answers to big questions: Who gets to tell their stories? How do stories change the way we understand the past? Which is more powerful: truth or fiction? Students examine the role that authors inhabit when they take on the important task of retelling and reframing stories from our collective past. Whether reading *Echo*, *Journey to Topaz*, or "The Shawl," students are exposed to the different devices authors use to highlight struggles, triumphs, and life-changing moments in characters' lives. With a focus on magical realism, students also explore the power of imagination in reshaping narratives and providing opportunities for healing.

As in our first semester, students engage with the writing process through both narrative and analytical pieces. Whether writing about the impact of an unreliable narrator or exploring the purpose of magical realism when retelling historical events, students expand their skills and focus on providing detailed support for their analyses. In this semester, the course structure

moves from teacher-moderated to student-led discussions in order to build the skills of listening, speaking, and providing text-based evidence in oral argumentation.

#### STUDY SKILLS 6, SPRING SEMESTER

### Is This Thing On?: A User's Guide to Middle School

This course assists SLA's youngest students in establishing the skills and practices necessary for their success in Middle School. Students learn how to organize their assignments and responsibilities, manage their time, communicate effectively, and advocate for their needs in an academic setting. In addition to the practical and organizational skills covered in this course, students receive direct instruction in grammar. These transferable skills are utilized by students in their other courses, to great success. This course asks students to consider: *How can I find success in Middle School? Is there a way for me to manage my workload and still make time for extracurricular pursuits? What do I need to be and feel my best?*

#### LITERATURE & WRITING 7, FALL SEMESTER

### Home and Family

This course begins the seventh-grade journey of exploring the question: How can literature help us understand our own identity? Students encounter literature in various forms, beginning with the poetic, vignette-style prose of Sandra Cisneros in *The House on Mango Street*. We ask why Cisneros might have chosen such a style to narrate Esperanza's coming of age. These same questions of form and meaning will carry forward into our readings of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Both texts consider questions of how home and family impact the identities of our protagonists. We, too, will use these texts to reflect on how our homes and families impact who we become.

Throughout the semester students practice writing for a variety of purposes, exploring literary style by making choices about figurative or literal language, syntax, and diction to best fit their intent. Students compose Vignette Projects, in which they write about significant "coming-of-age" moments in the style of Cisneros. An argumentative style essay about the theme of control in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* guides students through a scaffolded, multi-step writing process using teacher support and peer editing groups. By the end of the semester, students can identify and discuss the various elements of literary style, the impact of a text's form on its meaning, and the effects of home and family on our identities.

## LITERATURE & WRITING 7, SPRING SEMESTER

### Literature as Witness

During the second semester, seventh-grade students continue their exploration of how literature can help us understand ourselves, by encountering texts that in some way bear witness to significant periods of an author's history. We begin with an extended study of the Harlem Renaissance, using poetry, music, and visual art to gather knowledge about the themes, questions, and images on the minds of Black artists of the period. Students pay particular attention to similarities between blues music and blues poetry, exploring how and why this form was so popular. We ask not only how language can articulate a writer's experience of a historical moment, but how form communicates significance, as well. These questions expand and change shape with our reading of *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass* and Elie Wiesel's *Night*. As a class we experience the process of reading as one of witnessing, as well, and consider the responsibilities that come with bearing witness.

Throughout this semester, students continue to build comfort with writing in various styles for various purposes, writing comparatively about a blues poem and blues song of their choosing, for instance. They expand on their knowledge of literary style and form, thinking critically about the role of nonfiction in helping us understand our own identities. By the end of their seventh-grade year, students are comfortable with the writing process as it applies to exposition, argument, and personal narrative. The year concludes with a Memoir Project that invites students to choose the form and style that best suits their lived experience.

## LITERATURE & WRITING 8, FALL SEMESTER

### Growing Up, Making Choices: Using Literature to Craft Our Perspectives

The eighth-grade year encourages students to use literature to ask and answer questions about their contemporary world. We read plays, graphic novels, personal essays, and contemporary poetry in which characters are tasked with trying to find and remain their best selves in the conflicts that come with growing up—like making a difficult choice or coping with loss. Students practice identifying resonant themes in our texts that can serve as a link between the literature and their own lived experience. By moving from the concrete to the abstract in their thinking and writing, students practice combining textual evidence, research, and their own opinions to use literature as a way to explore self and world. As we observe our characters and narrators navigating the meeting of their perspective with external conflicts through language, we'll do something of the same.

Throughout the semester students write for a variety of purposes and audiences, exploring forms that play with tone and incorporate the "I" voice. For instance, students use the themes that emerge in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to write an op-ed style essay that creates an



explicit connection between the play and a current cultural movement or conflict. In our personal essay unit, students narrate an event from their own lives to craft a political or cultural commentary. Finally, students create poetry chapbooks in the style of a contemporary poet of their choosing, further experimenting with the possibilities of language in articulating the messy process of becoming.

## LITERATURE & WRITING 8, SPRING SEMESTER

### Speculative Fiction: Using Fantasy to Envision Reality

The second half of the eighth-grade year continues to support students in developing a sense of autonomy in their relationship to reading and writing. In preparation for the Upper School humanities curriculum, students begin to explore questions like: What topics do I care about? And how can I use literature to think and act *toward* that care? We use speculative fiction as a way to investigate how the fantastical can comment on social, political, and cultural issues, and wonder together if and how fantasy can affect reality. As we engage with speculative fiction from across genre and time: *Antigone*, *Frankenstein*, and selections from *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, we'll wonder together how these various fictions can support us in articulating our own perspectives on the issues presented.

Students continue to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, with an increased independence. While reading *Antigone*, students prepare for and engage in a class dialogue on the morality of Antigone's decision, using both textual evidence and real world examples that support their perspectives. While reading *Frankenstein*, students work in small groups to research a topic related to our study of the text, using textual evidence paired with research to write an informational essay and create a presentation. During our reading of *Octavia's Brood*, students write an analytical essay that articulates what kind of world is imagined by a story of their choosing. Finally, the year culminates in students selecting a contemporary speculative novel from a curated list, and designing a project that uses the fiction to explore a social, political, or cultural event of interest to them.

# Middle School History

## HISTORY 6, FALL SEMESTER

### The Origins of Humanity

This history course creates a foundation for historical inquiry by introducing students to the purpose, techniques, and importance of the varied social sciences used to interpret artifacts of the ancient world. With a focus on prehistoric human adaptations, students examine the remains of ancient hunter-gatherer societies and chart the movement of humans into agrarian settlements, city-states, and eventually kingdoms.

Much of the work completed this semester is project-based. Students dress up as Neolithic farmers and teach one another about their daily life, they make presentations on the most significant hominid fossil finds, and they decode and recreate ancient cave paintings from around the world. Through these immersive projects and their accompanying written reflections, students practice the important skills of observing, questioning, and drawing reasonable conclusions.

## HISTORY 6, SPRING SEMESTER

### The Rise and Fall of Ancient Empires

In the second semester of sixth-grade history, students explore the achievements and contributions of the world's earliest empires. Using digital images of artifacts and written records, students continue the work of examining and analyzing primary source documents. With a focus on India, Greece, Egypt, China, and Rome, students learn to spot cultural diffusion and independent invention across the ancient world. We explore architecture, religion, advancements in learning, and the arts as areas of human development during this time period. Lessons focus on the experience of the average citizen of these empires, raising the question, "What was daily life like in the ancient world?"

Both informational and narrative writing are used to immerse students in the process of exploring, uncovering, and discovering the mysteries of the world's oldest and most influential civilizations. Students engage with the past through questioning, research, and imagination. They write postcards home from Egypt, research the Wonders of the Ancient World, and create field journals from excavation sites in the Middle East.

## HISTORY 7, FALL SEMESTER

### Power, Culture, and Change in the Medieval Era

In this course students focus on changes and patterns of human interaction after the fall of the Roman Empire and through the medieval period. This era, referred to as the Middle Ages, was a period of rapid change throughout the world. Students examine the impact of this changing world through their exploration of human ideology, environment, and interaction. Students pay particular attention to how human views of the world have changed over time and how evaluating historical events help us to make future decisions.

Students also build on their writing skills, analyzing and interpreting evidence, both primary and secondary, to construct an account or portrayal of the past and formulate hypotheses. Following a scaffolded, multi-step writing process, students write a research paper, develop historical thinking, and learn how to articulate what their senses tell them about historical events. By the end of the semester, students know how to gather information, analyze and organize evidence, and then synthesize that evidence to create claims.

## HISTORY 7, SPRING SEMESTER

### Afro-Eurasia: Civilizations and their Legacies

Students continue to explore the events and people of medieval civilizations in Europe, North Africa, and Asia until the 17th Century. The course covers the foundations and history of major world religions, and investigates how human perspectives impact history and our modern world. During this semester students focus on improving critical thinking skills that will help them grasp the social and political events studied in the course. These skills include document and art analysis, interpreting historical context, and producing clear and coherent writing. Students also examine literature from the medieval period as a method of understanding the worldview of societies who lived during the era.

This course focuses on facilitating critical thinking skills and reasoning by equipping students with opportunities for speaking, reading, writing persuasive and expository essays, and analyzing primary sources. By the end of the year, students are comfortable thinking critically, questioning what they read and interpret, and expressing their original ideas with clarity and confidence.

## HISTORY 8, FALL SEMESTER

### US History I: Pre-Colonial America through the Revolutionary Era

This course introduces students to American history starting from the era of the Americas pre-European contact and through the Revolutionary era. Students examine the history of Indigenous nations in the United States and delve into the diverse cultural, religious, and political systems which governed Indigenous societies prior to and after European contact and colonization. By exploring slavery, economics, diplomacy, violence, gender dynamics, and racial ideology, we interrogate the dynamics of the American identity.

In this course, students closely analyze historical evidence and identify significant patterns and pivotal turning points that define the first three centuries of the American experience. The course will also focus on conflict, change, and cross-cultural encounters that contributed to the creation of the country. As students learn about the foundations of the United States, they also interact with a multitude of diverse perspectives that portray the scope of experiences and opinions of Americans, ranging from individuals in positions of power to the systematically disenfranchised. Survivor testimonies and historical narratives are powerful elements of the course. Awareness of these events and perspectives assist student comprehension of the complex nature of the American story.

## HISTORY 8, SPRING SEMESTER

### US History II: The Civil War and the 20th Century

The course builds on skills and concepts introduced or mastered in the first semester. Students explore challenges faced by the new nation, including the development of government, westward expansion, and the reasons and impact of the Civil War leading up to the Reconstruction period. In studying the Civil War and Reconstruction era, students analyze causes, key events, and results of the war and its aftermath. The second semester focuses on developing students' content literacy skills, including writing, reading, and public speaking. Students are empowered to become investigators of history and engage in analytical and critical thinking skills to analyze sourcing, contextualization, and strengthen their understanding of the evidentiary nature of history.

Finally, students explore the cultural history of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, focusing on the technological, economic, and social upheavals that emerged during these years. The course provides opportunities for students to construct arguments about cause-effect relationships, significant turning points, and change throughout US history. Upon completion of the class, students have a strong understanding of the significant ideas, personalities, movements, and events of American history through the 20th Century.

# Middle School Science

## SCIENCE 6

### Understanding Matter: Chem 101

How do we understand and make meaning of the land that we call home? What are the natural properties of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we use for farming and shelter? Students in this course explore the changing landscape of Los Angeles as a site for scientific discovery. From the microorganisms in the soil to the macro exploration of space flight, students study the foundations of chemistry, focusing on the inherent properties of matter and how that matter reacts in both stable and ever-changing conditions, all the while connecting their coursework to the needs of our community.

Students deepen their understanding of matter through field studies and experiments, orienting themselves to the natural world they call home: Los Angeles. From wildfire assessments in Griffith Park to chemical analysis of the LA River, from shooting stars in Topanga Canyon to the “Scrap Sculptures” that litter the city, students deconstruct how humans affect the nature of matter overtime, identifying more sustainable ways of living moving forward. At the culmination of the course, students will use their knowledge of matter to investigate the health of Earth’s most vital natural resource, soil, and use their findings to offer suggestions for future leaders who steward the land.

## SCIENCE 7

### Matter in Motion: Physics 101

Most of the things happening around us, at the fundamental level, are based on mechanics. Seventh-grade students learn about “Matter in Motion” by observing types of motion and developing the skills to explain that motion in terms of forces, energy, and momentum.

Units begin by analyzing the operations of familiar wonders happening around us. What are the mechanics of kicking a soccer ball or riding in a car? What are the forces, energy, and momentum involved to create motion? Students then apply this information to explain the unfamiliar, including the ways in which the planets, stars, and galaxies operate, how electricity can be transferred down a phone line, or how a flash drive can store information technology.

Students use the knowledge they gain during each unit to engineer, design, and/or adapt various technological solutions that humans use to interact with our universe, including conducting energy audits on campus to ensure SLA is as “green” as possible; building,

designing, and adapting circuits, lights, and soundboards; and working to combat accessibility issues faced by Disabled members of society by engineering solutions.

## SCIENCE 8

### Living Systems: Biology 101

In nature there is no MVP; each member of the team is reliant upon all others. This course takes a deep dive into the interconnectedness of systems on Earth. Our journey starts at a microscopic level, where we analyze the structure and function of cells. From there, we pull back to study specific body systems (digestive, skeletal, muscular, respiratory) to gain a full understanding how each part of the human body—small and large—works together to create a functioning whole.

We build on this understanding of the interconnectedness of systems within the human body by turning our attention to systems around us. From the food chain in an ecosystem to the delicate process of reproduction in plants, we again analyze the different parts contributing to the whole and assess the consequences of what happens to the system if a single aspect is compromised.

Lastly, we examine how life has changed throughout the history of Earth. We learn the principles and evidence for evolution and analyze the cause-and-effect relationship between an organism and its environment. We study the basics of the human reproductive system and how different environmental factors affect our development at the fetal stage.

Students walk away from this course having internalized that nothing in nature stands alone. Small or large, complex or simple, each part contributes to and receives from something larger than itself.

# Middle School Math

## MATH 6

### Foundations of Mathematics 1: Our Number System

Algebraic, geometric, and statistical mastery rely on a strong command of how numbers work. In this first foundational course, students develop the confidence and capacity to reason fluently with numbers, make reliable estimates, and understand how to apply rates and ratios to real situations they encounter every day. Students learn how to work and reason fluently with numbers by making sense of integers, fraction division, the coordinate plane, percentages, decimals, equivalent ratios, and unit rates. When learning new procedures and skills, students are not only expected to demonstrate accuracy, but also to justify why those procedures make mathematical sense.

Students also learn how to summarize statistical data with graphs and numbers, make probabilistic predictions, represent patterns with expressions, and solve simple linear and exponential equations. Students develop these skills and understandings through rich problem sets, Desmos-based investigations, collaborative challenges, and short mini-projects that apply these skills to recipes, games of chance, and making estimates of very large and small quantities encountered in our world.

## MATH 7

### Foundations of Mathematics 2: Problem Solving and Proportionality

As students prepare for their journey into algebra, they must develop the capacity and confidence to solve richer problems involving numbers, graphs, expressions, equations, words, or data. In our second foundational course, students develop their problem-solving capacity by taking a deep dive into understanding proportional relationships. By tackling rich problem sets, classroom activities, and Desmos investigations, students apply proportional thinking to solve problems involving complex fractions, circles, dilations, angles, triangles, prisms, and multi-step probability.

Students also increase their problem-solving skills by mastering more techniques and properties to handle negative numbers, rational numbers, algebraic expressions and linear relationships expressed in graphs, equations, tables and words. Through in-class studies and data collection activities, students also learn the value of random sampling in preventing bias in estimating features of populations.

## MATH 8

### Integrated Mathematics I: Algebra and Introductory Geometry

A student's journey into advanced mathematics is fundamentally an exploration of detecting, describing, and making conclusions from patterns. In this course, the first in SLA's Integrated Math Series, students are introduced to foundational skills and ideas in introductory algebra, geometry, and data analysis. We develop a thorough understanding of linear equations, inequalities, and systems, and we explore linear and exponential functions represented with graphs, numbers, and algebraic notation.

Students develop their skills in representations in the coordinate plane, rigid transformations, and compass and straight-edge constructions to create and prove simple theorems in geometry. They investigate how to represent data in one and two variables by using visual, verbal, and numerical measures of center and spread. They also explore bivariate relationships in data with scatter plots, correlation, and linear regression models. Students develop more skills with irrational numbers (square and cube roots) and the Pythagorean Theorem. They use these skills to increase their working knowledge of special right triangles and Pythagorean triples, which are used frequently in future studies of algebra and geometry.



# Middle School Languages

## Spanish I

This year-long course is designed as an introduction to the language, culture, and traditions of the Spanish-speaking world for sixth- and seventh-grade students with little or no background in Spanish. Communicative units focus on basic greetings and introductions, school, family, hobbies, travel, food, and celebrations. Through music, games, short films, stories, and projects, students discover basic grammar, develop conversational vocabulary, and learn to communicate and ask questions in the present tense.

By the end of the year, students possess communicative and literacy skills within the Novice-Low to Novice-Mid range of the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency scale (A1 of the CEFR scale), meaning that they are able to express and understand Spanish about themselves, others, and the topics covered in class using words, phrases, and some short sentences.

## Spanish II

This year-long course is a continuation from Spanish I that immerses Middle School students with Novice-Low to Novice-Mid level proficiency (A1-A2 per the CEFR) into the culture, history, and traditions of the Spanish-speaking world. Communicative units reinforce content, structures, and skills from Spanish I, while presenting opportunities to delve deeper into Hispanic culture, history, and geography.

Students continue to discover basic grammar, develop conversational vocabulary, and learn to communicate and ask questions in the present, the preterite, and the imperfect—with an introduction to the subjunctive mood. Topics include daily routines, consultations, technology, living spaces, and food. By the end of the year, students possess communicative and literacy skills in the Novice-High (A2 per the CEFR) range of the ACTFL proficiency scale, meaning that they are able to express and understand Spanish using phrases, sentences, and strings of sentences.

## Spanish III

This is a year-long intermediate course for students who possess a Novice-High (or A2 and beyond, per the CEFR) Spanish language ability. Students delve into the history, culture, and politics of the Spanish-speaking world while moving toward an Intermediate-Low (B1) language proficiency. Through daily interaction and communication in Spanish, students expand their basic interpersonal communication skills and build on their ability to communicate using strings of sentences and transition words in the present, past, and future tenses.

Students build a wider vocabulary and strengthen their ability to describe, narrate, and express opinions in Spanish. In addition to daily communication, students study music and short films and explore units centered on a large variety of topics, such as the environment, art, local American politics and history, culture, and literature—including works such as *Don Quijote de la Mancha* and authors such as Julia de Burgos. Through this communicative context and inquiry-based exploration of Spanish-speaking cultures, students progress to an Intermediate-Low language (B1) ability, foster skills to become more independent language learners, and develop a greater understanding of the historical and political issues that shape the Spanish-speaking world today.

# Middle School Visual & Performing Arts

## VISUAL ART 6, SPRING SEMESTER

### Ways of Seeing

In *Ways of Seeing*, students are introduced to art-making as a means of describing and interpreting the world around them. Students train their hands to document the world as they see it from observation, memory, and their imaginations. Students have a variety of opportunities to experiment, explore, and share in their learning with peers in exercises like exquisite corpse and blind contour, and collaboratively in a group stop-motion animation project. We start every class with a sketchbook prompt, and students are introduced to the discipline of keeping a daily sketchbook for documenting their ideas, sketches, and progress. Students are also introduced to ways of interpreting works of art and given opportunities to share about their own experiences creating; they support and learn from their peers in unit takeaways and reflect on their progress and processes orally and in writing.

## VISUAL ART 7, FALL SEMESTER

### Art Through Different Lenses

In *Art Through Different Lenses*, students learn and discuss the many different ways of knowing and understanding the world through an interdisciplinary approach to art. This course explores the many ways other disciplines such as math, science, history, and literature and writing inform and rely upon art practices in media such as drawing, painting, collage, and sculpture. We start the class with a deep dive into math and art, examining the relationship between the two in pattern and repetition: in architecture, fabric design, braiding, and tile work, just to name a few. In our exploration of science, we discuss the ways in which we use experimentation in art practice to gather data about materials and processes, and the role of observational skills in both disciplines. Students continue to build upon technical drawing skills from *Ways of Seeing*, and continue the discipline of using a sketchbook to draft and workshop ideas.

## VISUAL ART 8, FALL OR SPRING SEMESTER

### Point of View

In *Point of View*, students explore more deeply artistic styles, processes, and modes of communication. Throughout the course of the semester, we ask ourselves, “What do I want this work to say?” and “What is the difference between what I want to communicate and what the

viewer interprets?" Students process these questions individually in self-reflective writing and spend time as a group discussing what resonates with them most. These exchanges and opportunities for reflection help students make sense of their own processes and practices as they evolve their personal style and approach to projects. We spend the semester exploring portraiture and the many facets of how we represent parts of ourselves in our work: figuratively, abstractly, and symbolically. Students begin the course by determining their own "rules" for art-making and end the course with a mixed-media project inspired by NASA's *Golden Record*. This class prepares students for the rigor of Upper School visual art electives.

## MUSIC 6-8

### Band

This course is an introductory study of ensemble playing in commercial genres including rock, soul, pop, and country focusing on 1950–2020. Students learn the fundamentals of music through studying band instruments, music notation, ear training, scales, harmony, and rhythm. Throughout this semester course, students play multiple instruments as they learn the basics of drums, bass, piano, and guitar. The bulk of the class periods focus on developing necessary skills to participate in a live performance at the end of the term. With the use of peer-to-peer modeling, this class emphasizes band ethics, personal responsibility, and generosity.

## THEATRE 8, FALL SEMESTER

### Ensemble

What does it mean to be part of a theatre ensemble? What can performing teach us about collaboration and groupthink? This course introduces students to the stage by building confidence and community. Guided by Anna Deavere Smith's *Letters to a Young Artist* and the Leap Theatre Workshop's *Making the Leap: Theatre of Empowerment*, students create devised theatre performances that reflect their passions and points of view.

*Letters to a Young Artist* provides "straight-up advice on making a life in the arts" for students facing questions of confidence, discipline, fear, community, and social justice. *Theatre of Empowerment* serves as a framework for our non-hierarchical devising process. Collaborating to create performance work that is more than the sum of its parts, students design community norms and rehearsal practices as a way of holding one another accountable. Students explore acting techniques, improvisation, and ensemble-building as a means to build confidence and tell their stories. The course culminates in a devised theatre showcase curated by the students.

# Middle School Religion, Ethics, & Philosophy

## REP 6, SPRING SEMESTER

### Nomads, Poets, and Prophets: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

Our course begins with the story of the garden. Students consider three essential questions: What are humans? What is our relationship to the earth? and What makes life 'good'? Through our experience of planting and composting as a class, we ask the earth to help us interpret these ancient creation stories, which are fundamentally about relationships. We then trace the major themes and history of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) to build awareness of the Bible's influence on Western religion, art, culture, and literature: from many gods to one, from nomad to kingdom to diaspora, from sacrifice to justice. We end with the Sabbath Project in which students participate in their own modern Sabbath to explore both the value and challenges of disconnecting.

Students develop two important skills as they explore the text: close reading and dialogue. Through close reading, students learn to identify different biblical literary forms including myth, epic, narrative history, poetry, and prophecy. Through dialogue with one another, students learn what it means to be in a community of interpretation and thus gain an appreciation for how modern faith communities relate to their sacred texts.

## REP 7, SPRING SEMESTER

### Ethics

In this course we explore Moral Virtue and "the Good Life" through stories, practice, and self-reflection. Students learn the basics of Aristotelian virtue ethics, an ethical framework that defines all virtues as a mean or a midpoint between two extremes or "vices." For example, we can define courage (one of SLA's virtues) as the sweet spot between acting with too little courage (timidity or cowardice) and demonstrating too much courage (hubris, recklessness, or stupidity). Students practice identifying the moments in their own lives when they have to find and choose this midpoint and then reflect on instances when they have succeeded or failed to habituate specific virtues in weekly written Virtue Reflections. In the final part of the course, students are asked to write the ending of their own story and to imagine how virtues, relationships, and a sense of vocation might play a role in the remainder of their life.

Students also engage with classic thought experiments, like Trolley Problems and John Rawls' Veil of Ignorance to practice using different ethical frameworks and to answer big questions like

“What makes a human life valuable?” “How can we teach ethics to robots?” and “What sort of laws and systems would exist in a more just and equitable society?”

## REP 8, FALL SEMESTER

### Building Beloved Community

This course invites students to practice building beloved community within the classroom and in the city through the study and practice of Martin Luther King Jr.'s six principles of nonviolence. Far from being a utopian vision without conflict, the beloved community is one in which people work diligently against the triple evils of poverty, racism, and militarism to create a society in which armed and systemic violence is prevented. The first half of the course is dedicated to strengthening students' dialogue skills. The remainder of the course is focused on the theory and practice of collective, nonviolent action, and students design their own collective action for the class or school to carry out to help us imagine how both we and the world would be different if we consistently practiced nonviolence. Along the way, students practice careful reading of texts by Gandhi and King as well as living peace activists. A portion of the course will take place in contemplation of the natural world as we ask what the earth has to teach us about peaceful coexistence.

# Middle School Physical Education

## Middle School Physical Education

The physical education courses provide students with the opportunity to learn and develop sports-related skills with an emphasis on teamwork and cooperation. The courses place a great focus on components related to health, wellness, and fitness. Students are encouraged, through the virtue of curiosity, to discover movement activities that give them true joy to enhance their overall health and wellness. Themes of these courses are self-management, positive social interaction, group dynamics, and physical literacy.

Units in the sixth-grade course include: physical fitness; hand-eye coordination sport skills (handball, throwing and catching, juggling, flag football); striking sports skills and lead-up games (badminton, wiffle ball, pickleball); dribbling skills (basketball and soccer); and line dance.

Units in the seventh- and eighth-grade courses include: physical fitness; accessing valid and reliable information; team-building activities; refining throwing and catching sport skills (ultimate frisbee, baseball/softball, lacrosse); volleying skills and games; dribbling skills and games (soccer and basketball); combative sports skills (martial arts, self-defense); track and field (long jump, relays, sprints); and multicultural dance.

# Middle School Electives

## Intro to French

In this course students engage with French culture and learn the basic functioning of the French language in all of its modalities (writing, speaking, hearing, reading). The course is appropriate for students who have not had experience with a foreign language before or who have some experience with another language.

Students study greetings and goodbyes, the French alphabet, diacritical marks (cedilla, umlaut, treble and grave accents, circumflex accent), basic numbers, as well as learning and forming liaisons and writing using elisions to create phrases similar to those of native speakers. Topics covered include the school, family and friends, pastimes, vacations, and the home. Students learn how to get by (*se débrouiller*) in the real world by focussing on the oral and written production of the language as the majority of the class is taught in French.

## Computer Science

"Computer Science: Scratch Programming and Game Development" offers students an engaging introduction to the world of computer programming. Students will dive into fundamental programming concepts, mastering the use of loops, conditional statements, and variables. Through the dynamic and user-friendly Scratch platform, students will have the opportunity to work on their own unique projects that explore the core principles of coding, animation, and interactive game design. They will learn to transform their imaginative ideas into tangible projects, honing their skills in storytelling and digital artistry.

This course is not just about coding; it's about problem-solving. We will tackle coding challenges that require us to apply logical thinking and coding skills to overcome real-world problems. Most of our curriculum is based on CS First, an easy-to-use computer science curriculum offered by Google. Additionally, students will engage in peer-reviewed Scratch projects, learning from their peers' creations and drawing inspiration from their work.

Join us on this thrilling journey of exploration, creativity, and coding mastery, where students not only acquire technical skills but also develop problem-solving abilities and artistic expression in a collaborative learning environment.

## Engineering: How to Train Your Robot

In "How to Train Your Robot," a captivating engineering elective for 7th and 8th graders, students embark on a dynamic journey that encompasses not only the world of robotics but



also key engineering concepts. This semester-long course offers a hands-on exploration of artificial intelligence (AI) and its ethical implications while introducing students to the broader field of engineering.

Throughout the course, we explore core concepts such as AI, machine learning, and ethics in technology, alongside an introduction to the engineering process. Students will have the unique opportunity to apply this process in an exhilarating bridge-building competition, putting their problem-solving skills to the test. Additionally, we delve into electrical circuit elements and diagrams, paving the way for students to build their very own circuits, and unleashing their creativity in engineering applications.

By the course's conclusion, students will have not only designed their robot companions but also honed essential engineering skills, making them well-rounded innovators in the fields of robotics and technology. Join us in "How to Train Your Robot" to gain a comprehensive understanding of AI, ethics, engineering, and circuitry while creating a robot companion and competing in a thrilling bridge-building challenge. This course is a unique opportunity to nurture the engineers of the future.

## Self-Defense

Self awareness is Self Defense. This empowering course focuses on teaching students how to protect themselves and escape dangerous situations and self-protection techniques borrowing many elements from various martial arts. The various martial arts will include Wado-Ryu Karate, Jiu jitsu, Kajukenbo (Karate, Judo/Jiu jitsu, Kenpo, & Chinese Boxing Kung fu) & Wrestling. In addition to the physical skills required to learn effective self-defense, students learn how to use discipline, respect, self-control, and teamwork. Skills and techniques learned through martial arts teach students lifetime lessons.

# Upper School Overview

The Upper School academic calendar is divided into semesters:

1. Fall Semester
2. Spring Semester

Students in the Upper School share essential, formative experiences with their peers through much of the core curriculum, but also have substantial flexibility regarding how they fulfill both the departmental and general elective graduation requirements. Each semester during grades 10–12, students select a pairing of Literature and History courses from the various disciplines in the core offerings (Black Studies, Environmental Studies, etc.); this allows students to shape their trajectory through the humanities core and share meaningful class time with students from other grade levels.

On transcripts submitted to colleges, SLA reports semester grades. Progress reports and teacher comments are not shared with colleges.

## HONORS DISTINCTION

Students demonstrating exceptional academic performance can earn a yearly Honors distinction. To earn the rigorous Honors distinction, students must take a minimum of seven courses per semester and earn a GPA of 4.04 or higher for the academic year. Each semester, students must take a Literature, History, Math, Science, and Language course to be eligible for the distinction. Students who earn the Honors distinction every year they are enrolled at SLA also earn a special, cumulative Honors designation on their diploma.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

		9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Literature	Sem 1	Intro to Literary Study	3 semester credits required; students select from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black Literature</li> <li>- Environmental Literature</li> <li>- Latinx Literature</li> </ul>		
	Sem 2	Los Angeles Literature	3 semester credits required; students select from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Class Literature</li> <li>- European Literature</li> <li>- Queer Literature</li> </ul>		
History	Sem 1	US Government and Politics	3 semester credits required; students select from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black History</li> <li>- Environmental History</li> <li>- Latinx History</li> </ul>		
	Sem 2	Los Angeles History	3 semester credits required; students select from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Class History</li> <li>- European History</li> <li>- Queer History</li> </ul>		
Science		Chemistry	Physics	Biology	Additional semester elective(s) recommended
Math		3 year-long courses (6 semester credits) required; student placement and sequence is based on readiness			1 additional year-long course (2 semester credits) recommended
Languages		3 year-long Spanish courses (6 semester credits) required; student placement and sequence is based on readiness			1 additional year-long course (2 semester credits) recommended
Arts		4 semester credits required			
Religion	Sem 1		Encountering God		
	Sem 2	New Testament			
PE & Health		1 semester credit of PE required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>An athletic season satisfies a semester credit of PE</i></li> </ul> 1 semester credit of Health & Wellness required			
Electives		5 additional semester credits required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 of these must be electives from the Literature, History, Math, Science, or Language departments</li> </ul>			

## COURSE LIST

- (f) = Fall semester course  
(s) = Spring semester course  
(y) = year-long course

### Literature

*8 semester credits required*

Literature 9 - Intro to Literary Study (f)

Literature 9 - Los Angeles Literature (s)

Literature 10–12 - *Students select semester courses from the options below; selections are paired with a History course in the same discipline:*

- Black Literature - Atlantic is a Sea of Bones (f)
- Environmental Literature - Environmental Justice and Change (f)
- Latinx Literature - Magical Realism (f)
- Class Literature - Class, Conflict, and Location in Literature (s)
- Queer Literature - Theory in the Flesh: Lesbian of Color Literary Genealogies, 1970-1990 (s)
- European Literature - Dissolving Boundaries: Forms of Possession in European Literature (s)

### *Electives*

Voices of Incarceration (grades 10-12) (f, s)

### History

*8 semester credits required*

History 9 - Los Angeles History (f)

History 9 - Government (s)

History 10–12 - *Students select semester courses from the options below; selections are paired with a Literature course in the same discipline:*

- Black History - Loving U is Complicated (f)
- Environmental History - Agency or Futility?: Unequal Voices and the Global Environmental Crisis (f)
- Latinx History - Latin America: Identity at the Intersection of Local and Global (f)
- Class History - The Birth of the Global Market and the Development of Capitalism (s)
- Queer History - Queer Pasts, Homonational Futures?: Deviance and Punishment from the late 19th Century to the Post-Marriage Era (s)

- European History - From Absolutism to Uncertainty: Europe from 1648-1919 (s)

*Electives:*

A People's History of WWII and the New Deal (f)  
 Poetry of Exile: Dante's Commedia in Translation (f)  
 Pre-Colonial Africa (grades 9–12) (f)  
 Race and Popular Culture in the Modern United States (grades 9–12) (s)  
 A Cultural History of Asian Immigration to the US (grades 9–12) (s)  
 Political Populism and Conspiracy Theory (grades 11–12) (s)  
 The American South (grades 11-12) (s)

## Science

*6 semester credits required*

Science 9: Chemistry (y)  
 Science 10: Physics (y)  
 Science 11: Biology (y)

*Electives:*

Computer Science: Javascript (grades 9–12) (f)  
 Computer Science: Python and AI (grades 11-12) (f)  
 Ecology: A Fieldwork-based Approach to Ecological Restoration of The LA River (grade 12) (f)  
 Epidemiology: Non-Infectious and Chronic Disease (grade 12) (s)

## Mathematics

*6 semester credits required*

*Students rising from SLA's eighth grade enter Integrated Math II. The Mathematics Department assesses newly enrolled students and supports them in course placement.*

Integrated Mathematics I: Algebra and Introductory Geometry (y)  
 Integrated Mathematics II: Geometry, Probability, and Intermediate Algebra (y)  
 Integrated Mathematics III: Advanced Algebra and Analysis of Functions (y)  
 Precalculus and Trigonometry (y)

*Following successful completion of Precalculus and Trigonometry, students may choose to enroll in either Statistics and Probability or Calculus I.*

Statistics and Probability (y)

Calculus I (y)

Calculus II (y)

*Electives:*

Mathematical Analysis and Functions (s)

*Students may elect to take this course simultaneously with Integrated III. This course exposes students to mathematical concepts and topics essential for success in a first-year calculus course, and—in rare cases—students who demonstrate readiness may be approved to advance directly to Calculus I the following year.*

## Language

*6 semester credits required*

*All students take a yearly Spanish assessment, which helps determine their course placement.*

Spanish I (y)

Spanish II (y)

Spanish III (y)

Spanish IV: Language and Culture (y)

Spanish IV: Film (y)

Spanish V: Literature (y)

## Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)

*4 semester credits required*

Visual Arts

- Portfolio Building (grades 11–12) (y)
- Visual Art (grades 9–12) (f,s)
- Ceramics (grades 9–12) (s)

Theatre

- Ensemble: Musical Theatre (grades 9–12) (f)
- Playwriting (grades 9–12) (s)
- Advanced Playwriting (grades 10–12) (s)

Music

- Band (grades 9–12) (f, s)

- Advanced Band (grades 10–12) (y)
- Music Production - *Artist in Residence Course* (grades 10-12) (f)

#### Film and Photography

- Film (grades 9-12) (f, s)
- Photography (grades 9-12) (f, s)
- Broadcast Journalism (grades 9-12) (s)

### Religion, Ethics, and Philosophy (REP)

*2 semester credits required*

REP 9: New Testament (s)

REP 10: Encountering God (f)

### Physical Education

*2 semester credits required*

Health & Wellness (f, s)

Personal Fitness (f, s)

Studio Fitness (f, s)

# Ninth-Grade Humanities

## LITERATURE 9, FALL SEMESTER

### Intro to Literary Study

This course introduces students to the habits, skills, and thematic concerns that will help them complexly engage with the study of literature and culture throughout the SLA Upper School curriculum and beyond. Students practice a variety of tools for critical analysis as readers while they develop flexible, effective, persuasive techniques as writers. Students also engage in a variety of approaches to speaking, listening, research, and information/media/digital literacy to develop habits of mind (reflection, goal setting, revision) and organizational skills (note taking, source citation, scaffolding, communication, advocacy) that empower them as critical thinkers and agents of change.

This course's content complements the ninth-grade history curriculum by engaging with questions about the United States' past, present, and future. Thematically, it explores concepts such as identity, belonging, exclusion, justice, agency, power, and social transformation through units organized around form and genre studies of poetry, essays, drama and film, fiction, and graphic narratives. Readings may include selections by authors such as Gloria Anzaldúa, W.H. Auden, James Baldwin, Thi Bui, Octavia Butler, Louise Erdrich, Langston Hughes, John Lewis, Ada Limón, Amiee Nezhukumatathil, Naomi Shihab Nye, Alberto Ríos, Amy Tan, and George Takei, among others. Assessments may include discussion posts, reflective writing, creative analysis essay, literary analysis essay, peer review, recording/video projects, and speaking/presenting projects.

## HISTORY 9, FALL SEMESTER

### US Government and Politics

*What legal, economic, and social systems exist to shape our everyday lives and opportunities? How do we critically engage—and even change—these systems?* This course examines how peoples who inhabited the space we now call the United States have developed structures of power and representation, have navigated their lives within them, and have often challenged them. Indeed, at the core of this course is an exploration of how and why political movements emerge as reactions to discontent with “the way things are.” So, while students consider familiar developments like the Constitution and its amendments, the rise of political parties, and presidential administrations, our main interest lies in recovering how everyday people, often far removed from seats of power, questioned timeworn ideas of who gets what in a society and what its members owe each other.



Throughout the semester, we close-read primary sources, including speeches, public art, demonstrations, and manifestos; examine, assess, and discuss scholarly sources; and apply core concepts to current events and contemporary political terminology. As well, students develop a personalized research project that addresses the questions: *How can we understand “politics” as central to everyday life? What remains and what changes about political consciousness over time and place? And How can we take a synoptic view of a political concern in the long history of the US without sacrificing the specificity of experience?*

## LITERATURE 9, SPRING SEMESTER

### Literature of Los Angeles

Perhaps no city is more actively imagined or persistently misunderstood than Los Angeles, California. What does it actually mean to be an Angeleno? How does our history inform our present? Where is this “City of Quartz,” as the author Mike Davis has called it, headed? This course takes our hometown as its theme, providing students with the opportunity to see it from a number of perspectives. Carrying over from the first semester’s introduction to high school- and college-level literary study, students use our readings to strengthen their emerging understanding of genre, formal features, and archetypes as they engage in their writing with the diversity of a real city that rattles, hisses, and hums behind the glittering façade presented by marketers and motion-picture impresarios.

The iconic novel, *Day of the Locust* by Nathaniel West paints a picture of the wild-catting early days of the film industry. Luis Valdez’s play *Zoot Suit* enacts the themes of pachuquismo, racism, and injustice of the murder at the Sleepy Lagoon, the subsequent trial of a group of Chicana teenagers and young men, and the WWII-era riots over race, style, and American identity. *In the Not Quite Dark*, Dana Johnson’s collection of short fiction grapples with matters of race, place, and history. And *Tropic of Orange*, a novel by Karen Tei Yamashita, presents the complex mosaic of social and political issues that stir the currents and crosscurrents of our present era.

In Literature of Los Angeles, ninth graders have the opportunity to consolidate their reading and writing skills in the literature classroom, while at the same time acquiring a sophisticated understanding of the city in which they live. The California historian Kevin Starr calls Los Angeles, “the Great Gatsby of American cities”: Literature of Los Angeles is an opportunity for students to assume the Nick Carraway role—to become the “unreliable,” passionate narrators of the story of their own complicated home.

## HISTORY 9, SPRING SEMESTER

### Los Angeles History

*Is Los Angeles, has it ever been, or could it ever be a just city?* This course introduces students to key periods, events, figures, and questions in the history of the space we now commonly call “L.A.” Moving from the pre-Columbian era to the early twenty-first century, students develop an understanding of the historical changes and continuities that made Los Angeles the urban center it is today, all the while thinking critically about narratives of “progress” and “development,” and learning how historians construct alternative understandings of how people have existed in this space. Indeed, in tracing this history from indigenous homeland to Spanish missionary outpost to Mexican pueblo to US state, this course introduces students to basic concepts and vocabulary in the study of cities and communities and encourages a reckoning with the ways in which the city’s present—its demographics, geographies, cultures, and inequities—have been produced by its past and the stories we tell about that past.

These analytical approaches are grounded in a curriculum centered on experiential learning within the city, from visits to the Watts Towers Art Center to “cognitive mappings” of the city blocks surrounding our campus; close readings of primary sources, including folklore, maps, advertisements, and pop music; and a critical engagement with how to read, assess, and discuss scholarly sources. Throughout the semester, students develop a personalized research project that addresses the questions: *What do you owe Los Angeles? And what does Los Angeles owe you?*

# Black Studies

## BLACK LITERATURE, FALL SEMESTER

### Atlantic is a Sea of Bones

For African slaves and their descendants, the Middle Passage represents a rupture of catastrophic proportions. Violently separated from their homes, families, and pasts forever, the newly enslaved were forced onto slave ships and carried across the Atlantic to New Worlds where they would become human property. As they crossed the ocean, subjected to brutal conditions that drove many of the enslaved to mutiny or suicide, the Atlantic became a sea of bones.

This course visits the “sea of bones” from the perspective of three novels by Black women—*Krik? Krak!* by Edwidge Danticat, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward and *A Map to the Door of No Return* by Dionne Brand—each of which look back on the Atlantic and the violences of the Middle Passage from a contemporary perspective.

Using the films *Atlantics*, *Moonlight*, and *Atlantic is a Sea of Bones* to compliment our study of literature, we explore how the Middle Passage manifests itself in the lives of people of African descent across the contemporary diaspora, attending specifically to how the Atlantic Ocean is represented in each of these texts. Together, we examine how memory of the Passage structures Black identities and cultural desires in the present day, thinking critically about the resources that authors and characters employ to heal the wounds produced by the violent rupture.

## BLACK HISTORY, FALL SEMESTER

### Loving U is Complicated

This course will begin in pre-colonial Africa. This is the place in which the idea of blackness would be formulated and woven into pseudo constructs that will come with real consequences. After the European enslavement of Africans and their exit from the continent through the Door of No Return, the dehumanization process has already begun and will be carried out in the Americas. From this point forward race, gender, class, and identity overall will be enforced through a violent process driven by racial capitalism. Students will critically analyze and reflect on the historical phenomena that will inform frameworks antithetical to the very existence of those deemed Black. These include the creation of the plantation economy, the essential re-enslavement during the Jim Crow era, as well as both past and contemporary resistance to all of the above by those being subjugated. In their critical analysis/reflection, students will

think about what it means to be human and what it means to be positioned outside of such classification in society through the lens of the Black experience. This journey will take one semester, beginning on the shores of Africa and leading all the way up to modern events.

This course will include writings and theories by Cedric Robertson (Robertson's text *Black Marxism* will be used throughout the semester as main reference), James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Sadiya Hartman, W. E. B. DuBois, Howard Zinn, Franz Fanon, and more. The students will use these writings and other forms of media for the development of their critical consciousness, as well as furthering their argumentation and research skills within the realm of historical thinking.

# Environmental Studies

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE, FALL SEMESTER

### Environmental Justice and Change

This course asks the question: How can reading help sustain attention to climate change? We acknowledge the uselessness of disciplinary boundaries when confronting something as all-encompassing as environmental change, and thus uses a variety of texts across genre, such as: Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*, Robin Wall-Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones*, David Wallace-Wells *The Uninhabitable Earth*, and CAConrad's *Ecodeviance*.

Additionally, a semester-long project calls on students to change some aspect of the way they live their lives, and to reflect on how reading stories about climate change affects their experience of the everyday. The wager we make here as thoughtful readers is that *doing* and *thinking* reinforce one another, and therefore cannot be separated. Together we will interrogate ourselves, the inequitable impact of ecological degradation on communities around the world, the various forces creating and perpetuating climate change, and then, with some hearty wills, seek to answer: Is there a path toward recovery?

## ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY, FALL SEMESTER

### Agency or Futility?: Unequal Voices and the Global Environmental Crisis

This course is about ordinary communities, the environment, and the global economic structures of which they are a part. The central question of the course is: Whose voices in the global discussion on the environmental crisis are heard?

In order to properly frame this central question, we first begin by asking two closely related ones; namely, How does climate change affect the world's most vulnerable communities? And, What power do local communities have to safeguard the land on which they belong in the face of powerful international actors?

Answering these questions takes us to the megacities of the global south such as Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Lagos, Nigeria, in order to understand how climate change affects the most densely inhabited regions in the world. Next, we travel to Port Harcourt in southern Nigeria, site of the hanging of the Ogoni 9, and the Native Lands of the Rosebud Sioux and the Fort Belknap Indian Community in South Dakota, regions where oil production and transport threatens the resources upon which communities rely. Finally, we examine the high politics of

the climate crisis, taking a closer look at the Paris Climate Accords, and asking to what degree global institutions are capable of safeguarding those most vulnerable to climate change.

During the course students will read excerpts from Donna Goldstein's *Laughter Out of Place* about a favela in Rio di Janeiro, watch a BBC documentary on Lagos, read primary sources from the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, as well as portions of a federal lawsuit filed on behalf of the Rosebud Sioux and Fort Belknap Indian Community. Next, using news reports and primary sources, we examine the negotiations and controversies surrounding the Paris Climate Accords.

# Latinx Studies

## LATINX LITERATURE, FALL SEMESTER

### Magical Realism

This course offers an introduction to Latin American literature in translation. Students engage a broad selection of authors and texts from various countries in Central and South America in order to develop an understanding of socioeconomic, philosophical, literary, and political influences of time and place, with a particular focus on anti-imperialism.

Students address a series of questions particular to Latin American literature: How does a body of literature respond to its canonical and imperialist precedents? How does magical realism subvert the post-Enlightenment premium placed on realism? How do these texts affect the world they critique?

The course begins with Boom authors Julio Cortázar, Gabriel García Márquez, Silvina Ocampo, and Jorge Luis Borges before transitioning into more diverse, non-Boom voices like Rosario Castellanos, Clarice Lispector, Julia Alvarez, and Roberto Bolaño. Students engage in discussions about genre, magical realism, political critique, and translation throughout the semester. Students also produce analytical writing, creative writing, and self-guided research.

## LATINX HISTORY, FALL SEMESTER

### Latin America: Identity at the Intersection of Local and Global

The course explores Latin American's complex relationship with the globalizing forces that have shaped it. Using such works as Charles Mann's *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, and Martin and Wasserman's *Latin America and its People*, we first explore the pre-colonial economies of Latin American and their systems of authority with an emphasis on the regions of contemporary Mexico and Brazil. Next, we examine the manner in which colonialism and participation in a global economy on highly unequal terms shaped new, fragmented societies and gave birth to forms of rhetoric and nation-building discourses such as Brazil's racial democracy or Mexico's popular conception of its "mestizo" roots. We will analyze these and other hegemonic discourses as we explore how global and international forces continue to shape new conceptions of identity and belonging in Brazil, Mexico, and the United States.

In the latter stages of the course, we discuss key questions in each country. In Brazil, we ask what it means to be Afro-Brazilian, and whether the promise of racial democracy holds true

today. In Mexico, we interrogate the precarious existence of indigenous communities, often neglected and semi-autonomous, but who nonetheless have to struggle to maintain their language and identity in the face of growing Spanish monolingualism and increasingly tight ties to diasporic communities in the US where transnationalism is creating new forms of identity and belonging among the youth in particular.



# Class Studies

## CLASS LITERATURE, SPRING SEMESTER

### Message to the Grass Roots: Literatures of the Dispossessed

The first half of this course begins with a question: What is property? We consider practical questions like how ownership of property is actually constituted and enforced in our daily lives, we look at important moments and trends in the historical formation and practice of private property in the modern era, and we study an array of arguments regarding both the philosophical and legal formation of property, including Proudhon's claim that "property is theft," basic Marxist interpretations of class relationships, Cheryl I. Harris' work on "whiteness as property," and Rinaldo Walcott's proposition that "Black people will not be fully able to breathe—a word I do not use lightly—until property itself is abolished." Students conduct an overview of the concept of "racial capitalism," examining the historical and social connections between race, class, and property—including works from Cedric Robinson, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Dylan Rodriguez. We then study recent theoretical frameworks from Stephano Harney and Fred Moten, which help us think critically about—and beyond—the conditions that make ownership possible and necessary. Finally, through critical, small-group discussions, we consider how schools play a central role in producing and maintaining these conditions—and how this directly affects us.

During the second half of the course, we embark on a review of a wide array of literary forms—memoir, essay, speech, letter, poem, prison writing, and conversation—that have emerged out of what Piven and Cloward term "poor people's movements" in the US, as well as international anti-colonial struggles, and contemporary anti-gentrification movements in Los Angeles. This includes works by Malcolm X, James Baldwin, George Jackson, Kwame Ture, Amílcar Cabral, Dean Spade, the School of Echoes, and the Los Angeles Tenants Union. Students play a major role in charting the path we take through these course materials—where we linger, where we dig deeper, where we take an unexpected turn. Throughout the semester, students develop, submit, revise, and resubmit an ever-growing glossary of terms—a project which demands a high level of compositional rigor, but also encourages a high level of creativity and collaboration.

## CLASS HISTORY, SPRING SEMESTER

### The Birth of the Global Market and the Development of Capitalism

The rise of the Western world, with its familiar and easily recognizable political and economic institutions, developed in lockstep with the creation of a truly global economy beginning in the

1500s. This course explores the development of capitalism, the sociopolitical and economic system that first developed in the West in the 1600s, as part of larger global processes. We begin by examining the linkages between forms of merchant capital and the later development of the financial institutions that facilitate the expansion of a capitalist economy. Of particular interest is merchant capital surrounding slavery, and the later establishment of financial institutions by those such as the Barclays brothers or the Lehman brothers who were intricately involved in the slave economy. Students will read classic works such as Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, as well as more critical authors, such as Walter Johnson's *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, and analyze a host of primary-source documents in order to make an informed argument on the relationship between slavery and modern banking.

Next, we explore industrialization in Europe and North America, and the struggles that occurred over such issues as the length of the working day, and the development of approaches to labor management such as Fordism. Finally, we explore the expansion and contraction of industrialization in the Global South, and the tragic legacies of both colonialism and the early global economy. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to engage the subject matter through careful, fact-based analysis via persuasive writing and exercises on research methods. Our goal, ultimately, is to create the necessary historical lenses to understand such contemporary issues as the proliferation of the gig economy through apps such as Uber or Instacart, or the outsourcing of factory production to regions of lower cost labor.

# Queer Studies

## QUEER LITERATURE, SPRING SEMESTER

### Theory in the Flesh: Lesbian of Color Literary Genealogies, 1970-1990

In the 1960s and 1970s, a women's movement emerged in the United States. Though it claimed to address the oppression of all American women, those who were not white, middle-class, and college-educated saw their interests relegated to the margins. Instead of pursuing inclusion within a feminist movement that did not recognize their existences, excluded lesbians of color created their own collectives, literary magazines, publishing presses, and feminist anthologies.

This course introduces students to the poetry and social thought of such lesbians of color who forged their own feminist consciousness between 1970 and 1990—Pat Parker, Cheryl Clarke, Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldua, and Barbara Smith, among others.

In the same way that the authors we study took a deeply collaborative approach to learning and writing, exchanging letters, co-writing anthologies, and sharing teaching materials, we take a communal approach to learning in this course. Students write letters to classmates that respond to course readings, engage in regular peer review exercises, and lead class discussions.

In this course that emphasizes creativity, experimentation, and collaboration, texts include The Combahee River Collective Statement, excerpts from *Sister Outsider*, *This Bridge Called My Back* and *Borderlands/La Frontera*, and essays by Adrienne Rich, Cheryl Clarke, and Alice Walker.

## QUEER HISTORY, SPRING SEMESTER

### Queer Pasts, Homonational Futures?: Deviance and Punishment from the late 19th Century to the Post-Marriage Era

In the late 1890s, twenty years before the term "queer" was first used to deride gay men in Northeastern cities, the word was employed in Atlanta newspapers to describe another group of perceived deviants: incarcerated Black women. In order to justify the use of imprisoned Black women as free labor in the post-Emancipation South, such women had to be labeled "deviant" and therefore deserving of punishment and policing.

This course turns a critical eye to seemingly natural ideas about what it means to be “normal” and “deviant.” Taking an expansive approach to the concept of queerness—one that defines “queer” in terms of one’s relationship to normativity as opposed to specific sexual identities—students develop an analysis of normalcy, queerness, and deviance that incorporates race, class, and nation alongside gender and sexuality. Using a historical lens to excavate the invention of ruling ideas about “normal” men, women, and families, we ultimately interrogate the myriad consequences of being perceived as deviant: social ostracization, imprisonment, heightened policing, and often premature death.

Focusing specifically on the role that prisons and carceral logics play in shaping and reproducing ideas about deviance, the course draws heavily from the following texts, among others: *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment and The Making of Jim Crow Modernity* by Sarah Haley, *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault and *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex* edited by Eric Stanley and Nat Smith.

# European Studies

## EUROPEAN LITERATURE, SPRING SEMESTER

### Dissolving Boundaries: Forms of Possession in European Literature

In this course, students engage in a survey of European literature from antiquity to the contemporary, exploring instances in which a character's sense of agency is "possessed." These sources of "possession" might show up as will or fate, or perhaps as gods or God. In other instances, the self is possessed by the influence of an intimate relationship, an ancestral energy, an idea, or a "group-mind." We begin with the contemporary Italian novel *My Brilliant Friend*, in which author Elena Ferrante employs the concept of "dissolving boundaries" to organize various coming-of-age experiences in the lives of her two protagonists. From there, we go back to antiquity and move forward again, reading texts like Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, writings of the Christian mystic Angela de Foligno, Valery's *Monsieur Teste*, and Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.

In a course that covers such a broad swath, students are asked to flex their analytical muscles, creating dialogue across chronologically distant texts to draw conclusions about how the ways people think about God over time reflect the ways they think about the boundaries of the self. The characters' voluntary reception and resistance to these instances of possession support students in writing comparative literary analysis essays based on questions like: *How do instances of possession reveal themselves as helpful or harmful?* and, *What sorts of conceptions of the human individual and human society do these experiences reflect?*

## EUROPEAN HISTORY, SPRING SEMESTER

### From Absolutism to Uncertainty: Europe from 1648 to 1919

This course is about the creation of modern Europe, and the major social, economic, and political trends that shaped its countries and peoples between 1648 and 1919. It begins with an analysis of the Age of Absolutism; the concentration of centralized political authority that absolutism represents is analyzed against the backdrop of global trade and colonialism. The course next moves on to read the social-political thought that both justified and opposed the idea of monarchy, as well as hinting at later revolutions. We examine excerpts from the work of Nicola Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, as well as the revolutionary ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau. In our third unit, we discuss how these ideas ultimately led to the undoing of absolutism, paying particular attention to England's Glorious Revolution of 1689 and the French Revolution. We also study how the racialization of the revolution ultimately manifested itself in opposition to Toussaint Louverture's leadership in Haiti. Finally, the course

examines the historical role that conflict has played in European state building, and how such patterns ultimately manifested themselves in the utter destruction of the First World War.

# Upper School Humanities Electives

## HISTORY ELECTIVE, FALL SEMESTER

### A People's History of WWII and the New Deal

In this course, we take scope of the United States from 1933-1945—years which saw unprecedented political, economic, and demographic shifts set in motion by the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Second World War and the Holocaust. But rather than emphasizing legislation, party politics, and military campaigns, we explore social and cultural changes from the bottom up: How did these developments foster new opportunities for building local, national, and even hemispheric communities? For producing new national narratives and myths? For reconceptualizing the individual's relationship to the State? And in what ways were these challenges belied by the intransigent forces of capitalist, racist, sexist, and nationalist thinking? We also consider the changes in American thought and activism after the war that were catalyzed by the circulation of images of the Holocaust and the atomic bomb. Touring tenements, Hoovervilles, Japanese-American concentration camps, sharecroppers' cabins, German-Jewish intellectual enclaves, and construction sites; examining photographs, films, advertisements, and murals; and engaging in writing and experiential learning that emphasizes the built and cultural landscapes of the era, this course traces the contours of everyday experience for everyday people in an era of World Historical upheaval.

## LITERATURE ELECTIVE, FALL SEMESTER

### Voices of Incarceration

Whenever Professor of Art History and American Studies and Author Nicole R. Fleetwood encounters art or writing made by individuals who are presently or were formerly incarcerated, she proposes asking the following questions: Who has access [to this work]? Who has ownership? How do these works circulate? How do these [works] play into institutional frameworks of prison and the captive/free, etc.?

These questions frame a semester-long exploration of a selection of novels, essays, films and letters that explore the role of the prison in society and individuals' experiences of incarceration in the U.S., particularly in Los Angeles. 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. Students will read texts written by individuals who are currently or were formerly incarcerated, *and* writing created by

those on the outside. 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 be challenged to consider what stories have shaped their own perspectives about carceral institutions and criminality and where those narratives come from. Students will also speak with individuals and organizations that are working to change the experience of people-in-custody. In addition to ongoingly applying Fleetwood's questions to the works we encounter, we will also think about and interrogate the following main questions as we move through our study:

1. What is the role and significance of literature written about experiences of incarceration?
2. What are the different effects of and uses for writing that comes from outside the prison versus writing that comes from the inside?
3. What writing has shaped our understanding of carceral institutions and how do the writings we encounter in this course change or add to it?
4. How has the prison industrial complex shaped California's contemporary social and political landscape?
5. How does the U.S. criminal justice system create and maintain racial hierarchy through mass incarceration?

## LITERATURE ELECTIVE, FALL SEMESTER

### Poetry of Exile: Dante's *Commedia* in Translation

Dante's *Divine Comedy* stands as one of the greatest epic poems ever written, comfortably sharing shelf-space with Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Milton. Dante's imaginative depiction of the afterlife combines medieval theology, pagan myth, and profoundly human experience into three vivid realms peopled by the souls of the dead and meticulously organized by Divine Justice. This course will follow Dante's journey through *Inferno*.

This semester-long elective follows Dante the Pilgrim as he descends through Hell's concentric circles. With Virgil as his guide, Dante encounters hordes of sinners who are justly and poetically punished according to their specific sins in life until, at the bottom of the wretched cone, he comes face-to-face with Satan. An unforgettable cast of characters and gruesome punishments jump off of *Inferno*'s pages, but it's the poem's undeniable beauty and keen insight into the human condition that cement it in the mind of anyone who reads it.

Students not only engage with the medieval text in translation, but are required to grapple with Dante's intricate intertextual mode — supplementing the master text with readings from Classical mythology, Christian theology, ancient philosophy, and learning to apply annotations and criticism to the poem. Students will produce written work comparing *Inferno* to Virgil's *Aeneid*, keep a running journal of images and allusions, and finish the semester with a



photography-based project that places Dante's words in our modern world and an essay on dynamic language.

#### HISTORY ELECTIVE, FALL SEMESTER

### Pre-Colonial Africa

The goal of the course, to the extent that we can speak of a singular purpose, is to contribute to sound, evidence-based knowledge about the African continent that enriches student perspectives both about larger historical processes, as well as the way in which all peoples from all over the world have contributed to them. Students develop a sense of the manner in which culture, ideology, social institutions and customs affect the ways African societies organize themselves, which may at first appear to be unique, or novel. Students also come away from the course with a recognition of historically rooted continuities that link African societies and economies both to each other and to other regions of the world.

After examining the structure of pre-colonial African states and societies, one of the principal questions we ask in the course is: *What role has the continent played historically in the circulation of goods, services, ideas and people in the pre-colonial world?* What quickly becomes apparent is that pre-colonial Africa was shaped by, and in turn shaped, the world in which the continent enmeshed itself, going back to the Middle Ages and earlier. Thus, the course examines West Africa's historic ties to Mecca and the Islamic World in the medieval period, the city states of the Swahili coasts and their trade activities that reached as far afield as China and India from the 1100s onward, or the manner in which African gold helped to monetize the global economy of the Middle Ages. In revisiting these fundamentally important but often neglected social and economic processes, we attempt to shift the center of focus in world history by helping to chart out a place for African societies. In so doing, we highlight the importance of the continent and hopefully bring to the table a long-forgotten voice in our understanding of the foundations of our modern world.

#### HISTORY ELECTIVE, SPRING SEMESTER

### Political Populism and Conspiracy Theory

This course examines the evolution of populist movements in the United States. It begins by exploring the narrative and conceptual frameworks that animated populist movements from the mid-19th to early 20th Centuries, centering on groups such as the Know-Nothings and the People's Party. We then explore the dark side of these movements and others, discussing the scapegoating of immigrants, non-whites, Catholics, and others, and popular conspiracy theories about the roots of US intervention in World War I.

During the second part of the course, we explore how the complexity of the US economy and its institutions of government during and after the Great Depression, along with massive social changes in the 20th Century, spawned new forms of populism. We discuss historical personages such as Huey Long, Father Coughlin, George Wallace, and political movements such as the New Left and the John Birch Society.

Finally, we examine populist movements and conspiratorial theories that have grown out of globalization, focusing on the Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, and a myriad of smaller groups, some of whom engage in the politics of hate. We end the course with a discussion of the role of populist narratives, discourses, and movements within contemporary American politics. Our study of the history of populist movements and conspiracy theories provides students with the analytical background to examine contemporary issues of great importance, such as the January 6 insurrection at the US capital, and contemporary conspiracy theories and movements such as QAnon.

#### HISTORY ELECTIVE, SPRING SEMESTER

### A Cultural History of Asian Immigration to the U.S.

Drawing from theories of hybridity and representation developed around Asian-American identity in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, this course takes scope of the patchwork of experiences of peoples of Asian descent in the United States. We consider how and why different national and ethnic groups arrived in this nation, contended with larger structural forces, and remade the landscape of US culture and politics. Grounding our discussions are two key themes: First, how this diverse group was positioned, and positioned themselves, amidst domestic and international developments; and second, how this diverse group strived for self-representation in a society that rejected, fetishized, and exoticized the "Oriental" other.

Along with cutting-edge scholarship on Asian-American identity from Erika Lee and Jay Caspian Kang, we engage cultural texts such as photographs, poems, and Carlos Bulosan's 1946 memoir, *America Is in the Heart*, as we traverse railroad camps and sugar plantations, Chinatowns and internment camps, bachelor hotels and boba shops. Accompanying our historical inquiry are weekly discussions of an article of students' choosing from the online journal, *Hyphen*, and a series of visits from Asian-American health and social workers and activists working with Asian-American communities in Southern California.

## HISTORY ELECTIVE, SPRING SEMESTER

### American South

In the popular American imagination, the South tends to get a bad rap. Constructed as the home of Confederate flags, racism, fried food, country accents and Bible thumpers, the region is often dismissed as being backwards and unlike the rest of America, especially by those who do not live there. In this course, however, we begin by rejecting any stable idea of “the South,” departing from the notion that there are multiple Souths existing in the same region. Further, we will examine the history and culture of the U.S. South not as an American outlier, but rather as an American creation par excellence. Thus, as students learn about the slave societies of the South, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement, particular emphasis will be placed on this question: what can the South teach us about what needs to happen for America to move forward from its “original sins” of slavery and genocide? Because the course builds towards a five day experiential learning trip in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, students should expect a personally and academically rigorous experience, and thus should be prepared to complete a college-level workload.

## HISTORY ELECTIVE, SPRING SEMESTER

### Race and Popular Culture in the Modern United States

The century from the end of the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s saw the advent of a national mass media that seeped into everyday life through film, radio, records, television, magazines, public leisure spaces, and novels. Yet even as the United States became increasingly integrated in terms of *what* people consumed, ideas of race in these texts continued to depict a disconnected, unequal nation, reinforcing structural inequalities amidst an official story of increasing democracy, often by emphasizing exoticism.

This course examines popular culture’s role in circulating and reinforcing racial stereotypes in the US; the larger political, economic, and social impacts of these representations; and ways in which artists and activists have used these same media to *challenge* normative ideas of race as part of freedom struggles. Refracting key moments in modern US history—the end of slavery, the rise of industrial capitalism, immigration, economic fluctuations, and war—through the prism of photographs, novellas, pop songs, television, films, and amusement parks, we ask: *What role can culture play in shaping, reinforcing, and challenging how Americans relate to each other?*

Key cultural texts emphasize these contested representations in their unique contexts: the Fisk Jubilee Singers during their first tour of the US in 1871, the unveiling of Gabriel Siqueiros’s ironically-titled *America Tropical* mural at Olvera St. in 1932, and Dorothea Lange’s

photographs of Japanese-American concentration camps in 1942, to name just three. We also consider how professional historians have broached this question, and, through a series of short essay assignments, interrogate cultural texts that, though common, are the opposite of trivial.

# Upper School Science

## SCIENCE 9

### Chemistry

This course exposes students to the mindset and practices of a chemist. The course introduces students to fundamental concepts of chemistry, which are the core ideas of physical and natural sciences. Students create models, participate in lab activities, and gather data to explain interactions occurring at the molecular level. With a focus on phenomena-based learning, students build upon their prior knowledge during the process of inquiry and investigation. Students engage in virtual simulations that model different experiments from Thompson, Rutherford, and Chadwick, showing evidence of the existence of the proton, neutron, and electron within the atom.

To equip students with the 21st Century skills they will need to tackle complex, real-world challenges, this course involves lessons rooted in problem solving and introduces new research and ideas in chemistry. Topics covered include the patterns in the periodic table that help scientists predict how elements and compounds react during a chemical reaction, and how those reactions are important for biological systems and our environment.

## SCIENCE 10

### Physics

Have you ever wondered how an airplane can simulate zero gravity like astronauts on the international space station experience? Or how airplanes can fly in the first place, with hundreds of passengers and their cargo?

In this course students explore the theoretical and practical applications of the four fundamental forces of nature. Building upon the core concepts learned in previous science courses, as well as the experience with natural phenomena encountered in our daily lives, physicists apply scientific thinking and computational analysis to solve real-life challenges through hands-on experimentation.

This course integrates cross cutting concepts and 21st-Century skills needed to prepare students to think critically in a future of technological advancements and global energy demands. The year focuses on looking at various topics through the lens of energy and how it is conserved. Students use precise equations related to motion, heat, electricity, and waves, and develop their conceptual understanding of how everyday phenomena are the result of the

microscopic interactions involving subatomic particles, visualized by models, demonstrations, and experimentation.

## SCIENCE 11

### Biology

This course focuses on the interconnections of four unifying concepts: structure and function of living systems, transformations of energy and matter, information flow and storage, and evolution.

Students use inquiry and the scientific method to generate and answer questions about current topics in biology. Specific topics are determined by students and may include: the diversity of life, interconnectedness among ecosystems, genetic engineering, infection and response, cancer and stem cell research, and the impacts of trauma on neurotransmitters. We work together to integrate our existing understanding of living systems and acquire new knowledge to explore our beautifully complex, dynamic, living world.

Students also participate in the Biology Sustainability Challenge by identifying the challenges of living sustainably in an urban environment, researching cities that are managing to coexist with nature, exploring environmental injustices in Los Angeles, and finally designing and proposing nature-based solutions and designs that can potentially coexist at SLA.

### *Electives*

#### ELECTIVE, FALL SEMESTER

### Computer Science: JavaScript

The introduction to computer science course teaches the foundations of computer science and basic programming with an emphasis on helping students develop logical thinking and problem solving skills and be able to program in JavaScript. Each unit of the course is broken down into lessons. Lessons consist of video tutorials, classroom instruction, short quizzes, example programs to analyze and modify, and individual written programming exercises, adding up to over 100 hours of hands-on programming practice in total. Each unit ends with a comprehensive unit test to check algorithm, syntax and performance task (\*working program) that assesses student mastery of the material from that unit.

ELECTIVE, FALL AND SPRING SEMESTER

## Computer Science: Python and Applications in AI

This introduction to computer science course offers a comprehensive understanding of computer science fundamentals and basic programming concepts, with a particular focus on artificial intelligence. Through the Python programming language, students not only develop logical thinking and problem-solving skills but also gain insights into the practical applications and ethical considerations surrounding AI. Each unit consists of a diverse range of lessons, including video tutorials and simulations presented by CodeHs, in-classroom instruction, hands-on analysis and modification of example programs, and individual programming exercises. Additionally, weekly discussions will provide students with the opportunity to learn about the social impact of AI, fostering critical thinking and encouraging ethical reflections. To assess student understanding and proficiency, each unit culminates in a comprehensive assessment project that evaluates student mastery of the unit's material and serves as a reflection for real-world AI applications, allowing students to bridge the gap between theory and practical implementation.

ELECTIVE, SPRING SEMESTER

## Computer Science: Coding Hub

In this dynamic course, students embark on a journey of technology exploration and innovation. As students gain competency in programming languages, frameworks, and design principles, the course places a strong emphasis on skill acquisition. Each unit serves as a checking point for students to remain on track to produce functional prototypes, emphasizing user experience and important functionality. By the end of the semester, the students will have a computational artifact that has been polished, made practical, and put through extensive testing. Students leave this hands-on, group learning experience with the knowledge and attitude needed to succeed in the rapidly changing world of technology.

ELECTIVE, FALL SEMESTER

## Ecology: A Fieldwork-Based Approach to Ecological Restoration of The L.A. River

*Our River, Our Future.* For centuries, the Los Angeles River has sustained life—and to its very own detriment—the settlements that founded our city. Beginning with the genocide of Tongva villages and exacerbated by our continued settlement and industrialization, we are active participants in the violence perpetuated against our most bountiful ecosystems. As a result, we must also serve as active participants in the restoration and biological healing of this land.

In this upper-level course, students investigate and employ their understanding of fundamental biological concepts, current scientific literature, and contemporary projects relating to ecological restoration. Engaging the Los Angeles River as our primary case-study, students collect and analyze ecological data using a mixed-methods approach. As part of this research, students perform various tests on water and soil samples from local fieldwork sites and complete in-depth analyses of the rapidly changing biodiversity throughout these regions. Students reference and interrogate local, national, and international restoration projects as a means of exploring alternative objectives, problems, limitations, ecological potentials, and restoration strategies. As a culmination of these learnings, students develop their own restoration project with the purpose of protecting, managing, and restoring our local ecosystems.

**ELECTIVE, SPRING SEMESTER**

### **Epidemiology: Non-Infectious and Chronic Disease**

What is disease and how does it manifest in different parts of the body? What factors may lead to chronic diseases in different populations? How do scientists compile and use public health data to address these chronic health conditions?

This non-infectious epidemiology course offers an emphasis on the methodological approach used when collecting evidence that links the causal effect of societal determinants to a certain chronic health outcome within a population. Students wear the hat of both a data-research scientist and health advocate. Students begin by understanding the anatomy and physiology of “healthy” body systems and through dissection and existing clinical studies, investigate factors negatively impacting this health. Working towards a common language when investigating health outcomes, students engage existing scientific research, biological concepts relating to the human body, and statistical tools to collect and analyze large health datasets. From their analyses, students attempt to expose the biopolitical mechanism by which a policy (or lack of) has infected the health of those it targets. Examining policies relating to housing, employment, education, and access to healthcare and correlating health measures such as infant mortality and life expectancy, students gain critical insight into the politics behind health. Students branch the knowledge and skill sets strengthened across their biological, statistical, and political research and discussions. In culmination, students develop an in-depth research analysis of a specific policy or program and its relation to a health outcome. As a result, they may then begin to offer their own insight as to the societal changes most relevant to improving the conditions of those most affected.



# Upper School Math

## Integrated Mathematics I: Algebra and Introductory Geometry

A student's journey into advanced mathematics is fundamentally an exploration of detecting, describing, and making conclusions from patterns. In this course, the first in SLA's Integrated Math Series, students are introduced to foundational skills and ideas in introductory algebra, geometry, and data analysis. We develop a thorough understanding of linear equations, inequalities, and systems, and we explore linear and exponential functions represented with graphs, numbers, and algebraic notation.

Students develop their skills in representations in the coordinate plane, rigid transformations, and compass and straight-edge constructions to create and prove simple theorems in geometry. They investigate how to represent data in one and two variables by using visual, verbal, and numerical measures of center and spread. They also explore bivariate relationships in data with scatter plots, correlation, and linear regression models. Students develop more skills with irrational numbers (square and cube roots) and the Pythagorean Theorem. They use these skills to increase their working knowledge of special right triangles and Pythagorean triples, which are used frequently in future studies of algebra and geometry.

## Integrated Mathematics II: Geometry, Probability, and Intermediate Algebra

As students learn to detect and describe patterns with algebra, graphs, tables, and words, they also learn to create more convincing arguments when generalizing from patterns. In this course, students practice methods for rigorously justifying their conclusions in geometry, algebra, and probability. Students begin this journey by exploring ruler-compass constructions—using software such as GeoGebra and Desmos—as well as different frameworks for providing proofs for their conclusions, including two-column, flowcharts, diagrams, proofs by contradiction, and algebraic proofs with coordinate geometry. By exploring new geometric relationships through class challenges, activity-based problems in Desmos, and proof-writing, students learn to make convincing claims about lines, angles, triangles, dilations, and similarity.

Students also further develop their skills in geometric reasoning, algebra, and mathematical modeling as they explore the algebraic and graphical properties of quadratic functions. Through mathematical modeling activities, students explore how the equations of functions they have studied in the abstract can be modified to represent real-world phenomena. Students also examine how conditional probability can help them make wise predictions about random chance events that emerge in large-scale drug and disease testing.

## Integrated Mathematics III: Advanced Algebra and Analysis of Functions

In this course, students further develop their skills in solving equations, analyzing graphs of functions, and modeling scenarios with geometry and algebra. All of these skills give students greater power to detect, describe, and generalize from patterns they see in the world around them. By completing rich problem sets, unpacking the arguments of other students, and exploring complex examples through Desmos (dynamic graphing software), students learn to better predict the graphical features of functions based on their equations. Through class investigations, case-study problems, mini-projects, and written assessments, students demonstrate their capacity to solve problems, describe patterns, and justify their reasoning.

We also explore exponential functions across continuous domains, which allows us to develop a deeper understanding of fractional exponents. We introduce logarithms as the inverses of exponentiation, and students explore the properties of logarithms to solve more complex problems with unknown exponents. Students explore the end behavior of polynomials and rational functions, as well as the concept of asymptotes and multiplicities of zeros. Students learn multiple strategies for dividing polynomials and extend their knowledge of graphing parabolas to higher-degree polynomials. Students analyze properties of a library of common functions (linear, quadratic, cubic, hyperbolic, exponential, absolute value, and  $n$ th root) and their linear transformations. Lastly, students apply their understanding of geometry and similarity to develop an understanding of radian measure, the Unit Circle, and definitions of trigonometric ratios beyond right triangles. In addition to developing stronger algebra skills, students use Desmos, spreadsheets, and graphing calculators to explore complex functions, automate calculations, and determine solutions for problems that require computational or numerical solution methods.

## Precalculus and Trigonometry

How can students precisely model how planets, populations, viruses and earthquakes behave?  
How do probability, algebra, and geometry give us the tools to develop good models?

In this course, students develop a more sophisticated understanding and analysis of functions and equations. We develop fluency with the following big ideas of precalculus: invertibility of functions and its relationship to domains and range; advanced explorations of rational, polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic functions and their applications; building new functions from existing functions; unit-circle trigonometry, periodic functions, and their applications; statistical variability; arithmetic and geometric series; sigma notation; and an introduction to limits and rates of change.

During this course, students fine tune their algebra skills while diving deeper into concepts covered in previous years. Students also develop an understanding of new topics, which

includes familiarity with six trigonometric functions; their inverses, graphs, and applications; trigonometric identities; the law of sines and cosines; introductions to parametric functions; and polar representations of equations and complex numbers. Students use random numbers and simulations as a tool to estimate complex probabilities and are introduced to the concept of a derivative in preparation for future courses in calculus. Lastly, students develop experience using computers and graphing calculators for problems that require computational or numerical solution methods.

## Statistics and Probability

The world is awash in variability. How do we make sense of it? How can we detect genuine signals from random noise and make good conclusions about the future?

This course provides an in-depth study of statistics fundamentals: understanding variability in data. Students learn about variability by mastering four foundational components of the statistical process: how to read and summarize data (univariate and bivariate exploratory data analysis); how to produce valuable data (design of samples and experiments); the mathematical behavior of randomness (probability, simulations, the normal model, sampling distributions); and making conclusions from data (statistical inference using simulations, hypothesis tests, and confidence intervals).

Students develop their technical reading and writing skills as they analyze case studies and real data collected from in-class studies and experiments. Students use statistical software and technology to facilitate computational work, and they develop their skills in communicating substantive, correct conclusions with precision, accuracy, and proper context. Students frequently demonstrate their understanding through investigations and case studies on topics of their own choosing.

## Calculus 1

This course is designed for students who have successfully completed Precalculus and Trigonometry or have demonstrated calculus readiness in the Math Analysis elective. In this course, students develop fluency with the following core concepts of calculus: limits and continuity, derivatives and rates of change and their applications, integration and accumulation of change and their applications, and differential equations. Throughout the year, students fine tune their proof-writing skills and learn how to use theorems and definitions to make valid conclusions.

Students use limits to determine whether functions are continuous, to determine the instantaneous rate of change of a function, and to evaluate the area under a graph. They

explore derivatives and approximate functions using linearization. They gain strategies for modeling problems involving related rates and optimization and can use derivatives and integrals to answer questions about straight-line motion and other applied contexts—for example, determining the dimensions of a soda can that costs the least to manufacture

Students learn to write integrals as a limit of a Riemann sum and approximate them using rectangles and trapezoids. We solve problems related to volume using cross sections, discs, washers, and cylindrical shells and solve separable differential equations and plot and analyze their slope fields. During class, students regularly collaborate on assignments while they work through these ideas and present their findings to their peers. Small projects involving modeling are interspersed throughout the year. Lastly, students continue to develop experience using computers and graphing calculators for problems that require computational or numerical solution methods.

## Calculus 2

In this course, students deepen their understanding of differential and integral calculus with improper integrals, Euler's method, logistic differential equations, integration with partial fractions, integration by parts, and using integrals to compute arc length. Students develop fluency with the following core concepts of calculus: parametric equations; polar and vector-valued functions; infinite sequences and series; linear algebra; and complex numbers, functions, and roots.

Students are introduced to the algebra of vectors and matrices and use their understanding of pivot positions to answer questions about systems of linear equations, linear independence, and the span of a set of vectors. Students use parametric equations and vector-valued functions to understand the position of a particle moving in a plane, and can calculate velocity, speed, and acceleration of a particle moving along a curve. Students learn to graph and find the areas bounded by polar curves, and we study the algebra of complex numbers in both rectangular and polar form. By understanding the graphs and areas bounded by polar curves, students can, for example, estimate the number of people seated in a music hall the shape of a cardioid.

We dive deep into the use of infinite power series to represent and estimate more complicated functions. Students become fluent with tests to determine the convergence and divergence of infinite series, and can approximate functions with Taylor and Maclaurin polynomials, and provide an error-bound analysis of such approximations. In class, students spend much of their time exploring these ideas in groups and presenting their findings. They are routinely encouraged to question why theorems and formulas are true and demand proofs to justify their use. Lastly, students continue to develop their experience using computers and graphing calculators for problems that require computational or numerical solution methods.

## *Electives*

### **MATHEMATICS ELECTIVE, SPRING SEMESTER**

#### **Mathematical Analysis and Functions**

Students may elect to take this course simultaneously with Integrated III. Because of the fast pace of the course and its ambitious agenda, enrollment requires Mathematics Department approval and is recommended to students who are interested in substantial work outside of class. This course exposes students to mathematical concepts and topics essential for success in a first-year calculus course, and—in rare cases—students who demonstrate readiness may be approved to advance directly to Calculus I the following year.

Students will explore the following units: 1) Unit Circle Trigonometry and Periodic Functions, 2) Analyzing Functions and Linear Transformations of Functions, 3) Arithmetic and Geometric Series and Sigma Notation, and 4) Exploring Limits through Advanced Polynomial and Rational Functions. Advanced algebraic techniques and sophisticated use of mathematical technology to solve problems are interwoven throughout every lesson.

# Upper School Languages

## Spanish I

This is a non-native Spanish course intended to provide a general introduction to the Spanish language. Through practice in and out of class, students work toward meeting the “Novice High” level of proficiency as outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The course focuses on sound system, pronunciation, functional vocabulary related to everyday life, cultural information, and basic grammatical structures that concentrate primarily on the present tense.

Students engage with short readings, films, and recorded conversations on topics like introductions/greetings, the running of the bulls, and dating; students also study music such as “Los pollitos dicen,” “Corre Corre Corazon,” y “Rie y Lloro.” The course emphasizes the acquisition of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The main objective of the course is to give students the opportunity to carry on simple conversations in Spanish, as well as compare their own culture to that of the Spanish-speaking world.

## Spanish II

In this course, through practice in and out of class, students work toward meeting the “Intermediate Low” level of proficiency as outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Students continue the development of all modalities of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

This course includes a greater focus on grammatical structures and verb conjugations (tenses). Having mastered the present tense, students expand their study to the preterite and imperfect tenses. With room for flexibility, we cover topics that include but are not limited to: travel, daily routines, food and restaurants, holidays, social occasions, and media and technology.

## Spanish III

Students enrolled in this course develop strong linguistic skills while increasing their understanding of the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of Spanish-speaking peoples. Students develop comfort speaking in several tenses—including the present, the preterite, and the future—and using colloquial expressions at a conversational speed. Students

also use their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar to analyze authentic texts, engage in conversation, and write in idiomatic style.

This course allows students to engage in conversation, form opinions, and explore topics that include: how people are educated by different communities, how people individuate themselves, how technology is affecting the world (with sub topics that include how technology affects health care and one's well-being), and how our society has come to judge beauty and aesthetics. The objective is for students to engage and develop the following domains: interpersonal communication, presentational speaking, presentational writing, interpretive listening, interpretive reading, and cultural comparison.

## Spanish IV: Language and Culture

In this course, students speak Spanish almost exclusively. The course provides opportunities for cultural comparisons within the majority of Spanish-speaking countries and Los Angeles at large, while using a variety of instructional materials, including: authentic written materials, music, film, news media, interviews, and literature.

The course provides opportunities for students to practice Spanish in authentic conversations surrounding unit themes. Students make meaning and interpret a variety of material in Spanish and provide their written and oral presentation on several topics. Some of the readings include: *La Otra Cara de América* by Jorge Ramos, Isabel Allende's work, and excerpts from Gabriel García Márquez, among many others. The course also provides opportunities for students to write extended essays in Spanish as well as shorter essays, and other various forms of writing.

## Spanish IV: Film

This course centers largely on viewings and discussions of Spanish-language feature-length films. The course uses the lens of global cinema to immerse Spanish-speaking students into the diverse contexts and challenges of 21st-Century citizenship in Latin America and Spain. The course supports a 21st-Century global education by building (inter-)cultural competencies, promoting media literacy, developing viewing as a critical skill, and modeling deep engagement with complex texts.

We explore cinema from and about Latin America to expand our understanding of this culturally diverse region comprising more than twenty countries and territories. We examine topics such as ethnicity, class representation, immigration and exile, dictatorship, experiences of war and violence, globalization, gender, as well as sexual and racial identities, among other themes. Through this cinematographic encounter, we develop new perspectives and understandings of Latin America. Some of the readings in class include: *Venas Abiertas de*

*Latinoamérica* by Eduardo Galeano and *Modern Latin America* by Peter H. Smith, James N. Green, and Thomas E. Skidmore, among many rich articles and excerpts.

## Spanish V: Literature

This course, conducted exclusively in Spanish, introduces students to the major literary movements in Spain, Latin America, and the United States. Students critically analyze representative works of prose, poetry, and drama, and draw connections between various traditions and contexts. We cover a wide range of literary movements, including Medieval literature, Romanticism, Naturalism, Generation 98 and Modernism, the Latin American Boom, along with contemporary works from the United States and Spain.

Students explore a number of themes across different works, including: societies in contact, gender construction, time and space, the creative process, and interpersonal relationships. Throughout the course, students contribute to individual readings, discussions, projects, dramatizations, letters, posters, essays, and presentations—reflecting on the characteristics of major literary movements and the forces that shaped them. Readings include: *Hombres necios que acusáis* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* by Federico García Lorca, and *La segunda carta de relación* by Hernán Cortés.



# Upper School Visual & Performing Arts

## VISUAL ART, FALL AND SPRING SEMESTER

### Visual Art

This course emphasizes creativity, concept development, and scale using diverse materials and techniques to create unique two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms. Students apply art techniques and expand visual art skills by using a wide range of tools and materials. Students delve on graphite, pen and ink, 3D printing, sculpture, paint, and sculpture. Projects emphasize creative thinking and problem-solving skills to initiate the creative process from concept sketches to finalized polished art pieces. Students work with their peers in order to critique and look at their artwork through a growth mindset. We learn about contemporary and historical artists that range from Kehinde Wiley to John Singer Sargent in order to expand our artist vocabulary and literacy. Students develop an understanding of each material in order to construct a personal portfolio.

## VISUAL ART, SPRING SEMESTER

### Ceramics

In Ceramics, students explore clay as one of the most ancient and versatile materials used by artists, craftspeople, and humans across cultures. As a class we explore how ceramics is a crucial guide to understanding the development of human life, and how clay connects us to the earth and our bodies. Central to the course is our journey through many stages of clay—from malleable to vitrified—to create ceramic objects of permanence. Merging craft and creative expression, students develop a breadth of knowledge through tactile engagement and kinesthetic approaches. Students present their own findings from experimenting with clay materials, processes, and techniques to enhance, expand, and encourage their ideas and those of their peers.

With a focus on hand-building, students learn to pinch, coil, and slab clay to create ceramic forms. Students also experiment with and learn techniques to creatively express through surface design: applying texture using hands, tools, natural materials, and everyday objects, learning sgraffito and mishima, as well as experimenting with the application of underglazes, stains, and glazes. Students keep a visual journal throughout their ceramic journey combining sketching, note-taking, and reflective writing: documenting ideation, clay and glaze experimentation, and how they ultimately use their creations in daily life and practice.

## VISUAL ART

### Portfolio Building

In this year-long course, advanced visual arts students build a portfolio of their strongest visual and conceptual work. Students study modern and contemporary artists and artmaking techniques as they reflect on their own process and history of artmaking. In conversation with visiting artists, students ask: How do artists present themselves? How do artists describe their work? How does an artist build a network?

At the beginning of the course, students write a statement of inquiry, outlining the essential questions they hope to answer through their concentration (a sustained investigation of a theme, medium, element of art, or concept). Throughout the course, students are challenged to develop and diversify their concentration through individual and collaborative art practices. At the culmination of the course, each student produces a portfolio of work and a written artist statement to be exhibited in the spring art show.

## THEATRE, FALL SEMESTER

### Ensemble

This collaborative course fully immerses students in one genre of performing arts. Students read, analyze, and produce a show or showcase from one of the following genres: Ancient Greek Theatre, Shakespeare, Theatre of the Absurd, American Realism, Musical Theatre, Theatre for Social Change, or Theatre of Empowerment. Each genre is offered in rotation so that students have the opportunity to experiment with a variety of styles. Students explore acting, directing, producing, devising, and dramaturgy as they build a collaborative understanding of the genre.

Students study the culture and history of the genre in question as they consider the implications of a production in the present moment. Is this genre still relevant? What could be modified to make it relevant? What impact might a production of this genre have on a contemporary audience? What impact did it have when it was originally produced? Students consider these questions as they deconstruct past ways of being and thinking that have influenced past and contemporary theatre making. Using feminist theory, postcolonial theory, and queer theory, students critique the existing literature and performance methods of the genre and create a culminating performance that invites their audience into this critique.

## THEATRE, SPRING SEMESTER

### Playwriting

In this performing arts course, students explore a range of dramatic styles for writing monologues, scenes, and short plays. Studying modern and contemporary playwriting, students read and analyze the work of Katori Hall, Dominique Morisseau, Suzan-Lori Parks, Ntozake Shange, Anna Deavere Smith, Tennessee Williams, and Luis Valdez. Students discuss the impact of playwriting in different cultural and historical contexts, as well as discuss various plays' production value in the current year.

Crucial to the study of playwriting, students are encouraged to develop their unique voice and style in a workshop environment with consistent feedback from their peers. Workshops are guided by the questions: What draws us into this work? What connections do we make? Where do we want to know more? Students are assessed on their ability to write, workshop, revise, and produce their own original work in a writing portfolio and ten-minute play festival at the culmination of the course.

## THEATRE, SPRING SEMESTER

### Advanced Playwriting

In this performing arts course, students continue to build upon the skills they gained in Playwriting. Students add character studies, abstracts, manifestos, and moment work to their playwriting portfolios. Studying modern and contemporary playwriting, students read and analyze the work of Edward Albee, Caryl Churchill, Athol Fugard, Henrik Ibsen, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Sarah Ruhl, and August Wilson. Students discuss their role as creators and sustainers of American Theatre and question what it means to be an American playwright. What is the legacy they inherit? What hopes and dreams do they have for the future of theatre?

Crucial to the study of playwriting, students are encouraged to develop their unique voice and style in a workshop environment with consistent feedback from their peers. Student assessment focuses on their ability to write, workshop, revise, and produce their own original work in a writing portfolio and a new plays festival at the culmination of the course. Some students choose to pursue a course of study where they develop one longer piece (a one- or two-act play) over the course of the semester. These students are welcomed to produce their play in a future semester with support from theatre faculty.

## MUSIC

### Band

Are you interested in taking your music making to the next level? This performing arts course is an introductory study of ensemble playing in commercial genres including rock, soul, pop, and country focusing on 1950–2020. Students learn the fundamentals of music through studying band instruments, music notation, ear training, scales, harmony, and rhythm.

Everyone is encouraged to explore multiple instruments and learn the basics of drums, bass, piano, and guitar. The majority of class time is spent working toward a live performance at the end of the term. Additional projects include recording, performance critiques, and album reviews. The class is hands-on and much of the learning takes place via peer-to-peer modeling, with an emphasis on band ethics, personal responsibility, and generosity. Teacher approval is required.

## MUSIC

### Advanced Band

Do you already know how to play an instrument well? Are you curious about what it feels like to be a bandleader? This performing arts course is designed for those students wanting to take more control of their own musical direction. Designated band leaders choose the repertoire for each group and generate the materials needed for rehearsal, including demo recordings and charts. Teachers act much more as collaborators and offer assistance with recording technology, stage settings, group discussions, and band etiquette.

Music theory, ear training, and instrumental command are expected. The majority of class time is spent working toward a live performance at the end of the term. The class is hands-on and much of the learning takes place via peer-to-peer modeling. Students with exceptional ability are given independent study projects. Teacher approval is required.

## FILM AND PHOTO

### Photography

In this photography course students will explore visual storytelling through photography. Students will take a critical approach to photography as they analyze works from the past in an effort to create a new future. What is the story? What is left out of the image?

Throughout the course, students will utilize mobile devices and DSLRs to learn exposure, composition, and storytelling. Students will be presented with a journal that will be used

throughout the course to capture ideas and experiences. These journals will serve as inspiration for their photographs as they learn to tell their own visual story.

## FILM AND PHOTO

### Film

In this introductory film course students will learn about the history and technology of cinema. By focusing on the early days of filmmaking students will learn about the art form in a more critical manner. Students will be presented with filmmakers that have been left out of the conversation as we fill in the gaps in cinema history.

Students will be assessed by written analysis as well as group discussions on different themes throughout the history of cinema.

## FILM AND PHOTO

### Broadcast Journalism

In this course, students will create a student-run news station that showcases the community around them. As students create and run their news station they will discuss the following questions:

1. What is the future of broadcasting in a dense information age?
2. What is news and what is opinion?
3. How can we become better journalists through the way we ask questions and provide information?
4. How can we use media as an artifact and capture time through our broadcasts?

Using multiple different forms of technology students will learn how to write, produce and broadcast non-fiction storytelling. Over the duration of the course, students will become journalists broadcasting local stories within the school community and city.

# Upper School Religion, Ethics, and Philosophy

## REP 9, SPRING SEMESTER

### New Testament

In *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, the late biblical scholar Marcus Borg notes that it is useful to refer to the image we create of Jesus as a sketch rather than a picture or portrait because a sketch “suggests broad strokes—a clear outline without much precision” (Borg, 28).

Every student, regardless of their experience with scripture or organized religion, has assumptions about who or what Jesus is or was. Students begin the course by reflecting on the experiences and backgrounds that have influenced the sketch of Jesus they carry around in their head. Throughout the semester, students examine the history of the library that we call the New Testament and learn the tools that are necessary to read the Gospels in the historical context of Jesus and his first followers. Through close and critical reading of the text, students add to, clarify, and hopefully complicate their understanding of Jesus of Nazareth.

As we do this work, we reflect on the ways understandings of Jesus continue to impact the modern world and we ask big questions, including the following:

- Why do our images of Jesus matter?
- How did the library of texts we call the New Testament come to exist and why did its authors write it?
- Who was Jesus of Nazareth and what can we learn about Jesus from scripture?
- Who did Jesus think he was?
- How did early Jesus-followers use and adapt existing scripture, symbols, and information technology?
- What did Jesus mean when he talked about The Kingdom of God? What might this Kingdom mean for us today?

## REP 10, FALL SEMESTER

### Encountering God

What do we mean by God/god? What grounds do we have for saying that God exists? What might belief in God mean? And what would make a God worthy of believing in? These questions have taken a distinct turn in Western Christian philosophical discourse in the Modern era, especially in the wakes of the Enlightenment, scientific discoveries, the atrocities of World War II, and the liberation movements of the 20th Century.

Yet while concepts of God have shifted, belief in God has not disappeared—despite many predictions that it would. Even in an age characterized by decreased religious practice, new religious conflict and new understandings of God have surfaced. The purpose of this course is for students to map some of these new questions and understandings in ways that increase religious literacy and generate more light than heat. Through a mix of close reading, analytical writing, personal written reflections, and playful observation, our praxis invites students to consider what it is about the human condition that keeps the God questions alive.

# Upper School Physical Education

## Health and Wellness

This course provides the basis to help students attain and maintain healthy lifelong behaviors. The course is designed to assist students in obtaining accurate information, developing lifelong positive attitudes and behaviors, and making wise decisions related to their personal health. Study includes the following units: 1) the immune system, 2) nutrition and wellness, 3) self-esteem and values, 4) addiction, and 5) careers in health and wellness.

In unit 1, students learn to describe what the immune system is, identify the organs and tissues associated with the immune system, and specify their locations and functions. They also learn to identify and implement healthy living strategies to help strengthen the immune system. In unit 2, students learn the role of nutrients, the principles of a healthy diet, dietary recommendations, the role of nutrition in disease prevention, and strategies for safe and healthy weight management. Students learn the relationship between their choices and their personal wellness along with how to apply the goal-setting process when practicing behavior change to improve. In unit 3, students reflect on who they are and how they can be the best version of themselves. Students learn about topics such as personality, goal-setting, developing healthy habits, self-worth, self-advocacy, and planning for the future. In unit 4, students learn the psychology behind addiction, how families and peers influence decision-making, and preventative techniques to combat the cycle of addiction. Lastly, in unit 5, students conduct research of emerging occupations in the field of health and wellness.

## Personal Fitness

This course is designed to give students the tools and knowledge necessary to achieve their fitness goals. The course begins by asking students what they hope to achieve during the semester. Here we are looking for specific goals that will require dedication to achieve. Students are also invited to create their own fitness tests to help measure their progress. The students maintain a weekly plan of workouts including cardiovascular, strength, and sport-specific workouts. Cardiovascular and strength training take place in the SLA fitness room. Students are required to plan sessions that show detailed progression and clear understanding of how the workouts will affect their body and move them towards their goals. Lectures, class discussions, self assessments, and educational handouts are also a valuable component of the overall fitness regimen.



## Studio Fitness

The Studio Fitness course at SLA is a combination of three movement systems that are most commonly completed in a studio setting: Pilates, Yoga, and Dance. This course will offer an introduction to each practice, allowing the student to discover new ways to move their body and relieve stress. Each style will bring its own set of movement vocabularies, exercise intentions, and creative practices, while increasing body awareness and improving overall health. So whether the student is improving core stability and alignment in Pilates, flexibility and flow in Yoga, or creativity and collaboration in dance, this course will connect the student with their body and leave them feeling stronger than ever. End of unit challenges for students will include creating personal exercise flows, memorizing anatomical terms throughout the body, as well as choreographing and analyzing dance phrases. Helpful texts will include *"Pilates for Everyone: 50 Exercises for every type of body"* by Micki Harvard, *"Pilates Anatomy"* by Rael Isacowits and Karen Clippinger, *"Discovering Dance"* by Gayle Kassin, *"Hatha Yoga Illustrated"* by Martin Kirk, Brooke Boon, Daniel DiTuro, and *"Yoga for Everybody"* by Dianne Bondy. I look forward to creating a safe space for these three Studio Fitness practices at the School of Los Angeles.