Blake Upper School Course Catalog

2025-2026

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BLAKE

Anne Stavney, Ph.D.
Head of School

MISSION

Blake engages students with a dynamic, academically challenging education in a diverse and supportive community committed to pluralism and a common set of values. Students pursue an integrated program of academic, artistic and athletic activities, preparing for college, lifelong learning and purposeful lives as community and global citizens.

VALUES

Curiosity
We seek out ideas, ask questions and strive to understand as a means to learn about others, develop ourselves and think meaningfully about our place in the world.

Kindness
We recognize the dignity and humanity in every person and show empathy to ourselves and others.

Inclusivity
We foster a sense of belonging by valuing each other for our similarities and differences, forging respectful relationships and helping others feel connected to the community.

Resilience
We persist through setbacks, learn from our mistakes and emerge from hardships with greater adaptability and strength.

COMMITMENT TO PLURALISM

A vibrant learning environment springs from a diverse school community. For this reason, Blake seeks and values students, families and employees with a wide range of backgrounds, identities and life experiences. Individually and collectively, we strive for understanding across differences in an inclusive environment where everyone can belong, contribute and thrive.

UPPER SCHOOL ACADEMIC CONTACT INFORMATION

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GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To earn a Blake diploma, a student must meet all credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing requirements and remain in good standing. Overall, twenty-two (22) earned credits are required to graduate.

I. Departmental Requirements

Arts Minimum: 2 credits

English Minimum: 4 credits

- *World Literature* (Grade 9)
- *American Literature* (Grade 10)
- Four additional semesters of elective courses

Mathematics Minimum: 2 credits

- Successful completion of Geometry and Algebra II
- Computer Science courses do not count toward the departmental credit requirement

Modern & Classical Languages Minimum: 2 credits

- Successfully completion of coursework through level III of one language
- Enrollment in MCL coursework through the end of the 10th grade year

Science Minimum: 2 credits

- *Introductory Biology* (Grade 9)
- One semester of Chemistry
- One semester of Physics

Social Studies Minimum: 3 credits

- *World History* (Grade 9)
- One semester of *Citizenship & the Nation* (Fall - Grade 10)
- One semester of *Global Power & Resistance* (Spring - Grade 10)
- *United States History* (Grade 11 or Grade 12)

II. General Education Requirements

A. Credited
   a. *Health* (Grade 10)
   b. *Senior Seminar (Grade 12)* (or the equivalent: see course catalog for details)

B. Non-Credited
   a. Students must participate as a playing member of a Blake athletic team for at least one season during both grades nine and ten.
   b. Attendance at and participation in College Seminar (Grade 10/Quarter 4)
   c. Preparation and delivery of an approved senior speech (Grade 12)

Seniors have additional attendance and academic program requirements for graduation outlined in more detail in the Blake Family Handbook.

GUIDELINES FOR COURSE SELECTION, REGISTRATION, AND ENROLLMENT

Please note that more detailed and complete information about the Upper School academic program and requirements can be found in the most recent edition of the Blake Family Handbook.

1. When selecting courses, students should consult the school's departmental and general graduation requirements (see previous page). Students, parents, and grade deans are jointly responsible for ensuring the construction of a program that fulfills requirements to receive a Blake diploma.

2. After registration, all requested courses will be reviewed and approved by the student's grade dean in consultation with the appropriate faculty and department chairs. It should be noted that the construction of the master schedule (including whether courses are offered and the number of sections for each course) is partially based on the requests that students submit in the spring for the subsequent school year; therefore, it is imperative that these choices are carefully considered given the difficulty in making adjustments after the fact. Course offerings are subject to sufficient enrollment and teacher availability.

3. Our commitment to maintaining appropriate and manageable class sizes supersedes student choice. Class caps on the number of students that may be enrolled in a particular section are taken very seriously, and exceptions are made only in the most extenuating circumstances and only with the expressed permission of the Upper School Director.

4. Credit Information
   - 4.1. Definition of credit
     Credit is determined based on weekly class hours over the course of an academic year. There are exceptions, however, as a general guideline one credit represents 210 minutes of class attendance per week for the entire year. Successful completion of a one-semester class that meets three times per week (for a total of 210 minutes) would result in 0.5 credit.
   - 4.2. Departmental credit requirements
     Students must complete all department specific classes in order to earn a Blake diploma. This will always involve a total number of credits per department and may also include specific courses or proficiency level standards.
   - 4.3. Graduation credit requirements
     A student must earn a total of 22 credits in order to graduate.
   - 4.4. Full-time status
     Full-time status is defined as enrollment in at least 2.5 credits in a given semester. Enrollment in an independent study does not count toward this total. Students must maintain full-time status for each semester in which they are enrolled at Blake unless approved by the Upper School Director.
   - 4.5. Transfer credit
     Coursework taken at other institutions will be reviewed by the Blake Office of Admission and the Upper School administration in order to determine the number of credits that will transfer as well as which credits are eligible to fulfill Blake departmental and overall graduation requirements.
   - 4.6. Only summer coursework taken at Blake will be listed on the transcript. Work done at other institutions will be appended on a copy of the transcript issued by the institution granting credit.

5. Course Enrollment Changes
   - 5.1. Adding a Class
     A student may add a course by the third class meeting of the semester/year if there is space available and any prerequisites are met.
   - 5.2. Switching Class Sections
     Section switches are only granted in special circumstances and with the permission of the grade dean. Class switches are not made in order to accommodate teacher or schedule preferences.
   - 5.3. Changing Course Levels

A student may request a change in the level of a course within the same department. The department chair and grade dean must approve the request and there must be space available in the requested course.

I. Semester Courses

1. If the request occurs after the third class meeting for the course in which the student is currently enrolled but before the end of the first quarter, the grade of record will be determined through consideration of performance in both the original and new courses; the student's transcript, however, will only reflect enrollment in the new course.
2. Requests for a course level change will not be considered after the first quarter.

II. Year-long Courses

If this change occurs during or before the second quarter, for year-long courses, the student's transcript will reflect only enrollment in the new course, though the grade of record will be determined with consideration of the student's performance in both the original and new classes. If this change occurs after the first semester, a student's transcript will reflect the student's separate enrollment and performance in both courses as if they were each a semester-long course. In this case, there would be no end-of-year grade given.

5.4. Unenrolling from a Course

I. Dropping a Course

A student may drop a class without penalty and without a record on the transcript one week after first or third quarter interim reports are issued (for semester courses), or before the end of the first quarter for year-long courses.

II. Withdrawing from a Course

After the end of the drop period, a student may only unenroll from a semester 1 or year-long class if full-time status can be maintained (or for medical reasons as determined by the grade dean and Upper School Director). The course will be recorded on the student's transcript with a grade of WP (withdraw passing), WF (withdraw failing), or WM (withdraw medical). In these cases no credit will be issued and the student's GPA will not be affected. For semester 2 classes, withdrawals are noted after the end of the third quarter.

6. Global Online Academy (GOA)

GOA courses are available to juniors and seniors (and sophomores with permission of the grade dean). Students earn graduation credit for these courses and they appear on the student's Blake transcript just as they would for any course taken at Blake. It is important to note, however, that they do not fulfill departmental graduation requirements. Additionally, a student may not enroll in a GOA course that replicates an existing Blake course, except in the rare instance that enrollment in the Blake course is precluded by a scheduling conflict or enrollment cap. Enrollment in GOA summer courses requires additional fees at the family's expense.

6. Independent Study

An Independent Study program is an opportunity for a student to explore an area of study that is not offered in our curriculum. It is open to seniors who apply during junior year (or by administrative approval). An Independent Study program should be a rigorous course of study that adheres to departmental academic standards.

Juniors must apply by January 31st so that proposals can be approved prior to registration. A proposal is submitted through a form to the supervising faculty member, the department chair, and the Grade Dean for approval. They will review the proposal along with the student's entire academic program, and if each supports the proposal, it will be submitted to the US Director for approval. If approved, meeting times between the student and the advisor will be determined, but they should occur for at least one class period per week.

Students will maintain a minimum course load of five classes in addition to an Independent Study program. An Independent Study program may not satisfy a departmental requirement. A student is permitted to pursue only one Independent Study program at a time. Independent Study Proposal Form

7. Grading
   a. Course grades are calculated on a quarterly basis and reported as letters in gradations from A to F. Blake does not issue grades of A+.
   b. The grade of record on the student's transcript is the semester grade (for a semester-long class) or the year-long grade (for a year-long class). Quarter grades are not recorded on the transcript, nor are the semester grades for a year-long course.
   c. Blake does not weigh Honors, Advanced, and AP courses when calculating a student's grade-point average.
   d. Pass/Fail

      Juniors and seniors may request to take one course per semester on a pass/fail basis with the permission of their grade dean if the course is not a departmental or graduation requirement. The request must be made prior to the end of the first quarter for first semester and year long classes, and prior to the end of the third quarter for second semester classes.

Academic Planning: Thoughts from College Counseling

Throughout Upper School, grade deans and teachers provide important advice about course selection. When students and parents have questions, grade deans and teachers partner closely with college counselors to make recommendations. This information is intended to provide students and parents with considerations as they make decisions on course requests.

Consider Context:

- The single most important document in a college application is the transcript. Data consistently shows that daily classroom work over four years of high school is the best indicator of collegiate success.
- Blake transcripts show the course titles, final grade and course credit received. This means the transcript only includes the final semester grade for a semester-long course and the final year grade for year-long courses. Final exam grades are not included on the transcript.
- College admission officers will first examine the high school record in grades nine through twelve. Has the student maintained a steady performance or has the record been sporadic? Has the student pursued appropriately rigorous courses in areas of interest? Admission officers usually like to see either a consistently strong performance or an upward trend in performance — even as courses become more challenging during the junior and senior years. Grades are the most important indicator of success, consistency and growth.

Questions to consider when selecting classes:

- Consider the student's learning style. Are they able to manage deadlines independently? Do some subjects take longer? What is the right balance of challenge?
- What are the student's time commitments outside of school? How will those impact time spent on courses?
- What are the student's academic strengths?
- Is the student an independent learner able to manage the unique challenges of a GOA course?

Additional considerations:

- Rising tenth graders may consider pursuing Honors or AP classes in certain subjects. Students should seek and carefully consider recommendations from their teachers and grade dean as they make these decisions.
- High school is a time to prepare for college, not to begin pursuing a major. Breadth and depth across all core academic disciplines is important.
- Every student is different; what is right for one may not be right for another.
- Brain development is continuing to happen. Learning is a process, not a race, so focus on growth over time.
- Parents and students often wonder if it is better to take a challenging course and receive a lower grade, or take a less challenging course and receive a higher grade. The answer is always the same: it depends on what poses an appropriate challenge for the particular student. Colleges want to see that students are motivated to learn and grow, and have taken advantage of the resources available to them at their school by challenging themselves *appropriately*. This does not mean taking every AP or Honors course available. If a student is strong in a subject area, it may be very appropriate to take on additional rigor in that subject. Colleges can see when a student chooses a less rigorous course schedule in order to earn a higher GPA.

Thoughts for senior course selection:

- Colleges carefully review course selection for the entire senior year. First and second semester courses must be reported at the time of application, typically by November 1. If a student is considering a second-semester schedule change, they must contact *each college* to which they have applied (even if already admitted) to ask permission prior to making any changes.
- Contrary to popular belief among seniors, academic work throughout the ***entire*** senior year matters to colleges. As a part of the application, colleges require grades from the first term of the senior year. The college a student chooses to attend will require a final high school transcript that will include grades from the entire senior year. Every offer of admission is conditional upon satisfactory completion of the senior year. If a student's grades drop in the senior year — first or second semester — that student risks beginning college on academic probation or even having an offer of admission rescinded.

ARTS

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENT:

Minimum of four semesters during grades 9-12

MUSIC

Music Technology: Composition & Production
Open to students in grades 10-12 First Semester Course
This course is offered every other year. It will be offered during the 2025-26 academic year.

This course focuses on the fundamentals of music composition, recording and production through the use of music notation software, digital audio workstations (DAW) and audio recording equipment. Assignments focus on using these tools to compose creative musical products as well as analyze and evaluate student and professional compositions. Culmination of the class may include a public performance of student work. Basic music reading skills are helpful, but not necessary.

Popular Music in the United States First Semester Course
Open to students in grades 10-12
This course is offered every other year. It will be offered during the 2026-27 academic year.

A study of social change in the United States through popular music of the 20th and 21st century. This course focuses on the cultural, social, political, economic and historical dimensions of the music, musicians and musical movements as well as on narratives of race that inform our ways of valuing, defining and understanding the history and context of individual genres. Students will explore their own musical tastes to learn its history, influences and its place in the musical continuum. Musical styles and traditions to be studied include blues, jazz, R & B, country, folk, soul, rock, hip-hop, electronic and current musical trends. Previous musical training is not necessary to participate in this course.

Band - 9th and 10th Grade Year Course
Advanced Band - 11th and 12th Grade

Band is an exciting and engaging class and community where students grow their individual musicianship and ensemble skills, explore musical concepts and theory, and develop musical literacy. Throughout the year-long course, students engage with music and their peers by performing, creating, analyzing and discussing music from varying cultures, historical eras, styles/genres and diverse and representative composers. It is open to all students in grades 9-12 who have previous instrumental music experience or are interested and committed to learning a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument. No audition is required. Performances include at least two concerts per year, a spring semester music tour, solo and chamber music, and other performance opportunities. The annual spring music tour includes local, national, and international destinations on a rotating basis. All students in 9th and 10th grade should register for Band while students in 11th and 12th grade should register for Advanced Band. Students in Advanced Band will continue to enhance their musicianship and ensemble skills through advanced techniques and methods and take on leadership responsibilities within the ensemble leading sectionals, serving as a section leader and contributing to concert organization. Both Band and Advanced Band meet at the same time and rehearse and perform together.
These courses may be repeated for credit

Chamber Orchestra - 9th and 10th Grade Year Course
Advanced Chamber Orchestra - 11th and 12th Grade

Chamber Orchestra is an exciting and engaging class and community where students grow their individual musicianship and ensemble skills, explore musical concepts and theory, and develop musical literacy. Throughout the year-long course, students engage with music and their peers by performing, creating, analyzing and discussing music from varying cultures, historical eras, styles/genres and diverse and representative composers. It is open to all students in grades 9-12 who have previous instrumental music experience or are interested and committed to learning a violin, viola, cello or string bass instrument. No audition is required. Performances include at least two concerts per year, a spring semester music tour, solo and chamber music, and other performance opportunities. The annual spring music tour includes local, national, and international destinations on a rotating basis. All students in 9th and 10th grade should register for Chamber Orchestra while students in 11th and 12th grade should register for Advanced Chamber Orchestra. Students in Advanced Chamber Orchestra will continue to enhance their musicianship and ensemble skills through advanced techniques and methods and take on leadership responsibilities within the ensemble leading sectionals, serving as a section leader and contributing to concert organization. Both Chamber Orchestra and Advanced Chamber Orchestra meet at the same time and rehearse and perform together. *These courses may be repeated for credit.*

Cantemus (Soprano/Alto) Year or Single Semester Course

Cantemus is an exciting community that centers collaboration, fun and music. The ensemble welcomes sopranos and altos in grades 9 through 12 of all experience levels who want to increase their singing knowledge. Students will gain a better understanding of vocal technique and music literacy while learning global repertoire from classical and contemporary traditions. Highlights of this class include collaborative songwriting, arranging pop music, and performing with students in A Cappella and Cantare (Mixed Choir) in concert. No audition is required. Cantemus performs in one major concert each semester, a yearly music department retreat, and participates in outreach performances in the school and community.
This course may be repeated for credit.

Cantare (Mixed Voice Choir) Year or Single Semester Course

Cantare is open to students of all voice parts looking for a mixed choir experience in grades 9 through 12. It is an exciting community that centers collaboration, fun and music. Cantare welcomes students of all experience levels who want to increase their singing knowledge. Students will gain a better understanding of vocal technique and music literacy while learning global repertoire from classical and contemporary traditions. Highlights of this class include collaborative songwriting, arranging pop music, and performing with students in A Cappella and Cantemus in concert. No audition is required. Students will perform in one major concert each semester, a yearly music department retreat, and participate in outreach performances in the school and community.
This course may be repeated for credit.

A Cappella Choir Year Course (no exceptions)
Prerequisite: *Cantemus, Vocare, or Mixed Choir at the Upper School; Auditions held in the spring*

A Cappella Choir is a select, mixed-voice choir comprised of students in grades 9 through 12. The course emphasizes the development of already established individual vocal technique and music literacy. This ensemble performs vocal literature from a wide

variety of styles, time periods, and cultural traditions and explores all the ways we can use our body and voice to create music. Performances include two major concerts per year, a spring semester music tour, and other performing opportunities that may arise. The annual spring music tour includes local, national, and international destinations on a rotating basis.
This course may be repeated for credit.

Musical Theatre: Voice and Movement First Semester Course
This course is offered every other year.
This course will be offered in the 2026-27 academic year.

This course allows students to strengthen their skills and confidence in the combined fields of vocal performance and movement. Students taking this course will gain a deeper understanding of their voice and how it can be used to interpret a variety of musical theatre styles. In addition, the course will blend elements of movement and dance. Students will develop a final showcase of the vocal and movement techniques and skills they have learned throughout the course. The showcase will be shared with the US community, in addition to outreach performance opportunities. *This course may be repeated for credit.*

Student -Led Ensembles (co-curricular)

Blakers' Dozen No Credit
Blakers in Treble No Credit
Prerequisite: *Audition only, auditions are held in late spring; members must also be enrolled in a choral music class in order to participate in this group.*

These choirs represent select groups of 10th-12th grade students who perform a variety of styles of *a cappella* choral literature, including lighter, popular music. Groups rehearse twice a week before school on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Performances include two concerts per year, and other off-campus events. Each group is student-led under the artistic direction of the choral music teacher.

Ursa Major Chamber Ensemble No Credit
Prerequisite: *Membership is by audition only and is limited to students enrolled in Band or Orchestra.*

Ursa Major is a select group of motivated instrumental musicians who want to develop their chamber ensemble performance skills. They perform a variety of music based on each year's instrumentation. Rehearsals take place before school and performances each year include two major concerts, Solo & Ensemble Contest, and off-campus community events. This is a student-led ensemble under the artistic direction of the instrumental music teacher.

Jazz Express No Credit
Prerequisite: *Membership is by audition only and is limited to students enrolled in Band or Orchestra.*

Jazz Express is a select combination of motivated student musicians who work to develop their jazz performance and improvisation skills. Emphasis is on performance, as this group performs often for events in the community at large as well as during the school day. Jazz Express members who are also registered for band and orchestra are required to participate in the annual spring semester music tour, which includes local, national, and international destinations on a rotating basis.

SPEECH & DEBATE

Argumentation/Debate First Semester Course

This course is an introduction to the development and application of argument in competitive debate situations. Course experiences focus on the development of speaking, listening, research, and critical thinking skills.
Class requirements include participation in two weekend competitive debate tournaments in the Twin Cities area.

Advanced Debate: Pursuing Social Justice Year Course
2 classes/week; 0.5 credit
Prerequisite: *Argumentation/Debate and instructor approval*
This course is offered every fourth year. It will be offered during the 2025-2026 academic year.

This advanced course in argumentation and public speaking utilizes the competitive formats of public forum and world debate. The course includes speech writing, research, speaking, and critical thinking skill development. The course examines current issues in social justice. The class will particularly focus on issues of race, class and gender and how argumentation can impact those issues in both a positive and negative manner.
Class requirements include participation in four competitive debate tournaments in the months of September, October and November.

Advanced Debate: Contemporary Society Year Course
2 classes/week; 0.5 credit
Prerequisite: *Argumentation/Debate and instructor approval*
This course will be offered every fourth year. It will be offered during the 2026-2027 academic year.

This advanced course in argumentation and public speaking utilizes the competitive formats of public forum and world debate. The course includes speech writing, research, speaking, and critical thinking skill development. The course examines current issues in contemporary society and uses a variety of philosophical and public policy methods to analyze contemporary debates in our society. Topics will be generated from the current competitive debate topics released by the National Speech and Debate Association.
Class requirements include participation in four competitive debate tournaments in the months of September, October and November.

Advanced Debate: United States Domestic Political Issues
2 classes/week; 0.5 credit Year Course
Prerequisite: *Argumentation/Debate and instructor approval*
This course will be offered every fourth year. It will be offered during the 2027-2028 academic year.

This advanced course in argumentation and public speaking utilizes the competitive formats of public forum and world debate. The course includes speech writing, research, speaking, and critical thinking skill development. The course examines current issues in United States domestic affairs, including economics, race and class, party political processes, federalism and checks and balances in the United States system of government. Understanding methods of public policy analysis are covered within the content of the class. Class requirements include competitive debates in class.
Class requirements include participation in four competitive debate tournaments in the months of September, October and November.

Advanced Debate: International Affairs Year Course
2 classes/week; 0.5 credit
Prerequisite: *Argumentation/Debate and instructor approval*
This course will be offered every fourth year. It will be offered during the 2028-2029 academic year.

This advanced course in argumentation and public speaking utilizes the competitive formats of public forum and world debate. The course includes speech writing, research, speaking, and critical thinking skill development. The course examines current issues in international affairs, including foreign affairs and relations, military capabilities of nations, international organizations, and how the United States best operates in an increasingly multi-polar world. Understanding methods of foreign policy analysis are covered within the content of the class.
Class requirements include participation in four competitive debate tournaments in the months of September, October and November.

THEATRE

Improvisation and Acting First or Second Semester Course

This course is ideal for actors of all skill levels looking to improve their confidence and release their own creativity. Using the guiding principles of improvisation and a variety of improvisation activities, students learn the importance of quick thinking, free-flowing imagination, and collaboration within an ensemble. Students will continue to develop these skills through a combination of vocal and movement-based exercises that are then implemented into contemporary scene studies. Participants will develop a final public performance to showcase the techniques and skills they have learned throughout the course. *This course may be repeated for credit.*

Musical Theatre First Semester Course
This course is offered every other year. It will be offered in Fall 2025.

Co-taught by theatre and choral music faculty, this course provides students with the opportunity to strengthen their skills and confidence in the combined fields of acting, vocal performance, and movement. In the first quarter students will learn musical theater history beginning with vaudeville and progressing through the decades to the present. Students will also have weekly voice and movement sessions. In the second quarter students have the opportunity to put together their own original performance. *This course may be repeated for credit.*

Advanced Theatre Production Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Acting and Improvisation*
This course will be offered every other year. It will be offered in Spring 2026.

Advanced Theatre Production is a multifaceted, collaborative course that enables students to gain a broader understanding of the creative art forms required to see a play into full production. This course includes units on set design, lighting design, sound design, costume design, and directing, and features a variety of local theatre professionals as guest lecturers. Utilizing the skills gained in the first part of the semester, the entire class works collaboratively to produce a one-act play in which students act, direct, and are responsible for the technical elements of the production. The culminating performance of this production is open to the public. *This course may be repeated for credit.*

Advanced Acting First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Improvisation and Acting*
This course will be offered every other year. It will be offered during the 2026-2027 academic year.

In Advanced Acting, students build upon the performance skills they developed in their Improvisation and Acting course through deeper exploration of the complexities of classical theatre texts and neutral mask. Students utilize a variety of new vocal and physical techniques, as well as historical context, to bring the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare and the rhyming couplets of Molière to life on stage, all while broadening their ability to create dynamic and believable characters. Students will also work on a selection of contemporary texts. This course culminates in a final public performance featuring a selection of the scenes studied throughout the course. *This course may be repeated for credit.*

Playmakers Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Improvisation and Acting or by the permission of the instructor.*
This course will be offered every other year. It will be offered during the 2026-2027 academic year.

Building on the skills learned in improvisation and acting, students will engage collaboratively to create an original play, as an ensemble, based on a theme of their choosing. This creative process encourages students to draw on their unique culture and history and learn the skills to engage with others as they broaden their perspectives. The original play students create will be performed at the end of the semester for a live audience.

VISUAL ARTS

Semester Courses Offered Both Semesters in 2025-2026

Ceramics First or Second Semester Course

This course introduces students to the world of clay art. Through utilizing pottery wheel processes, hand-building techniques, and surface decorating concepts, students will explore their creativity, strengthen observational skills, and make connections between their lives and cultures very different than their own. Students develop a foundational understanding of the physical nature of ceramic materials and processes while stretching their ability to express their ideas with the clay medium. Through studio work, group critique, and art historical studies, students gain fresh awareness of their visual environment and abilities to create functional and decorative objects.

Advanced Ceramics: Wheel Techniques First or Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Ceramics; open to students in grades 10-12*

This ceramics course is entirely based on using the pottery wheel to learn the skills necessary to create functional forms like mugs, bottles, pitchers, vases, lidded jars, and teapots. In this course, students develop the ability to confidently put form to their ideas. Building a diverse repertoire of pottery wheel techniques and applying them to design problems is the primary focus of Advanced Ceramics: Wheel Techniques. Students greatly expand upon the foundation level wheel throwing skills and concepts to which they were introduced in the beginning level ceramics course.

Drawing First or Second Semester Course

This course leans towards the realistic depiction of people, places, and things, with the goal of improving confidence, observational skill, and drawing technique. Students in this course will develop both technical abilities and creative responses to material and subject matter. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to take advantage of our surroundings by drawing at the Walker Art Center and Sculpture Garden. Upon completion of the course, students will have built a portfolio and artist statement that tells their own story - of the people, places, and things that matter most to them.

Painting First or Second Semester Course

How do you tell your own story with paint? In this course we paint every day. We study color theory, and how color can express emotion. We carefully build up paintings with learned skill and confidence. We work in multiple modes, using photographic sources, signs and symbols, found and created patterns, and the fascinating approaches of contemporary artists at our neighboring Walker Art Center. Students' final portfolio will include work on paper, canvas, and board, and will show a range of styles from realism to abstraction. Students will complete this course having the confidence and skill to use watercolors and acrylics to express their own reactions to the world around them.

Photography First or Second Semester Course

You have grown up in a world filled with photography. Once a camera was a specialized device only brought out for special occasions, but you know a world where the camera is so omnipresent that a camera is built into the phone in your pocket. You will learn more about cameras and photography than you ever thought possible. We will delve into the origins of photography and learn how artists and scientists worked together to find a way to paint with light. Ultimately, this class provides creative, expressive ways to use the camera.

Semester Courses Offered Fall 2025

Art History - Women in Modern Art First Semester Course
Open to 11th and 12th grade students, no prerequisite
Offered Fall 2025

In this course, we will uncover the women who made 20th Century Art, spanning all of the major movements from pre- to postmodern. Weekly field trips! Regular research visits to the Walker Art Center, MIA, the Weisman, and galleries in Minneapolis will be a significant aspect of this class. Course work will encompass journaling, discussion, slide and video presentations, and interviewing local arts people. Parts of the book *The Story of Art Without Men* by Katy Hessel will be read. Art History may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Drawing: Spaces and Places First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Drawing; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Fall of 2025

This course focuses on landscapes, architecture (interior and exterior), maps, and public spaces. We draw outside, exploring the neighborhood, every day the weather allows. We learn a multitude of techniques to translate our 3-dimensional world into a 2-dimensional drawing, from linear and atmospheric perspective to map-making projections. The book The Urban Sketcher: Techniques for Seeing and Drawing on Location will complement our work in this course. Advanced Drawing may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Photography: Storytelling First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Photography; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Fall of 2025

A class where you will illustrate and tell stories with photography. Use photography as a means of documenting the world, creating fictional narratives, and championing causes. The class is primarily hands-on creation and editing of photos, punctuated with short readings and discussions. You will end class with a substantial digital portfolio.

Design First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *One introductory-level visual art course; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Fall of 2025

Students learn the fundamentals of 2D and 3D design through studio-based activities like drawing, painting, clay modeling, 3D construction with foam-core, wood, metal, plastic, found objects, and digital graphic manipulation. This course encourages development of critical thinking and creative problem solving techniques. Project topics covered in class include graphic designed greeting cards, logo/brand ID design, color studies, design sketching, creating a clay chess set, fashion accessory, artist inspired electric lamp and chair. Students will study global and historic design traditions and participate in group critique sessions to develop perspective and strengthen original ideas.

Screen Printing First Semester Course
Offered Fall of 2025

Learn how to screen print on paper and fabric using water-based acrylic ink. Seamlessly combine drawings, words, and photographs in a harmonious art form. This class will include screen print, experimental stencil art, and sculptural paper forms.
While you may have never heard the phrase "screen print", the current world record for the most expensive work of American art is a screen print: Andy Warhol's screen print of Marilyn Monroe. This class may be repeated for credit.

Filmmaking First Semester Course
Offered Fall 2025

If you have ever wanted to learn how to express yourself through filmmaking, this course is a good place to start. Students will produce a number of short films throughout the semester and will develop skills in camerawork, editing, and sound. Students will learn how to shoot using best practices for camerawork and composition, and then bring them into DaVinci Resolve, learning the tools and techniques used by professionals. Class projects present unique opportunities that challenge each student's creativity while letting them choose which skills they want to develop. The course includes film screenings for inspiration and study of techniques including lighting, composition, editing, and sound design. The final project requires students to bring all of their skills to bear in a film that is intended to make the viewer feel an emotion.
Students are required to provide their own camera phone for class use.

Game Development First Semester Course
Offered Fall 2025

Students learn about game design and development through a series of "game jams" following a "learn-as-you-go/learn-by-doing" model. The course uses a method of looking at the design process through different "lenses," or ways of looking at the same problem to set the direction and refinement of a game's design. They will learn how to make a game using graphics, sounds, and effects, and how to have the game respond to the player. The rest of the course has students work in teams to brainstorm and develop an original game. Students can focus on different aspects of game art, design, and coding while developing skills in communication, project and time management, and creative problem-solving. No prior experience with programming required - just an imagination and a desire to make cool things!

Semester Courses Offered Spring 2026

Block Printing Second Semester Course
Offered Spring 2026

You might know Block Printing by other names, like linocut or woodcut printmaking. While you may not recognize the name Hokusai, if you search it, you will probably recognize an ocean wave: it's a block print, carved from wood. Hokusai's block print is so famous that its shape was used to create the "wave" emoji on your phone. In this class we will carve rubber, linoleum, and wood blocks, making prints in a variety of techniques. Techniques will include traditional Western block printing, Japanese *mokuhanga* block prints, multi-block registration, using a Glowforge to laser-engrave blocks, and monotype with an etching press. Block printing will give you a number of new ways to experiment in your art. This class may be repeated for credit.

Advanced Ceramics: Clay Sculpture Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Ceramics; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Spring 2026

Sculpting a human, animal, or imaginary creature's head through clay modeling, reproducing real life objects through clay sculpting, creating large scale coil-built structures, and learning how to make molds of objects in plaster and latex and then casting them in clay to make Pop Art inspired sculptures are among the major projects that make up the curriculum of the Advanced Ceramics: Clay Sculpture course. This is NOT a pottery wheel based class. Instead, students will use hand building process to put form to their creative inspiration. A field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art and regular group critiques complement the significant studio-based focus of this advanced level course. Advanced Ceramics may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: Sculpture and Ceramic Traditions Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Ceramics; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Spring 2026

In this hands-on, wheel throwing and clay sculpting class, students will discover the rich and diverse history of the ceramics practices of indigenous cultures throughout the Americas. Clay work from several Native cultures from south, central, and north American regions will be explored. Learning and practicing regionally specific pottery making, glazing, painting, and clay sculpting techniques will be the focus of this course. As an extension of this learning experience, students will incorporate these methods into their own original ceramic art creations. Both pottery wheel and clay sculpting techniques will be practiced. A field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art to study its collection of ceramic Arts of the Americas is integrated into the curriculum of this class.

Advanced Painting: Realism Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Painting; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Spring 2026.

This course focuses on making realistic paintings. We'll make paintings of people, places, and things that tell your story. Working from the world around us, we will develop our painting skills and creative confidence, building from the realism units in beginning painting. Trips to local museums and galleries will help to uncover the many ways that artists ultimately interpret the term realism. The course will culminate with a large-scale realistic painting of your choice. Advanced Painting may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Generative Art Second Semester Course
Open to students in grades 9-12; no prerequisites
Offered Spring 2026

This course introduces students to the skills and practices of creating art through programming. Much generative art uses a mix of artist-designed rules combined with elements of chance or user interaction. Using the open source platform Processing and its online variant, p5js, students will learn how to put simple shapes on the screen, and through iteration, build upon these skills to make complex pieces that move, respond to user input, react to sound, pull in live data, and even create live performances. Processing was developed specifically to be accessible to artists and beginners, with lots of room for growth through imagination, use of all sorts of other input devices, and add-ons to build more sophisticated and surprising new works.

Advanced Media Arts Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Game Development, Filmmaking, or Generative Art*
Offered Spring 2026

Students pursue in-depth study extending the principles and practices related to filmmaking, game development, or generative art. In addition to individualized projects developed in collaboration with other students and their teacher,, students will interact with professionals in the field of media arts to find inspiration and learn new skills and production techniques. Example projects have been VR gallery spaces, commercials and TV show opens, and even some service learning projects depending on the year and need.

Courses Offered in Future Years

Art Now – 21st Century Art First Semester Course
Open to students in grades 11-12, no prerequisite
Offered Fall 2026

Weekly field trips! The Walker Art Center is our primary text. We will visit the garden and museum, as well as local art spaces, to uncover the people, ideas, and work that is happening right now in the contemporary, local, and international art world. We will hear from multiple alumni who are leading successful careers in the arts, opening new doors of possibility for the future. We will also study recent controversies about censorship in the arts. Art can offend, but is there a line to cross where art should be censored? Course work will encompass journaling, discussion, slide and video presentations, and interviewing local arts people.

Advanced Ceramics: Asian Ceramics Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Ceramics; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Spring 2027

In this hands-on, wheel throwing and clay sculpting class, students will discover the rich and diverse history of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean ceramics by focusing on learning and practicing regionally specific pottery making, glazing, painting, and clay sculpting techniques. As an extension of this learning experience, students will incorporate these methods into their own original ceramic art creations. Both pottery wheel and clay sculpting techniques will be practiced. A field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art to study its collection of Asian ceramics is integrated into the curriculum of this class. Advanced Ceramics may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Design: Exhibit Design Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Successful completion of Design; open to students in grades 11 and 12, as well as 10th graders who both take Health in the summer and Design first semester.*
Offered Spring 2027

In this hands-on studio course, students learn to think like designers while creating their own exhibitions. Students will study how designers communicate socially relevant and politically charged ideas through their design decisions. Students will practice constructing effective public exhibition spaces that integrate photography, video, graphics, lighting, sculpture, historic artifacts, and landscape. Advanced Design may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Drawing: Growth and Decay First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Drawing; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Fall of 2026

Do the objects you keep define who you are? Can objects define a culture? This course interrogates objects; their growth and their decay. You will plant a seed and draw it as it grows. We will compile and draw an array of things - rusty car parts to candy - junk to junk food. This course is about finding, depicting, and seeing with fresh eyes the objects that surround us. Students will leave this course with a portfolio built of still-life drawings that explore the things that matter to us, as well as the ways we do or don't take care of the world around us. Advanced Drawing may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Drawing: The Human Condition First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Drawing; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Fall of 2027

Who are you? Who are we? This course will focus on portraits and figure, allowing you to develop skills in observing and drawing people and their condition. Portraits allow us to confront ourselves. In addition, this course is perfect for those interested in subjects ranging from cartooning to fashion design. Drawing Portraits: Faces and Figures by Giovanni Civardi will complement our work in this course. Students will complete this course with a portfolio of portraits and figure studies, and a new understanding of ourselves. Advanced Drawing may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Painting: Abstraction
Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Painting; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Spring of 2027.

This course focuses on making abstract paintings. From the patterns surrounding us, to distorted reality, to pure abstraction, we will explore painting and its potential to evoke meaning and create visual impact. Trips to local museums and galleries will uncover the many approaches that artists use to make abstractions. The course will culminate with making a large-scale abstraction of your choice. Advanced Painting may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Painting: Public Art
Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Painting; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Spring of 2028.

From protest posters to hieroglyphs, people have use public art to communicate their core beliefs. We use it to tell a story, get us to think about ourselves in a new way, or demand change in our society. In this course you will make paintings exploring the range of ways we can communicate on a large, public, and visual scale. Field trips will explore public art in Minneapolis, including a trip to George Floyd Square. The course will culminate with large-scale paintings on boards. Advanced Painting may be repeated for course credit, as the theme of the course changes each year.

Advanced Photography: The Natural World
First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Photo 1; open to students in grades 10-12*
Offered Fall of 2026

Immerse yourself in nature as a source of inspiration for photography. Express your own personal vision of the world through photos. The class is primarily hands-on creation and editing of photos, punctuated with short readings and discussions. You will end class with a substantial digital portfolio.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science is an elective department. There are currently no CS graduation requirements.

Semester Courses Offered in 2025-26

iOS App Design First Semester Course

Design your very own iOS apps! This course is a comprehensive introduction to iOS app development using SwiftUI, where you will learn fundamental programming concepts through hands-on, app creation. You will master core programming principles like sequencing, selection, and iteration while simultaneously developing skills in user interface design. You will learn to transform abstract logic into engaging, interactive mobile experiences. The course introduces critical software architecture concepts, including the Model-View-Controller (MVC) design pattern, and presents best practices in app design, empowering the creation of clean, efficient, and user-friendly iOS applications from the ground up.

Fall 2023 App Showcase

Honors Data Science First Semester Course
Evidence of readiness: B+ in *Geometry or teacher recommendation*

Intro to Data Science combines three perspectives: inferential thinking, computational thinking, and real-world relevance. Given data arising from some real-world phenomenon, how does one analyze that data so as to understand that phenomenon? The course teaches critical concepts and skills in computer programming and statistical inference, in conjunction with hands-on analysis of real-world datasets, including economic data, document collections, geographical data, and social networks. It delves into social issues surrounding data analysis such as privacy and design. This course may be paired with *AP Computer Science A* in the spring.

Introduction to Computer Science Second Semester Course

This introductory course guides you through the fundamental principles of computational thinking and technology design, exploring how computer science transforms real-world challenges into solutions. You will develop critical skills in abstraction, programming, and computational problem-solving, beginning with techniques for representing complex information in computer-friendly formats and progressing to hands-on app development using iOS platforms. The course culminates in an exploration of artificial intelligence, where you not only learn the technical foundations of neural networks and machine learning but also critically examine the profound global and ethical implications of emerging computing technologies.

AP Computer Science A Second Semester Course
Spring 2026
Prerequisite: *iOS App Design OR Honors Data Science*

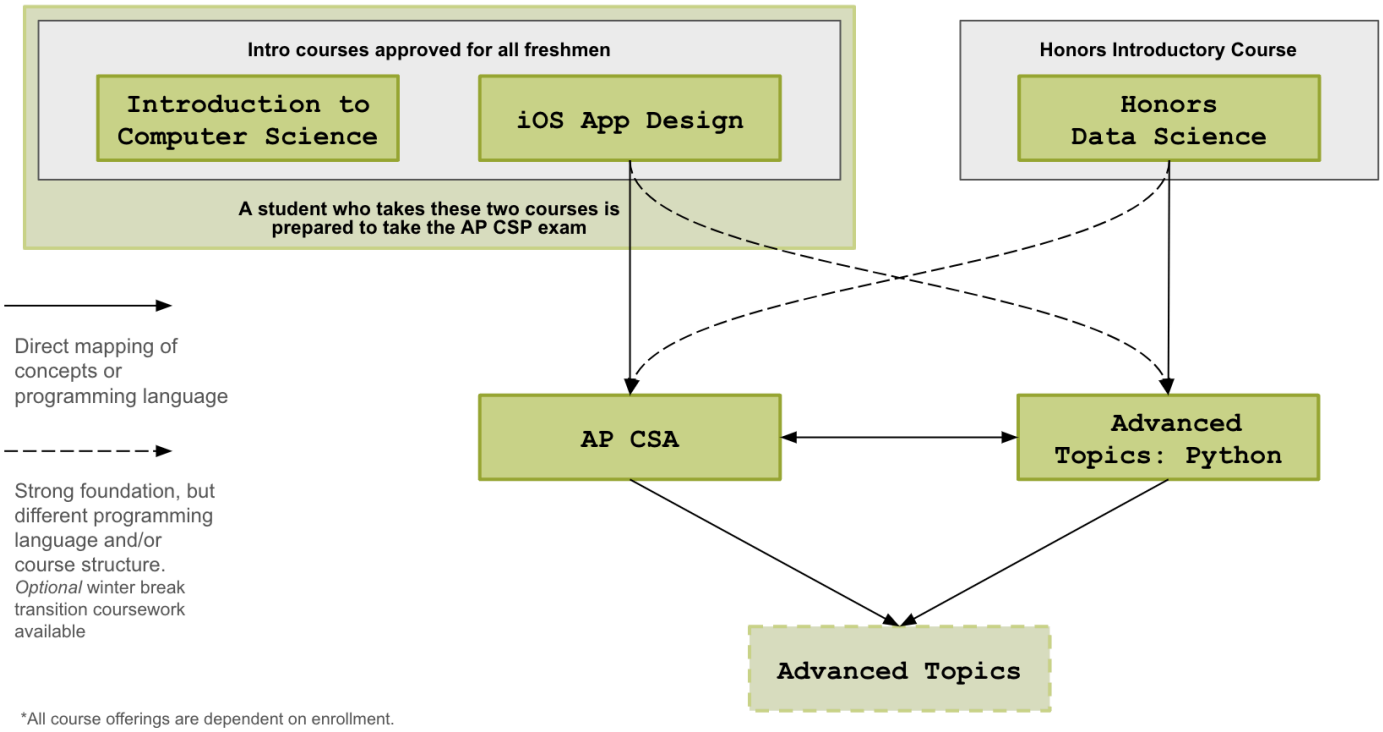
Embark on a semester-long exploration of Java programming, a course thoughtfully designed for you to immerse yourself in the world of object-oriented design and development. Throughout this journey, you will progressively tackle more complex programming challenges, enhancing your understanding and application of Java. Each unit in the course is structured to build upon your skills, culminating in open-ended projects where you can creatively apply your knowledge to design unique, personalized programs. Key topics covered include the fundamentals of Object-Oriented Programming (OOP), sophisticated program architecture and design, and effective integration of various Java libraries. Students enrolling in AP Computer Science A will be expected to sit for the Advanced Placement CSA examination in May.

Semester Courses Offered in 2026-27

Advanced Topics: Python Second Semester Course
Spring 2027
Prerequisite: *Honors Data Science*

Delve into the intricacies of Python in this semester-long intermediate course, designed to enhance your programming skills through practical application. Focused on producing clear and robust programs, you'll explore advanced concepts such as top-down design, informal analysis, and sophisticated testing and debugging techniques. The course emphasizes working with complex data types, algorithms, and creating programs that bring data to life through animation and visualization. In lieu of an AP Exam, at the end of this course students will have the opportunity to take an exam from Carnegie Mellon. Students who pass this exam receive 12 CMU units (equivalent to 4 college credits) credits on a CMU transcript. Exam information is available here.

Blake Upper School Computer Science Course Sequence



*All course offerings are dependent on enrollment.

ENGLISH

Grade 9

World Literature Year Course

This English course introduces students to the arts of reading, writing, and discussing literature in a variety of genres, building a foundation of skills that will empower ninth graders to be effective lifelong readers and writers. Skills and habits of mind that are fundamental to analysis and interpretation will be the focus of the learning activities and assessments. Throughout the year, students will consider such questions as the following: Why do we read? Why do we write? Why do we tell stories? Why do we talk about the stories we read and hear? What are the conversations stories create? How does context create meaning in literature? The power of story and the influence of perspective on story are important themes. Students will explore the works of such authors as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Brian Friel, R. K. Narayan, Devdutt Pattanaik, Chinua Achebe, William Shakespeare, Marjane Satrapi, and Homer. World Literature and World History teachers coordinate efforts to create a coherent, supportive learning experience for ninth graders.

Grade 10

American Literature Year Course

Sophomores in this course will read literature of increasing stylistic and thematic complexity in a variety of genres. Class activities will challenge students to move well beyond literal levels in their interpretations as they apply close reading skills to analysis of texts. Annotating texts and developing effective skills in many modes of discussion are strands throughout the year. In their writing, students will explore a variety of forms, including creative writing and analytical essays. Texts may include such authors as Walt Whitman, N. Scott Momaday, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson, August Wilson, Zora Neale Hurston, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Grade 11

The electives for juniors are yearlong seminars that offer students both intensive literary study and a heightened focus on the process of writing. Students will engage texts that invite close reading while they develop tolerance for ambiguity, appreciation for complexity, and strategies to avoid reducing any text to a single meaning or issue. Reading selections for all electives explore genres, voices, and literary traditions that span the globe.

As writers, students will focus on process: planning, drafting, revising, and editing their work, with the ultimate aim of producing thoughtful, cogent essays in a voice that feels natural to the student. Writing will include literary analysis, where students have the opportunity to develop their insights as readers and interpreters of literature as well as creative projects such as personal essays, where students will reflect on their own lives and the world around them. Written teacher feedback on student writing highlights progress toward stated outcomes and details opportunities for growth and revision. At least once a semester, and in most cases more frequently, students schedule one-on-one writing conferences to work with the teacher in a more detailed, focused way on some important aspect of their writing.

AP English Literature & Composition Year Course

This college-level course is intended for highly motivated juniors and seniors interested in rigorous reading and writing experiences that prioritize literary analysis. The seminar-style course will embrace the challenges of writers such as Toni Morrison, William Shakespeare, James Joyce, Leslie Marmon Silko, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Maxine Hong Kingston, John Donne, Bharati Mukherjee, and Tony Kushner while preparing students for the AP English Literature & Composition exam without straying from the central reasons for studying literature. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP Exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Comedy & Tragedy In Literature Year Course

Laughter, marriage, love and happiness – and deceit, heartbreak, murder, and death. This yearlong course will grapple with the big questions literature poses, and the two genres – comedy and tragedy – that confront those questions head-on. How do we define literary comedy? How do modes within comedy (satire, parody, and farce) offer profound insights into the human condition? What is tragedy? How can literature offer readers insight into the fullest depths of emotion and experience, whether blissful, loving happiness – or devastation, wrack and grief. When these genre lines blur, what meaning arises? We'll read works by authors including Jane Austen, William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Jesmyn Ward, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Yaa Gyasi, and we'll study poetry, essays and film, attend a play at the Guthrie Theater, and hone critical and creative writing skills together.

Literary Realisms: The Anthropocene and Alternative Fictions Year Course

Beginning first semester with a foundation of literary realism, this yearlong junior elective will grapple with the question of whether or not literary realism, which roots itself in verisimilitude—the supposed rational, objective depiction of the observable world—is an outmoded form for our current anthropocentric, late-capitalist "reality." In a world where the specters of climate change and social collapse loom large in the daily lives of human beings, does realism now feel reactionary? How does realism account for our contemporary experiences? How can realism present alternatives to a world order dominated by colonial and universalist ideas about what counts as progress? After engaging with the conventions of realism in semester one, semester two will ask students to consider "alternative realisms," namely those from the genres of magical realism and science fiction, and together we will contemplate if and why fantastical forms of fiction may be better suited to an increasingly uncertain future. We will examine texts from authors such as Gustave Flaubert, Nikolai Gogol, John Steinbeck, Zadie Smith, Mohsin Hamid, John Green, Ted Chiang, Isabel Allende, Clarice Lispector, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Ling Ma, Jesmyn Ward, Karen Russell, Mary Shelley, Ursula K. Le Guin, Sherryl Vint, N.K. Jemisin, Octavia Butler, and Philip K. Dick, to name a few.

Literature of Class Struggle: Representations in Fiction, Nonfiction, and Theater Year Course

What literary forms and techniques have authors innovated to expose, conceal, critique, reify, and revolutionize ideas about socio-economic class? How does literature represent the experience of class, poverty, wealth, and income inequality? How can literature most accurately and effectively portray the economic realities of people living under capitalism, socialism, and communism? Is literature capable of doing

anything beyond "portraying" or "representing"? How do economic systems bear on literature itself, its production, scope, style, and aims? To refine, supplement, and answer such questions, we will engage writers and thinkers such as these: Karl Marx, Adam Smith, Ayn Rand, Bertolt Brecht, Herman Melville, Lynn Nottage, Slavoj Žižek, Joseph Conrad, Ajay Navaria, Jamaica Kincaid, and Zadie Smith.

GRADE 12

Yearlong Courses

AP English Literature & Composition Year Course

This college-level course is intended for highly motivated juniors and seniors interested in rigorous reading and writing experiences that prioritize literary analysis. The seminar-style course will embrace the challenges of writers such as Toni Morrison, William Shakespeare, James Joyce, Leslie Marmon Silko, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Maxine Hong Kingston, John Donne, Bharati Mukherjee, and Tony Kushner while preparing students for the AP English Literature & Composition exam without straying from the central reasons for studying literature. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP Exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Semester Courses Offered Fall 2025

The 21st-Century Novel First Semester Course

The novel has been around for a long time—2,000 years, taking the term loosely, and at least a few hundred years in its modern form. And yet, derived from the mid-16th century Italian, by way of Latin, the word novel essentially means "new story." So in that spirit, nearly a quarter of the way into the 21st century, what's new with the novel? What antecedents does it owe its existence to? In what ways might its modern form also look ahead? How are writers and thinkers stretching the definition of what a novel—or literature, for that matter—can be? These are the guiding questions we'll seek to address based on a small, curated list of texts—acknowledging, of course, that no single text or list of texts can possibly be definitive. While novels will be our primary literary form of study, other literary forms will be included as time and circumstance allow. And while reading literature will be the primary mode (and for which student choice will occasionally factor in), opportunities may arise to study other emerging non-traditional literary mediums—for instance, podcasts that borrow from and present similarly to the novel's form. So, too, while discussion and written essays will remain the primary forms of expression, students will be encouraged to keep the course itself new and relevant by suggesting unique forms of assessments. This course is reading intensive; expect an average of thirty pages of reading per night.

Composing Narratives of Healing and Hope

First Semester Course

Do you ever wonder why literature is so dark and depressing? This course seeks ways to find renewed hope in humanity. We will also consider how hope is different from optimism and what the limits of hope might be. In this course, we will meet people who withstand fear, post-traumatic stress, historical trauma, or the stress of growing up to find renewed hope in humanity. We will learn how someone heals from trauma or finds the will to move forward with life after war. Literature can provide us with pathways out of darkness through community, religion, nature, and other sources of help and healing. We will then write non-fiction narratives in a variety of forms to process our own hurdles. Readings might include such texts as *The Latehomecomer* by Kao Kalia Yang**,** *Recovering the Sacred* by Winona LaDuke (selections), *Teachings on Love* by Thich Nhat Hanh, "Revolutionary Hope: A Conversation Between James Baldwin and Audre Lorde," *Another Life* by Theodor Kallifatides, *The Book of Delights* by Ross Gay, *World of Wonders* by Aimee Nezhukumatathil, and *Rising* by Elizabeth Rush.

Memory, Imagination, and Dream in Latin American Literature

First Semester Course

This course will explore the hybridity of culture in Latin America by focusing on the vital cross-pollination between the indigenous and various guises of the "foreign" – including influence from Europe, Africa, and the United States. Readings may include such authors as Jorge Luis Borges, Dolores Reyes, Gabriel García Márquez, Yuri Herrera, Pablo Neruda, María Elen Llano, Humberto Ak'abal, and Isabel Allende. What do these works say about culture in Latin America, or about its diverse cultures? How are the boundaries and borders of identity, history, and place troubled and complicated by these visionary authors? How might indigenous cultures have infused and fed what we think of as "Latin American Literature"? And, equally important, what happens if we downplay the specificity of Latin America when thinking, speaking, and writing about the region and its cultures – and focus instead on Latin America's commonality with the rest of the world?

Poetry First Semester Course

Have you ever wondered what makes a poem a poem? What makes poetry more than just arranging sentences in verse? How do line breaks, caesuras, and other pauses shape the meaning of a poem? What are the different types of poems? This course will give you the opportunity to answer such questions as you read, discuss, write, and analyze a wide range of poems. You will develop your writing skills as you compose a balance of analytical essays alongside a portfolio of original poems. Keeping a journal, engaging in daily writing exercises, and communicating effectively with peers in a workshop setting will be cornerstones of our collective poetic experience.

Semester Courses Offered Spring 2026

African American Literature Second Semester Course

Interested in courageous conversations? If you answered "yes," then this course is for you! African American literature grew out of an oral tradition of storytelling and spirituals. In this course, you will consider this vernacular tradition and its impact on African American authors who come along after this early time period. Along with considering the content of literary works, students will explore a number of cultural, historical, and political themes and then examine how the issues of gender, race, sexuality, and class affect the meanings of varied works. Students will leave the course with a broader, more nuanced sense of African American writing (and authors) and will hopefully feel inspired to read more varied cultural texts as they move beyond the walls of Blake. Readings may include texts by Octavia Butler, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Taiyon Coleman, Toni Morrison, Alexs Pate, Alice Walker, Colson Whitehead, and Richard Wright.

Film Analysis and Theory Second Semester Course

This class is *not* a film appreciation course. This course is about film: what it is, how it works, how we watch it, and what we can learn from close reading films. How do films make meaning? How do films position and shape us as viewers? Why does the world in a film feel believable, convincing us to see our own lives through the conventions of cinematic codes? In order to answer these questions, this class will cover the basic terms and key theoretical frameworks of film analysis while also providing a sketch of cinema's historical development as a medium and academic discipline. The first half of the course will be organized around learning the necessary vocabulary for analyzing film and familiarizing ourselves with how to watch films critically. The second half will take a more in-depth look at film theory, using this rich body of work to recognize how film shapes larger cultural ideas.

In addition to reading film theory and learning film language, students should expect to watch films from the beginning of cinema's history to the present. Students will also write about film and examine its formal elements and techniques. The course will not evaluate the comparative worth or value of these films or consider personal judgments or feelings about them; instead, this course will be concerned with what films can do. To this end, we will develop methods for identifying and understanding how films construct meaning, spectator positions, and privileged forms of interaction as well as constitute a part of our larger social imaginary. Readings and screenings may include the work of Thomas Edison, George Méliès, Billy Wilder, Jordan Peele, Chantal Akerman, Agnès Varda, Laura Mulvey, Robert Stam, Louise Spence, and David Bordwell.

Indigenous Literature of Mni Sóta Makọce

Second Semester Course

What if your relationship to the land were like that of a relative? In order for us to make sense of where we are going, we ought to listen to the original inhabitants of this place where the water reflects the clouds. This course will read and hear the voices of Indigenous people from the past and today as they steadily speak today in fiction, poetry, and film. We will address the benefits and challenges of an oral tradition as a form of literature, as well as questions of representation, the Noble Savage, the Urban Indian, the Trickster, and representations and objectifications of Indigenous people and cultures in the consciousness of the United States and on Turtle Island. The course will culminate with proposals to this question: How can Indigenous ways of knowing enable us to engage with the world around us? Which teachings of Indigenous literature can help us thrive in a global society? Students will choose from a rich collection of YA novels by Cherie Dimaline, Angeline Boulley, and Anton Treuer, read poetry by Kenzie Allen, Heid E. Erdrich, and Anthony Ceballos, view the film *Reel Injun,* and listen to the radio play *Blood Quantum Physics.* Community engagement will be part of this literature-based course.

Individual and Nature Second Semester Course

What is our proper place in the world? To what extent are human beings "natural"? Is the smallest viable unit of humanity truly "the individual"? In what ways have we transcended "nature"? How has the idea of nature shaped our identity as Americans? How might a deeper understanding of these questions impact how we live today? Students should be prepared to read fiction and poetry, but also nonfiction and alternative texts such as television commercials, landscape paintings, and trees. Experiential learning components include weekly outdoor tree observations regardless of weather, and participating in a media/technology fast. Possible authors include: Daniel Quinn, Alison Hawthorne Deming, Jon Krakauer, Luther Standing Bear, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Leo Tolstoy, Robert Hass, Werner Herzog, and Isabel Zapata.

Short Fiction Second Semester Course

This class is all about short fiction: the art and craft of it, the range of it, the pleasures and mysteries of reading and analyzing it, and yes, the composition of it. What is the difference between flash fiction, short stories, and novellas? In contrast to full-fledged novels, what is each form uniquely suited to do? What makes each form work? How does each delight? Why, ultimately, does short fiction matter? This course will balance the work of reading, analyzing, and interpreting short works of fiction with the expectation that students will compose an original portfolio of their own short fiction. As students develop their own stories, we will read works by established writers with an eye to the elements and techniques that make their work provoke and please. In addition, we will engage in playful writing exercises and practical writing workshops designed to help students enliven their own language and writing voices. Our goal is that all will leave this course with a handful of short fiction they can proudly call their own, along with a series of reusable activities and exercises designed to generate ideas for writing beyond the scope of this class.

MATHEMATICS

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENT:

Enrollment in a minimum of four semesters of mathematics offered by the Blake Mathematics Department and successful completion of Geometry and Algebra II, either at Blake or through courses that are equivalent to those offered at Blake. Because problems that depend upon mathematics for their solution arise in many fields, the mathematics department strongly recommends that students continue the study of mathematics in all semesters. Nearly all Upper School students complete four years of mathematics.

The department offers several courses of study to meet the varied needs of our student body:

- Students with an interest in the social sciences or humanities are encouraged during their junior and senior years to choose *Functions: Data and Modeling*, *Calculus: Data and Modeling, Statistics and Research Methods,* or *AP Statistics* or one of the other semester electives.
- Students interested in the applied sciences or pure mathematics are encouraged to take some level of *Precalculus* and *Calculus* before graduation, as well as semester electives that provide an opportunity to participate in mathematics research or to explore advanced mathematics in greater depth.

The most common courses of study are outlined in the Mathematics Course Sequences flowchart found at the end of this section. Students are not locked into a mathematics course sequence and, with appropriate preparation; it is possible to switch sequences in consultation with the mathematics department.

In order to be successful, a student enrolling in a mathematics course must be proficient in preceding mathematics concepts and skills. The course prerequisites and evidence of readiness recommendations listed in this course guide provide a way for students to demonstrate mastery of prerequisite content. The mathematics department strongly recommends that a student who has not demonstrated evidence of readiness consider an alternative mathematics course sequence. If a student who has not demonstrated evidence of readiness, based on their performance in their current math class, desires to enroll in a course, the student must consult with their mathematics teacher to develop a monitored plan for demonstrating proficiency in prerequisite concepts and skills. The plan must be in place by the end of April, and fully executed including testing by the end of the summer in order for the course request to be honored.

The department will place students who are new to Blake in the appropriate course based on mathematics experience, teacher recommendation, and test results. Students may be asked to take a placement exam.

Geometry Year Course
Prerequisite: *Algebra I or* teacher recommendation

We will explore Geometry from its earliest beginnings as a set of rules arrived at by trial and observation by nearly every civilization on Earth. Our main focus is on Euclidean geometry, which was developed by the Greeks into a set of conjectures concerning figures formed by points, lines, planes and circles. This course emphasizes both deductive and inductive reasoning. Topics include congruence, logic and proof, congruence and similarity, properties and areas of circles and polygons, relationships of lines and planes in space, right triangle trigonometry and transformations.

Honors Geometry Year Course
Prerequisite: *Honors Algebra I*
Evidence of readiness: B in *Honors Algebra I*

This course gives a more rigorous treatment of the topics covered in *Geometry*, emphasizes deductive reasoning and formal proof, and approaches geometry from synthetic, analytic, and transformational perspectives. Additional topics include advanced compass-and-straightedge constructions, non-Euclidean geometries, proofs of the Pythagorean Theorem, and researching both ancient and modern mathematicians. Special emphasis is placed on the way Geometry is applied around the world, including research of Islamic Geometric patterns and Japanese Sangaku.

Algebra II Year Course
Prerequisite: *Algebra I*, and *Geometry*
Evidence of readiness: Completion of *Algebra I* and *Geometry*

Algebra II is a course that extends and reinforces the problem solving and symbolic reasoning found in *Algebra I*. Students learn the skills required to investigate properties and transformations of various functions, including linear, quadratic, higher-order polynomial, exponential, and radical functions, with an introduction to logarithmic and rational functions. Applications are made in the areas of inequalities, systems of equations, and mathematical modeling. Algebraic manipulation and computation are mastered in the context of reasoning and problem solving.

Honors Algebra II Year Course
Prerequisite: *Honors Algebra I* and *Honors Geometry, or by satisfactory completion of acceleration process*
Evidence of readiness: B in *Honors Algebra I* and *Honors Geometry*

Honors Algebra II incorporates aspects of a problem-based learning curriculum and is designed for students who enjoy problem solving and who demonstrate persistence and confidence in tackling novel problems. The course gives a more rigorous treatment of the topics covered in *Algebra II* and includes additional topics such as parametric equations, matrices, sequences and series.

Functions: Data and Modeling Year Course
Prerequisites: *Geometry* and *Algebra II*

In this course students will develop a toolkit of functions to model the world around them. They will be introduced to core concepts through the extensive use of data and real-world applications. Rather than *learn the math* first and then apply what they've learned, they will wrestle with problems and ultimately develop the tools they need to construct solutions. Topics include function notation, composition, and inverses; transformations; linear, quadratic, polynomial, exponential, and logarithmic functions; trigonometry; sequences and series; and probability and simulation. Traditional algebra skills are integrated as needed to reinforce the fundamental themes.

Precalculus Year Course
Prerequisite: *Geometry* and *Algebra II*
Evidence of readiness: B in *Algebra II*

This course focuses on functions and their characteristics, including trigonometry. Although the course begins with a brief review of algebra concepts, students in *Precalculus* must already possess a strong foundation in algebra. Topics include function notation and transformations; combinations and composition of functions; linear, quadratic, polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions; sequences and series; and analytical trigonometry.

Honors Precalculus Year Course
Prerequisites: *Geometry* and *Honors Algebra II*
Evidence of readiness: B in *Honors Algebra II*

This course gives a more rigorous treatment of the topics covered in *Precalculus*. Additional topics include parametric equations, conic sections, and an introduction to limits.

Calculus: Data and Modeling Year Course
Prerequisite: *Precalculus* or *Honors Precalculus or FDM*
Evidence of readiness: B in *FDM or* C in *Precalculus*

This course presents the big ideas of calculus with an emphasis on data, numerical calculus, and modeling. The course emphasizes how the fundamental theorem and the first and second derivative tests can be used to interpret data and understand real-world scenarios. It includes derivative and antiderivative rules for power functions, exponential functions and sine and cosine, as well as the product and chain rules for derivatives. Throughout the course, the emphasis is on using these rules to understand data and model real-world scenarios, rather than using algebraic processes to understand abstract functions.

Advanced Placement & Post-AP Mathematics

AP Statistics Year Course
Prerequisite: *Pre-Calculus* or *Honors Precalculus*
Evidence of readiness: B in *Honors Precalculus*, B+ in *Precalculus,* or instructor permission in *Functions: Data and Modeling*

IIn this course, students will learn to be intelligent and critical consumers of data and information, to use the tools of statistics to understand and make decisions from data, and to communicate statistical information clearly and precisely. Topics encompass four major themes: descriptive statistics, which makes use of graphical and numerical techniques to study patterns and departures from patterns in data; planning and conducting a study, in which students learn to collect data according to a well-developed plan; probability and random variables, which are the tools that let us anticipate what the distribution of variable should look like under a given model; and inferential statistics, which guides the selection of appropriate models. Students enrolling in *AP Statistics* will be expected to sit for the Advanced Placement Statistics examination in May. ***The supplemental fee for taking the AP exam will be the responsibility of the student. Financial aid is available.***

AP Calculus AB Year Course
Prerequisite: *Precalculus*, *Honors Precalculus* or *Calculus*
Evidence of readiness: B in *Honors Precalculus,* A in *Precalculus* or B in *Calculus* or instructor permission

AP Calculus AB is a college-level course in calculus that includes limits, derivatives, integrals and their applications. The course will emphasize proof and an understanding of fundamental concepts, along with development of computational skills. Considerable time will be devoted to preparing students to take the AP exam. Students enrolled in *AP Calculus AB* will be expected to sit for the Advanced Placement Calculus AB examination in May. ***The supplemental fee for taking the AP exam will be the responsibility of the student. Financial aid is available.***

AP Calculus AB/BC Year Course
Prerequisite: *Honors Precalculus* or *Calculus:Data and Modeling*
Evidence of readiness: A in *Honors Precalculus* or instructor permission from *Calculus: Data and Modeling*

AP Calculus AB/BC (yearlong) is a college-level course in calculus that includes limits, derivatives, integrals and their applications. The course will cover all *AP Calculus AB* topics with emphasis on proof and an understanding of fundamental concepts, along with development of computational skills. *AP Calculus BC* will also cover the calculus of the polar coordinate system, vector calculus, curvilinear motion as defined parametrically, specialized methods of integration, separable differential equations, indeterminate forms, infinite series and Taylor series. Students enrolled in *AP Calculus AB/BC* will be expected to sit for the Advanced Placement Calculus BC examination in May. ***The supplemental fee for taking the AP exam will be the responsibility of the student. Financial aid is available.***

AP Calculus BC & Advanced Topics Year Course
Prerequisite: *AP Calculus AB*
Evidence of readiness: B in *AP Calculus AB* or score of 4 on the AP Calculus AB examination

AP Calculus BC includes the remaining topics from the AP Calculus BC syllabus that are not in the AP Calculus AB syllabus, including the calculus of the polar coordinate system, vector calculus, curvilinear motion as defined parametrically, specialized methods of integration, separable differential equations, indeterminate forms, infinite series and Taylor series. Students will be expected to sit for the Advanced Placement Calculus BC examination in May. The second semester will cover combinatorics in some detail with particular focus on how these ideas help open new problem-solving doors. We will also apply those concepts to subjects like number theory, computing, and set theory. In addition, we will cover some unique problems that show the beauty, potential, and complexity of mathematics. ***The supplemental fee for taking the AP exam will be the responsibility of the student. Financial aid is available.***

Advanced Topic offered in 2025-26

Advanced Topics: Linear Algebra Year Course
Prerequisite: *AP Calculus BC* or *AP Calculus AB/BC*

This is a college-level course in linear algebra covering the properties of linear maps on finite-dimensional vector spaces and inner-product spaces, with real and complex coefficients. The course emphasizes the abstract definition of a vector space, and includes the study of R_n and C_n, as well as P_n (polynomials) and other vector spaces. Topics include null space and range, trace, determinant, eigenvalues and eigenvectors, the spectral theorem, standard decompositions and characteristic polynomials.

Advanced Topic offered in 2026-27

Advanced Topics: Interest Theory and Actuarial Mathematics
Year Course

Prerequisite: *AP Calculus AB or AP Calculus BC*

This college-level course dives into how monetary investments grow and shrink over time. You will be introduced to financial mathematics useful in a number of business applications, while exploring the lucrative and desirable math-based career path found in actuarial science, the science of risk calculation for insurance and beyond. Topics covered include time value of money, measurement of interest, general annuities, amortization, sinking funds, bonds, and calculus-based probability.

Mathematics Electives

Students who have fulfilled their mathematics graduation requirements or who would like to simultaneously explore additional topics in mathematics or computer science are encouraged to consider mathematics or computer science electives. Actual course offerings will depend upon course enrollment. Some semester-long electives are offered in alternate years.

Electives offered every year

Statistics and Research Methods Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: *FDM* or *Precalculus* or *Honors Precalculus* or instructor permission

This semester course introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Students use projects as a basis for learning how to collect data sensibly, identify bias, and display and analyze statistics obtained from data, using technological software designed to allow them to explore many of the central questions of statistics. Through these conversations, students better learn how to analyze their world, interpret graphs and data presented in the media, and craft their own research and arguments. Students will also learn the basics of linear regression techniques, probability theory, and statistical inference.

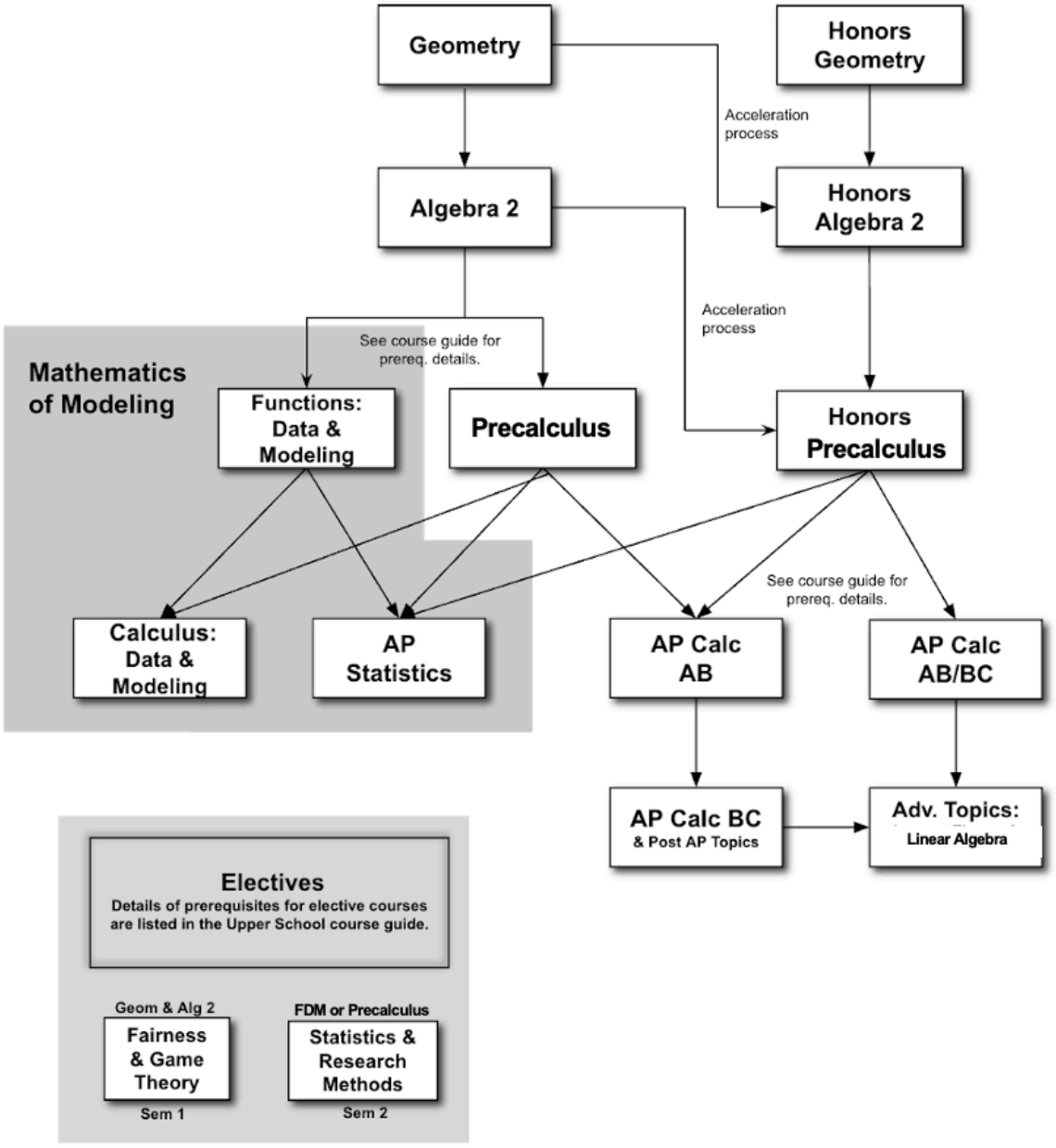
Fairness and Game Theory First Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Geometry* and *Algebra II*

The branch of mathematics called game theory deals with the underlying mathematical theory of conflict and cooperation. It is applicable whenever two individuals – or companies, political parties, or nations – confront situations where the outcome for each depends on the behavior of all. In this course, you will develop a structured method for analyzing complex situations involving personal decision-making, social choice, conflict, fairness, and political power. You will even start to view everyday interactions in terms of game theory.

Additional topics of study may include fair division of resources, voting methods, and applications to business or economics. Through analysis of case studies, you will evaluate and apply these theories in various real-world contexts and explore the meaning of fairness and equity as applied and interpreted through a mathematical lens.

The Mathematics Course Sequences flowchart depicts the course sequences that students may follow as they advance through The Blake School's mathematics program. Students may switch sequences with appropriate preparation and the consent of the Mathematics Department.

THE BLAKE SCHOOL
MATHEMATICS COURSE SEQUENCES



Actual course offerings will depend upon enrollment.
Not all paths are shown. Students may switch between course sequences after meeting departmental requirements.

MODERN AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

GRADUATION REQUIREMENT: A minimum of two consecutive years of study of one language offered by MCL at the high school level with a successful completion of Level III or above in a target language.

Because language competence is increasingly required in many fields, the MCL department strongly recommends continued enrollment in Modern and Classical Languages courses during the junior and senior year. Most Blake students complete four years of Modern and Classical Languages in one language, and some add a second as they culminate their careers at Blake.

All rising Blake Middle School students are placed into Upper School MCL courses according to their demonstrated language proficiency through a language portfolio and in consultation with their MCL teacher.

Placement of new students in languages they have previously studied will be determined by the MCL department based on a written placement test and an oral interview in the modern language during placement testing periods.

Advanced Placement course enrollment is limited only to students in their junior or senior years. Rising sophomore students may petition to be considered for Advanced Placement enrollment if they can demonstrate successful academic achievement in their current Level IV or above language course, obtain a current MCL faculty recommendation, and demonstrate readiness on the Advancement Test during spring placement testing period.

Course sequences are usually followed as outlined. Students deemed to be of exemplary motivation and who are interested in accelerating their course of language study must consult with their MCL teacher to develop a monitored plan for demonstrating proficiency in prerequisite knowledge and skills, and complete the US MCL Acceleration Contract before the first day of Spring Break. Full execution of the acceleration plan includes successfully passing the Acceleration Exam in August.

The department recommends remedial work to those students whose language proficiency may prevent them from being successful in the next level. This is usually the case when a student has earned a C+ or below as the final grade in a course.

Students who want to begin their study of a language should note that, depending on enrollment, a level I class in a language may not be offered in a particular school year. Students entering Level I should be prepared to consider an alternate language choice or summer acceleration options. Please contact PK-12 MCL Department Chair for details.

French

French I Year Course

This course is an introduction to the French language and to our textbook series. The curriculum is context-based and addresses culture as well as the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By the end of the year students will have gained enough French so that they can express themselves in simple conversation on very familiar topics. The curriculum is supported by a robust online platform, which allows students the flexibility to do a lot of additional practice outside of class. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

French II Year Course
Prerequisite: *French I*

Through a variety of materials and methods, French II will continue to develop a strong foundation in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Class time will be devoted to aural/oral work with most written work done outside of class. Through videos or film clips, lectures, discussions, and digital media, students will develop a cultural perspective of France and Francophone countries.

French III Year Course
Prerequisite: *French II*

In this course, taught entirely in French, students continue to build their understanding of the French language. This is a year of intense study that deepens a student's basic foundation in preparation for advanced classes that include readings, poetry, film, and music. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are developed within the context of language usage through a variety of materials. Students learn to speak with confidence in everyday situations as well as to successfully express a variety of ideas through writing. Grammar is presented through a variety of themes, and the textbook is supported by an online platform with additional activities.

French IV Year Course
Prerequisite: *French III*

More interdisciplinary and content-based than French III, French IV focuses on increased proficiency in language communication skills and appreciation of contemporary French and Francophone culture. Arranged thematically, the course allows students the opportunity to interpret authentic texts and produce language in diverse contexts. Through literary excerpts and articles, students are exposed to a variety of French cultural contexts. Time is devoted to the development of reading strategies, and students read novels in their entirety. Speaking skills improve greatly through daily discussion and attention to oral expression as all elements in class are conducted in French. Writing skills are enhanced through essays and journals that accompany all thematic units.

French V Year Course
Prerequisite: *French IV*

This course is designed for advanced students who are interested in furthering their knowledge of the language and culture. Taught in French, the content of this course includes short stories, poetry, non-fiction readings, current events and cultural activities from a variety of French-speaking countries. Grammar practice will be reviewed in the context of the readings and by additional reinforcement exercises. Emphasis will be given to developing effective communication skills, and students will write compositions and make oral presentations on a regular basis. A robust multimedia component will support the growth of communication skills and the development of global competence.

AP French Language and Culture Year Course

Prerequisites: *Successful completion of French V, or A in French IV and departmental approval, followed by demonstration of readiness on the Advancement Test.*

Interdisciplinary and content-based, this course promotes both fluency and accuracy in language use while providing students an opportunity to broaden their worldviews and deepen their knowledge of French and Francophone cultures through critical study and authentic materials. Students are engaged in an exploration of culture in both contemporary and historical contexts, using their knowledge of French to understand and compare cultural products, practices, and perspectives of the French and Francophone worlds with their own communities. Taught in French, the course incorporates interdisciplinary topics across the six required themes (Global Challenges, Science and Technology, Contemporary Life, Personal and Public Identities, Families and Communities, and Beauty and Aesthetics) in the Advanced Placement: French Language and Culture Curriculum Framework, and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency and ability to interpret and synthesize information from authentic resources in each of the three modes of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational). The use of French is required at all times and students will be given frequent presentational writing and speaking assignments. Grammar is reviewed as needed throughout the year. The course prepares students to take the Advanced Placement: French Language and Culture examination in May. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Advanced Topics: Le Monde Francophone

Year Course or or Fall Semester*

*(*for students studying abroad during the Spring semester only)*

Prerequisite: *AP French Language and Culture* and/*or departmental approval.*

This advanced elective allows French students to explore and more fully develop language while also increasing their understanding of the Francophone world. Using a variety of materials, short readings, novels, press, films, podcasts and technology, students will discover the history, literature, culture and current issues of various French speaking countries. ***Advanced Topics: Le Monde Francophone and The AP French Language and Culture class will run jointly. Consequently, the topics covered in both classes will vary from year to year to avoid duplication, and assessment expectations will be differentiated by level.***

Latin

Latin I Year Course

In Latin I, students will begin to study the language, history, and culture of the ancient Romans. Students will begin to build the foundational skills needed to read an inflected language, which requires students to use word endings over word placement to guide meaning. In Latin, our primary modes of communication are reading and writing, and students will develop critical thinking skills by engaging in our activities and readings about mythology, history, and culture in Rome. In addition to gaining an understanding of ancient Roman culture, students will begin to make connections between the Roman world and our modern one. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

Latin II Year Course

Prerequisite: *Latin I*

In Latin II, students will continue to study the Latin language, history and culture through more advanced readings and the analysis of more complex grammar. By the end of this course, students will have a complete understanding of Latin grammar and be able to translate mostly unedited Latin from Roman authors.

Latin III Year Course

Prerequisite: *Latin II*

Latin III is a yearlong translation course designed to synthesize the application of Latin grammar learned in Latin I and II with the interpretation and study of authentic Latin texts. Throughout the course, students will read modern novellas written in Latin as well as the works of Romans who lived 2,000 years ago, both in prose and in poetry. In addition, students will continue to learn more about the ancient Roman world and the people who lived there.

Latin: Readings in Roman History Year Course

Prerequisite: *Latin III*

This course will be offered during the 2025-2026 academic year and every third year thereafter.

This is an advanced translation course. Students will translate and analyze Latin texts from various Roman authors in order to gain a deeper understanding of Roman history, from the founding through the fall of Rome, all while solidifying their understanding of Latin grammar. Authors may include Eutropius, Cicero, Caesar, and Livy. In addition to translating texts, students will conduct research on a variety of aspects of Roman history and its lasting impact on the modern world. In the final quarter, students will have the opportunity to select an author or topic from the course for more in-depth study

Latin: Readings in Roman Culture Year Course

Prerequisite: *Latin III*

This course will be offered during the 2026-2027 academic year and every third year thereafter.

This is an advanced translation course. Students will translate and analyze Latin texts from various Roman authors in order to gain a deeper understanding of Roman culture, while solidifying their understanding of Latin grammar. Topics may include religion, daily life, family life, education, and slavery. In addition to translating texts, students will conduct research on a variety of aspects of Roman culture and the impact of that culture on the modern world. In the final quarter, students will have the opportunity to select an author or topic from the course for more in depth study.

Latin: Readings in Roman Biographies Year Course

Prerequisite: *Latin III*

This course will be offered during the 2027-2028 academic year and every third year thereafter.

This is an advanced translation course. Students will translate and analyze Latin texts about Roman men and women; real and fictional, written by various authors in order to gain a deeper understanding of Roman history and culture. Vocabulary and grammar concepts will also be reviewed in the context of the Latin texts. Romans to be studied may include Caesar, Cicero, Lucretia, and the Emperors. In addition to translating texts, students will conduct research on a variety of topics to provide a broader context for the Romans being

studied. In the final quarter, students will have the opportunity to select an author for more in depth study.

Latin: AP Vergil and Caesar Year Course
Prerequisite: *Latin III and departmental approval*

Latin AP Vergil and Caesar is a year-long course devoted to the study of Vergil's epic poem, the *Aeneid*, and Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* (*Gallic War*). Over the course of the year, students translate selections from both texts, working to hone strategies specific to reading both epic poetry and prose. In addition to the Latin text, students are also expected to read selections from the *Aeneid* and the *Gallic War* in English. While this course remains an advanced translation course, students will also learn to analyze and interpret the Latin text as literature. Student-led discussions, journal entries, and regular short response papers allow students to articulate and refine their evolving interpretation of each author. The course of study prepares students to take the Advanced Placement Latin Examination in May. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Advanced Classics: The Age of Augustus and Empire
Year Course or or Fall Semester*
*(*for students studying abroad during the Spring semester only)*
Prerequisite: *Latin III and entering 11th or 12th grade*
This course will be offered in alternate years. It will be offered during the 2025-2026 academic year.

This is a yearlong translation course that explores the literature, history, social dynamics, and architecture during the Principate of Augustus, and the emperors who followed him. Students in this course translate from authors including, but not limited to: Suetonius, Augustus, Tacitus, Pliny, Horace, Ovid, and Vergil. During this course, students also write papers, prepare presentations, and engage in student-led discussions covering various topics dealing with the Roman Empire. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

Advanced Classics: Politics and Poetry
Year Course or or Fall Semester*
*(*for students studying abroad during the Spring semester only)*
Prerequisite: *Latin III and entering 11th or 12th grade*
This course will be offered in alternate years. It will be offered during the 2026-2027 academic year.

During the first semester, students will explore the politics of the Roman Republic through reading and analyzing primary sources written by Cicero and Sallust which focus on the infamous Catilinarian Conspiracy. During the second semester, students will turn to poetry, observing through various authors the ways poetry can enhance and/or question Roman political agendas. Throughout the year there will also be various student-led projects, such as preparing and teaching a Latin text, creating polished translational work, and presentations. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

Beginning Ancient Greek Year Course
Prerequisite: ***Completion of Latin II and entering 12th grade***

Beginning Ancient Greek will use the Athenaze book series to begin the study of this classical language. By reading about Dikaiopolis and his family, students will discover how the Greek language functions as well as learn about the culture of Ancient Greece. We will also read several tragedies in English translation to discuss both the religious and philosophical beliefs of the ancient Greeks. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

Mandarin Chinese

Chinese I Year Course

This is an introduction to Modern Standard Chinese (Mandarin Chinese) and to the cultures of China. With an emphasis on speaking and listening, this course also addresses reading and writing in simplified characters. Students will acquire the Pinyin Romanization system. Topics covered in this course will allow the students to exchange personal information and engage in simple conversations about everyday life. Traditional Chinese holidays and festivals and the distinctive foods associated with them will also be introduced. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

Chinese II Year Course
Prerequisite: *Chinese I*

This is a continuation course for students who have completed Chinese I, or who can demonstrate that they have acquired a knowledge of the language to the required level. Emphasis will continue to be on the spoken language. This course is taught primarily in Mandarin Chinese. The study of Chinese characters will focus on the simplified forms. Topics include shopping, talking about past and future events, daily and leisure activities, and home and school. Students will understand brief messages and notes written in simplified Chinese characters that they have studied previously. Supplementary materials and technology will support this course.

Chinese III Year Course
Prerequisite: *Chinese II*

Chinese III is an intermediate course that is taught entirely in Mandarin Chinese. Vocabulary and sentence structures from Chinese I and II will be further developed. Topics will include home and school, going to the doctor, ordering dishes in a restaurant, getting around town, and narrating a sequence of events. Students will begin to read short stories, advertisements, and other authentic materials. With the use of computer software this course will offer additional practice in extended writing. Students will be working with a textbook and authentic text in simplified characters. Other resources will include music, film, and digital media.

Chinese IV Year Course
Prerequisite: *Chinese III*

In this course, taught entirely in Mandarin Chinese, students will be working with a college-level textbook and authentic Chinese texts to further develop their reading and writing in simplified character, as well as listening and speaking skills. Readings and digital media will be supplemental resources for this class.

Chinese V Year Course
Prerequisite: *Chinese IV*

This course is designed for advanced students who are interested in furthering their knowledge of the language and culture and is taught entirely in Mandarin Chinese. In order to provide a content-rich environment, this course includes short stories, poetry, non-fiction readings, current events, cultural activities, digital media, films, and songs. Students are introduced to different writing styles. Grammar practice is reviewed in the context of the readings and by additional

reinforcement exercises. Emphasis is given to developing effective communication skills. Students will write compositions and make oral presentations on a regular basis.

AP Chinese Language and Culture Year Course

Prerequisite: *Successful completion of Chinese V, or A in Chinese IV and departmental approval, followed by demonstration of readiness on the Advancement Test*

The Advanced Placement: Chinese Language and Culture course deepens students' immersion into the language and culture of the Chinese-speaking world. This course provides students with ongoing and varied opportunities to further develop their proficiencies across the full range of language skills within a cultural frame of reference reflective of the richness of Chinese language and culture. Instructional materials and activities are carefully and strategically adapted from authentic sources to support the linguistic and cultural goals of the course. The course prepares students to take the Advanced Placement Chinese Language and Culture examination in May. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Advanced Topics - Chinese Culture and Literature
Year Course or or Fall Semester*
*(*for students studying abroad during the Spring semester only)*
Prerequisite: *Departmental approval*

This advanced Chinese elective allows students of Mandarin Chinese to explore and more fully develop language while also increasing their understanding of the Chinese speaking world. Using a variety of materials, short readings, novels, press, films, podcasts, and technology, students will discover the history, literature, culture, and current issues of the Chinese speaking world. ***Advanced Topics: Chinese Culture and Literature and the AP Chinese Language and Culture class will run jointly. Consequently, assessment expectations will be differentiated by level.***

Spanish

Spanish I Year Course

This course is an introduction to the Spanish language. The curriculum is context-based and addresses culture as well as the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By the end of the year students will have gained enough Spanish so that they can express themselves in simple conversation on very familiar topics. The curriculum is supported by a robust online platform which allows students the flexibility to do a lot of additional practice outside of class. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

Spanish II Year Course
Prerequisite: *Spanish I*

Students will acquire standard language and grammar and develop communication skills largely through the context of the course content and activities. Oral and written stories, current events, active listening, note-taking and writing, and lots of interpersonal communication are the vehicles for delivering this content. In class, listening, engagement, and participation are a daily expectation. By the end of this course, students will be able to speak and write about everyday and familiar topics in both the present and past tenses.

Spanish III Year Course
Prerequisite: *Spanish II*

Spanish III is an intermediate level course that is taught entirely in Spanish. Some time is devoted to reviewing the many structures and verb tenses introduced in Spanish II. New units will include more vocabulary topics, compound verb tenses, cultural information, and longer readings. The general format of the textbook sequence continues throughout the publisher's materials supported by a robust online platform. Classroom activities and conversation will reinforce the daily homework exercises. Some work will involve culture projects, digital media, and online assignments.

Spanish IV Year Course
Prerequisite: *Spanish III*

More interdisciplinary and content-based than Spanish III, Spanish IV focuses on increased proficiency in language communication skills and global competence. A review of grammar structures, as well as new concepts, vocabulary enrichment, and reading practice will continue throughout the year. Arranged thematically, the course allows students the opportunity to interpret authentic texts and produce language in diverse contexts. Through literary excerpts and articles, students are exposed to a variety of cultural contexts from around the world. Time is devoted to the development of reading strategies. Speaking skills improve greatly through daily discussion and attention to oral expression as all elements in class are conducted in Spanish. Writing skills are enhanced through compositions and journals that accompany all thematic units.

Spanish V Year Course
Prerequisite: *Spanish IV*

Spanish V is a departure from a focus on language, and instead, utilizes the language as a vehicle to examine cultural products and perspectives. Themes include family, beauty and aesthetics, the individual and society, and change-makers. Students will increase proficiency by engaging meaningfully with authentic resources such as short stories, movies, poems, various visual arts, music, and a novel. Active discussion and participation are daily expectations.

AP Spanish Language and Culture Year Course
Prerequisites: *Successful completion of Spanish V, or A in Spanish IV and departmental approval, followed by demonstration of readiness on the Advancement Test*

The Advanced Placement: Spanish Language and Culture course strives to promote both fluency and accuracy in language use while providing students an opportunity to expand their exposure to and deepen their knowledge of the cultures in the Spanish-speaking world through critical study of authentic materials. Taught completely in Spanish, this course engages students in an exploration of culture in both contemporary and historical contexts. Students will work with a variety of current instructional materials, including digital media, journalistic and literary sources. Texts are intended to be a catalyst for active class discussion. The use of Spanish is required at all times and students will be given frequent presentational writing and speaking assignments. The course prepares students to take the Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture examination in May. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Advanced Hispanic Culture and Literature

Year Course or or Fall Semester*

*(*for students studying abroad during the Spring semester only)*

Prerequisite: *Departmental approval.*

This course will be offered during the 2025-2026 academic year and alternate years thereafter.

This course is taught entirely in Spanish and is intended to further enrich the students' knowledge and appreciation of literature and culture in the Hispanic world. Course content includes: literary selections, fiction and nonfiction, on a variety of cultural topics. Students will demonstrate their understanding of course content through a variety of mediums, including dramatic presentations, analytical writing, formal presentations, creative writing, in-class discussion, and digital media. Grammar instruction is not an explicit part of the curriculum of this course. However, it is expected that students use clear and accurate language, and that they make every effort to develop and hone their language skills. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

Advanced Topics – Hispanic Theater and Film

Year Course or or Fall Semester*

*(*for students studying abroad during the Spring semester only)*

Prerequisite: *Departmental approval*

This course will be offered during the 2026-2027 academic year and alternate years thereafter.

This class includes short films, feature films, and plays that focus on both historic and contemporary issues of cultural, socioeconomic, and philosophical relevance. Main themes in the course will address topics such as politics, religion, gender, migrations, historic and current events, and social concerns. Students will analyze, perform in and create short films and literary plays, improving their pronunciation, intonation, and dramatic expression, while developing a more complete understanding and appreciation of the complexities of the Spanish-speaking world. Grammar instruction is not an explicit part of the curriculum of this course. However, it is expected that students use clear and accurate language, and that they make every effort to develop and hone their language skills. ***Please note that a minimum enrollment is needed to run this class.***

SCIENCE

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENT:
Introductory Biology (grade 9) and at least one semester of chemistry and one semester of physics sometime during grades 10, 11 or 12. The Science Department strongly recommends continued enrollment in science courses during the junior and senior year.

Biology

Introductory Biology Year Course (Grade 9)

This survey course provides a background in biological concepts and theories. The focus of this inquiry-based, laboratory experience is to allow students to investigate the basic concepts of biology and to develop skills in data collection and analysis. Students will work to develop skills in academic research and writing throughout the course. The major topics studied include the chemical basis of life, energy flow through the living world, ecology, cells, genetics, comparative anatomy, and evolution.

Chemistry

Chemistry Year Course
Prerequisite: *Introductory Biology*

In this college preparatory survey course, topics covered will include the study of matter, atomic structure, periodic table, bonding, stoichiometry, chemical reactions, gas laws and thermochemistry. Laboratory experiences will be an important part of the course. This is a year-long course and cannot be taken for only one semester.

Honors Chemistry Year Course
Prerequisites: *Minimum grade of B+ in Introductory Biology, and completion of Honors Geometry, or Geometry with department approval.*

Honors Chemistry is a rigorous year-long course designed for students who are highly interested in science and are interested in pursuing a more challenging academic path in the sciences at Blake. This class will examine matter and the changes that it undergoes by exploring topics in atomic and electronic structure, nuclear chemistry, energy, ionic and molecular compounds, intermolecular forces, stoichiometry, acids & bases, and gas laws. The course uses laboratory experiments to explore and understand the molecular world. There will also be a strong focus on building students' analytical and critical thinking skills, improving scientific reading and writing and developing good collaboration. Students will be challenged to make connections with the material throughout multiple units, to problem-solve, and to plan experiments. The emphasis on skill development will prepare students to succeed in subsequent science courses at Blake (such as AP Chemistry and Honors Physics), as well as college level science-courses. This course is a prerequisite for *AP Chemistry*.

Physics

Physics: Mechanics, Electricity & Magnetism Year Course
Prerequisites: *Introductory Biology and Chemistry or department approval*

Class activities include laboratory investigations, concept development through small-group collaborative work, and real world problem solving. The pace is that of a typical college-preparatory course. In the first semester, the course will be focused on concepts of building graphical and mathematical models to better understand the relationships among forces, motion, energy, and momentum. The course routinely incorporates technology, using probes with computer interfaces to collect data, and software to analyze it. The emphasis of each unit is on the co-construction of physics principles based on experimental evidence. Subsequent activities focus on concept development and problem solving. The course has a significant semester project that integrates data analysis with models of Newtonian mechanics.

In the second semester, the course focuses on developing conceptual models and reasoning skills to understand life in the Electric Age. Topics include electric charge behavior, D.C. electric circuits, behaviors of permanent and ferromagnetic materials, electromagnetism in speakers and motors, physical waves, light, color, and mirror and lens optics. Much of the lab work involves using observation to construct qualitative models. Students apply models to solve quantitative problems, as well. The course includes a semester project in which students use principles developed during the term to detail how a modern electrical device works.

Honors Physics Year Course
Prerequisites: *Honors Chemistry with a minimum grade of a B+, or Chemistry with a minimum grade of A- and completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, Honors Pre-Calculus, or department approval*

This rigorous yearlong course serves as the introduction to physics for juniors who both have high interest in science and math, and are very academically motivated. The course addresses topics in Newtonian mechanics including kinematics, dynamics, conservation of energy and momentum, rotation, simple harmonic motion, physical waves, sound, charge behavior, and electric circuits. The lab component requires good functionality in a laboratory environment, and focuses on developing skills to analyze experimental data graphically and mathematically. Each unit has at least one associated lab experiment. In addition, there is a strong emphasis on problem solving at the pre-calculus level that requires a high comfort level with mathematics. Most topics are treated with significantly more rigor than a typical high school course. The pace is that of a college freshman non-calculus-based introductory physics course.

Advanced Science Electives

The Blake Upper School Science Department offers a wide variety of semester electives designed to allow students to advance their exploration and knowledge in areas of study in multiple disciplines.

Advanced Science: Astronomy Second Semester Course
Prerequisites: semesters of *Physics, Honors Physics* or departmental approval.

This course takes a hands-on, multimedia approach to a subject that asks some of the most basic and profound questions about the cosmos. What explains the apparent motions of the moon, sun, stars and planets? Why do stars shine, and what happens when they die? Why do astronomers say that we are made of "star stuff?" What is the ultimate fate of the universe? Videos, computer activities, observation projects and hands-on inquiry labs supplement traditional textbook study. If weather permits, numerous "sky watching" nights are also scheduled. Learn the constellations, look at objects through a large telescope and witness various astronomical current events; students

who would like to participate in such activities are especially encouraged to enroll.

Advanced Science: Engineering I First Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Completion of or concurrent enrollment in Physics or Honors Physics*

Engineering will introduce students to a variety of different fields that fall under the wide umbrella of engineering through class activities, projects, design challenges, field studies, and class speakers. Most importantly, students will engage in the engineering process to gain vital experience in problem solving, design, prototyping, and implementation. Along the way, students will learn about and apply mechanics principles, coding, CAD, budget proposals, and project bidding.

Advanced Science: Engineering II Second Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Completion of Engineering I and one year of Physics (any level)*

This class is a continuation of Blake Engineering curriculum that began in Engineering I. The project will begin as it does in industry, pinpointing a problem based on human-centered need. Students will continue to develop skills gained in Engineering I in mechanical principles, coding, and CAD while undertaking a semester project that will be applied to significant human-centered design projects. Through analysis of problem/solution sets, we will workshop projects with which to move forward. Projects will be presented to students and faculty at the end of the semester to showcase their unique research, engineering principles utilized, designs, iterations, and final solutions pursued during the semester.

Advanced Science: Environmental Science
First Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Introductory Biology* and *Chemistry*

The goal of this interdisciplinary course is to provide students with the scientific principles, concepts, methods and experiences required to understand the interrelationships of the natural world. Students will identify and analyze environmental problems both natural and human-made, evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and examine alternative solutions for resolving and/or preventing them. An overarching focus will be the human influence on the environment, coupled with the exploration of basic ecological concepts. In addition, the course will concentrate on the science behind environmental problems and issues. Classroom, laboratory, and field study will include the following topics: ecosystems, matter and energy in living systems, atmosphere and weather, geology, soil, water, population dynamics, biodiversity, climate change and global warming, pollution, solid waste, food, energy, ozone depletion, urbanization, human impact on the environment, and local field work.

Advanced Science: Geology First or Second Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Introductory Biology* and *Chemistry*

Geology will take you on an exciting journey through the Earth's past 4.6 billion years as we work to understand the question: "What is the universe, and what is Earth's place in it?" We will explore the concept of geologic time as we unwrap the past, present, and future of our evolving planet. We will also ask the question "How and why is Earth constantly changing?" as we unpack the processes acting on and in the earth to produce change. Emphasis will be placed on understanding how we humans affect our geologic environment in our ever-increasing need for natural resources. Topics could include plate tectonics and large-scale system interactions, surface-water dynamics and flooding, groundwater and groundwater contamination, pollution and waste management, landslides, volcanic and earthquake hazards, and global climate change. This course will incorporate classroom, laboratory, and field study.

Advanced Science: Human Anatomy & Physiology
First or Second Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Introductory Biology* and *Chemistry* (any level)

Human Anatomy and Physiology covers the structure and function of the human body. The course begins with an introduction to the human body and the key chemistry concepts needed to understand its processes. Body systems will be covered in detail and an understanding of how these systems coordinate with one another will be developed. Emphasis will be placed on the structure and function of organs. Lab work, including dissection, will be a core part of the course

Advanced Science: Human Genetics
First or Second Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Introductory Biology* and *Chemistry* (any level).

How are genes inherited? How do genes affect human health? How can we use genetic information to personalize medicine? How do direct-to-consumer genetic tests intersect with the medical marketplace? This course focuses on how genes impact human health. We will explore the human health outcomes of monosomies and trisomies. We will dive into medical genetic tests (such as BRCA 1 and 2) and what they can predict about health outcomes over a lifespan. Furthermore, through Journal Club discussions, we will focus on the ethics of genetics and stay current with recent discoveries in the field.

Advanced Science: Marine Science Zoology and Marine Policy
Second Semester Course
Prerequisites: *Introductory Biology* and *Chemistry* (any level)

This Marine Science course will focus on the biology and ecology of the organisms that call the ocean home, with a heavy focus on conservation. It will begin with an investigation of basic principles of oceanography, and then move through the taxonomic framework of the biotic elements of the ocean, including planktonic diversity, algae and sea plants, and the animal kingdom where we will survey phyla in order of complexity. The unit will end with an investigation of marine mammal behavior and physiology. The end of the semester will focus on the human relationship with the ocean including national and international law, animal migrations, fisheries collapse, and the ethics of the aquarium industry and trade.

Advanced Science: Organic Chemistry I First Semester Course
Pre-requisites: *Honors Chemistry with a minimum grade of B or Chemistry with a minimum grade of A-*

Organic Chemistry I will introduce you to the fascinating world of carbon-based chemistry. We will explore how the structure of organic compounds dictates function, and investigate different types of organic compounds such as alkanes, alkenes, alkynes, alcohols, amines, polymers and more! You will also gain an understanding of organic reactions and how these reactions are used in our larger world. The course will include a hands-on laboratory component where you'll extract caffeine from chocolate or tea, and create soap from organic molecules, bringing the chemistry of everyday products to life. A strong emphasis will be placed on 3-dimensional thinking

and problem-solving skills. This course is designed to be an excellent starter course for students interested in being doctors, nurses, health care professionals, chemists, engineers, or scientists.

Advanced Science: Organic Chemistry II Second Semester Course
Pre-requisites: *Organic Chemistry I with a minimum grade, of B or departmental approval*

Organic Chemistry II is the continuation of exploring the world of carbon-based chemistry. This course will build on the foundational concepts learned in ochem I with a deeper focus on reaction mechanisms such as electrophilic substitution, nucleophilic substitution, elimination reactions and more. We will investigate organic synthesis strategies and spectroscopic analysis of compounds. There will be several field trips to industries and universities which use synthetic organic chemistry or spectroscopic instrumentation. This course is designed to be an excellent starter course for students interested in being doctors, nurses, health care professionals, chemists, engineers, or scientists.

Advanced Placement Science

Juniors and seniors who have demonstrated both interest and excellence in science have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement courses in biology, chemistry and physics. Students taking these courses will meet the objectives of an introductory-level college course and, by taking the AP Exam in the spring, may have the opportunity to receive college credit for their work. Students interested in AP Science courses should confer with the teachers of these courses prior to registration. Students in AP Science courses are expected to sit for the AP Exam for that course in May. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP Exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

AP Biology Year Course
Prerequisites: *Completion of either Honors Chemistry or Honors Physics with a minimum grade of B+, or departmental approval.*

This college-level course explores fundamental biological principles at various levels of organization, from molecules to ecosystems. Utilizing a lens of connecting structure and function, the class progresses from a study of the biochemistry of macromolecules to cell biology. Energetics, mechanisms of enzymes, and enzymatic pathways such as Cellular Respiration and Photosynthesis are investigated. Cell division, control of cell cycle, and a mechanistic understanding of the central dogma of molecular biology are subjects developed in the second semester. The course concludes with an emphasis on biotechnology, populations, and ecology. The units covered in the class echo the 8 units outlined by the AP Biology curriculum. Each unit will include lab activities. Lab activities range from modeling experiments to inquiry based student led experimentation and analysis. Scientific communication is practiced in ways that reflect how professional scientists report out their findings: through poster presentations, oral presentations, and written reports. A focus is placed on experimental design, hypothesis testing, and data analysis. This course may require occasional laboratory work outside the normal class times throughout the year.

AP Chemistry Year Course
Prerequisites: *A minimum grade of B+ in Honors Chemistry or department approval.*

This college-level course explores fundamental chemical principles at the macroscopic and atomic scale including relating molecular structure to observable properties and understanding the rearrangement of matter and transfer of energy. The topics covered in this year-long introductory college chemistry include stoichiometry, chemical reactions, kinetics, chemical equilibrium, electronic structure and bonding, acids & bases and oxidation and reduction. This course is designed to help students build effective scientific and analytical skills so that the student is prepared to succeed in advanced science courses in college. Laboratory experiments are conducted to compliment the material being learned and there is an emphasis on building lab skills. Lab time will account for over 25% of the instructional time—some labs are completed in one class period while others may be completed over multiple class periods. Scientific communication, data analysis, and critical thinking skills are emphasized in this course and students are expected to work independently as highly motivated and self-disciplined students.

AP Physics (C Level) Year Course
Prerequisites: *A minimum grade of A- in Honors Physics (or departmental approval) and completion of one year of Calculus or concurrent enrollment in AB Calculus with departmental approval.*

AP Physics C is a calculus-based second-year physics course that examines principles and problem solving at a significantly more sophisticated level than in earlier courses. The course is divided into two semesters: Mechanics, and E&M (Electricity and Magnetism). Students delve both more deeply and more broadly into topics from their first year course to capture a more thorough and descriptive understanding of the material and to study more real-life applications. Students are expected to have a high level of comfort with mathematics, as both differential and integral calculus are used extensively from the beginning of the AP Physics C curriculum. There is an ambitious lab component to the course that includes laboratory research studies that frequently require outside-of-class time commitments.
Note: Only capable students who are strongly motivated and highly self-disciplined with a history of successful independent work are encouraged to enroll in this course.

AP Physics II: Modern Physics First Semester Course
Prerequisite: *Honors Physics or Physics (Mechanics and E&M) with a minimum grade of B+ or departmental approval*

Modern Physics is the first semester of a two-semester sequence. It is an Advanced Placement algebra-based course designed for students who would like to take a second year of physics, but due to their math level, would best be served by a non-calculus-based physics course. The curriculum covers a broad range of topics and prepares students for further work in sciences in college. The primary objectives of *Modern Physics* are: (1) to introduce the ideas and concepts of modern physics, (2) to provide a historical perspective on the development of key scientific ideas, and (3) to further develop scientific reasoning skills. Students will be introduced to the major experimental findings that led to the development of current theories of light and matter. The course will include selected topics on special and general relativity, the quantization of energy, particle-wave duality, theories of the atom, fundamental particles and interactions, selected applications of modern physic theories, and an overview of

the most recent theories that have been proposed to account for the nature and existence of matter.

AP Physics II: Electricity & Magnetism, Thermodynamics, and Fluids Second Semester Course

Prerequisites: *AP Physics II: Modern Physics with a minimum grade of B or department approval.*

Electricity & Magnetism, Thermodynamics, and Fluids is an Advanced Placement algebra-based course that builds upon the work students have done in their first year of physics and *AP Physics II: Modern Physics*. The focus of this course is on electrostatics (including fields and potentials), electromagnetism, geometrical and physical optics, thermodynamics, and fluid dynamics. Students will develop problem-solving techniques for approaching comprehensive problems in physics, and use laboratory work to further their understanding of theoretical content. The college equivalent of this course is normally taken by a wide range of students including pre-med students and those interested in careers in the biological sciences. The course is also an excellent preparation for students who wish to enter engineering fields, but have not yet taken calculus.

SOCIAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS:

Class of 2026 and beyond:

- World History (Grade 9)
- Citizenship & the Nation (Fall - Grade 10) and Global Power & Resistance (Spring Grade 10)
- United States History (Grade 11 or Grade 12)

For the Class of 2026 and beyond, additional elective courses in grades 11 and 12 are highly encouraged but not required. Research Intensive electives will continue to be labeled with an R. *Students who wish to be considered for the Excellence in Social Studies Award need to take at least one research-intensive course..*

Grade 9

World History Year Course

This course will explore issues relevant in our globalized 21st-century societies by examining the roots of our modern worldviews and cultural practices in the philosophies, religions, and responses to technological developments past and present. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of historical and contemporary texts and media from the development of agriculture to the rise of modern science and the digital revolution. The course prepares students to analyze historical world events through the reading and evaluation of sources, participation in academic conversation, and the practice of historical thinking and inquiry skills. We will ask several essential questions: Whose information, perspectives, and agendas am I consuming? How do narratives of history (*mythos/logos*) sustain communities, empires, and nations? How do power structures and paradigms develop and change over time? This class is coordinated with the 9th grade English course, World Literature, and students regularly experience co-taught, combined classes to explore interdisciplinary topics.

Grade 10

Citizenship & the Nation First Semester

Building on the skills from 9th grade World History, this course introduces students to the structure, function, and processes of United States federal, state, and local governments. Special emphasis will be given to analyzing the democratic and federalist principles (and their origins) that define these relationships, as well as the rights and responsibilities that citizenship confers (and how to best put them into practice). These include: knowing how government works and how to work through formal electoral processes, critically consuming and creating responsible media, and understanding how grassroots activism intersects both with systems of formal power and the media. Students in this course will be reading historical primary sources and modern media to discuss ideas in seminar-style classes, taking quizzes/unit tests to demonstrate a body of content necessary for informed citizenship in our democracy, and engaging in community-based inquiry projects to investigate issues (like gerrymandering) to critique the notion of the United States as a "nation-state" and think deeply about the democratic principles of representation in a multicultural country like the U.S. Some essential questions for the course include: What are the rights and privileges of citizenship? Who is excluded from citizenship and/or the political process, and why? How does one become a thoughtful consumer of news and information? Is our U.S. government system currently working the way we *say* we want it to? What is to be done? The reading, writing, and research skills practiced in this course will be put to larger use in Semester 2 in formal research projects at the end of 10th grade. See Global Power and Resistance.

Global Power & Resistance Second Semester

This course will build upon the skills and topics students introduced and practiced in both 9th grade World History and the first half of 10th grade in Citizenship and The Nation. Students will be asked to think about a similar set of essential questions, but on a global, modern scale: Who has power? What are modern goals for those with global power? Who defines and propels resistance and decolonization movements? How do identities and representations of those identities matter in resisting and transforming power structures? Do we consider multiple perspectives in reading the news about clashes between authorities and resistors? Students will have the opportunity to learn about imperialism, nationalism, oppression, and resistance as experienced by a range of people particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the 20th and 21st centuries. The first half of the course will use case studies and readings to contextualize resistance movements to global power by becoming familiar with the broad-stroke historical causes and consequences of World Wars I & II in restructuring global superpowers and institutions, the origins of the Cold War and the roots of modern terrorism. Students will continue honing their skills in historical analysis and writing. Then, they will identify a topic they are interested in related to the content of the course and explore the topic in depth by writing a guided, rigorously documented, 5-8 page historical research paper in the second half of the course.

United States History
Students in the Class of 2026 and beyond will need to take a full year course in U.S. history in either their 11th or 12th grade year. The three courses that can be used to fulfill this requirement are:

American Narratives Year Course

This year-long U.S. history course offers a highly engaging thematic investigation into U.S. history. Students will carefully examine each theme, following throughlines from past to present, in order to better understand our current society. Possible course themes include voting, urbanization, civil rights, and immigration. The course will utilize a wide range of perspectives and source types, including traditional texts, as well as newspapers, oral histories, novels, film, music, art, and advertisements, as well as a variety of instructional modes and assessments. Students will produce a variety of research projects and papers. No prerequisite or summer reading is required.

Advanced Placement U.S. History Year Course
Prerequisites: *For rising juniors,a minimum grade of B+ in Citizenship & Nation and B+ at the end of Q3 in Global Power & Resistance or approval of department chair before June 15. Open to any senior.*

This is a rigorous, college level survey course that engages students in the study of history through primary and secondary texts. It divides U.S. history into nine chronological time periods from the pre-colonial era through the early twenty-first century and will touch on major historical themes including identity, work, exchange and

technology, migrations, politics and power, foreign policy, environment and geography, and the ideas, beliefs and culture which have shaped the experience of Americans throughout the centuries. Students will focus on causation, make comparisons within and among societies, evaluate multiple, and often conflicting, perspectives on historical phenomena, craft sophisticated historical arguments using historical evidence, and interpret and synthesize a wide variety of events and ideas. Students will be encouraged to derive their own conclusions and to present them in a variety of formats, including in several short (3-5 page) research papers and writing assignments. Students are expected to start the course with proficient to mastery-level skills in historical research and writing, as well as highly developed notetaking skills. *There is a supplemental charge to take an AP Exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.* ***You must complete a summer reading assignment before the first day of class.***

Advanced Seminar: U.S. History Year Course

Prerequisites: *For rising juniors,application due at registration including recommendation from current 10th grade teacher and a minimum grade of A- in Citizenship & Nation and A- at the end of Q3 in Global Power & Resistance or department chair approval by June 15. Open to any senior.*

This year-long seminar will offer an alternative to the survey approach in AP U.S. History and will be a place to hone close reading, writing, and historical research skills for college readiness. The class will explore U.S. history in a college format, focused on readings from historians of U.S. history, contemporary and historical long form journalism, and current monographs both of the instructors' and the students' choosing. The primary questions of the course will be historiographical: tracing the history of American history. That is, students will focus on learning not just *what* happened in U.S. history, but also the ways Americans have written and told American history across time. The course is designed to allow students to grapple with major problems of U.S. history from 6 core time periods ranging from pre-colonial eras to the early 21st century. A major research paper of 8-10 pages will be written over the course of 2-3 months. Students are expected to start the course with proficient to mastery-level skills in historical research and writing, as well as highly developed notetaking skills. This class is intended for students with some prior knowledge of U.S. history and/or a deep interest in the material to understand what real historians do. *Students enrolled in this class may still choose to sit for the AP U.S. History Exam though that is not the intended design outcome of this course (additional fees apply - see AP U.S. History)* ***You must complete a summer reading assignment before the first day of class.***

Grade 11 and 12 Electives

Class of 2026 and beyond: Electives are not needed for graduation and category designations will only be used descriptively.

Semester Courses Offered Fall 2025

Advanced Placement European History Year Course

Prerequisites: *For rising juniors, a minimum grade of A- in Citizenship & Nation and A- at the end of Q3 in Global Power & Resistance or department chair approval by June 15. Open to any senior.*

This rigorous and writing-intensive course is intended for strong social studies students. The course examines major political, cultural and social trends in European history from the fall of Rome to the French Revolution. The course explores the medieval social order, the rise of nation states and the transition to a modern capitalist economy, the achievements of the Renaissance, the bloody conflicts of the Reformation, the discoveries and conquests of the age of exploration, the study of the new ways of perceiving the world created by the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment and the triumphs and tragedies of the French Revolution. Students will engage with these topics through a variety of highly challenging projects, readings and activities. The course is designed to prepare students for the A.P. European History exam in May, and accordingly it will entail extensive reading assignments, which will begin over the summer, in the textbook and other secondary sources as well as primary sources. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP Exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Advanced Placement Microeconomics First Semester Course

Prerequisites: *For rising juniors, a minimum grade of A- in Citizenship & Nation and A- at the end of Q3 in Global Power & Resistance or department chair approval by June 15. Open to any senior.*

How does Apple decide what to charge for an iPhone? Why do baseball players earn more money than high-school teachers? Should you stay to the end of a movie you're not enjoying in order to get your money's worth out of the ticket you bought? Explore the answers to these and many other questions in this advanced-level economics course. The course introduces students to the principles of microeconomics and includes such topics as supply and demand, market mechanisms and competition, taxation and income distribution. The course also develops students' familiarity with the operation of product and factor markets, distribution of income, market failure, and the role of government in promoting greater efficiency and equity in the economy. Students learn to use graphs, charts, and data to analyze, describe, and explain economic concepts. The course is designed to aid student preparation for the A.P. Microeconomics exam in May, and accordingly it will entail extensive reading assignments, which will begin over the summer, in the textbook and other secondary sources. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP Exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Advanced Topics Research: Independent Historical Studies (R) First Semester Course

This elective course will allow students to work on an independent study within the structure of a teacher-directed course explicitly focusing on the skills and frameworks for increasingly advanced historical and social science research methods. Whole-class discussion will be balanced with substantial independent work time and conferencing. Students will reflect on the following questions: What does it mean to be an academic researcher and scholar working on a long-term project? In what ways do history and the social sciences offer important interdisciplinary lenses for any topic of interest? What does collaboration look like in an independent study? Students will be expected to write a substantial 8-10 page paper and exhibit their work to the school and/or outside community at the end of the semester. ***You must complete a summer reading assignment before the first day of class.***

Comparative Politics & Economics (R) First Semester Course

How do governments affect economic development through their policies? What trade-offs do societies make as they pursue their economic goals? How do order, freedom, and equality shape the political experiences of a society? What is globalization, and how do international institutions function in a globalized world? This course will use a comparative approach to examine the political and economic institutions and social challenges among four selected countries, including the United States, China, and at least one country that Blake students have visited in global immersion programs in recent years (Taiwan, Sierra Leone, Dominican Republic, Rwanda, Iceland, Amsterdam, Costa Rica). Students can expect policy simulations within the case study units and the opportunity to research the political and economic systems in a country of their own choosing in the final project, testing the concept of globalization as a sustaining model for world stability and prosperity.

Rural/Urban Minnesota (R) First Semester Course

In this elective course that has evolved from Twin Cities Histories, Global Theories, Local Realities and Minnesota History, students will focus on the political, social, cultural and geographic history and contemporary realities of divisions in Minnesota, namely those that exist between urban and rural areas of the state and the Metro area. This class will utilize practices from place-based, experiential learning by connecting students to community partners to explore how race, class, gender, local and state politics, music, culture, religion, and arts merged and evolved together over the past 200 years, though with emphasis on the last 20-30 years. Heavy emphasis will be placed on refining discussion, reading, and writing skills as well as interpersonal and identity reflections on our own place in this community. A final research paper will allow students to explore a topic with more depth.

Morality in the Modern World Issues (R) First Semester Course

This course is designed to help you determine who you are, what you believe, and how you want to live your values. You will be asked to think about how you think, particularly as it pertains to making decisions about what you believe is right or wrong. Some of the questions you may explore include: What moral frameworks animate the contemporary world? How do we trace controversial issues in our US society back to their philosophical roots? Where do we find philosophical and moral codes in the religious and cultural roots of contemporary societies? What is the interplay between morality and laws in secular, pluralistic societies? This course will hone your skills to think critically, ask questions, and articulate your perspective. In this discussion-based course, you will learn to listen with empathy and also disagree both vigorously and respectfully. The course will culminate with a final project that is research-based.

Semester Courses Offered Spring 2026

Advanced Placement European History Year Course

See description under first semester courses.

Advanced Action Research: Identities & Representations (R) Second Semester Course

In this elective that merges previous courses (Class & Race in the U.S., Gender Studies, and SPARC), students will dive deeply into the multiple and intersecting identities that make up our school community and the national and international discourses around identity and representation in the media. Students will grapple with questions like: What is "representation" in the media? Why do we care about how different people are represented? Who gets to represent whom? Why is diversity of representation important? In addition, students will participate in our partner program School Participatory Action Research Collaborative, a program through the University of Pennsylvania, that will allow students from this course to design social science qualitative research projects to analyze our school climate through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion in order to propose new initiatives and programs to our Head of School. Students who choose to do so will be encouraged to travel with teacher chaperones to UPenn in April for an annual student roundtable to present their work (expenses paid by the school).

Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics Second Semester Course

Prerequisites: *For rising juniors, a minimum grade of A- in Citizenship & Nation and A- at the end of Q3 in Global Power & Resistance or department chair approval by June 15. Open to any senior.*

What is the proper role of government in U.S. society? Students in this advanced course will consider how the government institutions and electoral systems promote and limit equality and freedom. Using current domestic and international realities, students will engage in practical politics to understand how to attain change at the local and national level. Students will examine the development of the U.S. system of democracy and assess the interplay between the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the federal government. Along with learning about how political leaders fashion public policy, students will learn how individuals and groups develop attitudes about political life. We will closely follow the presidential election this fall, as well as make connections to local and state elections coming up in November. The course is designed to aid students in preparation for the A.P. U.S. Government & Politics exam in May, and accordingly it will entail extensive reading assignments, which will begin over the summer, in the textbook and other secondary sources as well as primary sources. ***There is a supplemental charge to take an AP Exam that will be the responsibility of the student to pay. Financial aid is available.***

Holocaust & Genocide Studies (R) Second Semester Course

This course will examine genocide from a comparative perspective. The first unit will begin with an investigation into human behavior, race, and the influence of the state in forming an individual's identity. From there, students delve deeply into understanding the varying definitions of genocide and the ways in which it compares and contrasts with pre-WWII examples of mass violence, including those from colonial contexts. In the next unit, students will conduct an in-depth study of the Holocaust to facilitate their knowledge of the key issues associated with genocide including the roles of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, the conditions that allow genocide to occur, and the short and long-term consequences of genocide. In the third unit, students will examine the issues of justice and reconciliation among more contemporary examples of genocide including the incidents in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Serbia. The course will conclude with a final project in which students will conduct an in-depth, independent research project on a genocide-related topic of their choice.

Positive Psychology: Pursuit of Happiness (R)
Second Semester Course

How can happiness be maximized? Can an individual choose happiness? What will make me happier? This course will explore the human idea of happiness as a way to introduce students to the disciple of positive psychology. To do so, students will be asked to seek what brings humans joy, meaning, and purpose, both collectively and as individuals, and to inquire across cultures and times if this is a universal constant or how it has evolved with changes in beliefs, technology, or circumstances of modern life. Students will use data analysis to unpack social and scientific research to evaluate if a true correlation exists between possible contributors and happiness. Students will create, implement, and track a personal happiness plan throughout the semester. Nightly reading will prepare students for active participation in regular Harkness discussions. Additionally, a final semester research project will be required.

Religion in the Modern World (R) Second Semester Course

This course delves into the seminal ideas, practices, and relationships that define a handful of world religions. Possible religions include: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Students are asked to deepen their understanding of each religion with openness to their own traditions and curiosity about others. We will explore the powerful impact of religion on our lives as citizens of the United States and the world, using a religious pluralism framework that is informed by Religion in Public Life at Harvard [https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/]. Current events are incorporated into the course on a regular basis . Students will engage in a final inquiry project.

GENERAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENT:
Health in grade 10
Senior Seminar in Grade 12

Health First or Second Semester Course

This course will deliver health and wellness information aimed at promoting healthy behaviors, increasing responsible decision-making, and encouraging healthful living. As a result of this course, students will gain an understanding of how to make positive lifestyle changes in the areas of physical wellness, mental health, chemical health and relationships/sexual health, and they will work toward personal application of the information into their daily lives. The overarching theme of this course is to allow students to practice and model making healthy decisions (short and long term) that will reduce the risk of future health concerns. In addition to taking personal responsibility for their health and well-being, students will also use the knowledge that they have acquired to educate their friends and family.

Health is also available as a Blake Summer Programs course for students entering grades 10-12. This summer course fulfills the Health graduation requirement. For more details, please see the Summer Academic Courses section of this catalog.

Journalism First or Second Semester Course
0.25 semester elective credit

This course enables the editorial staff of *Spectrum,* Blake's student newspaper, to work on the writing, editing, and layout of the paper using InDesign. Fundamentals of print and online newspaper design and journalism ethics will be discussed. Enrollment for this course is open to all students in grades 9-12 who would like to contribute to the production of this award-winning school newspaper. In addition to the print publication, students will maintain the online extension of the newspaper, www.blakespectrum.org, which includes broadcast journalism. Students who intend to apply for editorial positions are strongly encouraged to enroll for both semesters. Co-curricular involvement on the *Spectrum* staff prior to joining this editorial class is encouraged, but not required. Editorial positions are leadership positions, which entail an interview prior to course commencement. Course may be repeated.

Yearbook First Semester or Year Course
2 classes/week; 0.25 semester elective credit

This course provides an opportunity to work on the design and production of a tangible publication: *Reflections,* the Blake Upper School yearbook. Students will learn multiple aspects of book production: concept, design, layout, photography, and copywriting. Using an all-online workflow – meaning you can work on the book anywhere at any time – students will create a publication that defines the personality and character of each class. The final product will be a lasting collection of memories, events, and relationships.

This course is open to grades 10-12. Leadership positions exist for juniors and seniors; students with leadership positions must enroll for the full year. Course may be repeated.

Senior Seminar First or Second Semester Course

Senior Seminar students investigate advanced communication strategies, explore identity, and develop community partnerships through service learning as they prepare their Senior Speech and Senior Project. Course learning assists students' successful transition to post secondary and career pathways. Seniors contribute to the Upper School learning community through dual presentations to the Upper School student body and faculty OR The Blake School community: Senior Speeches presented during Upper School assemblies in September through April and an end-of-school year final presentation detailing completed Senior Project.

The Senior Seminar course will provide seniors with the opportunity to reinforce Blake community values, as well as the school's commitment to pluralism, intercultural competence, exploration of identity, and community service. Students will investigate introductory theories and concepts of public speaking and advanced research skills. In addition, students will evaluate the influences and implications of cultural dynamics and communication behaviors in intercultural, professional, interpersonal, and public speaking contexts. They will immediately apply this knowledge to write and present their Senior Speech and design and execute their Senior Project. For the Senior Project, each student will actively partner with a community organization to identify and address a community need and/or social issue. Students will study and develop ethical communication skills and apply them in community service and social advocacy contexts.

The Senior Program is an individual learning opportunity that offers students the space and time to engage in a guided service learning experience and execute a self-designed service project. Students design Senior Projects learning and activities to occur off campus and outside the standard curriculum. Each senior must meet attendance and academic eligibility requirements to participate. Please consult the Upper School Handbook for details. In their Senior Seminar course, seniors will write a persuasive project proposal and defend their proposal through an oral defense. Once approved, the project will be conducted during the last two weeks of the school year.

Exemption
A very small number of students may qualify for exemptions from attending Senior Seminar. To request an exemption, students must speak with the Debate Director and the Senior Speech and Senior Program Coordinator and complete a form during the spring of junior year. If an exemption is approved, students are required to work independently with both the Debate Director and the Senior Program Coordinator to complete their senior speech and senior project.
Exemption Eligibility -- Departmental approval, at least one year of Advanced Debate prior to the senior year, and enrollment in Advanced Debate during the senior year.

Global Online Academy is a consortium of top national and international independent schools offering students rigorous courses taught by a member school faculty. Class size is limited to 18; no more than two students from each school may enroll in a given course. GOAoffer courses that connect students to topics they care about, and the opportunity to learn alongside a global network of peers as passionate and curious as they are.

Even though GOA courses are online, students get to know their teachers and classmates by using technology to build relationships. GOA's small classes have students from many different schools, led by expert teachers. Students log in multiple times a week to engage in discussions, collaborate on projects, and share ideas.

GOA courses are designed to be as intellectually rigorous as any course. GOA courses are mostly asynchronous: students do not show up on certain days at certain times. Instead, teachers publish a calendar of activities, and within that framework, students work on their own schedules, gaining critical independent learning skills along the way. Students have a videoconference experience approximately every 10 days, more frequently in our intensive summer courses. GOA courses offer practical, hands-on experience in how these ideas can be applied to the world outside of school. Students have a voice and a choice in the work they do and the ideas they explore.

Students seeking to demonstrate depth of interest and expertise in a field of study can pursue one of GOA's eight pathways to earn a Pathway Certification. When a student earns a Pathway Certification, the certification is highlighted on their GOA transcript, which provides additional context and description of a student's GOA experience. The GOA-issued transcript includes a list of courses the student has taken and the competencies mastered in those courses as well as Pathway Certification earned. Blake will continue to record grades from GOA courses on the school's transcript as well. In order to earn a Pathway Certification, students must take three (or more) courses from a particular pathway.

The academic experience is collaborative, creative, and demanding; therefore, Blake students who wish to enroll in a GOA course should consider it as a replacement for a Blake course, not as an addition to a full course of study. Juniors and seniors are eligible to enroll; occasionally, sophomores with a strong history of successful, self-directed academic work may also be eligible.

Blake students will earn graduation credit for GOA courses (0.5 credits per course) as they would for a semester-length Blake course; GOA courses do not, however, satisfy Blake's departmental graduation requirements. GOA courses will appear on students' transcripts, and the final grades will be included in their Blake Grade Point Averages. Students may not enroll in a GOA course that replicates an existing Blake course (e.g. Organic Chemistry), except in the rare instance that a scheduling conflict prohibits them from enrolling in that Blake course; students are eligible for all GOA courses listed below.

Students may indicate their interest in fall, spring, or yearlong courses via this form but they must contact Blake's GOA Site Director, Nat Gilsdorf, and their Grade Dean to enroll formally.

Courses offered in the summer require an additional $800 fee per course on the family's part. GOA's summer classes are offered in an intensive 7-week format. Most of these courses cover a semester's worth of material and expect a 10-12 hour per week commitment from students. This year (summer 2025) GOA is offering one summer term:

- Summer 1: Monday, June 16, 2025 - Friday, August 1, 2025

Additionally, GOA offers intensive summer courses covering the requisite math subjects Algebra I, Geometry & Precalculus at a fee of $1,100. These courses are more intense than regular summer GOA offerings, as they cover an entire school year's content in one summer. Students should expect to dedicate 15-20 hours per week to these courses.

Families can directly enroll in summer courses via the GOA website.

Financial assistance may be available for students who receive financial assistance towards Blake tuition. Contact Assistant Director of Financial Assistance for more information: Lynn Loew.

Please see www.globalonlineacademy.org for additional information about the program.

Fall Courses

Art, Media, and Design
- Architecture
- Graphic Design

Business, Economics, and Finance
- Business Problem Solving
- Entrepreneurship in a Global Context
- Introduction to Branding & Marketing
- Investing I
- Investing II
- Macroeconomics
- Personal Finance

Computer Science and Engineering
- Computer Science I: Computational Thinking
- Computer Science II: Analyzing Data with Python
- Cybersecurity
- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence

Global Studies
- Climate Action & Sustainability
- Entrepreneurship in a Global Context
- Global Health
- International Relations

Health Sciences
- Bioethics
- Global Health
- Health & Fitness
- Medical Problem Solving I
- Medical Problem Solving II

Justice, Ethics, and Human Rights
- Bioethics
- Introduction to Legal Thinking
- Prisons and Criminal Justice Systems
- Race & Society

Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning
- Data Visualization
- Number Theory

Psychology and Neuroscience
- Abnormal Psychology
- Developmental Psychology
- Neuropsychology
- Social Psychology

Spring Courses

Art, Media, and Design
- Architecture
- Graphic Design
- Arts Entrepreneurship
- Computer Science II: Game Design & Development

Business, Economics, and Finance
- Arts Entrepreneurship
- Business Problem Solving
- Entrepreneurship in a Global Context
- Introduction to Blockchain and Cryptocurrency
- Introduction to Branding & Marketing
- Investing I
- Investing II
- Macroeconomics
- Personal Finance

Computer Science and Engineering
- Computer Science I: Computational Thinking
- Computer Science II: Java
- Computer Science II: Analyzing Data with Python
- Computer Science II: Game Design & Development
- Cybersecurity
- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
- Introduction to Blockchain and Cryptocurrency

Global Studies
- Discourse Across Difference
- Entrepreneurship in a Global Context
- International Relations

Health Sciences
- Bioethics
- (New!) Biochemistry: Medicine, Drugs, & Addiction
- Medical Problem Solving I
- Medical Problem Solving II

Justice, Ethics, and Human Rights
- Bioethics
- Gender & Society
- Discourse Across Difference
- Introduction to Legal Thinking
- Prisons and Criminal Justice Systems

Psychology and Neuroscience
- Abnormal Psychology
- Developmental Psychology
- Neuropsychology
- Social Psychology

Year-Long Courses

- Arabic Language Through Culture I
- Arabic Language Through Culture II
- Arabic Language Through Culture III
- Japanese Language Through Culture I
- Japanese Language Through Culture II
- Japanese Language Through Culture III
- Multivariable Calculus

Summer Courses

- Abnormal Psychology
- Algebra I*
- Architecture
- Bioethics
- Business Problem Solving
- Computer Science I: Computational Thinking
- Computer Science II: Analyzing Data with Python
- Computer Science II: Game Design & Development
- Creative Nonfiction Writing
- Cybersecurity
- Fiction Writing
- Geometry*
- Health & Fitness
- International Relations
- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
- Introduction to Branding & Marketing
- Introduction to Legal Thinking
- Investing I
- Medical Problem Solving I
- Personal Finance
- Precalculus*
- Problem Solving With Engineering & Design

*Denotes a summer intensive course, offered at an increased fee.

Abnormal Psychology First or Second Semester; Summer Course

This course provides students with a general introduction to the field of abnormal psychology from a western perspective while exploring the cultural assumptions within the field. Students examine the biopsychosocial aspects of what society considers abnormal while developing an understanding of the stigma often associated with psychological disorders. Through book study, videos, article reviews, and discussions, students consider how our increasingly global world influences mental health in diverse settings. In learning about the different areas of western abnormal psychology, students study the symptoms, diagnoses, and responses to several specific disorders such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, or schizophrenia. Students develop an understanding of how challenging it can be to define "normal" as they begin to empathize with those struggling with mental distress. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to attend to their own mental well-being. The course culminates in an independent project where students showcase their learning with the goal of making an impact in their local communities.

Algebra I Summer Intensive Course
Prerequisite: *Pre-Algebra or its equivalent*

This intensive seven-week summer course is engineered to fast-track your journey through the foundational Algebra I curriculum, and to lay a strong foundation for a successful transition from middle school into high-school Algebra. Students in this course will master key algebraic concepts such as linear equations and systems of linear equations. In addition, students will be exposed to inequalities, functions, and polynomials (including quadratics). Students will be guided through solving equations, understanding the properties of numbers, and grasping the intricacies of mathematical relationships. Special emphasis is placed on mastering basic operations with polynomials, understanding the coordinate plane, and tackling word problems that translate into algebraic equations. To ensure you're set up for higher-level math, we'll also lay the groundwork for Algebra II topics, such as quadratic equations and systems of equations. Alongside the subject matter, the course aims to cultivate analytical reasoning and problem-solving skills, crucial for your future studies in STEM. Given the accelerated pace, be prepared to put in 15-20 hours a week. This course condenses a year's worth of material into a seven-week sprint, so buckle up! At the end of the course, the Algebra I teachers will make a recommendation to a student's home institution as to whether the student has mastered the key competencies of Algebra I. This course is offered in the summer only.

Arabic Language Through Culture I Year Course

This course (or its equivalent) is a prerequisite to Arabic II and III at GOA. In addition to bringing Arabic popular culture to life, this course introduces students to the Arabic writing system in 12 weeks to communicate in spontaneous spoken conversations on everyday topics, including personal Pathways introductions, families, food, lifestyle, preferences, celebrations, history, art, music, social media, and environment. This yearlong course focuses on Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and some of the spoken dialects of the Levant, Egypt, and North Africa. With an emphasis on Arabic culture, students learn commonly used expressions and phrases to develop their skills in listening, reading, writing, forming grammatically correct structured sentences, and most importantly, conversation. This is accomplished through synchronous and asynchronous assignments, face-to-face conversation sessions with the instructor and a group of peers, instructional videos, discussions about culture, and collaborations on group projects with students from around the globe. Since Arabic is becoming one of the most functional languages in the world, especially in the areas of commerce, business, and trade, students participating in this course can avail themselves of the opportunity to learn the language in a highly stimulating and rich cultural context.

Arabic Language Through Culture II Year Course
Prerequisite: *Arabic Language Through Culture I or permission from the instructor*

This course (or its equivalent) is a prerequisite to Arabic III at GOA. Arabic II students have taken one year of Arabic Language Through Culture or have demonstrated novice proficiency where they are able to communicate in spontaneous spoken conversations on familiar topics, including food, weather, and hobbies, using a variety of practiced or memorized words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions. Students review the first three units of the book Al-Kitaab as well as most of the Arabic foundations that they took in the previous year, starting with the alphabet and ending with how to write a sentence and even a paragraph. Students also work on other skills such as reading and speaking through using different real-life situations that they would need to use Arabic in, most importantly the conversation. They also work on building students' vocabulary bank in many topics such as introducing themselves, ordering food, describing the weather, and talking about clothes. Moreover, they discuss travel and trips, their country, health, and plans and goals for the future. And finally, they talk about how to tell a story. This yearlong course focuses on Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and some of the spoken dialects of the Levant and Egypt. With an emphasis on Arabic culture, and engaging with group work with their peers from around the globe. They have the opportunity to finish units 4-8 from AlKitaab and to learn the language in highly interactive activities and cultural contexts.

Arabic Language Through Culture III Year Course
Prerequisite: *Arabic Language Through Culture I and II or permission from the instructor*

Students in Arabic III have demonstrated intermediate interpersonal proficiency in Arabic (MSA or a dialect) through two years in Arabic Language Through Culture or other coursework, and have demonstrated an ability to work online independently and reliably with instructors and peers in Arabic Language Through Culture or another GOA class. Students in Arabic III have opportunities to work on the intermediate high levels and the advanced level to communicate in spontaneous spoken conversations on everyday topics on a higher level. This course focuses mainly on units 8-13 from Al-Kitaab. They study Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and some of the spoken dialects of the Levant and Egypt, most importantly conversation. They are also able to design their own venue, talk about the food and nutrition, the weather, and the climate, and discuss stories in the past and present. This is accomplished through synchronous and asynchronous assignments, conversation sessions with the instructor and a group of peers, instructional videos, discussions about culture, and collaborations on group projects with students from around the globe. In reading, listening, speaking, and writing, students curate, share, and practice materials may include TV commercials, news, movies, children's stories, online websites, and Arabic songs and music. Finally, they learn the language in highly interactive activities and cultural contexts.

Architecture First or Second Semester; Summer Course

In this course, students build an understanding of and apply skills in various aspects of architectural design. While gaining key insights into the roles of architectural analysis, materials, 3D design, and spatial awareness, students develop proficiency in architectural visual communication. The course begins by learning the basic elements of architectural design to help analyze and understand architectural

solutions. Through digital and physical media, students develop an understanding of the impact building materials have on design. At each stage of the course, students interact with peers from around the globe, learning and sharing how changes in materials, technology, and construction techniques lead to the evolution of contemporary architectural style and visual culture. The course culminates with a final project in which each aspiring architect has the opportunity to work toward a personal presentation for the GOA Catalyst Exhibition. Students, through a variety of outcomes, present an architectural intervention that they have proposed as a solution to an identified need, one emanating from or focused within their own community. Throughout the course, students refer to the design process and use techniques to track, reflect, and evidence their understanding of architecture.

Arts Entrepreneurship Second Semester Course

In this course, aspiring visual artists, designers, filmmakers, musicians, and other creatives learn how to find success in the dynamic fields of their choosing. Students learn about arts careers and organizations by attending virtual events and interviewing art practitioners, entrepreneurs, and administrators. Beyond exploring trajectories for improving their crafts, students build skills in networking and personal branding while examining case studies of a variety of artistic ventures — some highly successful and some with teachable flaws. Using real-world examples of professional and emerging creatives and arts organizations, students gain a better understanding of the passion and dedication it takes to have a successful creative career.

Biochemistry: Medicine, Drugs & Addiction (New!)
Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: Students enrolling in this course should have taken or should be concurrently enrolled in Chemistry

Unlock Medicine and Drug Design: Discover the fascinating science behind medicine and drug interactions, exploring how drugs impact the human body at the molecular level. You'll dive into the chemistry and biology behind drug design, effectiveness, and safety; learn how drugs interact with molecules, such as receptors and enzymes, to create therapeutic effects; and tackle complex topics like tolerance, addiction, and withdrawal. You'll also investigate the processes of drug testing, legalization, and regulation, gaining a well-rounded view of the pharmaceutical world. Why Take This Course? A must for aspiring healthcare professionals, pharmacists, or biochemists, this course will give you a deep understanding of drug mechanisms and development. You'll walk away with insights into the science of healing and the effects of drugs on the body, setting you up for future studies and a career in healthcare and the sciences.

Bioethics First or Second Semester; Summer Course

Ethics is the study of what one should do as an individual and as a member of society. Bioethics refers to the subset of this field that focuses on medicine, public health, and the life sciences. In this course, students explore contemporary, pressing issues in bioethics, including the "right to die," policies around vaccination and organ transplantation, competence to consent to care, human experimentation and animal research, and genetic technologies. Through reading, writing, research, and discussion, students explore the fundamental concepts and questions in bioethics, deepen their understanding of biological concepts, strengthen their critical-reasoning skills, and learn to engage in respectful dialogue with people whose views may differ from their own. The course culminates with a student-driven exploration into a particular bioethical issue, recognizing the unique role that bioethics plays within the field of ethics.

Business Problem Solving
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

How could climate change disrupt your production and supply chains or impact your consumer markets? Will tariffs help or hurt your business? How embedded is social media in your marketing plan? Is your company vulnerable to cybercrime? What 21st-century skills are you cultivating in your leadership team? Students in this course tackle real-world problems facing businesses large and small in today's fast-changing global marketplace where radical reinvention is on the minds of many business leaders. Students work collaboratively and independently on case studies, exploring business issues through varied lenses including operations, marketing, human capital, finance and risk management as well as sustainability. As they are introduced to the concepts and practices of business, students identify, analyze, and propose solutions to business problems, engaging in research of traditional and emerging industries, from established multinationals to startups.

Climate Action & Sustainability First Semester Course

The course explores the critical issues of climate change and its profound impacts through the lenses of equity and sustainability. In an ever-changing world, we'll delve into the interconnected challenges of climate justice, agriculture, wildfires, renewable energy sources, sea level rise, and the consequences of invasive species. Students will engage in comprehensive studies to interrogate the causes and effects of climate change, investigate public policy debates, and, most importantly, examine how these issues affect the diverse populations of our planet through hands on activities. The course culminates with GOA's Catalyst Exhibition, as students share projects to spark change in local communities through well-informed activism. Note: This course is a reimagined, redesigned, retitled version of the course that was called Climate Change & Global Inequality through the 2023-2024 school year. Students who have already taken Climate Change & Global Inequality should consider choosing a different course.

Computer Science I: Computational Thinking
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

This course (or its equivalent) is a prerequisite to all Computer Science II classes at GOA. Computational thinking centers on solving problems, designing systems, and understanding human behavior. It has applications not only in computer science but also myriad other fields of study. This introductory-level course focuses on thinking like a computer scientist, especially understanding how computer scientists define and solve problems. Students begin the course by developing an understanding of what computer science is, how it can be used by people who are not programmers, and why it's a useful skill for all people to cultivate. Within this context, students are exposed to the power and limits of computational thinking. Students are introduced to entry-level programming constructs that help them apply their knowledge of computational thinking in practical ways. They learn how to read code and pseudocode as well as begin to develop strategies for debugging programs. By developing computational thinking and programming skills, students will have the core knowledge to define and solve problems in future computer science courses. While this course would be beneficial for any student without formal training as a programmer or computer scientist, it is intended for those with no programming experience.

Computer Science II: Analyzing Data with Python
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

In this course, students utilize the Python programming language to read, analyze, and visualize data. The course emphasizes using real-world datasets, which are often large, messy, and inconsistent. Because of the powerful data structures and clear syntax of Python, it is one of the most widely used programming languages in scientific computing. Students explore the multitude of practical applications of Python in fields like biology, engineering, and statistics. Prerequisite: Computer Science I: Computational Thinking or its equivalent

Computer Science II: Game Design & Development
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

In this course, students design and develop games through hands-on practice. Comprised of a series of "game jams," the course asks students to solve problems and create content, developing the design and technical skills necessary to build their own games. The first month of the course is dedicated to understanding game design through game designer Jesse Schell's "lenses": different ways of looking at the same problem and answering questions that provide direction and refinement of a game's theme and structure. During this time, students also learn how to use Unity, a professional game development tool, and become familiar with the methodologies of constructing a game using such assets as graphics, sounds, and effects, and controlling events and behavior within the game using the C# programming language. Throughout the remainder of the course, students work in teams to brainstorm and develop new games in response to a theme or challenge. Students develop their skills in communication, project and time management, and creative problem-solving while focusing on different aspects of asset creation, design, and coding. Prerequisite: Computer Science I: Computational Thinking or its equivalent

Computer Science II: Java Second Semester; Summer Course

This course teaches students how to write programs in the Java programming language. Java is the backbone of many web applications, especially eCommerce and government sites. It is also the foundational code of the Android operating system and many tools of the financial sector. Students learn the major syntactical elements of the Java language through object-oriented design. The emphasis in the course is on creating intelligent systems through the fundamentals of Computer Science. Students write working programs through short lab assignments and more extended projects that incorporate graphics and animation. Prerequisite: Computer Science I: Computational Thinking or its equivalent

Creative Nonfiction Writing Summer Course

Tell your own stories and the stories of the world around you! This course centers on the art of shaping real experiences into powerful narratives while growing foundational writing skills. Participants read, examine, and write diverse works of creative nonfiction including personal narratives, podcasts, opinion editorials, profile pieces, and more. Emphasizing process over product, this writing workshop provides opportunities to create in new ways. Students practice essential craft elements (e.g., voice, style, structure) while reflecting on stories from their own lives, communities, and interests. They also build a personalized library of inspiring mentor texts, consider opportunities for publication, and develop sustainable writing habits. Both in real-time video chats and online discussion spaces, students support one another intentionally. Feedback is an essential component of this course, and students gain experience in the workshop model, actively participating in a thriving, global writing community. Creative nonfiction has never been as popular as it is today; participants experience its relevance in their own lives as they collaboratively explore this dynamic genre.

Cybersecurity First or Second Semester; Summer Course

Cybercriminals leverage technology and human behavior to attack our online security. This course explores the fundamentals of, and vulnerabilities in, the design of: Computers (computer components, connectivity); Networks (design, Domain Name Services, and TCP/IP, hubs, switches, and routers); and The internet (DNS, HTTP, routing protocols, and access control for internet devices). From understanding the intricacies of data protection and networking principles to exploring the physical architecture of networks, ciphers, and encryption techniques, the course is meticulously designed to equip students with a holistic understanding of the cybersecurity landscape. Delve into the human element of cyber attacks, navigate the world of machines, dissect malware anatomy, and grapple with the delicate balance between privacy and tracking. Gain expertise in encryption, data recovery, and enterprise security, culminating in an exploration of emerging trends. This course ensures students emerge with the knowledge and skills necessary to safeguard against evolving cyber threats in our interconnected digital age. There is no computer science prerequisite for this course, though students with some background will certainly find avenues to flex their knowledge.

Data Visualization First Semester Course

Through today's fog of overwhelming data, visualizations provide meaning. This course trains students to collect, organize, interpret, and communicate massive amounts of information. Students wrangle data into spreadsheets, learning the basic ways professionals translate information into comprehensible formats. They explore charts, distinguishing between effective and misleading visualizations. Employing principles from information graphics, graphic design, visual art, and cognitive science, students create their own stunning and informative visualizations using Datawrapper, Tableau Public, and/or Python. From spreadsheets to graphics, students in this course practice the crucial skills of using data to decide, inform, and convince. There is no computer science, math, or statistics prerequisite for this course, though students with backgrounds in those areas will certainly find avenues to flex their knowledge in this course.

Developmental Psychology First or Second Semester Course

Over a few short years, most human beings grow from infants who are not even able to hold up their heads to become walking, talking, thinking people who are able to communicate using language, to understand complexities, to solve problems, and to engage in moral reasoning. This course is an introduction to the fascinating study of human growth and development focusing on the significant changes that occur physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially from birth through adolescence. Students consider the big questions of heredity versus environment, stability versus change, and continuity versus discrete stages of change as they investigate language acquisition, sensorimotor development, thinking and learning, and personality and emotions. Through readings, observations, case studies, and application activities, students examine development from the perspectives of major theorists in the field from both Western and nonWestern traditions.

Discourse Across Difference Second Semester Course

Our increasingly interconnected, globally networked society presents us with complex social, political, and ethical dilemmas. This course equips students with strategies for engaging such issues through constructive dialogue focused on building understanding across differences. Through structured conversations, debate, rhetorical analysis, and guided reflection, students will gain skills for having difficult yet thoughtful dialogues. They will learn how to carefully evaluate multiple perspectives, make evidence-based claims, ask insightful questions, take others' viewpoints into account, and seek common ground. Specific topics examined may include technology's impact on privacy, environmental sustainability, social justice reform, and other current events that are sure to emerge! By practicing perspective-taking, identifying shared goals, and finding compromise, students will be able to have productive conversations even when they disagree. The course aims to foster civil discourse, strengthen critical thinking abilities, and build understanding across diverse perspectives. Students will emerge better prepared for responsible civic participation and prepared to thrive in a globally networked society.

Entrepreneurship in a Global Context
First or Second Semester Course

How does an entrepreneur think? What skills must entrepreneurs possess to remain competitive and relevant? What are some of the strategies that entrepreneurs apply to solve problems? In this experiential course, students develop an understanding of entrepreneurship in today's global market; employ innovation, design, and creative solutions for building a viable business model; and learn to develop, refine, and pitch a new startup. Units of study include business model canvas, customer development vs. design thinking, value proposition, customer segments, iterations and pivots, brand strategy and channels, and funding sources. Students use the business model canvas as a roadmap to building and developing their own team startup, a process that requires hypothesis testing, customer research conducted in hometown markets, product design, product iterations, and entrepreneur interviews. An online startup pitch by the student team to an entrepreneurial advisory committee is the culminating assessment. Additional student work includes research, journaling, interviews, peer collaboration, and a case study involving real-world consulting work for a current business.

Fiction Writing Summer Course

This course connects students interested in creative writing (primarily short fiction) and provides a space for supportive and constructive feedback. Students gain experience in the workshop model, learning how to effectively critique and discuss one another's writing in an online environment. In addition to developing skills as readers within a workshop setting, students strive to develop their own writing identities through a variety of exercises. The course capitalizes on the geographic diversity of the students by eliciting stories that shed light on both the commonalities and differences of life experiences in different locations. Additionally, students read and discuss the work of authors from around the globe. Students' essential responsibilities are twofold: to engage in the class as readers and writers and to focus on their development as readers and writers. Both require participation in discussions of various formats within the course's online community, as well as dedicated time outside of class reading and providing feedback on one another's work as well as writing original pieces for the workshop.

Geometry Summer Intensive Course
Prerequisite: *A strong background in Algebra 1 or its equivalent*

This intensive summer course is designed to provide an accelerated path through the traditional high school geometry curriculum. Focusing on Euclidean geometry, students examine topics relating to parallel lines, similar and congruent triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, and circles. Students can expect to analyze lengths, areas, and volumes of two- and three-dimensional figures and explore transformations and other manipulations. Particular attention is paid to introductory trigonometry with right triangles and the study of circles (radians, sectors, arc length, etc). In addition, the development of a mature, logical thought process will begin through a formal introduction to arguments, deductions, theorems, and proofs. Because this course covers topics that are typically presented in a yearlong course, students should expect to dedicate 15-20 hours per week during the intensive seven-week summer session. This course is offered in the summer only.

Global Health First Semester Course

What makes people sick? What social and political factors lead to the health disparities we see both within our own communities and on a global scale? What are the biggest challenges in global health and how might they be met? Using an interdisciplinary approach to address these questions, this course improves students' health literacy through an examination of the most significant public health challenges facing today's global population. Topics addressed include the biology of infectious disease, the statistics and quantitative measures associated with health issues, the social determinants of health, and the role of organizations (public and private) in shaping the landscape of global health policy. Throughout the course, students use illness as a lens through which to critically examine such social issues as poverty, gender, and race. Student work includes analytical writing, research and curating sources around particular topics, readings and discussions exploring a variety of sources, and online presentations created both on their own and with peers.

Graphic Design First or Second Semester Course

What makes a message persuasive and compelling? What helps audiences and viewers sort and make sense of information? This course explores the relationship between information and influence from a graphic design perspective. Using an integrated case study and design based approach, this course aims to deepen students' design, visual, and information literacies. Students are empowered to design and prototype passion driven communication projects. Topics include principles of design and visual communication, infographics, digital search skills, networks and social media, persuasion and storytelling with multimedia, and social activism on the internet. Student work includes individual and collaborative group projects, graphic design, content curation, analytical and creative writing, peer review and critiques, and online presentations.

Health & Fitness First Semester; Summer Course

In this course, students take a comprehensive look at multiple factors that influence our bodies over a lifetime to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Students gain physical literacy by identifying, applying, analyzing, and evaluating components of fitness, exercise (FITT) principles, principles of training, phases of movement, and athletic performance. Students set personal improvement goals for both fitness and movement skills utilizing baseline testing and performance analysis. Each week students complete a variety of physical exercises to target specific areas of fitness and movement to

assist in achieving their goals. Reflection and feedback will inform students regarding their improvement. The course culminates in a student-led project where students explore, synthesize, and implement an exercise or sport-specific topic that directly impacts their lives. Topics of exploration include but are not limited to: nutrition in sport, exercise psychology or mental health in sport, sport exploration for the lifetime, exercise science or sport-specific performance and biomechanics, careers in sport, and community-based improvement design and implementation.

International Relations First or Second Semester; Summer Course

Are China and the U.S. on a collision course for war? Can the Israelis and Palestinians find a two-state solution in the holy land? Will North Korea launch a nuclear weapon? Can India and Pakistan share the subcontinent in peace? These questions dominate global headlines and our daily news feeds. In this course, students go beyond soundbites and menacing headlines to explore the context, causes, and consequences of the most pressing global issues of our time. Through case studies, students explore the dynamics of international relations and the complex interplay of war and peace, conflict and cooperation, and security and human rights. Working with classmates from around the world, students also identify and model ways to prevent, mediate, and resolve some of the most pressing global conflicts.

Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

Aspects of artificial intelligence permeate our lives and the algorithms power your favorite apps. How much do you really know about how AI works or how it is changing the world around us? This course explores the history of research into artificial general intelligence and the subsequent focus on the subfields of narrow AI: neural networks, machine learning and expert systems, deep learning, natural language processing, and machine vision and facial recognition. Students also learn how AI training datasets cause bias and focus on the ethics and principles of responsible AI: fairness, transparency and explainability, human centeredness, and privacy and security.

Introduction to Blockchain & Cryptocurrency
Second Semester Course

Much attention has been brought to the cryptocurrency space by the meteoric rise in the valuation of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. More recently, meme tokens have also grabbed the spotlight. When thinking about cryptocurrency, there is much more to consider than just market capitalization or coins named after canines. Introduction to Blockchain & Cryptocurrency is an entry level course for anyone excited by the space. This course explores how we arrived at the place we are now, and what the current and possible applications of crypto are. Students explore how markets in crypto operate, where they've received practical application, and where the space may head in the future through the lenses of creators, consumers, and governments. In addition, students take a deeper look at blockchain, the underlying technology that powers cryptocurrencies, and its many, far-reaching implications for the future of government, business, the arts, and more. Each lens represents a different way to view the complex and interrelated causes and outcomes of the changing crypto landscape. Using a variety of technologies and activities, students work individually and with peers to evaluate each lens. Students then analyze and explore how these technologies may shape and disrupt the future not only of the crypto space but of many current and future industries.

Introduction to Branding & Marketing
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

In our increasingly digitized world, we are bombarded by ads every day and presented with an immeasurable amount of content across all media platforms. It has become increasingly difficult for brands to break through the noise and capture the attention of their intended audience. In this course, students learn what it takes to build an effective brand that can authentically connect with consumers and create long-term brand equity. The course starts with introducing what a brand is and goes on to explore how different branding elements, such as visual identity, advertising strategy, and content marketing, as well as the intangible elements of the customer journey, come together to create a unique brand experience. By applying marketing theories, interviewing experts, and analyzing modern case studies, students develop and strengthen their competencies as brand strategists. Students also examine how responding to important ethical, social, and environmental issues can impact the brand's success. The course culminates in a final project where students collaborate to design an impactful brand campaign for a mission-driven company, organization, or initiative.

Introduction to Legal Thinking
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

Inspired by GOA's popular Medical Problem Solving series, this course uses a case-based approach to give students a practical look into the professional lives of lawyers and legal thinking. By studying and debating a series of real legal cases, students sharpen their ability to think like lawyers who research, write, and speak persuasively. The course focuses on problems that lawyers encounter in daily practice, and on the rules of professional conduct case law. In addition to practicing writing legal briefs, advising fictional clients, and preparing opening and closing statements for trial, students approach such questions as the law and equity, the concept of justice, jurisprudence, and legal ethics.

Investing I First or Second Semester; Summer Course

This course is a prerequisite to Investing II at GOA. In this course, students simulate the work of investors by working with the tools, theories, and decision-making practices that define smart investment. Students explore concepts in finance and apply them to investment decisions in three primary contexts: portfolio management, venture capital, and social investing. After an introduction to theories about valuation and risk management, students simulate scenarios in which they must make decisions to grow an investment portfolio. They manage investments in stocks, bonds, and options to learn a range of strategies for increasing the value of their portfolios. In the second unit, students take the perspective of venture capital investors, analyzing startup companies and predicting their value before they become public. In the third unit, students examine case studies of investment funds that apply the tools of finance to power social change. Throughout the course, students learn from experts who have experience in identifying value and managing risk in global markets. They develop their own ideas about methods for weighing financial risks and benefits and leave this course not just with a simulated portfolio of investments, but the skills necessary to manage portfolios in the future.

Investing II First or Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: Investing I

In this course, students expand their knowledge of practices that define smart investment. They explore concepts in finance and apply them to investment decisions in four primary contexts: fixed-income investments, foreign exchange and crypto, commodities, and real estate. After an introduction to theories about behavioral finance, students simulate scenarios in which they must make decisions to add to their portfolio of equities. In the first unit, they learn how fixed-income assets like bonds fit into a larger portfolio to hedge risk in their portfolios. In the second unit, students examine forex trading and the cryptocurrency markets, a riskier and more volatile investment vehicle. In the third unit, students examine how commodities can be a part of a larger portfolio, but also how commodity prices might affect the larger economy. Finally, in the fourth unit, students learn about the array of strategies in real estate investing. Throughout the course, students learn from experts who have experience in identifying value and managing risk in global markets. They develop their own ideas about methods for taking calculated financial risks and build on their understanding from Investing I. They leave this course with a more nuanced view of their overall portfolio and the skills necessary to manage risk in the future.

Japanese Language Through Culture I Year Course

This course (or its equivalent) is a prerequisite to Japanese II and III at GOA. This full-year course is a unique combination of Japanese culture and language, weaving cultural comparison with the study of basic Japanese language and grammar. While examining various cultural topics such as literature, art, lifestyle, and economy, students learn the basics of the Japanese writing system (Hiragana and Katakana), grammar, and vocabulary. Through varied synchronous and asynchronous assignments, including hands-on projects and face-to face communications, students develop their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The cultural study and discussions are conducted in English, with topics alternating every two to three weeks. The ultimate goal of this course is to raise awareness and appreciation of different cultures through learning the basics of the Japanese language. The focus of this course is 60 percent on language and 40 percent on culture. This course is appropriate for beginner-level students.

Japanese Language Through Culture II Year Course
Prerequisite: Japanese Language Through Culture I or permission from the instructor

This course (or its equivalent) is a prerequisite to Japanese III at GOA. Through language learning, students in this course share their voices, cultivate global perspectives, and foster an appreciation for self and others. Students further develop the speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills introduced in Japanese Language Through Culture I. Each unit follows the IPA model (Integrated Performance Assessment), blending three modes of communication: interpretation of authentic material in Japanese, synchronous and asynchronous practice in speaking and writing, and oral and written presentations. Each unit focuses on one of the following cultural topics: design and expression, ecology, entertainment, East meets West, harmony, and nature. In addition, students have the opportunity to select and pursue topics of their own interest. Grammar topics cover the essential forms that are typically introduced in the second and third year of a high school Japanese program. By learning the dictionary form, nominalizer, TE form, TA form, NAI form, and noun modifier, students are able to add more complexity to their sentence construction. In doing so, they shift from forming simple sentences to communicating in coherent paragraphs. As online learners, students are expected to exhibit superb time management and communication skills, as well as take ownership of their learning. While grammar instruction is delivered through asynchronous work and face-to-face meetings, much of the course content is curated and created by students through their research and collaboration. The focus of this course is 60 percent on language and 40 percent on culture.

Japanese Language Through Culture III Year Course
Prerequisite: Japanese Language Through Culture I and II or permission from the instructor

Students in Japanese III have mastered most of the conjugation patterns (TE/TA form, dictionary form, and NAI form) that are necessary to speak and write in complex structures. While advancing their grammatical knowledge, students compare and examine similar functions and their subtle differences. In speaking, students are allowed to speak in an informal/casual style with each other and with the teacher in order to solidify their control of the Plain Form. Interpersonal communications are done through face-to face conversation and recorded messages. In reading and listening, students curate, share, and practice grasping the gist of authentic materials. Materials may include TV commercials, news, movies, children's books, online newspapers, and cooking recipes. In Semester 2, students participate in the GOA Catalyst Exhibition.

Macroeconomics First or Second Semester Course

Macroeconomics is the study of economic units as a whole rather than of their individual components. The aggregate unit is usually a national economy and that is the focus of this course. Students learn to better understand how to measure national economic activity with concepts like gross domestic product, unemployment and inflation, and the strengths and weaknesses of these statistics. Students then study theoretical methods of influencing national economic activity with monetary and fiscal policy and learn about some of the controversy surrounding these policy tools. The advantages and disadvantages of international trade and of methods of setting exchange rates are also introduced. The course includes an individual student investigation of a national economy other than their home country. Students identify their economic findings and present resolutions in their final report.

Medical Problem Solving I
First or Second Semester; Summer Course

This course is a prerequisite to Medical Problem Solving II at GOA. In this course, students collaboratively solve medical mystery cases, similar to the approach used in many medical schools. Students enhance their critical-thinking skills as they examine data, draw conclusions, diagnose, and identify appropriate treatment for patients. Students use problem-solving techniques in order to understand and appreciate relevant medical/biological facts as they confront the principles and practices of medicine. Students explore anatomy and physiology pertaining to medical scenarios and gain an understanding of the disease process, demographics of disease, and pharmacology. Additional learning experiences include studying current issues in health and medicine, interviewing a patient, and creating a new mystery case. Optional: Students in this course can simultaneously enroll in the ungraded Academic English Accelerator in order to get additional support with their English in the context of their work in this course.

Medical Problem Solving II First or Second Semester Course
Prerequisite: Medical Problem Solving I

Medical Problem Solving II is an extension of the problem-based approach in Medical Problem Solving I. While collaborative examination of medical case studies remains at the center of the course, MPS II approaches medical cases through the perspectives of global medicine, medical ethics, and social justice. The course examines cases not only from around the world but also in students' local communities. Additionally, the course addresses the challenges patients face because of a lack of access to health care, often a result of systemic discrimination and inequity along with more general variability of health care resources in different parts of the world. All students in MPS II participate in the Catalyst Exhibition, a GOA-wide conference near the end of the semester where students from many GOA courses create and publish presentations on course-specific topics. For their projects, students use all of the lenses from the earlier parts of the course to choose and research a local topic of high interest. Further, their topics enable identifying a local medical problem, using local sources, and generating ideas for promoting change.

Neuropsychology First or Second Semester Course

Neuropsychology is the exploration of the neurological basis of behavior. Within this course, students learn about basic brain anatomy and function as well as cognitive and behavioral disorders from a neurobiological perspective. They do an in-depth analysis of neural communication with an emphasis on how environmental factors such as smartphones affect nervous system function, their own behaviors, and the behaviors of those around them. Students also have the opportunity to choose topics in neuropsychology to explore independently including Alzheimer's disease, addiction, neuroplasticity, and CTE and share their understanding with their peers in a variety of formats. The course concludes with a study of both contemporary and historic neuropsychological case studies and their applications to everyday life.

Number Theory First Semester Course

Once thought of as the purest but least applicable part of mathematics, number theory is now by far the most commonly applied: every one of the millions of secure internet transmissions occurring each second is encrypted using ideas from number theory. This course covers the fundamentals of this classical, elegant, yet supremely relevant subject. It provides a foundation for further study of number theory, but even more, it develops the skills of mathematical reasoning and proof in a concrete and intuitive way and is necessary preparation for any future course in upper-level college mathematics or theoretical computer science. Students progressively develop the tools needed to understand the RSA algorithm, the most common encryption scheme used worldwide. Along the way, they invent some encryption schemes of their own and discover how to play games using number theory. Students also get a taste of the history of the subject, which involves the most famous mathematicians from antiquity to the present day, and see parts of the story of Fermat's Last Theorem, a 350-year-old statement that was fully proven only 20 years ago. While most calculations are simple enough to do by hand, students sometimes use the computer to see how the fundamental ideas can be applied to the huge numbers needed for modern applications. Prerequisite: A strong background in Precalculus and above as well as a desire to do rigorous mathematics and proofs

Personal Finance First or Second Semester; Summer Course

In this course, students learn financial responsibility and social consciousness. They examine a wide array of topics including personal budgeting, credit cards and credit scores, career and earning potential, insurance, real estate, financial investment, retirement savings, charitable giving, taxes, and other items related to personal finance. Students apply their understanding of these topics by simulating real-life financial circumstances and weighing the costs and benefits of their decisions. Throughout the course, students have the opportunity to learn from individuals with varying perspectives and expertise in numerous fields. By reflecting on their roles in the broader economy as both producers and consumers, students begin to consider how they can positively impact the world around them through their financial decisions.

Precalculus Summer Intensive Course
Prerequisite: Algebra 2 or its equivalent

In this intensive summer course, students deepen and apply their understanding of mathematics in order to be prepared for higher-level courses. The emphasis is on understanding functions, including transformations, domain/range, and visual representations. In addition, students deepen their understanding of the concept of equivalence through numerical, graphical, and algebraic representations. This includes developing fluency with algebraic manipulation. Much of the work involves problem solving and the application of previous and current skills to new situations. Projects include opportunities to apply topics such as polynomials, matrices, trigonometry, and sequences and series to real-world scenarios. Students analyze situations, create models, develop solutions to problems, and then reflect on this work. The course culminates in a project that provides students a chance to explore a situation and bring to bear the skills they have learned to analyze it and present their understanding of the situation. This course is intended for students who are looking to accelerate through a Precalculus course and, as such, concepts and topics are presented quickly allowing for time to apply the skills to novel situations. This course replicates what is typically a yearlong course, so students should expect to dedicate 15-20 hours per week during the seven week summer session. This course is offered in the summer only.

Prisons & Criminal Justice Systems
First or Second Semester Course

How do societies balance individual freedoms with security? How do definitions of "crime" and "punishment" shift across jurisdictions and time periods? How do recent protests and discussions about racial biases and systemic racism inform our understanding of criminal law and its applications? Although the United States has been frequently cited as having the highest "mass incarceration" rate, other countries in the world have also been criticized for injustices in their criminal justice systems. In this course, students become familiar with the legal rules and institutions that determine who goes to prison and for how long. Along the way, students gain a concrete, practical understanding of legal systems while grappling with mass incarceration as a legal, ethical, and practical issue. To understand current views on crime and criminal punishments and to examine proposed systemic reforms, students immerse themselves in the different forms of rhetoric and media that brought the U.S. and other nations to our present. They read and analyze jury arguments, courtroom motions, news op-eds, judicial decisions, recent cases, and other forms of public persuasion that shape the outcomes of criminal defendants. The final project requires students to advocate for a major reform to a criminal justice system in a city, state, or country.

Having developed research skills, students apply them to build an effective argument that includes a real world solution.

Problem Solving with Engineering & Design Summer Course

This course investigates various topics in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics using a series of projects and problems that are both meaningful and relevant to the students' lives. Students develop engineering skills, including design principles, modeling, and presentations, using a variety of computer hardware and software applications to complete assignments and projects. This is a course that focuses on practical applications of science and mathematics to solve real-world issues. Project-based learning, working in collaborative teams, and designing prototypes are essential components of the course. Throughout the program, students step into the varied roles engineers play in our society, solve problems in their homes and communities, discover new career paths and possibilities, and develop engineering knowledge and skills. There are no particular math or science prerequisites for this course, just an interest in using STEM to solve problems and a desire to learn!

Race & Society First Semester Course

What is race? Is it something we're born with? Is it an idea that society imposes on us? An identity we perform? A beneficial privilege? Does our own culture's conception of race mirror those found in other parts of the world? These are just a few of the questions that students in this course explore together as they approach the concept of race as a social construct that shapes and is shaped by societies and cultures in very real ways. Throughout the course, students learn about the changing relationship between race and society across time and across cultures. Engaging with readings, films, and speakers from a variety of academic fields (history, sociology, anthropology, literature) students explore, research, reflect on, and discuss the complex set of relationships governing race and society.

ATHLETICS

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENT:
Participation as a playing member of a Blake athletic team for one season during both grades 9 and 10.

Students involved in a significant and ongoing individual sport or physical activity may petition the Athletic Director to use this sport or activity to fulfill the athletic requirement. Students can also fulfill their athletic requirement by participating on Blake club teams such as the Blake Area Equestrian Team, Blake Sailing Team, Ultimate Frisbee Team and Synchronized Swimming.

FALL
Cross Country (Boys and Girls)
Football (Boys)
Soccer (Boys and Girls)
Swimming (Girls)
Tennis (Girls)
Volleyball (Girls)

WINTER
Alpine Skiing (Boys and Girls)
Basketball (Boys and Girls)
Fencing (Boys and Girls)
Hockey (Boys and Girls)
Nordic Skiing (Boys and Girls)
Swimming (Boys)

SPRING
Baseball (Boys)
Golf (Boys and Girls)
Lacrosse (Boys and Girls)
Softball (Girls)
Tennis (Boys)
Track & Field (Boys and Girls)

28 total sports (14 Boys, 14 Girls)

INDEPENDENT STUDY

An Independent Study program is an opportunity for a student to explore an area of study that is not offered in our curriculum. It is open to seniors who apply during junior year (or by administrative approval). An Independent Study program should be a rigorous course of study that adheres to departmental academic standards.

Juniors must apply by January 31st so that proposals can be approved prior to registration. A proposal is submitted through a form to the supervising faculty member, the department chair, and the Grade Dean for approval. They will review the proposal along with the student's entire academic program, and if each supports the proposal, it will be submitted to the US Director for approval. If approved, meeting times between the student and the advisor will be determined, but they should occur for at least one class period per week.

Students will maintain a minimum course load of five classes in addition to an Independent Study program. An Independent Study program may not satisfy a departmental requirement. A student is permitted to pursue only one Independent Study program at a time.
Independent Study Proposal Form

P.S.E.O. (Post-Secondary Education Option)

The State of Minnesota's Post-Secondary Education Option Program (PSEO) enables high school juniors and seniors who have exhausted the curriculum of their schools an opportunity to take college courses for high school credit. As Blake reserves the right to define its own graduation requirements and academic standards, juniors and seniors are eligible to participate in PSEO under the following conditions:

- The course is not offered in The Blake School curriculum.
- A student must remain enrolled in at least four full credit courses each semester at Blake.
- Participation must have the approval of the Grade Dean, the College Counseling Office and the Director of the Upper School.
- Students interested in participating in a PSEO program must inform the Grade Dean at least two months prior to the proposed enrollment date.
- Students are solely responsible for contacting the prospective colleges to get information about the application process for the PSEO program.

Note: Deadlines for the PSEO program vary from college to college and admission into these programs is very competitive. We recommend that students who are interested in these programs inquire early.

SUMMER COURSES FOR UPPER SCHOOL GRADUATION CREDIT

The Blake School is excited to offer summer courses for academic credit. Students successfully completing a course described below will earn a semester credit that can be applied to departmental requirements or elective credits. Consistent, regular attendance is essential to earning credit due to the intensive nature of the courses; please review our website for attendance policies prior to registering. Students can register for summer classes with their other 2025-26 selections. To register, please visit https://summeratblake.campbrainregistration.com/

Health

This course will explore topics aimed at promoting healthy behaviors, increasing responsible decision-making and encouraging healthy living. Coursework and discussion will focus on physical, mental, chemical and sexual health. Students will gain an understanding of how to make positive lifestyle choices based on their personal values and work toward application of the information into their daily lives. Overarching themes of this course include accessing reliable wellness resources and learning to make healthy decisions that will reduce the risk of future health concerns. This course fulfills the Blake health requirement. Health is taught by Blake teachers Cris Larson and Jennifer Nunez. Students should bring a nut-free lunch, afternoon snack and two water bottles with them to class each day. Refrigerators and microwave ovens are not available.

Dates: June 10-27, 2025 (Monday-Friday with no class on June 19)
Time: 9am-2pm (includes lunch break)
For: Blake students ages 14-18, entering grades 10-12
Homework Expectations: .5-1 hour/day
Location: Northrop campus, Minneapolis, room 119
Instructor(s): Cris Larson and Jennifer Nunez
Cost: $2,200

Honors Precalculus
Prerequisite: *Students who have successfully completed Honors Algebra II and who seek to enroll in AP Calculus AB after completing Honors Geometry;*

Blake students who have successfully completed Honors Algebra II and Honors Geometry and who seek to enroll in AP Calculus AB; Students from outside Blake who seek to complete the equivalent of a full-year Honors Pre-Calculus course during the summer. They must possess a strong foundation in algebra because the course contains advanced material and moves at a rapid pace; it is not recommended for remedial purposes.

Before registering, Blake students must obtain their teacher's permission to advance, as indicated by a signed Mathematics Acceleration Contract. Following the completion of the course, successful advancement requires a grade of B or higher on each of the comprehensive exams given during the summer course. This course emphasizes functions and their characteristics. Topics include: function notation and transformations; combinations and compositions of functions; linear, quadratic, polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic and trigonometric functions; and analytical trigonometry. In addition, sequences, series, parametric equations and limits are introduced in preparation for calculus. Honors Pre-Calculus is taught by Blake mathematics teacher Susan Kreisle. Students should bring a nut-free lunch, snack and refillable water bottle with them to class each day. Refrigerators and microwave ovens are not available.

Dates: June 23-July 31, 2025 Monday through Thursday, with no class meetings on July 4.
Time: 9am-2:30pm (includes lunch break)
For: ages 13-18, entering grades 9-12
Homework Expectations: .5-1 hour/day
Location: Northrop campus, Minneapolis, room L16
Instructor: Susan Kreisle
Cost: $1600

THE BLAKE SCHOOL
COURSE PLANNING WORKSHEET

- The recommended course load is six classes, including an arts class, each semester. The minimum required course load is five classes each semester (5 total credits per year).
- Write course names on the appropriate department lines. Use elective lines for additional courses in a department. Each grade has different required courses and those should be included as you plan your registration.
- **Arts and Senior English Courses, as well as Math, Science and Social Studies semester electives**: It is imperative that you choose **one** alternate course for each of these selections.

Semester One Courses

Department	**Course**	
Art		**Alt:**
English		**Alt: (for grade 12)**
Modern and Classical Language		
Math		**Alt: (if choosing an elective)**
Science		**Alt: (if choosing an elective)**
Social Studies		**Alt: (if choosing an elective)**
Elective(s)		**Alt:**

Semester Two Courses

Department	**Course**	
Art		**Alt:**
English		**Alt: (for grade 12)**
Modern and Classical Language		
Math		**Alt: (if choosing an elective)**
Science		**Alt: (if choosing an elective)**
Social Studies		**Alt: (if choosing an elective)**