



## Course Catalog 2011-2012



1215 Fourth Ave., Suite 1500  
Seattle, WA 98161

[www.ApexLearningHS.com](http://www.ApexLearningHS.com)  
Phone: 1-800-453-1454 x8200  
[alhs@apexlearning.com](mailto:alhs@apexlearning.com)

## › Welcome from Head of School

At Apex Learning® High School, we offer our students a new way to prepare for college, work, and life.

The foundation of our educational program is built on high expectations for academic rigor both in our online curriculum and in student interactions with experienced teachers. We've designed our online courses, projects, clubs, and activities to fully engage students in their learning and school community.

Very important to us is building the important skills and personal qualities that today's students need for success. As we teach and mentor, we always have in mind the goal to develop:

- Confident and responsible scholars
- Independent thinkers
- Creative problem solvers
- Effective communicators and collaborators
- Resilient and adaptive people
- Media literate citizens

Our expert faculty, counselors, and administrators look forward to helping students achieve academically and personally. We are here to support each student every step of the way.

Sincerely,



Katherine Bach  
Head of School  
Apex Learning High School

## › An exceptional, individualized college preparatory education

Apex Learning® High School offers the academic excellence of the finest private schools combined with all the learning advantages of innovative online education—interacting one-to-one with highly experienced teachers, collaborating with other engaged students, and enjoying the flexibility of schedule and pace.

### **Academic excellence**

Our accredited private school provides a challenging 9th- to 12th-grade curriculum, including a wide range of Advanced Placement (AP)\* courses.

### **Expert teachers**

Apex Learning HS teachers have an average of 20 years of teaching experience and share their passion for their subject with each student.

### **Respect for each student's originality**

Teachers and counselors forge strong relationships with students, fostering each student's unique academic and personal development.

### **Engaging, contemporary online learning**

Individualized multimedia courses, schedules, and pacing maximize student learning potential and online discussions, clubs, and activities deepen student engagement and provide a sense of belonging to a school community.

To learn more, visit [www.ApexLearningHS.com](http://www.ApexLearningHS.com).

## › Accreditation

Apex Learning HS digital curriculum is accredited by the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), our courses are approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and our Advanced Placement (AP)\* courses are approved by the College Board.

\*Advanced Placement and AP are registered trademarks of the College Board.

## Courses at a Glance

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5	English	English I: Introduction to Literature and Composition <sup>H</sup> English II: Critical Reading and Effective Writing <sup>H</sup> English III: American Literature <sup>H</sup> English IV: British and World Literature <sup>H</sup>	Creative Writing <sup>1</sup> Media Literacy <sup>1</sup> (Spring 2012) Writing Workshop <sup>1</sup>	AP English Language and Composition AP English Literature and Composition
7	Mathematics	Algebra I <sup>H</sup> Algebra II <sup>H</sup> Geometry <sup>H</sup>	Mathematics of Personal Finance Precalculus <sup>H</sup> Probability and Statistics <sup>1</sup>	AP Calculus AB AP Statistics
9	Science	Physical Science <sup>H</sup> Biology <sup>H</sup> Chemistry <sup>H</sup>	Earth Science <sup>H</sup> Psychology <sup>1</sup>	AP Biology AP Chemistry AP Physics B AP Psychology <sup>1</sup>
11	Social Studies	World History since the Renaissance <sup>H</sup> U.S. History <sup>H</sup>	Geography and World Cultures <sup>H 1</sup> Multicultural Studies <sup>1</sup> Sociology <sup>1</sup> (Spring 2012) U.S. and Global Economics <sup>H 1</sup> U.S. Government and Politics <sup>H 1</sup> World History to the Renaissance <sup>H</sup>	AP Macroeconomics <sup>1</sup> AP Microeconomics <sup>1</sup> AP U.S. Government and Politics <sup>1</sup> AP U.S. History
14	World Languages		French I <sup>H</sup> French II <sup>H</sup> Spanish I <sup>H</sup> Spanish II <sup>H</sup>	AP Spanish Language
15	Fine Arts		Art Appreciation <sup>1</sup> Music Appreciation	
15	Health/Physical Education		Physical Education <sup>1</sup> Skills for Health <sup>1</sup>	
16	Life Skills		College and Career Preparation <sup>1</sup>	
17	Interdisciplinary Projects (January 2012)		History and Documentary Film Making <sup>Q</sup> Math and the Creative Process <sup>Q</sup> Modern Health and Human Systems <sup>Q</sup> Parks in Play <sup>Q</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> One semester courses. All other courses are two semesters

<sup>Q</sup> One quarter course (10 weeks)

<sup>H</sup> Option to take an Honors course is available

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# Diploma Requirements

Apex Learning® High School is an online college preparatory school accredited by the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) as a full-time private high school.

## Personalized Path to Graduation

Students attending Apex Learning HS work with experienced guidance counselors to chart a personalized path of courses and schedules to meet their individual academic goals. To earn a college prep diploma, students must complete a total of 22 credits, including academic and elective courses.

Students in 12th grade are required to complete their entire senior year (full-time at a minimum of 6 courses) with Apex Learning HS to earn a diploma. Counselors will closely monitor each student's progress to ensure graduation requirements are met.

## Course Requirements for Graduation

Subject	Credits
English	4
Mathematics	4
Science	3
Social Studies	3
World Languages	2
Fine Arts	1
Health/PE	1
Electives	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

## Required Courses

### **English I: Introduction to Literature and Composition**<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

Introduction to Literature and Composition covers literature study, reading, writing, and language. Students explore literature from around the world, including the following genres: short story, poetry, memoir, autobiography, drama, and epic. They read examples of informational writing, such as letters, websites, magazine articles, newspaper articles, speeches, editorials, and movie and book reviews. Along the way, they acquire and practice reading skills and strategies that are directly applicable to these literary and informational reading materials. In addition, students develop and practice writing and language skills. They employ the writing process to create narrative, expository, and persuasive compositions. They also learn to create and evaluate media presentations and oral presentations and to fine-tune their listening skills.

### **English II: Critical Reading and Effective Writing**<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** English I    **Length:** Two semesters

Critical Reading and Effective Writing offers a balanced curriculum that develops both academic and life skills. Concepts are presented in creative and lively ways that reinforce learning goals and engage students. Literary selections include short fiction and poetry from around the globe, Shakespearean and modern drama, and contemporary novels. Nonfiction selections feature historical correspondence, diaries, logs, and famous courtroom arguments. Life reading skills target forms, applications, and work-related communication. Throughout both semesters, students build active reading strategies as they question, predict, clarify, and evaluate events and ideas presented in texts.

The writing program builds confidence in young writers by targeting control of organization, effective sentences, and word choice. Students compose using the writing process. Grammar review and vocabulary development are included in every unit.

### **English III: American Literature**<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** English II    **Length:** Two semesters

American Literature is a general studies program in literature and composition, organized as a survey of American literature. It can stand alone as a complete year of general study in English without a specific prerequisite, but its modular design allows flexibility in how the program is used in the classroom; teachers may use a single unit, lesson, or activity to supplement regular class content. American Literature expands upon and deepens understanding of literary and communication skills covered in Critical Reading and Effective Writing, including reading, writing, language appreciation and aesthetics, listening and speaking, viewing and representing, and research.

Within these general topic areas, special emphasis is placed on writing expository, research, and creative compositions; honing critical and analytic skills through close readings of literary, historical, expository, and functional documents; using context

strategies and an understanding of etymology to build vocabulary; and practicing communication skills. Reading selections cover a variety of genres and voices in literature and expository prose. Students read a survey of American literature from colonial to contemporary eras. They are encouraged to respond critically and personally to these works and to use them as a context for thinking about the unique and universal aspects of culture. In addition, they learn and practice skills for workplace communication in special activities. Finally, students practice gathering, evaluating, synthesizing, presenting, and documenting information in a unit dedicated to writing research reports.

### **English IV: British and World Literature**<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** English II    **Length:** Two semesters

British and World Literature offers a survey of British literature that illustrates the origins of English-language literature and reflects its reach beyond the British Isles. The course is standards-based. Each activity correlates to state standards in six core areas: reading, writing, language (appreciation and aesthetics), listening and speaking, viewing and representing (including media literacy), and research. The course gives students meaningful practice in fundamental literacy skills while introducing them to classics of British and world literature. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to think and respond independently, critically, and creatively to the subject matter, whether it is a work of literature, a piece of nonfiction writing, or a media work. The course emboldens students to approach these works — both on their own terms and within a larger context — while providing them with the tools and encouragement they need in order to do so.

<sup>H</sup> Option to take an Honors course is available

## Elective Courses

### Creative Writing

**Prerequisite:** English I    **Length:** One semester

Creative Writing is an English elective course that focuses on the exploration of short fiction and poetry, culminating in a written portfolio that includes one revised short story and three to five polished poems. Students draft, revise, and polish fiction and poetry through writing exercises, developing familiarity with literary terms and facility with the writing process as they study elements of creative writing.

Elements of fiction writing explored in this course include attention to specific detail, observation, character development, setting, plot, and point of view. In the poetry units, students learn about the use of sensory details and imagery, figurative language, and sound devices including rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration. They also explore poetic forms ranging from found poems and slam poetry to traditional sonnets and villanelles.

In addition to applying literary craft elements in guided creative writing exercises, students engage in critical reading activities designed to emphasize the writing craft of a diverse group of authors. Students study short stories by authors such as Bharati Mukherjee and Edgar Allan Poe, learning how to create believable characters and develop setting and plot. Likewise, students read poetry by canonical greats such as W. B. Yeats and Emily Dickinson, as well as contemporary writers such as Pablo Neruda, Sherman Alexie, and Alice Notley. Studying the writing techniques of a range of authors provides students with models and inspiration as they develop their own voices and refine their understanding of the literary craft.

### Media Literacy

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Media Literacy teaches students how to build the critical thinking, writing, and reading skills required in a media-rich and increasingly technocentric world. In a world saturated with media messages, digital environments, and social networking, concepts of literacy must expand to include all forms of media. Today's students need to be able to read, comprehend, analyze, and respond to nontraditional media with the same skill level they engage with traditional print sources.

A major topic in Media Literacy is nontraditional media reading skills, including how to approach, analyze, and respond to advertisements, blogs, websites, social media, news media, and wikis. Students also engage in a variety of writing activities in nontraditional media genres, such as blogging and podcast scripting.

Students consider their own positions as consumers of media and explore ways to use nontraditional media to become more active and thoughtful citizens. Students learn how to ask critical questions about the intended audience and underlying purpose of media messages, and study factors which can contribute to bias and affect credibility.

### Writing Workshop

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Writing Workshop focuses on developing the art of expository writing through critical exposure to writing models and extensive opportunities for practice and feedback. Students explore composition at all levels from word choice and sentence style to paragraph cohesion and essay organization. Four key learning strands are integrated throughout the course: composition practice, grammar, diction and style, and media literacy. As students develop their craft as expository writers, they also develop their voices as writers, their powers of analysis and response, and their efficiency as communicators.

## Advanced Placement (AP)\* Courses

### AP English Language and Composition

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

In Advanced Placement\* English Language and Composition, students learn to understand and analyze complex styles of writing by reading works from a variety of authors. They will explore the richness of language, including syntax, imitation, word choice, and tone. Students will also learn about their own composition style and process, starting with exploration, planning, and writing, and continuing through editing, peer review, rewriting, polishing, and applying what they learn to a breadth of academic, personal, and professional contexts. The equivalent of an introductory college-level survey class, this course prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in communications, creative writing, journalism, literature, and composition.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

### AP English Literature and Composition

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition immerses students in novels, plays, poems, and short stories from various periods. Students will read and write daily, using a variety of multimedia and interactive activities, interpretive writing assignments, and class discussions to assess and improve their skills and knowledge. The course places special emphasis on reading comprehension, structural and critical analysis of written works, literary terms, and recognizing and understanding literary devices. The equivalent of an introductory college-level survey class, this course prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in creative writing, communications, journalism, literature, and composition.

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# Mathematics

## Required Courses

### Algebra I<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** Introductory or Pre-Algebra

**Length:** Two semesters

Algebra I provides a curriculum focused on the mastery of critical skills and the understanding of key algebraic concepts, preparing students to recognize and work with these concepts. Through a "Discovery-Confirmation-Practice"-based exploration of algebraic concepts, students are challenged to work toward a mastery of computational skills, deepen their conceptual understanding of key ideas and solution strategies, and extend their knowledge in a variety of problem-solving applications. Course topics include an Introductory Algebra review; measurement; an introduction to functions; problem solving with functions; graphing; linear equations and systems of linear equations; polynomials and factoring; and data analysis and probability.

### Algebra II<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** Algebra I   **Length:** Two semesters

Algebra II provides a curriculum that builds on the algebraic concepts covered in Algebra I. Through a "Discovery-Confirmation-Practice"-based exploration of intermediate algebra concepts, students are challenged to work toward a mastery of computational skills, to deepen their conceptual understanding of key ideas and solution strategies, and to extend their knowledge in a variety of problem-solving applications. Course topics include conic sections; functions, relations, and their graphs; quadratic functions; inverse functions; and advanced polynomial functions. Students also cover topics relating to rational, radical, exponential, and logarithmic functions; sequences and series; and data analysis and probability.

### Geometry<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** Algebra I or equivalent

**Length:** Two semesters

Geometry provides a curriculum focused on the mastery of critical skills and the understanding of key geometric concepts. Through a "Discovery-Confirmation-Practice"-based exploration of geometric concepts, students are challenged to work toward mastery of computational skills, to deepen their conceptual understanding of key ideas and solution strategies, and to extend their knowledge in a variety of problem-solving applications. Course topics include reasoning, proof, and the creation of a sound mathematical argument; points, lines, and angles; triangles; quadrilaterals and other polygons; circles; coordinate geometry; and three-dimensional solids. The course concludes with a look at special topics in geometry, such as constructions, symmetry, tessellations, fractals, and non-Euclidean geometry.

## Elective Courses

### Mathematics of Personal Finance

**Prerequisites:** Algebra I and Geometry or their equivalents

**Length:** Two semesters

Mathematics of Personal Finance focuses on real-world financial literacy, personal finance, and business subjects. Students apply what they learned in Algebra I and Geometry to topics including personal income, taxes, checking and savings accounts, credit, loans and payments, car leasing and purchasing, home mortgages, stocks, insurance, and retirement planning.

They then extend their investigations using more advanced mathematics, such as systems of equations when studying cost and profit issues, and exponential functions when calculating interest problems.

### Precalculus<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of two years of Algebra and one year of Geometry

**Length:** Two semesters

Precalculus is a course that combines reviews of algebra, geometry, and functions into a preparatory course for calculus. The course focuses on the mastery of critical skills and exposure to new skills necessary for success in subsequent math courses. The first semester includes linear, quadratic, exponential, logarithmic, radical, polynomial, and rational functions; systems of equations; and conic sections. The second semester covers trigonometric ratios and functions; inverse trigonometric functions; applications of trigonometry, including vectors and laws of cosine and sine; polar functions and notation; and arithmetic of complex numbers.

### Probability and Statistics

**Prerequisite:** None   **Length:** One semester

Probability and Statistics provides a curriculum focused on understanding key data analysis and probabilistic concepts, calculations, and relevance to real-world applications. Through a "Discovery-Confirmation-Practice"-based exploration of each concept, students are challenged to work toward mastery of computational skills, deepen their conceptual understanding of key ideas and solution strategies, and extend their knowledge in a variety of problem-solving applications.

This course covers topics such as types of data; common methods used to collect data; and various representations of data, including histograms, bar graphs, box plots, and scatterplots. Students learn to work with data by analyzing and employing methods of prediction, specifically involving samples and populations, distributions, summary statistics, regression analysis, transformations, simulations, and inference. Ideas involving probability — including sample space, empirical and theoretical probability, expected value, and independent and compound events — are covered as students explore the relationship between probability and data analysis. The connection between geometry and probability is explored through basic geometric probability.

H Option to take an Honors course is available



## Advanced Placement (AP)\* Courses

### AP Calculus AB

**Prerequisites:** Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-Calculus with Trigonometry

**Length:** Two semesters

In Advanced Placement Calculus AB, students learn to understand change geometrically and visually (by studying graphs of curves), analytically (by studying and working with mathematical formulas), numerically (by seeing patterns in sets of numbers), and verbally. Instead of simply getting the right answer, students learn to evaluate the soundness of proposed solutions and to apply mathematical reasoning to real-world models. Calculus helps scientists, engineers, and financial analysts understand the complex relationships behind real-world phenomena. The equivalent of an introductory college-level calculus course, AP Calculus AB prepares students for the AP exam and for further studies in science, engineering, and mathematics.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

### AP Statistics

**Prerequisites:** Algebra II    **Length:** Two semesters

Advanced Placement Statistics gives students hands-on experience collecting, analyzing, graphing, and interpreting real-world data. They will learn to effectively design and analyze research studies by reviewing and evaluating real research examples taken from daily life. The next time they hear the results from a poll or study, they will know whether the results are valid. As the art of drawing conclusions from imperfect data and the science of real-world uncertainties, statistics plays an important role in many fields. The equivalent of an introductory college-level course, AP Statistics prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in science, sociology, medicine, engineering, political science, geography, and business.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

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# Science

## Required Courses

### Physical Science<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

Physical Science offers a focused curriculum designed around the understanding of critical physical science concepts, including the nature and structure of matter, the characteristics of energy, and the mastery of critical scientific skills. Topics include an introduction to kinematics, including gravity and two-dimensional motion; force; momentum; waves; electricity; atoms; the periodic table of elements; molecular bonding; chemical reactivity; gases; and an introduction to nuclear energy.

### Biology<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

Biology focuses on the mastery of basic biological concepts and models while building scientific inquiry skills and exploring the connections between living things and their environment.

The course begins with an introduction to the nature of science and biology, including the major themes of structure and function, matter and energy flow, systems, and the interconnectedness of life. Students then apply those themes to the structure and function of the cell, cellular metabolism, and biogeochemical cycles. Building on this foundation, students explore the connections and interactions between living things by studying genetics, ecosystems, natural selection, and evolution. The course ends with an applied look at human biology.

Scientific inquiry skills are embedded in the direct instruction, wherein students learn to ask scientific questions, form and test hypotheses, and use logic and evidence to draw conclusions about the concepts.

Lab activities reinforce critical thinking, writing, and communication skills and help develop a deeper understanding of the nature of science.

### Chemistry<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisites:** A physical science course and one year of Algebra

**Length:** Two semesters

Chemistry offers a curriculum that emphasizes students' understanding of fundamental chemistry concepts while helping them acquire tools to be conversant in a society highly influenced by science and technology.

The course provides students with opportunities to learn and practice critical scientific skills within the context of relevant scientific questions. Topics include the nature of science, the importance of chemistry to society, atomic structure, bonding in matter, chemical reactions, redox reactions, electrochemistry, phases of matter, equilibrium and kinetics, acids and bases, thermodynamics, quantum mechanics, nuclear reactions, organic chemistry, and alternative energy.

Scientific inquiry skills are embedded in the direct instruction, wherein students learn to ask scientific questions, form and test

hypotheses, and use logic and evidence to draw conclusions about the concepts. Lab activities reinforce critical thinking, writing, and communication skills and help students develop a deeper understanding of the nature of science.

Throughout this course, students are given an opportunity to understand how chemistry concepts are applied in technology and engineering. Journal and Practice activities provide additional opportunities for students to apply concepts learned in the Studies and practice their writing skills.

## Elective Courses

### Earth Science<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

Earth Science offers a focused curriculum that explores Earth's composition, structure, processes, and history; its atmosphere, freshwater, and oceans; and its environment in space. Topics include an exploration of the major cycles that affect every aspect of life, including weather, climate, air movement, tectonics, volcanic eruptions, rocks, minerals, geologic history, Earth's environment, sustainability, and energy resources.

### Psychology

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Psychology provides a solid overview of the field's major domains: methods, biopsychology, cognitive and developmental psychology, and variations in individual and group behavior.

By focusing on significant scientific research and on the questions that are most important to psychologists, students see psychology as an evolving science. Each topic clusters around challenge questions, such as "What is happiness?" Students answer these questions before, during, and after they interact with direct instruction.

Students learn about all the domains the American Psychological Association (APA) emphasizes: methods, biopsychology, cognitive and developmental psychology, and variations in individual and group behavior.

<sup>H</sup> Option to take an Honors course is available

## Advanced Placement (AP)\* Courses

### AP Biology

**Prerequisites:** Biology and Chemistry

**Length:** Two semesters

In Advanced Placement Biology, students build the conceptual framework necessary to understand science as a process. The course is divided into three sections with correlating laboratory exercises: molecules and cells; heredity and evolution; and organisms and populations. Students will also explore evolution, energy transfer, continuity and change, the relationship of structure to function, regulation, interdependence in nature, and the balance of science, technology, and nature. The equivalent of an introductory college-level biology course, AP Biology prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in health sciences.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation and has been approved as meeting all requirements for a laboratory science course.

### AP Chemistry

**Prerequisites:** Chemistry and Algebra II

**Length:** Two semesters

Advanced Placement Chemistry builds students' understanding of the nature and reactivity of matter. After studying the structure of atoms, molecules, and ions, students move on to solve quantitative chemical problems and explore how molecular structure relates to chemical and physical properties. Students will examine the molecular composition of common substances and learn to predictably transform them through chemical reactions. The equivalent of an introductory college-level chemistry course, AP Chemistry prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in science, health sciences, or engineering. This course has the option to be taken with "dry lab" activities that are intended for students who do not have access to supervised laboratory facilities.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

### AP Physics B

**Prerequisites:** Algebra II, Pre-Calculus with Trigonometry

**Length:** Two semesters

Advanced Placement Physics B is a non-calculus survey course covering five general areas: Newtonian mechanics, thermal physics, electricity and magnetism, waves and optics, and atomic and nuclear physics. Students will gain an understanding of physics' core principles and then apply them to problem-solving exercises. They'll learn how to measure the mass of a planet without weighing it, find out how electricity makes a motor turn, and learn how opticians know how to shape lenses for eyeglasses. The equivalent of an introductory college-level course, AP Physics B prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in science and engineering.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation and has been approved as meeting all requirements for a laboratory science course.

### AP Psychology

**Prerequisite:** Biology   **Length:** One semester

Advanced Placement Psychology provides an overview of current psychological theories and research methods. Students will explore a range of therapies used by professional counselors and clinical psychologists and examine the reasons for normal human reactions: how people learn and think, the process of human development and human aggression, altruism, intimacy, and self-reflection. They will study core psychological concepts such as the brain and sense functions, and learn to gauge human reactions, gather information, and form meaningful syntheses. Along the way, students will also investigate relevant concepts like study skills and information retention. The equivalent of a 100-level college survey course, AP Psychology prepares students for the AP exam and for further studies in psychology and life sciences.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

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# Social Studies

## Required Courses

### World History since the Renaissance<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

World History since the Renaissance covers the development of civilizations around the world from the Renaissance to the present.

The course covers major themes in world history, including the development and influence of human-geographic relationships, political and social structures, economic systems, major religions and belief systems, the effects of science and technology, the vital role of the arts, and the importance of trade and cultural exchange.

Topics covered in this course include the Reformation and its legacy, the Scientific Revolution, European exploration, the Enlightenment, political revolutions, the rise of nation-states, the industrial era, the spread of imperialism, and the issues and conflicts of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Primary source documents, which appear frequently, encourage students to make connections to evidence from the past.

Writing skills are honed through a spiraled sequence of short analytic pieces.

### U.S. History<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

U.S. History traces the nation's history from the pre-colonial period to the present. Students learn about the Native American, European, and African people who lived in America before it became the United States. They examine the beliefs and philosophies that informed the American Revolution and the subsequent formation of the government and political system. Students investigate the economic, cultural, and social motives for the nation's expansion, as well as the conflicting notions of liberty that eventually resulted in civil war. The course describes the emergence of the United States as an industrial nation and then focuses on its role in modern world affairs.

Moving into the 20th and 21st centuries, students probe how the Cold War, and the "information revolution" affected the lives of ordinary Americans. Woven through this chronological sequence is a strong focus on the changing conditions of women, African Americans, and other minority groups.

The course emphasizes the development of historical analysis skills such as comparing and contrasting, differentiating between facts and interpretations, considering multiple perspectives, and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships. These skills are applied to text interpretation and in written assignments that guide learners step-by-step through problem-solving activities.

## Elective Courses

### Geography and World Cultures<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Geography and World Cultures offers a tightly focused and scaffolded curriculum that enables students to explore how geographic features, human relationships, political and social structures, economics, science and technology, and the arts have developed and influenced life in countries around the world. Along the way, students are given rigorous instruction on how to read maps, charts, and graphs, and how to create them.

Geography and World Cultures is designed as the first course in the social studies sequence. It develops note-taking skills, teaches the basic elements of analytic writing, and introduces students to the close examination of primary sources.

### Multicultural Studies

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Multicultural Studies is a history and sociology course that examines the United States as a multicultural nation. The course emphasizes the perspectives of minority groups while allowing students from all backgrounds to better understand and appreciate how race, culture and ethnicity, and identity contribute to their experiences.

Major topics in the course include identity, immigration, assimilation and distinctiveness, power and oppression, struggles for rights, regionalism, culture and the media, and the formation of new cultures. Students are asked to reflect critically on their own experiences as well as those of others. Interactive multimedia activities include personal and historical accounts to which students respond using methods of inquiry from history, sociology, and psychology.

Written assignments and Journals provide opportunities for students to practice and develop skills for thinking and communicating about race, culture, ethnicity, and identity.

### Sociology

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Sociology examines why people think and behave as they do in relationships, groups, institutions, and societies.

Major course topics include individual and group identity, social structures and institutions, social change, social stratification, social dynamics in recent and current events, the effects of social change on individuals, and the research methods used by social scientists.

Students are asked to reflect critically on their own experiences and perspectives, as well as on the ideas of sociologists.

Interactive multimedia activities include personal and historical accounts to which students respond, using methods of inquiry from sociology. Written assignments and journals provide opportunities to practice and develop skills in thinking and communicating about human relationships, individual and group identity, and all other major course topics.

<sup>H</sup> Option to take an Honors course is available

## Elective Courses (continued)

### U.S. and Global Economics<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** U.S. Government and Politics is recommended, but not required

**Length:** One semester

U.S. and Global Economics offers a tightly focused and scaffolded curriculum that provides an introduction to key economic principles. The course covers fundamental properties of economics, including an examination of markets from both historical and current perspectives; the basics of supply and demand; the theories of early economic philosophers such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo; theories of value; the concept of money and how it evolved; the role of banks, investment houses, and the Federal Reserve; Keynesian economics; the productivity, wages, investment, and growth involved in capitalism; unemployment, inflation, and the national debt; and a survey of markets in areas such as China, Europe, and the Middle East.

U.S. and Global Economics is designed to fall in the fourth year of social studies instruction. Students perfect their analytic writing through a scaffolded series of analytic assignments and written lesson tests. They also apply basic mathematics to economic concepts. Students read selections from annotated primary documents and apply those readings to the course content.

### U.S. Government and Politics<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** U.S. History is recommended, but not required

**Length:** One semester

U.S. Government and Politics offers a tightly focused and scaffolded curriculum that uses the perspective of political institutions to explore the history, organization, and functions of the U.S. government. Beginning with basic theories of government, moving to the Declaration of Independence, and continuing to the present day, the course explores the relationship between individual Americans and the governing bodies. It covers the political culture of the country and gains insight into the challenges faced by presidents, congressional representatives, and other political figures. It also covers the roles of political parties, interest groups, the media, and the Supreme Court.

U.S. Government and Politics is designed to fall in the fourth year of social studies instruction. Students perfect their analytic writing through a scaffolded series of analytic assignments and written lesson tests. Students read annotated primary documents and apply those documents to the course content.

### World History to the Renaissance<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

World History to the Renaissance traces the development of civilizations around the world from prehistory to the Renaissance.

The course covers major themes in world history, including the development and influence of human-geographic relationships, political and social structures, economic systems, major religions and belief systems, science and technology, and the arts.

Topics covered in this course include the birth of civilizations; the classical civilizations of India, China, Greece, and Rome; the rise of new empires such as the Byzantine; and an examination of civilizations in Africa and North and South America. From there, students journey to the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.

Primary sources documents, which appear frequently, encourage students to make connections to evidence from the past. Writing skills are honed through a spiraled sequence of short analytic pieces.

<sup>H</sup> Option to take an Honors course is available

## Advanced Placement (AP)\* Courses

### AP Macroeconomics

**Prerequisites:** Algebra II (or Math Analysis)

**Length:** One semester

Advanced Placement Macroeconomics students learn why and how the world economy can change from month to month, how to identify trends in our economy, and how to use those trends to develop performance measures and predictors of economic growth or decline. They will also examine how individuals, institutions, and economic influences affect people, and how those factors can impact employment rates, government spending, inflation, taxes, and production. The equivalent of an introductory college-level class, this course prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in business, political science and history.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

### AP Microeconomics

**Prerequisites:** Algebra I   **Length:** One semester

Advanced Placement Microeconomics studies the behavior of individuals and businesses as they exchange goods and services in the marketplace. Students will learn why the same product costs different amounts at different stores, in different cities, at different times. They'll also learn to spot patterns in economic behavior and how to use those patterns to explain buyer and seller behavior under various conditions. Microeconomics studies the economic way of thinking, understanding the nature and function of markets, the role of scarcity and competition, the influence of factors such as interest rates on business decisions, and the role of government in promoting a healthy economy. The equivalent of an introductory college-level course, AP Microeconomics prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in business, history, and political science.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

### AP U.S. Government and Politics

**Prerequisites:** U.S. History   **Length:** One semester

Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics studies the operations and structure of the U.S. government and the behavior of the electorate and politicians. Students will gain the analytic perspective necessary to critically evaluate political data, hypotheses, concepts, opinions, and processes. Along the way, they'll learn how to gather data about political behavior and develop their own theoretical analysis of American politics. They'll also build the skills they need to examine general propositions about government and politics, and to analyze the specific relationships between political, social, and economic institutions. The equivalent of an introductory college-level course, AP U.S. Government and Politics prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in political science, law, education, business, and history.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

### AP U.S. History

**Prerequisite:** At least a grade of B- in most recent social studies course

**Length:** Two semesters

Advanced Placement U.S. History analyzes and explores the economic, political, and social changes in America since Columbus. Students master historical knowledge and critical analysis, build reading, writing, and communication skills, and discover how historical events have contributed to American culture. In the process, they'll learn how decisions and events of the past continue to have profound effects on the world today and how knowledge of the causes behind past events can influence future decisions. By the end of the course, students will be ready to put their factual knowledge to work by weighing evidence and interpreting problems presented by historians. The equivalent of an introductory college-level course, AP U.S. History prepares students for the AP exam and for further study in history, political science, economics, sociology, and law.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

\*Advanced Placement and AP are registered trademarks of the College Board.

# World Languages

## Elective Courses

### French I<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

French I teaches students to greet people, describe family and friends, talk about hobbies, and communicate about other topics such as sports, travel, and medicine. Each lesson presents vocabulary, grammar, and culture in context, followed by explanations and exercises. Vocabulary includes terms to describe school subjects, parts of the body, and people, as well as idiomatic phrases. Instruction in language structure and grammar includes the verb system, adjective agreement, formal and informal address, reflexive verbs, and past tense. Students also gain an understanding of the cultures of French-speaking countries and regions within and outside Europe, as well as insight into Francophone culture and people.

The material in this course is presented at a moderate pace.

### French II<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** French I or the equivalent

**Length:** Two semesters

French II teaches students to communicate more confidently about themselves, as well as about topics beyond their own lives, both in formal and informal address. Each lesson presents vocabulary, grammar, and culture in context, followed by explanations and exercises. Vocabulary includes terms in cooking, geography, and architecture. Instruction in language structure and grammar includes present- and past-tense verb forms and uses, negation, and direct and indirect objects. Students deepen their knowledge of French-speaking regions and cultures by learning about history, literature, culture, and contemporary issues.

The material in this course is presented at a moderate pace.

### Spanish I<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

Spanish I teaches students to greet people, describe family and friends, talk about hobbies, and communicate about other topics, such as home life, occupations, travel, and medicine. Each lesson presents vocabulary, grammar, and culture in context, followed by explanations and exercises. Vocabulary includes terms to describe school subjects, parts of the body, and people, as well as idiomatic phrases. Instruction in language structure and grammar includes the structures and uses of present-tense verb forms, imperatives, adjective agreement, impersonal constructions, formal and informal address, and reflexive verbs. Students explore words used in different Spanish-speaking regions and learn about the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries.

The material in this course is presented at a moderate pace.

### Spanish II<sup>H</sup>

**Prerequisites:** Spanish I or the equivalent

**Length:** Two semesters

Building on Spanish I concepts, Spanish II students learn to communicate more confidently about themselves, as well as about topics beyond their own lives — both in formal and informal situations. Each lesson presents vocabulary, grammar, and culture in context, followed by explanations and exercises. Students expand their vocabulary in topics such as cooking, ecology, geography, and architecture. Instruction in language structure and grammar includes a review of present-tense verb forms, an introduction to the past tense, the conditional mood, imperatives, impersonal constructions, and reported speech. Students deepen their knowledge of Spanish-speaking regions and cultures by learning about history, literature, culture, and contemporary issues.

The material in this course is presented at a moderate pace.

## Advanced Placement (AP)<sup>\*</sup> Courses

### AP Spanish Language

**Prerequisites:** 3–4 years of Spanish or equivalent native fluency

**Length:** Two semesters

Advanced Placement Spanish Language students practice perfecting their Spanish speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. They study vocabulary, grammar, and cultural aspects of the language, and then apply what they've learned in extensive written and spoken exercises. By the end of the course, students will have an expansive vocabulary and a solid, working knowledge of all verb forms and tenses. The equivalent of a college-level language course, AP Spanish Language prepares students for the AP exam and for further study of Spanish language, culture, or literature.

This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation.

H Option to take an Honors course is available \*Advanced Placement and AP are registered trademarks of the College Board.

## Fine Arts

### Elective Courses

#### Art Appreciation

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Art Appreciation is a survey of the history of Western visual arts, with a primary focus on painting. Students begin with an introduction to the basic principles of painting and learn how to critique and compare works of art. Students then explore prehistoric and early Greek and Roman art before they move on to the art of the Middle Ages. Emphasis is placed on the Renaissance and the principles and masters that emerged in Italy and northern Europe. Students continue their art tour with the United States during the 20th century, a time of great innovation as abstract art took center stage. While Western art is the course's primary focus, students will finish the course by studying artistic traditions from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas.

Coverage of each artistic movement highlights historical context and introduces students to key artists who represent a variety of geographic locations. Throughout the course, students apply what they have learned about art critique to analyze and evaluate both individual artists and individual works of art. Art Appreciation encompasses a variety of skills to enable students to critique, compare, and perhaps influence their own works of art.

#### Music Appreciation

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** Two semesters

Music Appreciation is a streamlined course that introduces student to the history, theory, and genres of music, from the most primitive surviving examples, through the classical to the most contemporary in the world at large. The course is offered in a two-semester format: The first semester covers primitive musical forms, classical music, and American jazz; the second semester presents the rich modern traditions, including gospel, folk, soul, blues, Latin rhythms, rock and roll, and hip-hop.

The course explores the interface of music and social movements and examines how the emergent global society and the Internet are bringing musical forms together in new ways from all around the world.

## Health/Physical Education

### Elective Courses

#### Physical Education

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Physical Education offers students cardiovascular, aerobic, and muscle-toning activities. The course promotes a keen understanding of the value of physical fitness and aims to motivate students to participate in physical activities throughout their lives.

Specific areas of study include: cardiovascular exercise and care, safe exercising, building muscle strength and endurance, injury prevention, fitness skills and FITT benchmarks, goal setting, nutrition and diet (vitamins and minerals, food labels, and the evaluation of product claims), and stress management.

#### Skills for Health

**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One semester

Skills for Health is a valuable, skills-based health education course designed for general education in grades 9 through 12. The course helps students develop knowledge and essential skills in a variety of health-related subjects, including mental and emotional health; nutrition; physical activity; substance use and abuse; injury prevention and safety; and personal health, environmental conservation, and community health resources.

Through the use of accessible information and real-life simulations, students apply the seven health skills. These include access to valid health information; self-management; analysis of internal and external influences; interpersonal communication; decision making; goal setting; and advocacy. Students who complete Skills for Health acquire the skills they need to protect, enhance, and promote their own health and the health of others.



# Life Skills

## Elective Courses

### College and Career Preparation

**Prerequisite:** None      **Length:** One semester

High school students have many questions about the college application process, what it takes to be a successful college student, and how to begin thinking about their careers.

The course provides a step-by-step guide to choosing a college. It walks students through the process of filling out a college application, including opportunities to practice completing an application, and takes an in-depth look at the various college-admission tests, as well as financial aid options.

College and Career Preparation also instructs students in interviewing techniques and provides career guidance. Students explore valuable opportunities such as job shadowing and internships when preparing for a career.

Students who complete this course obtain a deeper understanding of college and career readiness through informative, interactive critical thinking and analysis activities while sharpening their time management, organization, and skills.

College and Career Preparation prepares students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and beyond.

# Interdisciplinary Projects

Learning becomes more relevant when students explore personal interests and are challenged to solve a real-world problem. This combination of engagement and relevancy motivates students to learn more and gain a deeper understanding of the topic and concepts. The for-credit Interdisciplinary Projects engage students in learning, encourage them to pursue career interests, and build skills important for success in college and beyond.

For each project, students work closely with a designated mentor—an Apex Learning High School teacher or expert from the community. Choosing to work on their own, or to collaborate with other Apex Learning HS students, students begin by defining the project scope and the questions to be answered. Then they move into the research phase, exploring written information, making observations, and interviewing. Finally, students complete and present a project such as a new city park design or a documentary film. In the Interdisciplinary Project courses, students are encouraged to be creative and use various types of media including traditional research papers, websites, films, taped original performances, and more.

## Elective Courses

### History and Documentary Film Making<sup>Q</sup>

**Disciplines:** History, Research, Writing, Editing, Film Production  
**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One quarter (10 weeks)

Historians attempt to find out about and explain the past. Documentary filmmakers want to present facts about a people, events, places, or issues. They must both know their subject and have something to “say” about it.

History and Documentary Filmmaking project students explore both the worlds of history and storytelling through images. They become detective, researcher, writer, editor, director, and presenter as they create their own short documentary film.

To start the project, students select a history topic, gather information, and write a short research paper. After additional, more in-depth research, students transition their written work into a short documentary film. During the course, students develop their skills of inquiry, citing sources, editing, and narration. To complete the course, students screen the documentary film with a selected group of peers, faculty, and family.

### Math and the Creative Process<sup>Q</sup>

**Disciplines:** Math, Art, Science, Music, History  
**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One quarter (10 weeks)

It might not be obvious while solving for  $x$  in an algebraic equation or studying conics in geometry, but math has strong ties to art and the creative process. Indeed, Leonardo daVinci’s notebooks are covered with random sketches and engineering schematics; Bach composed minuets using mathematical patterns; and painters such as French Post-Impressionist Georges Seurat have employed mathematical precision and calculations to produce compelling images. Today’s computer programs that generate mathematical fractal images can also create beautiful music.

During this project-based course, Math and the Creative Process, students tap their own powers of creativity and artistic expression as they discover the relationship between math and other disciplines including science, art, music, history, technology, drama, gaming, design, architecture, business, engineering, economics, and more. Students begin the project by exploring a math topic to discover where and how that particular aspect of math is used in the real world. Students then design and render a visual expression of that mathematical principle. To culminate the project, students present a summary of their research and exploration in a chosen form of artistic expression.

Q One quarter course (10 weeks)

### Modern Health and Human Systems<sup>Q</sup>

**Disciplines:** Science, Contemporary Issues  
**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One quarter (10 weeks)

Are cell phones, tanning beds, makeup, and secondhand tobacco smoke safe? How is DNA profiling done? What can be done to live with rheumatoid arthritis, muscular dystrophy, or bipolar disorders?

The Interdisciplinary Project, Modern Health and Human Systems, begins when a student chooses a contemporary topic related to human anatomy from a provided list. Students then work with their mentor to develop a set of questions about that topic. To answer the questions, they employ the basic tools of scientific inquiry and simple research practices and, as appropriate, participate in job shadowing to observe related careers. During this research phase, students develop a keen awareness of important health issues, form their own opinions and conclusions about the topic, and gain a working understanding of the structure and function of the human system related to the topic.

With a firm grasp of background knowledge, students then design and carry out a controlled research project. To finalize the project-based course, students present their research and conclusions using different media that may include video, photographs, text, or slides.

### Parks in Play<sup>Q</sup>

**Disciplines:** Data Collection, City Planning, Geometry, General Math  
**Prerequisite:** None    **Length:** One quarter (10 weeks)

Local parks offer recreational opportunities for citizens from toddlers to senior citizens. How and why did they come to be there? How do real planning and change take place in a community?

In Parks in Play, students have the opportunity to explore these questions. They act as a dreamer, researcher, city planner, designer, and presenter as they develop a plan to bring a new park into their community.

The project begins by studying an existing park, its uses, and original purpose. Then the students identify what the community is looking for in a new park. With this background data, the student planners imagine the perfect park. Where would it be? What would it offer? Who would use it? As students design the park, they improve important skills in inquiry, observation, analysis, planning, computation, and creative design. To complete the project, students present their newly designed park plan to friends, family, and maybe even to the city council.



[www.ApexLearningHS.com](http://www.ApexLearningHS.com)