

+ academics curriculum 2024–2025

OUR MISSION

At The Bay School, we balance challenging academics and innovative thinking with a mindful approach to learning and life. Our goal is to see students unlock their individual and collective potential so they begin to realize their roles in a dynamic world.

Bay’s program develops students into sophisticated, ethical thinkers. Our teaching continually encourages students to go further, always asking, *How? Why? Is there a better way?* The schedule—with long blocks during semesters and three-week Immersive terms—reflects the value we place on digging into complex ideas, engaging in deep discussions, and collaborating on a path forward. Everything we do reflects our mission to provide a rigorous academic experience with “a mindful approach to learning and life.”

Our alumni have gone on to create their own interdisciplinary majors in college, pursue PhDs and Fulbright scholarships, and start companies. From a strong foundation, you can take big leaps.

So let’s get started.

Your Path

At Bay you get to carve an academic path that speaks to your interests—the ones you have now and the ones you’ll discover along the way.

Academic progression at Bay is focused on building the skills and analytical abilities that allow you to take control of your learning and develop the confidence to challenge yourself. Your 9th and 10th grade schedules contain core academic courses and electives. In 11th and 12th grades, you get to focus on the subjects that fire up your interest, building your schedule from a wide choice of specialized courses in every subject area.

You can explore exciting course offerings like the post-Calculus pairing of **Linear Algebra** and **Quantum Mechanics**, **Human Nature**, and honors courses like **Banned Books** and **Advanced Drawing and Painting**. We’re excited to offer pathways through our academic program that inspire your intellectual curiosity and push you to explore your potential.

This guide will help you imagine what your own path at Bay could look like. After the course listings, you’ll find information about Bay’s approach to teaching and learning.



The Bay School Year

The school year at Bay is divided into four terms: fall semester, winter Immersive, spring semester, and spring Immersive. In a semester, you’ll take five classes. During Immersives, you’ll take one class for three weeks.

Daily Schedule: Semesters

Our day begins at 8:30 a.m. We have Morning Meeting on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays—it’s as important as class time. Advisory groups meet on Tuesdays or Thursdays, and tutorial and after-school activities take place three days a week. Sports teams practice or play five days a week throughout the school year.

Bay’s schedule offers the gift of balanced time. Longer class blocks during semesters give teachers flexibility to create varied class structures, with time for both discussion and collaborative project work. “Flex” blocks and tutorial give students time during the school day to do homework and meet with teachers.

Daily Schedule: Immersives

We switch it all up for Immersives. The official school day runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., but many classes are held off-campus or do extended field study. Some courses—like **Water in the American West**—include travel within the United States.



Immersives

Immersive courses are designed to take advantage of the unique three-week format. You spend each day with your classmates, learning intently and then planning and creating your final project. Some courses are interdisciplinary, like **The Mathematics of Democracy**, and some are focused on one topic, like **Biotechnology**. On the last day of each Immersive term, you present your final project. The weeks are intense, and you'll come away seeing that school can be exhilarating. Here's what can happen in those three weeks:

In **Assembling San Francisco**, you'll spend most days out in the field, from the City to Point Reyes, studying the unique geological features that have created the Bay Area.

In **Civil Rights in the American South**, you'll journey through some of the significant places in the American Civil Rights Movement, learning about the people and events of those locations.

And the possibilities go on. Different from the intersessions offered between terms at some schools, Immersives are graded, UC-approved courses that are required for graduation.

Honors Courses

Whether you're learning to derive and proof your own equations in **Physics 2** or collaborating on a project about Confucianism, you'll get next-level challenge in Bay's honors courses.

Honors courses let students who are academically ready for college-level work drill down into subjects of interest. You'll see the wide range of options in the course list on the following page. To take these courses, Bay students must get approval from their current teachers and their advisor, as these classes are designed to challenge students to push themselves in new intellectual directions.

Honors classes are developed by expert Bay faculty and reflect our commitment to depth over breadth. The Advanced Placement model, with its emphasis on memorization, does not provide the depth and interdisciplinary perspective that distinguish a Bay education. For this reason, we do not offer AP courses.



“Bay’s variety of courses really let you explore your interests in depth. My honors science classes and the Wilderness First Responders Immersive allowed me to understand more about the STEM fields, and assured me of what I wanted to study in college.”

**—Nathalia G.
Class of 2024**

2024-2025 Course Offerings

FALL SEMESTER: AUGUST 22–DECEMBER 13, 2024

SPRING SEMESTER: FEBRUARY 1–MAY 18, 2025

i = interdisciplinary

h = honors

ARTS

- The Creative Process
(9th grade requirement)
- Design IA-IB
- Drama IA-IB
- Drawing IA-IB
- Jazz IA-IB
- Music Production IA-IB
- Painting IA-IB
- Photography IA-IB
- Video Production IA-IB
- Vocal Music IA-IB
- h** Advanced Drama: Directing and Script Analysis
- h** Advanced Drawing and Painting Studio
- h** Advanced Projects in Digital Arts
- i** Artist as Activist
- h** Jazz 2

COMPUTER SCIENCE and DESIGN

- Advanced Design
- Computer Science 1 & 2

HUMANITIES CORE

- Humanities IA-IB (9th grade)
- Humanities 2A-2B (10th grade)
- Civics (10th grade)
- American Studies (11th grade)

ENGLISH

- Advanced Composition
- African American Literature
- The American Dream
- Asian American Literature
- h** Banned Books
- h** Breaking the Singular Story
- h** British Literature
- h** Creative Writing

Critical Theory

- h** Decolonized English Literature
- h** Essay and Memoir
- i h** The Good Life
- South Asian Literature
- Speculative Fiction: Our World Through Sci-Fi
- Literature of Neurodivergence

MATH

- Math IA-IB
- Math 2A-2B
- Math 3A-3B
- Analysis of Functions
- h** Calculus
- h** Group Theory
- h** Linear Algebra
- Statistics
- h** Topology
- Using Data Science to Explore Social Issues

RELIGION/PHILOSOPHY

- h** Comparative Religion
- Ethics and Ethical Decision Making
- h** Existentialism
- Human Nature
- Religion in U.S. Politics
- i** The Good Life

SCIENCE

- Conceptual Physics IA-IB
- Biology IA-IB
- Chemistry IA-IB
- Astronomical Research Seminar
- Biological Psychology
- h** Biology 2
- h** Chemistry 2
- Climate Change

Earthquakes and Volcanoes

- Environmental Science
- Evolutionary Biology
- h** Human Physiology
- h** Physics 2
- h** Quantum Physics

SENIOR PROJECTS

There is a makers' section for those doing product design or engineering projects. Juniors may opt to start SPs in their spring semester with teacher permission.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- i** Artist as Activist
- h** Comparative Government
- Ethnic Studies: Race, Class, and Gender
- h** Human Geography
- Queer History
- Latin American Studies
- Middle Eastern Studies

WORLD LANGUAGES

- Mandarin 1–4
- h** Mandarin 5
- h** Advanced Topics in Mandarin
- Spanish 1–4
- h** Advanced Topics in Spanish: Literature & Culture
- Spanish for Spanish Speakers 1–2
- h** Spanish for Spanish Speakers 3

WINTER IMMERSIVES: JANUARY

9TH GRADE

Assembling San Francisco: Geology of the Greater Bay Region

How Can We All Get Along?

Infinite Geometries: The Art of Islam

The Mathematics of Digital Animation

10TH GRADE REQUIREMENT

Humanities 2: Students take a course for English credit focused on the skill of public speaking. Options include:

- Shakespeare Unbound
- Negotiation, Legislation and Diplomacy
- Debate

11TH AND 12TH GRADE BY SUBJECT

ARTS

A Studio of One's Own

📌 Modern American Family

LITERATURE

Essential Questions Through Film

Futures Past and Present

📌 Modern American Family

Stories of San Francisco

MATH

📌 The Mathematics of Democracy

RELIGION/PHILOSOPHY

Buddhism

SCIENCE

Applied Chemistry: Better Cooking Through Chemistry

Astronomy: Observatory

Biotechnology

📌 Construction Techniques

📌 Cybersecurity and Ethical Hacking

Marine Biology

📌 Wilderness First Responder

SOCIAL STUDIES

Art History: The Genesis of Modern Art

📌 The Mathematics of Democracy

Poverty and Justice

SPRING IMMERSIVES: MAY–JUNE

9TH GRADE REQUIREMENT

Humanities 1: Students take a course for English credit that builds skills in research, empathy, and examining Bay Area dynamics around identity. Options will include

- Immigration
- Bay Area Religious Experiences and Practices

10TH AND 11TH GRADE BY SUBJECT

ARTS

Filmmaking

ENGLISH

The Evolution of the Book:

From Manuscripts to Media

Language of the Crossword Puzzle

Mythology

Novels in Nature

SCIENCE

Atmospheric Science and Engineering:

Launching Near-Space Weather Balloons

Fire Ecology

📌 The Geologic, Environmental, and Human History of the California Gold Rush

California Geology: A Field Experience

📌 Water in the American West: The Eastern Sierra Nevada

SOCIAL STUDIES

Bay Area Culture: The Evolution of Food

Civil Rights in the American South

📌 The Geologic, Environmental, and Human History of the California Gold Rush

📌 Water in the American West: The Eastern Sierra Nevada

CO-CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Activities or athletic team participation—3 years

9th Grade Seminar—2 semesters

10th Grade—1 semester of Choices (health and relationships class)

College counseling: 2 semesters (spring of 11th grade–fall of 12th grade)



The Project Arc

At Bay, we know the importance of sustained project work: It requires consistent practice in long-term project management, ideation, iteration, and learning how to change course when needed. We intentionally build these skills in our four-year curriculum arc. Students become resilient in responding to setbacks and gain the knowledge that there is usually more than one way to solve a problem.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Required for all 9th graders, this course creates a reliable foundation for problem solving. Using design-thinking principles, you'll learn the processes of identifying and researching problems, coming up with solutions, and testing and refining them.

CAPSTONE: Will you make an app to help other new students find their way around campus? Reinterpret a classical piano composition? *Try to reinvent the wheel?* These are real projects that Bay 9th graders have completed in The Creative Process.

CIVICS

All 10th graders take a semester of Civics, in which you learn about the structure of government on the local, state, and national level. Digging into current events and the history of many controversial topics, you explore the role of government in our lives. Media literacy

and evaluation of information sources are key components of the course, as you are challenged to think of ways you can become an informed civic actor within society.

CAPSTONE: Working in teams, you'll spend much of the semester creating a podcast—complete with expert guests—on one of the topics covered during the course.

BIOLOGY

Biology is taken in 11th grade, and in spring semester you'll come to the science milestone in the project arc, when you demonstrate your accumulated knowledge from physics (9th grade), chemistry (10th grade), and biology.

CAPSTONE: You'll select a topic related to climate change's impact on living systems, design the project, conduct research, and develop a comprehensive lab- or research-based report. A few recent examples:

- Why Fog Is Vital for the Redwoods of Northern California
- The Olympics and Their Carbon Footprint
- Mangroves and Their Role in Countering Climate Change
- Alternatives to Palm Oil in Consumer Products from Lipstick to Nutella

SENIOR PROJECTS

Now let's put it all together. Over the course of two semesters, you will: propose a project with defined goals, work with a community mentor, and execute the final product. You will encounter obstacles, twists and turns, and probably some failure. But you'll analyze problems along the way, change methods or even the goal, and keep going.

A (very) short list of recent senior projects:

- A system for prison inmates to play chess by mail with members of a San Francisco chess club
- An improved cargo system for bike commuters
- A working prototype of a handheld light that does not require batteries
- A solar-powered battery for small boats



Bay Essentials

The Bay School stands out for its emphasis on real-world skills paired with rigorous intellectual inquiry. In a world where “content” is at our fingertips, high school students need the tools to navigate our dynamic world, particularly focusing on research, credibility of sources, informed debate, and articulating ideas.

The coursework and structure for every Bay class is designed to help impart crucial transferable skills: communication, collaboration, academic skills and responsibility, critical thinking, creative thinking and risk-taking, and ownership of learning. In addition, we have three unique areas in which all Bay students will focus:

ETHNIC STUDIES

We believe every Bay graduate should have the skills and experience of learning about and discussing complex topics around identity, race, and ethnicity. Rather than prescribing a single course all students must take, we offer a menu for students to choose from; the options include semester courses, like **Asian American Literature** and **Middle Eastern Studies**, as well as Immersives like **Civil Rights in the American South** and **The Geologic, Environmental, and Human History of the California Gold Rush**.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

In their January Immersive, all sophomores will take a course focused on developing and practicing their public speaking and/or performance skills. Students will again have choice in how they practice this skill, with offerings like **Debate**, **Model United Nations**, or Shakespeare performance among other rotating courses. From class presentations to Socratic seminars to exhibitions, the emphasis on clear and confident communication is woven into our academic program.

PHILOSOPHY OR RELIGION

All Bay students take at least one elective course (semester or Immersive) that interrogates complex ideas that help us understand our broader communities, whether local, national, or international. Students can choose from offerings like **Ethics**, **Existentialism**, **Comparative Religion**, and **Religion in U.S. Politics**. Each of these courses explores the relationship between the self and society with a goal of deepening our understanding of others.

Learn More

We are excited to show you more about our unique and vibrant academic program. You will find more information and details on the webpages linked here.



Curriculum Overview



Immersives



Bay 101 Videos: The Academic Program



2024-2025 Course Catalog



College Counseling



Bay at a Glance



Water in the American West

Read a firsthand experience of an interdisciplinary Immersive



College Acceptances and Matriculations 2020–2024

Agnes Scott College
American University
Amherst College
 Appalachian State University
Arizona State University
 Art Center College of Design
 Auburn University
Babson College
Bard College
Barnard College
 Baylor University
 Beloit College
Bennington College
 Bentley University
 Berklee College of Music
Boston College
Boston University
Bowdoin College
 Brandeis University
 Brigham Young University
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
 Bucknell University
 California College of the Arts
 California Institute of Technology
 California Institute of the Arts
 California Lutheran University
 California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
 Cal Poly Pomona

Cal State Chico
 Cal State Dominguez Hills
 Cal State East Bay
 Cal State Fresno
 Cal State Fullerton
Cal Poly Humboldt
Cal State Long Beach
 Cal State Los Angeles
 Cal State Maritime Academy
 Cal State Northridge
Cal State Sacramento
Carleton College
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Chapman University
City College of San Francisco
Claremont McKenna College
 Clark Atlanta University
Clark University
 Clemson University
Colby College
Colgate University
 College of Charleston
College of Marin
Colorado College
 Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University, Fort Collins
Columbia College Chicago
Columbia University
Connecticut College
Contra Costa College

Cornell University
Cornish College of the Arts
Dartmouth College
Davidson College
Denison University
 DePaul University
 Dickinson College
 Dillard University
 Dominican University of California
Drexel University
 Duke Kunshan University
Duke University
 Durham University
Eckerd College
Elon University
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Emerson College
Emory University
 Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts at The New School
 Evergreen State College
 Fairfield University
 Florida Institute of Technology
 Florida State University
Fordham University
 Franklin & Marshall College
 Furman University
George Mason University
George Washington University
 Georgetown University
 Georgia Institute of Technology
 Gonzaga University
 Goucher College
Grinnell College
 Grove City College
 Hamilton College
 Hampshire College
 Hampton University
 Harvard University
Harvey Mudd College
Haverford College
 Hawai'i Pacific University
 Hillsdale College
 Hobart and William Smith Colleges
 Howard University
 Illinois Institute of Technology
Illinois Wesleyan University
 Imperial College London
Indiana University Bloomington
Johns Hopkins University
 Johnson & Wales University
 Kansas State University
Kenyon College
 King's College London
 Lafayette College
 Landmark College
Lawrence University
Lehigh University
 Lesley University
Lewis & Clark College
 Liberty University
 Linfield University
 Loughborough University
 Louisiana State University
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola University Chicago
 Loyola University Maryland
 Loyola University New Orleans
Macalester College
 Macquarie University
 Maine College of Art & Design
 Marian University
 Marist College
 Marquette University
 Maryland Institute College of Art
 Massachusetts College of Art and Design

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University
 Mercy University
 Miami University
 Michigan State University
Middlebury College
 Mills College
 Minerva University
Montana State University
 Morehouse College
 Mount Holyoke College
New York University
 Newcastle University
 North Carolina State University
 Northeastern University
Northwestern University
 Norwich University
 NYU Shanghai
Oberlin College
Occidental College
 Ohio University (Main Campus)
 Ohio Wesleyan University
 Oklahoma State University (Main Campus)
 Old Dominion University
Olin College of Engineering
Oregon Institute of Technology
Oregon State University
 Oxford College of Emory University
 Pace University
Pacific Northwest College of Art at Willamette University
 Pacific University
Parsons School of Design at The New School
Pennsylvania State University, University Park
Pepperdine University
Pitzer College
Pomona College
Portland State University
Pratt Institute
Princeton University
Purdue University
 Purdue University Northwest
 Queen's University
 Quinnipiac University
Reed College
 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
 Rice University
 Richmond American University London
 Ringling College of Art and Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
 Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
 Rutgers University, New Brunswick
Saint Joseph's University
 Saint Louis University
Saint Mary's College of California
 Salve Regina University
San Diego State University
San Francisco State University
 San Jose State University
Santa Clara University
Sarah Lawrence College
Savannah College of Art and Design
 School of the Art Institute of Chicago
School of Visual Arts
Scripps College
 Seattle University
 Seton Hall University

Simmons University
 Skidmore College
Smith College
 SOAS University of London
 Sonoma State University
Southern Methodist University
 St. Olaf College
Stanford University
 Stevens Institute of Technology
 Stony Brook University
 Suffolk University
 SUNY Buffalo
 Swarthmore College
Syracuse University
 Temple University
 Texas A&M University
Texas Christian University
The American University of Paris
The Boston Conservatory at Berklee
 The College of Wooster
 The Cooper Union
 The Juilliard School
 The London School of Economics and Political Science
The New School
The Ohio State University
The University of Edinburgh
 The University of Montana
 The University of Sheffield
 The University of Tampa
 The University of Tennessee
The University of Texas at Austin
 Towson University
 Trinity College
 Trinity College Dublin
 Trinity University
Tufts University
Tulane University
 Tuskegee University
 Underwood International College, Yonsei University
 Union College
 United States Military Academy at West Point
 United States Naval Academy
 University College Dublin
 University College London
 University of Alberta
University of Arizona
 University of Bath
 University of Bristol
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
 UBC Okanagan
University of California Berkeley
UC Davis
UC Irvine
UC Los Angeles
UC Merced
UC Riverside
UC San Diego
UC Santa Barbara
UC Santa Cruz
 University of Cambridge
University of Chicago
 University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado, Boulder
 University of Colorado, Denver
 University of Connecticut
 University of Dallas
 University of Dayton
 University of Delaware
University of Denver
 University of Exeter
 University of Florida
 University of Georgia
 University of Glasgow
 University of Guelph
University of Hartford
University of Hawaii at Manoa

University of Houston
 University of Illinois at Chicago
 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 University of Iowa
 University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Maryland, College Park
 University of Massachusetts, Amherst
University of Miami
University of Michigan
 University of Minnesota
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas
 University of Nevada, Reno
 University of New Hampshire
 University of New Haven
 University of New York in Prague
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 UNC Charlotte
 UNC School of the Arts
University of North Dakota
University of Notre Dame
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
 University of Pittsburgh
University of Portland
University of Puget Sound
 University of Redlands
 University of Rhode Island
University of Richmond
University of Rochester
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco
 University of South Carolina
University of Southern California
University of St Andrews
 University of Sydney
 University of the Pacific
University of Toronto
University of Utah
University of Vermont
 University of Victoria
University of Virginia
University of Washington, Seattle
University of Wisconsin, Madison
 Utah Valley University
Vanderbilt University
Vassar College
Villanova University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Wake Forest University
 Washington and Lee University
 Washington State University
Washington University in St. Louis
Wellesley College
 Wentworth Institute of Technology
Wesleyan University
 Western Michigan University
 Western University
Western Washington University
 Westmont College
 Wheaton College (MA)
Whitman College
 Whittier College
Willamette University
 William & Mary
Williams College
 Woodbury University
 Worcester Polytechnic Institute
 Xavier University of Louisiana
Yale University

Text in bold indicates schools attended.