

THE BAY SCHOOL + academics curriculum 2025–2026

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 offerings like the post-Calculus pairing of **Linear Algebra** and **Quantum Mechanics**, and humanities courses like **Banned Books** and **U.S. Foreign Policy**. Our courses are challenging, but at Bay academic rigor isn’t about relentless pressure—it’s about purposeful design that gets students to dive in.

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. During semesters, 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: Bay 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.



Bay Immersives

This program is the only one of its kind in California, and one of just a handful in the United States. Bay Immersivessm are experiential courses designed for deep exploration of a topic. For three weeks, you spend each day with your classmates, learning intently and then planning and creating your final project.

Some courses are interdisciplinary, like the **Art and Science of Bicycle Fabrication**, and some are focused on one subject, 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 experiential terms offered at some schools, Immersives are graded, UC-approved academic 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 in **Comparative Philosophy**, 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, 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

2025-2026 COURSE OFFERINGS

FALL SEMESTER: AUGUST 18–NOVEMBER 20, 2025

SPRING SEMESTER: JANUARY 12–MAY 5, 2026

 = interdisciplinary

 = honors

ARTS

The Creative Process
(9th grade requirement)

Design 1A-1B

Drama 1A-1B

Drawing 1A-1B

Jazz 1A-1B

Music Production 1A-1B

Painting 1A-1B

Photography 1A-1B

Video Production 1A-1B

Vocal Music 1A-1B

 Advanced Design

 Advanced Drama: Directing and
Script Analysis

 Advanced Drawing and
Painting Studio

 Advanced Projects in
Digital Arts

 Advanced Vocal Music

 Artist as Activist

 Jazz 2

Yearbook

HUMANITIES CORE

Humanities 1A-1B (9th grade)

Humanities 2A-2B (10th grade)

Civics (10th grade)

American Studies (11th grade)

ENGLISH

American Rage

Asian American Literature

 Banned Books

 Breaking the Singular Story

 British Literature

The Craft of Writing

 Essay and Memoir

Indigenous American Literature

 The Good Life

MATH

Math 1A-1B

Math 2A-2B

Math 3A-3B

Analysis of Functions

 Calculus

Computer Science 1 & 2

 Group Theory

 Linear Algebra

Statistics

 Topology

Using Data Science to
Explore Social Issues

RELIGION/PHILOSOPHY

 Comparative Philosophy

 Comparative Religion

Ethics and Ethical
Decision Making

 The Good Life

SCIENCE

Conceptual Physics 1A-1B

Biology 1A-1B

Chemistry 1A-1B

Astronomical Research Seminar

Biological Psychology

 Biology 2

 Chemistry 2

Earthquakes and Volcanoes

Evolutionary Biology

Human Genetics and Disease

 Human Physiology

Power Generation: Transitioning
from Fossil Fuels to Renewable
Energy

 Physics 2

 Quantum Mechanics

Sustainability and Earth Systems

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

African Studies

 Artist as Activist

Ethical Economics

Ethnic Studies: Race, Class,
and Gender

 Human Geography

Queer History

 U.S. Foreign Policy

WORLD LANGUAGES

Mandarin 1–4

 Mandarin 5

 Advanced Topics in Mandarin
Spanish 1–4

 Advanced Topics in Spanish:
Literature and Culture

Spanish for Spanish
Speakers 1–2

 Spanish for Spanish Speakers 3

WINTER IMMERSIVES: DECEMBER

9TH GRADE

Bird Nerds: Flight and Field Ornithology
Hands On: Process, Play, and the Art of Making
Assembling San Francisco: Geology of the Greater Bay Area
Infinite Geometries: The Art of Islam
Mathematics of Democracy

10TH GRADE REQUIREMENT

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

- Fiction on the Page and Stage
- Rhetoric and Debate
- Shakespeare Unbound
- Spoken Word Poetry

11TH AND 12TH GRADE BY SUBJECT

ARTS

- Modern American Family
- Museum Studies
- Technical Theater

ENGLISH

- Essential Questions Through Film
- Futures Past and Present
- Modern American Family
- Stories of San Francisco

RELIGION/PHILOSOPHY

Buddhism

SCIENCE

- Applied Chemistry: Better Cooking Through Chemistry
- Astronomy: Observatory
- Construction Techniques
- Cybersecurity and Ethical Hacking
- Marine Biology
- Wilderness First Responder

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Museum Studies
- Poverty and Justice

SPRING IMMERSIVES: MAY

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. Course options:

- Light Years Ahead: Technology & Humanity in the Bay Area
- The Mythos of California: Narratives & Discourses of the West
- Secrets of the City: Exploring San Francisco’s Hidden Histories
- Sights, Sounds, and Flavors: Exploring the Soul of the San Francisco Bay Area
- Summer of Love: The Rebels, Dreamers & Change-Makers of 1967

10TH AND 11TH GRADE BY SUBJECT

ARTS

- Filmmaking
- The Art and Science of Bicycle Fabrication

ENGLISH

Civil Rights in the American South
The Writer’s Life: A Creative Exploration

SCIENCE

- Atmospheric Science and Engineering:
 Launching Near-Space Weather Balloons
- Biotechnology (11th grade only)
- California Geology: A Field Experience
- Fire Ecology
- The Art and Science of Bicycle Fabrication
- The Geologic, Environmental, and Human History of the California Gold Rush
- 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

WORLD LANGUAGES

Spanish Language & Community Engagement, History, and Culture in Guatemala

Co-Curricular Requirements

Activities, athletic team participation, or individual sport—3 years

9th Grade Seminar—2 semesters

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

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



The Project Arc

We believe in the importance of sustained project work: It gives students consistent practice in long-term project management, ideation, iteration, and changing 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:

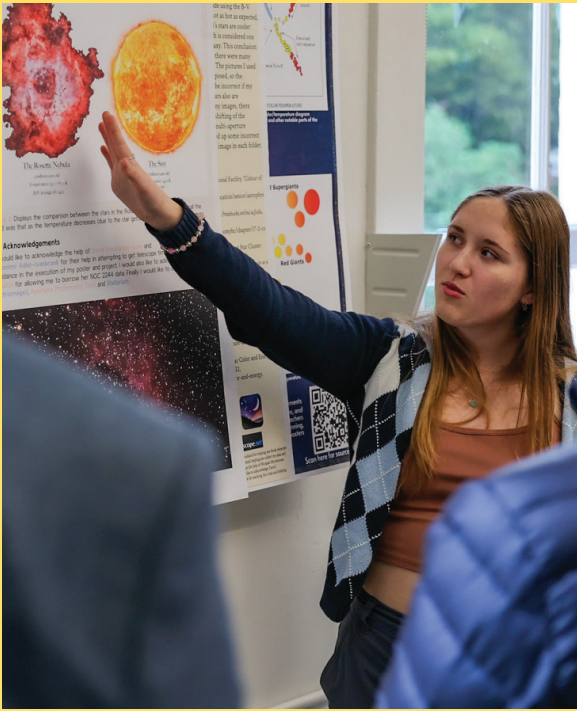
- Why Fog Is Vital for the Redwoods of Northern California
- The Olympics and Their Carbon Footprint
- Mangroves and Their Role in Countering Climate Change
- Alternatives to Palm Oil in Consumer Products

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, our students develop the tools to navigate a 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 six 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 learning areas in which all Bay students 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 to choose from; the options include semester courses, like **Asian American Literature** and **African 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 December Immersive, sophomores take a course focused on developing their public speaking and/or performance skills. Students have choices in how they practice this skill, with offerings like **Spoken Word Poetry, Rhetoric and Debate,** and **Shakespeare Unbound.** From 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 facilitates an understanding of belief systems in our broader communities, whether local, national, or international. Students can choose from offerings like **Ethics, Existentialism,** 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



Our Curriculum



Bay Immersives



2025–2026
Course Catalog



Water in the
American West

Read a firsthand experience of an interdisciplinary Immersive



College Acceptances and Matriculations 2021–2025

Acadia University	Columbia College (Chicago)
Agnes Scott College	Columbia University
American University	Concordia University (Irvine)
Amherst College	Connecticut College
Appalachian State University	Contra Costa College
Arizona State University	Coppin State University
Art Center College of Design	Cornell University
Auburn University	Cornish College of the Arts
Azusa Pacific University	Dartmouth College
Babson College	Davidson College
Bard College	Denison University
Barnard College	DePaul University
Bates College	Dickinson College
Bath Spa University	Dillard University
Baylor University	Dominican University of California
Beloit College	Drew University
Bennett College	Drexel University
Bennington College	Duke University
Bentley University	Durham University
Berklee College of Music	Eckerd College
Boston College	Elon University
Boston University	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Daytona Beach)
Bowdoin College	Emerson College
Brandeis University	Emory University
Brown University	Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts at The New School
Bryn Mawr College	Fairfield University
Bucknell University	Fisk University
Cal Poly Humboldt	Florida Institute of Technology
California College of the Arts	Fordham University
California Lutheran University	Franklin & Marshall College
California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo	George Mason University
Cal Poly Pomona	George Washington University
California State University Channel Islands	Georgetown University
Cal State Chico	Georgia State University
Cal State Dominguez Hills	Gettysburg College
Cal State Fullerton	Goldsmiths, University of London
Cal State Long Beach	Gonzaga University
Cal State Los Angeles	Goucher College
Cal State Monterey Bay	Grinnell College
Cal State Northridge	Hamilton College
Cal State Sacramento	Hampshire College
Carleton College	Hampton University
Carleton University	Harvey Mudd College
Carnegie Mellon University	Haverford College
Case Western Reserve University	Hawai'i Pacific University
Champlain College	Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Chapman University	Howard University
City College of San Francisco	Illinois Institute of Technology
Claremont McKenna College	Illinois Wesleyan University
Clark Atlanta University	Indiana University (Bloomington)
Clark University	International Christian University
Clemson University	Ithaca College
Colby College	Jamaica College
Colgate University	James Madison University
College of Charleston	Johns Hopkins University
College of Marin	Johnson & Wales University (Providence)
Colorado College	Kansas State University
Colorado School of Mines	Kenyon College
Colorado State University (Fort Collins)	Lafayette College

Lake Forest College	
Landmark College	
Langston University	
Lawrence University	
Lehigh University	
Lesley University	
Lewis & Clark College	
Liberty University	
Livingstone College	
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	
Marist University	
Marquette University	
Maryland Institute College of Art	
Massachusetts College of Art and Design	
McGill University	
Mercy University	
Miami University (Oxford)	
Michigan State University	
Middlebury College	
Mills College	
Montana State University	
Morehouse College	
Morgan State University	
Mount Holyoke College	
New Jersey Institute of Technology	
New York Institute of Technology	
New York University	
North Carolina A & T State University	
Northeastern University	
Northwestern University	
Norwich University	
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	
Otis College of Art and Design	
Oxford College of Emory University	
Pace University (New York City)	
Pacific Northwest College of Art at Willamette University	
Parsons School of Design at The New School	
Penn State University (University Park)	
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Closing)	
Pepperdine University	
Pitzer College	
Pomona College	
Portland State University	

Pratt Institute	
Princeton University	
Purdue University (Main Campus)	
Purdue University Northwest	
Queen's University Belfast	
Reed College	
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	
Rhode Island School of Design	
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	
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 State University	
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 for the Advancement of Science and Art	
The Evergreen State College	
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 (Knoxville)	
The University of Texas at Austin	
Towson University	
Trinity College	
Trinity College Dublin	
Trinity University	

Tufts University	
Tulane University of Louisiana	
Tuskegee University	
Union College	
University College Dublin	
University of Aberdeen	
University of Alaska Southeast	
University of Arizona	
University of Bath	
University of Birmingham	
University of British Columbia (Vancouver)	
University of British Columbia (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 Chicago	
University of Cincinnati (Main Campus)	
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 Essex	
University of Exeter	
University of Georgia	
University of Glasgow	
University of Hawaii at Manoa	
University of Houston	
University of Illinois at Chicago	
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	
University of Iowa	
University of Kent	
University of Maryland (College Park)	
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	
University of Massachusetts (Amherst)	
University of Massachusetts (Boston)	
University of Miami	
University of Michigan	
University of Minnesota (Twin Cities)	
University of Nevada (Las Vegas)	
University of New England	
University of New Hampshire (Main Campus)	
University of New South Wales	
University of New York in Prague	
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	
University of North Carolina School of the Arts	
University of North Dakota	
University of Notre Dame	

University of Oregon	
University of Pennsylvania	
University of Pittsburgh (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 South Wales	
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 Commonwealth University	
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	
Wake Forest University	
Waseda University	
Washington State University	
Washington University in St. Louis	
Wellesley College	
Wentworth Institute of Technology	
Wesleyan University	
Western Carolina University	
Western Michigan University	
Western University	
Western Washington University	
Westmont College	
Wheaton College - IL	
Wheaton College - MA	
Whitman College	
Whittier College	
Widener University	
Willamette University	
William & Mary	
Williams College	
Woodbury University	
Worcester Polytechnic Institute	
Xavier University of Louisiana	
Yale University	

Bold indicates schools attended