

Advance Placement (AP) Course Descriptions

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Students can enrich their educational experience at Burnaby South through our various Advanced Placement (AP) Courses that are offered. AP courses are shown to help better prepare high school students for the academic challenges of post-secondary education. Research consistently shows that students who are successful in AP typically experience greater academic success in college/university than similar students who do not participate in AP.

Students will also have an opportunity to obtain university credit if they choose to write the corresponding end of course AP exam that occurs in May. Exams are marked on a scale of 1 to 5, with Canadian universities giving credit with you score a 4 or 5. Some universities in the United States will also give credit for scores of 3 or higher. There is an exam fee for AP exams. Sign up occurs in October.

If there is more demand than space in an AP course, a ranked waitlist will be created for the course. Decisions on who gets into the AP course are made by each department, using data gathered from Learning Updates and teacher recommendations.

At Burnaby South, we also offer the **AP Capstone Program**. The program provides an innovative diploma option for grade 11 and 12 students. Developed in response to feedback from high education faculty and university admissions officers, AP Capstone complements the in-depth, subject-specific rigour of AP courses and exams, allowing students to engage in the development of skills critical for success in post-secondary education: inquiry, research, collaboration and writing. It includes a two-course sequence. Students in Grade 11 will take one of the verisons of AP Seminar offered at Burnaby South (either STEM or Indigenous Studies) and in Grade 12 students will take AP Research.

Students who complete AP Seminar in Grade 11, AP Research in Grade 12 and 4 additional AP courses done at any grade with an exam score of 3 or higher will be given the special designation of AP Diploma. Students only completing AP Seminar and AP Research will be given the special designation of AP Capstone Certificate.

Applied Design, Skills & Technologies (ADST)

AP Business with Personal Finances (NEW for 2026-2027)

Grade 10 students will be also enrolled in Business Ventures 10 when taking this AP course. Grade 11 and 12 students will be also enrolled in Entrepreneurship 12 when taking this course.

AP Business with Personal Finance introduces students to the knowledge and skills they'll need to grow their careers and manage money. The course will teach workforce-ready skills that prepare students for careers in a range of businesses—from startups and large corporations to regional and local organizations. Through projects and case studies, students will learn business fundamentals, decision-making skills, and personal finance standards.

AP Computer Science A

AP Computer Science A is an introductory college-level computer science course. Students cultivate their understanding of coding through analyzing, writing, and testing code as they explore concepts like modularity, variables, and control structures. Students do hands-on work to design, write, and test computer programs that solve problems or accomplish tasks using Java code.

AP Computer Science Principles

AP Computer Science Principles is an introductory college-level computing course that introduces students to the breadth of the field of computer science. Students learn to design and evaluate solutions and to apply computer science to solve problems through the development of algorithms and programs. They incorporate abstraction into programs and use data to discover new knowledge. Students also explain how computing innovations and computing systems—including the internet—work, explore their potential impacts, and contribute to a computing culture that is collaborative and ethical. Students learn how to creatively address real-world issues while using the same tools that artists, computer scientists and engineers use to bring ideas to life.

Note, some projects done during the year will also be part of their AP Computer Science Principles Exam final mark.

English

AP English Literature & Composition

Students will be enrolled and get credit for English 12 concurrently.

AP English Literature and Composition is an introductory college-level literary analysis course. Students cultivate their understanding of literature through reading and analyzing texts as they explore concepts like character, setting, structure, perspective, figurative language, and literary analysis in the context of literary works.

Languages

AP Chinese Language & Culture

Students need to have met a prior Mandarin language level assessment or taken Mandarin 11 Native Writers prior to the start of this course.

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Mandarin 12 concurrently.

AP Chinese Language and Culture is equivalent to an intermediate-level college course in Chinese. Students cultivate their understanding of Chinese language and culture by applying the interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication in real-life situations as they explore concepts related to family and community, personal and public identity, beauty and aesthetics, science and technology, contemporary life, and global challenges.

AP French Language & Culture

Students need to have met a prior French language level assessment or taken French 11 Honours prior to the start of this course.

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for French 12 concurrently.

AP French Language and Culture is equivalent to an intermediate level college course in French. Students cultivate their understanding of French language and culture by applying interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication in real-life situations as they explore concepts related to family and community, personal and public identity, beauty and aesthetics, science and technology, contemporary life, and global challenges.

Mathematics

AP Calculus AB

Students will need to complete Pre-Calculus 12 prior to the start of this course. Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Calculus 12 concurrently.

AP Calculus AB is an introductory college-level calculus course that covers 2/3 of the entire 1st year Calculus course. Students cultivate their understanding of differential and integral calculus through engaging with real-world problems represented graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally and using definitions and theorems to build arguments and justify conclusions as they explore concepts like change, limits, and the analysis of functions.

AP Calculus BC

Students will need to complete Pre-Calculus 12 prior to the start of this course. Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Calculus 12 concurrently.

Please note that AP Calculus BC will take up two periods in the student's schedule as this class meets once on Day 1 and once on Day 2 (so everyday during the school year).

AP Calculus BC is an introductory college-level calculus course that covers the entire 1st year Calculus course. Students cultivate their understanding of differential and integral calculus through engaging with real-world problems represented graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally and using definitions and theorems to build arguments and justify conclusions as they explore concepts like change, limits, and the analysis of functions. Additional Calculus BC topics include Taylor and Maclaurin Series, Convergence and Divergence of series, using Polar and Parametric functions to do Calculus.

AP Pre-Calculus

Students need to enroll in Pre-Calculus 12 Honours to taking this AP course. AP PreCalculus is part of the Pre-Calculus 12 Honours course.

AP Precalculus prepares students for other college-level mathematics and science courses. Through regular practice, students build deep mastery of modeling and functions, and they examine scenarios through multiple representations. The course framework delineates content and skills common to college precalculus courses that are foundational for careers in mathematics, physics, biology, health science, social science, and data science.

AP Statistics

Students who have completed Pre-Calculus 10/11 Honours can take this course in Grade 11.

AP Statistics is an introductory college-level statistics course that introduces students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Students cultivate their understanding of statistics using technology, investigations, problem solving, and writing as they explore concepts like variation and distribution; patterns and uncertainty; and data-based predictions, decisions, and conclusions.

Sciences

AP Biology

Students should have taken Life Sciences 11 Honours prior to the start of this course. Otherwise, students may need to make up missed work the summer prior to the start of this course.

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Anatomy and Physiology 12 concurrently.

AP Biology is an introductory college-level biology course. Students cultivate their understanding of biology through inquiry-based investigations as they explore topics like evolution, cellular processes, energy and communication, genetic information transfer, ecology, and interactions.

AP Chemistry

Students should have taken Chemistry 11 Honours prior to the start of this course. Otherwise, students may need to make up missed work the summer prior to the start of this course.

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Chemistry 12 concurrently.

AP Chemistry is an introductory college-level chemistry course. Students cultivate their understanding of chemistry through inquiry-based investigations as they explore topics like atomic and molecular structure, chemical reactions, kinetics, equilibrium, and thermodynamics.

AP Physics 1

Students need to have completed Pre-Calculus 11 (or Pre-Calculus 10/11 Honours) prior to the start of this course.

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Physics 11 concurrently.

AP Physics 1 is an algebra-based, introductory college-level physics course. Students cultivate their understanding of physics through classroom study, in-class activity, and hands-on, inquiry-based laboratory work as they explore concepts like systems, fields, force interactions, change, and conservation.

AP Physics 2

Students should have taken AP Physics 1 prior to the start of this course.

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Physics 12 concurrently.

AP Physics 2 is an algebra-based, introductory college-level physics course. Students cultivate their understanding of physics through classroom study, in-class activity, and hands-on, inquiry-based laboratory work as they explore concepts like systems, fields, force interactions, change, conservation, and waves.

Social Studies

AP Human Geography

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Human Geography 12 concurrently.

AP Human Geography is an introductory college-level human geography course. Students cultivate their understanding of human geography through data and geographic analyses as they explore topics like patterns and spatial organization, human impacts and interactions with their environment, and spatial processes and societal changes.

AP Psychology

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Psychology 12 concurrently.

AP Psychology introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. While considering the studies that have shaped the field, students explore and apply psychological theories, key concepts, and phenomena associated with major units of study, including biological bases of behavior, cognition, development, learning, social psychology, personality, and mental and physical health. Throughout the course, students apply psychological concepts and employ

psychological research methods and data interpretation to evaluate claims, consider evidence, and effectively communicate ideas.

AP World History (NEW for 2026-2027)

Students will be enrolled in and get credit for History 12 concurrently.

AP World History is an introductory college-level modern world history course. Students cultivate their understanding of world history from c. 1200 CE to the present through analyzing historical sources and learning to make connections and craft historical arguments as they explore concepts like humans and the environment, cultural developments and interactions, governance, economic systems, social interactions and organization, and technology and innovation.

Visual & Performing Arts

AP 2-D Art & Design

In AP 2-D Art and Design you'll develop skills using materials and processes such as graphic design, photography, collage, printmaking, fashion illustration, and others. As the course concludes you'll submit a portfolio that demonstrates your ability to practice, experiment, and revise your own work while communicating your ideas about art and design.

AP 3-D Art & Design

In AP 3-D Art and Design you'll learn how to create art in different disciplines such as sculpture, architectural rendering, metal work, ceramics, and others. At the end of the course you'll submit a portfolio that demonstrates your knowledge of art skills using three-dimensional materials.

AP Drawing

In this course you'll experiment with a variety of materials and processes as you develop your drawing skills. At the end of the course you'll submit a portfolio that demonstrates the different drawing abilities taught in the course, which include mark-making, line, surface, space, light and shade, and composition.

All 3 courses conclude when you submit a portfolio of your artwork at the end of the school year—and none of the courses end in an “exam” with multiple-choice questions or essays. Your work in your art portfolio makes up the entirety of your AP score for each of these courses. You will work with your teacher or AP coordinator to upload the digital images of your work and commentary online.

All AP Art and Design portfolios follow a two-section structure where you will demonstrate foundational knowledge and a range of understanding of visual methods. Each section is graded on a 5-point scale and contributes to the final portfolio score. You'll also learn similar skills in all three courses, including:

- Investigating the materials, processes, and ideas that artists and designers use.
- Communicating your ideas about works of art and design.
- Practicing, experimenting, and revising as you create your own work.

The topics covered in the three courses vary, as do the technical skills and knowledge you're expected to show in your final portfolio. See below for examples of the mediums where you'll develop and demonstrate these abilities throughout the course and in your portfolio.

AP 2-D Art: graphic design, digital imaging, photography, collage, fabric design, weaving, fashion design

AP 3-D Art: figurative or nonfigurative sculpture, architectural models, metal work, ceramics, fiber arts

AP Drawing: drawing (analog or digital), painting, printmaking, mixed media work

AP Music Theory

AP Music Theory is an introductory college-level music theory course. Students cultivate their understanding of music theory through analyzing performed and notated music as they explore concepts like pitch, rhythm, form, and musical design.

The AP Music Theory Exam also has a sight-singing component.

AP Capstone

The AP Capstone Program consists of students selecting one AP Seminar course in Grade 11 and AP Research in Grade 12.

AP Seminar – Indigenous Studies

This course is open to students going into Grade 11 only. Students will be enrolled in and get credit for Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12. This AP course will also satisfy the BC Ministry of Education Social Studies 11/12 and Indigenous course requirements for Graduation.

AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Students learn to investigate a problem or issue in the realm of BC Indigenous studies, analyze arguments, compare different perspectives, synthesize information from multiple sources, and work alone and in a group to communicate their ideas. Students will also participate in Samsung Canada's Solve for Tomorrow challenge as part of their course work.

Note, some projects done during the year will also be part of their AP Seminar Exam final mark.

AP Seminar – STEM (New for 2026-2027)

This course is open to students going into Grade 11 only.

AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Students learn to investigate a problem or issue in the realm of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), analyze arguments, compare different perspectives, synthesize information from multiple sources, and work alone and in a group to communicate their ideas.

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Students will also participate in Samsung Canada's Solve for Tomorrow challenge as part of their course work.

Note, some projects done during the year will also be part of their AP Seminar Exam final mark.

AP Research

This is for Grade 12 students only. Students must have taken AP Seminar before starting this course. This AP course is also offered before school in either Period 9 or 11.

AP Research, the second course in the AP Capstone™ experience, allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, issue, or idea of individual interest. Students design, plan, and implement a yearlong investigation to address a research question. Through this inquiry, they further the skills they acquired in the AP Seminar course by learning research methodology, employing ethical research practices, and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information. Students reflect on their skill development, document their processes, and curate the artifacts of their scholarly work through a process and reflection portfolio. The course culminates in an academic paper of 4,000–5,000 words (accompanied by a performance, exhibit, or product where applicable) and a presentation with an oral defense.