



City of Bridges Course Descriptions 2022-2023

What do we mean by a Learner-Centered Project-Based Real-World Curriculum?

Learner-Centered Project-Based Real-World Curriculum can sound like a bunch of words strung together and in a technical sense, they are, but when it comes to understanding what we do at City of Bridges it is helpful to use those words to explain them and what they look like in our school community.

Learner-Centered: The learning experiences at City of Bridges are focused on helping each individual learner, student, teenager, to build the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to chart any path in life. City of Bridges is learner centered because each person is different, they may learn better with one type of experience, they may be able to demonstrate their learning best in a certain format and they may have a desire to learn something different than other students. Ultimately, it is the job of the City of Bridges curriculum to meet each learner where they are and to then help them build the tools to get to where they want to be. As a result, our curriculum is flexible, personalizable and agile.

Project-Based: One of the core beliefs at City of Bridges is that people learn best by doing, especially when they are able to do real work with real purpose. Project or problem based learning allows students to apply what they are learning to tangible work. This doesn't mean that for every class they build a model car or write a play, but it does mean that the work that students do has an outcome that has purpose and meaning.

Real-World: As of writing this course book, we as human beings all still live in a world that we can perceive with our senses; therefore the work that we do should be applicable to the real world. We should always be able to answer the question of "How can this thing that I am learning be used in my life."

Trimesters, Blocks, Demonstrations of Learning and Credits

City of Bridges believes that one of the best ways to learn about something is to dive deep into learning. Therefore our yearly schedule is designed to give us the opportunity to explore topics with depth and focus, not running from class to class. Before we look at our daily schedule it will be helpful to understand some of the ways that we think about time in our community.



Trimester: The City of Bridges year is broken into three trimesters, the first two run for twelve to fourteen weeks and the third is nine weeks long.

Blocks: The first two trimesters are broken into two blocks of six to seven weeks and the third trimester has one block of nine weeks.

Classes: Our classes are the fundamental learning units at City of Bridges. In each block a student will have morning classes which run for six or seven weeks along with afternoon classes which last for the entire trimester. Some classes; Mathematics, Science and World Language and Culture run for the entire school year.

Demonstrations of Learning: At City of Bridges we believe that the best way to show that you have learned something is to show it! At the conclusion of each block, students are expected to show what they have learned. This will take multiple forms, often at the discretion of the student in consultation with the faculty member or practitioner who is facilitating the course. The Demonstrations of Learning are the way that the students earn credits for the course.

Credits: Students are expected to earn the following credits during their time at City of Bridges. A class is typically worth 1 credit per block. As an example a one block class such as Philosophy will be worth one humanities credit, while Mathematics II, a year long class will be worth three mathematics credits. In addition to classes, students will also have the opportunity to earn credits through independent and group projects, internships and other approved learning experiences which may take place in and out of school. The credits listed in the table below are minimum credits; students can and typically will earn more credits.

Credit Requirements for Graduation



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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| English 12 | Mathematics 9 | Social Studies 9 |
| Science 9 | Movement 6 | Art and Design 8 |
| Future Orientation 3 | World Language and Culture 6 | PLP 10 |
| Internship 8 | Expedition Week 8 | Electives 12 |
| Capstone 6 | Financial Literacy 2 | Health 2 |

Example Schedule-Year II

| | Trimester 1 | | | | Trimester 2 | | | | Trimester 3 | |
|-------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|---|
| | Block 1 | | Block 2 | | Block 3 | | Block 4 | | Block 5 | |
| 8:00-8:35 | Optional Work Time/Advising | | | | | | | | | |
| 8:40-8:50 | Morning Meeting | | | | | | | | | |
| 8:50-10:20 | US History: Does the Arc Bend? Social Studies | | Why do you write? English | | Principles of American Democracy Social Studies | | Rock and Roll in American Culture Social Studies | | Mendings: Making as Meaning Making English | |
| 10:20-10:30 | Break | | | | | | | | | |
| 10:30-11:20 | Mathematics II | Biology 10 | Mathematics II | Biology 10 | Mathematics II | Chemistry 10 | Mathematics II | Chemistry 10 | Mathematics II | Physics 10 |
| 11:25-12:15 | Spanish II | Personal Learning Project | Spanish II | Personal Learning Project | Spanish II | Personal Learning Project | Spanish II | Personal Learning Project | Spanish II | Personal Learning Project |
| 12:15-1:10 | Lunch | | | | | | | | | |
| 1:10-2:10 | Grassroots Activism Social Studies | Drama I Art and Design | Grassroots Activism Social Studies | Drama I Art and Design | Queer Cinema English | Painting I Art and Design | Queer Cinema English | Painting I Art and Design | Toni! Toni! Toni! An immersive Morrison Experience English | Introduction to Economics Social Studies |
| 2:10-3:10 | Movement Physical Education | | Movement Physical Education | | | | | | | Movement Physical Education |
| 3:10-3:30 | Cleaning and Appreciation | | | | | | | | | |



English

The English Curriculum at City of Bridges is much more than being able to read, write and speak well, although we do build those skills. Language is fundamental to the way that human beings explore their world, tell their stories and make meaning. English at City of Bridges provides students with learning opportunities that expose them to multiple voices, perspectives and forms of expression. Students will engage with texts, create their own and in the process build a set of essential skills for the paths that they chose to follow.

| Class |
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| Toni! Toni! Toni!: An Immersive Morrison Experience |
| Mendings: Making as Meaning Making |
| Birth of a Genre: American Blackness in Horror Films |
| Queer Cinema |
| Jewels for Everyday: Reading Gwendolyn Brooks' Maud Martha |
| Drawing the First Person |
| Story Building: Exploring Narrative Through an Interdisciplinary Lens |
| Thrill and Shiver: From Romanticism to Gothic Horror |
| Reading the Body, Making the Body |
| Soviet Book Club: Master and Margarita |
| Feminism or Feminisms? |
| Narrative and Storytelling through Dungeons and Dragons |



Social Studies

The questions of social studies are essentially the questions of what it means to be human. How have the choices of human beings shaped the world in which we live? What are the lessons that we can learn from the past and present to help shape a more just and equitable future? What does it mean to be human and humane? How do we ensure that we are hearing the voices and perspectives which are silenced? City of Bridges social studies curriculum is centred around providing young people with the opportunities to ask the necessary questions about the past and the present, so that they will be well informed and engaged citizens.

| Class |
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| Utopia in Literature and History |
| Principles of American Democracy |
| Grassroots Activism |
| US History: Does the Arc Bend? |
| Rock and Roll in American Culture |
| To Boldly Go: The History of America's Space Program |
| Model United Nations |
| Introduction to Economics |
| Law and Justice |
| Constitutional Literacy |
| Debate |
| The United States in Latin America |
| Sociology of Capitalism: Wealth, Power and Prestige |
| Geopolitics and Sports |



Science

City of Bridges' science curriculum is focused on teaching students how to view the world through an analytic lens, and how to apply scientific thinking toward problem solving. In addition to our Chemistry, Physics, and Biology courses, students are given the opportunity to take classes that develop skills that are not only useful in future science careers, but in all aspects of life. Those Chemistry, Physics, and Biology courses are also broken into three parts and offered every year.

| Class |
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| Biology 9 |
| Biology 10 |
| Chemistry 9 |
| Chemistry 10 |
| Physics 9 |
| Physics 10 |
| Introduction to Environmental Science |
| Astrobiology |
| Organismal Biology |

Mathematics

City of Bridges High School uses the Harkness Method in the mathematics classroom. This method was developed at Phillips-Exeter Academy and is used in schools throughout the world. Harkness teaching involves students solving methodically crafted word problems from which all of the course content is derived. Harkness Mathematics does not have lectures as all of the necessary definitions, theorems, and examples are presented in the problem sets, which are carefully designed to build in difficulty and complexity each day, while also introducing new concepts along the way. Accordingly,



the Harkness method for mathematics teaching is not only discussion-based, but a problem-based pedagogy. In 9th and 10th grade students explore concepts of Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and Trigonometry in Mathematics I and II. In 11th grade students build understanding of Pre-Calculus in Mathematics III and in 12th grade they focus on concepts of Calculus in Mathematics IV.

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| Class |
| Mathematics I |
| Mathematics II |
| Mathematics III |
| Mathematics IV |
| Business Mathematics |
| Data Analysis |
| Financial Literacy |

World Language and Culture

Language at City of Bridges is tailored to both students who want to pursue a language long term, and those who dread the state requirement. Studying a foreign language is more than memorizing verb endings-- we aim for students to embrace the frustration of learning to communicate, magic in finding words that cannot be translated, and foundational experience of looking beyond their immediate worldview. Students have the option to take one of 3 languages facilitated by teachers: Spanish or American Sign Language. Students who are interested in taking other languages have the opportunity to pursue them through independent study: using app-based learning, paired with a community mentor who speaks the language.

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| Class (6 Blocks Required) |
| Spanish I |
| Spanish II |



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|----------------------------|
| Spanish III |
| American Sign Language I |
| American Sign Language II |
| American Sign Language III |
| Independent Language Study |

Art and Design

The arts are one of the most profound ways to explore and to express what it means to be a person in the world. City of Bridges believes that all students should have the opportunity to examine, create and express themselves through a variety of artistic mediums. Students have the opportunity to build artistic skills and perspectives while working with educators and practicing artists. The arts is also an area where our students can deepen and develop their craft through personal learning plans, mentorships and independent studies.

| Class |
|---------------------|
| Drawing I |
| Drawing II |
| Painting I |
| Painting II |
| Conceptual Art |
| Art History |
| Pottery & Sculpture |
| Radical Fiber Art |
| Upcycled Art |



Movement

City of Bridges believes in providing a community that fosters the well-being of the whole person and our physical bodies are certainly part of that whole. On the other hand we are a small school and our inclinations lean more towards collaboration than competition. We likely won't ever field a WPIAL Class 6A football team (or a football team in general), but we do offer many opportunities for students to use their bodies, to move to dance, to explore. In addition to the courses offered below, we will also often have blocks based on students' movement interests, such as obstacle courses or volleyball. We love to move at City of Bridges!

Community Learning

All City of Bridges students participate in the Community Internship and Capstone program. During the first two years of school staff and students work together to find internships or apprenticeships with community members and at local organizations that allow students to explore their passions. Students will have one internship in the fall and one in the spring in their first, second and third years of high school. In their final year, they will typically have an internship in the fall and then work on their senior capstone in the spring semester.

Personal Learning Projects

Human beings have curiosities, ideas they want to explore, knowledge they want to gain and skills they want to master. At City of Bridges we are committed to creating spaces, guidance and mentorship to help students explore those curiosities. Every student will work with their advisor and staff to develop a personal learning plan each trimester. This is an opportunity for the student to build knowledge, understanding and skills in any area of interest from quantum physics, to knitting, to play writing, to banjo. (Those of course are not the only choices) In Year III students will also have the opportunity to engage with a local community organization, providing service while also learning about an area of interest.