



# Nova Classical School of Rhetoric

Grades 9-12

*“We learn not for school, but for life.”*

## **Curriculum at Nova Classical Academy**

Nova Classical Academy's curriculum is developed collaboratively by the Academic Director, Curriculum Committee, and the faculty of Nova Classical. Our curriculum is both age-appropriate and accelerated; we encourage students to continually seek out and achieve higher levels of competence in their studies.

Nova Classical holds three curricular tenets that apply across all grades:

**Classical** emphasizes virtue instruction including Truth, Beauty, and Goodness that fit the curricular goals of each grade.

**Spiraling** allows students to build from a broader to a deeper understanding of subject matter from grade to grade, helping develop a clear understanding of how ideas progress over time.

**Connected** respects that change has a ripple effect and ensures that as individual components of the curricular tapestry change, faculty and staff are informed and empowered to calibrate their parts to stay true to the whole.

The curriculum in the **School of Rhetoric (SOR)** continues Nova Classical Academy's focus on primary texts, rather than secondary works or textbooks. Students study and form solid understandings of the great ideas, texts, events, and people using history as the guiding principle. The SOR advances previous instruction to help students develop a deeper understanding of history and gain a clear view of how ideas have unfolded over time.

## **Pedagogy**

Regular and consistent instruction in the art of close reading is essential in the SOR. Students are taught that it does no good to rush through a book, especially a text selected because it is worth reading time and again. The habits learned in presenting and arguing the complex ideas facilitate the development of skills such as critical thinking, discernment, and debate that students will need in college and beyond.

## **Practice**

Seminar is the cornerstone of pedagogical practice in the SOR. A central tenet is that an idea is not fully understood until both a claim and its evidence can be expressed and defended by the student in their own words. The use of seminars provides both a mode of assessing how well students have mastered ideas and allows them to practice intellectual and communication skills.

# PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

## College & Career Preparation Resources

Students begin college preparation activities in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade. From exploring undergraduate programs to navigating the complexities of scholarships and financial aid, our systematic approach to higher-level education ensures students feel prepared for life beyond graduation. *For more information about college acceptance, please visit [novaclassical.org/college](http://novaclassical.org/college)*

## Advanced Placement & College in the Schools

All courses are rigorous, college-preparatory level courses, but for students who wish to specialize, there are higher level offerings available in most subjects. These are identified as Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), or College In Schools (CIS) courses throughout the Course Guide. AP and CIS courses will be specifically designated and offered in standalone classes. Honors, AP, and CIS classes are weighted with a higher GPA than standard courses.

## Senior Thesis

Under the guidance of a faculty adviser, all School of Rhetoric students are required to research and write their own senior thesis as a graduation requirement. The thesis represents a substantial piece of critical thinking and writing and refines students' abilities in the scholarly art of incorporating secondary sources into their own argument. The Senior Thesis will have an oral defense as a part of passing; exemplary theses will receive Honors designation.

## National Honor Society

Students interested in Nova Classical's National Honor Society (NHS) must meet the selection criteria to be invited to apply. Each fall, student's transcripts are reviewed to determine the students that meet the criteria, and those students will be invited to apply for membership. A panel of faculty members will review the applications and make a determination of admittance. If a student is not selected in a given year, they have the opportunity to apply again the following year.

## Capstone Experience

Nova Classical's curriculum is built upon a historical framework founded in classical civilization. In addition to educational field trips, our curriculum includes a capstone experience intended to enrich a student's understanding of ancient civilizations while providing them opportunity to comprehend, recall, analyze, and apply lessons learned by personal experience. Tours to historical sites and cities which they have studied allow students to see, feel, and understand specific events in context. This is essential, practical knowledge which books alone cannot provide.

## Student Volunteering & Service Work

Our commitment is not only to providing a rigorous academic environment that engages students to think more deeply about the world around them, but also to help our students develop into dedicated and compassionate citizens.

Serving one's community is a key aspect of *eudaimonia*, or the practice of raising a good and whole person, and embodies our school motto "We learn not for school, but for life." Seeking out opportunities to be involved in and support the needs of one's community is critical for our students to not only develop their understanding of the needs in our society, but also reflect on the positive change they can bring about for others and themselves.

*Students are required to have 80 service hours documented for graduation, of which up to 40 hours can be volunteering at Nova Classical. Service hours are recognized beginning the summer after a student's 8<sup>th</sup> Grade year through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade.*