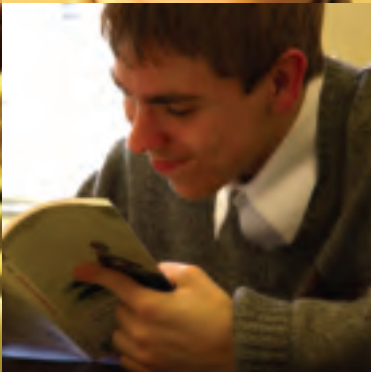
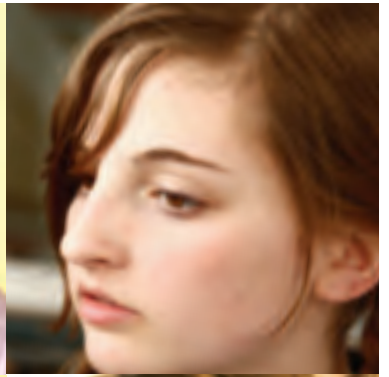




*advanced university  
preparation*



**the abelard school**  
*for gifted and  
motivated students  
grades 9-12*



The Abelard School is a place where ideas and people matter. Where debate is encouraged. Where our motto is “Don’t be afraid to think!” Where learning progresses logically through an integrated curriculum, and students talk about Plato and Homer, James Joyce and quantum theory in the hallways as well as in the classroom. It is a school where original texts are studied rather than textbooks, and where creativity and innovation are fostered. Abelard is a school for the student who wants to be inspired and challenged to work and think beyond the norm. It is a school for scholars.

**ABELARD STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THESE PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES, AMONG OTHERS:**

**CANADA**

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
QUEEN'S  
MCGILL  
WATERLOO  
MCMASTER  
WESTERN

**UNITED STATES**

HARVARD  
COLUMBIA  
CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
BROWN  
SMITH COLLEGE  
BRANDEIS  
REED COLLEGE  
COOPER UNION  
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

**EUROPE**

OXFORD  
CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
LEIDEN UNIVERSITEIT



**OUR ALUMNI** TELL US THAT THEY WERE SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER PREPARED FOR UNIVERSITY THAN THEIR PEERS AND MANY ARE NOW PURSUING GRADUATE DEGREES.

**OUR SCHOOL** IS UNIQUE: A SMALL SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS WHO WANT MORE PERSONAL INTERACTION WITH THEIR TEACHERS AND PEERS.

**OUR INTEGRATED CURRICULUM** IS CHALLENGING AND STIMULATING.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT** EXAMS AND COURSES ARE OFFERED IN EACH SUBJECT.

**OUR STUDENTS** ARE MOTIVATED, CREATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE OF ONE ANOTHER.

**OUR TEACHERS** ARE EXPERIENCED, DEDICATED AND ENTHUSIASTIC.



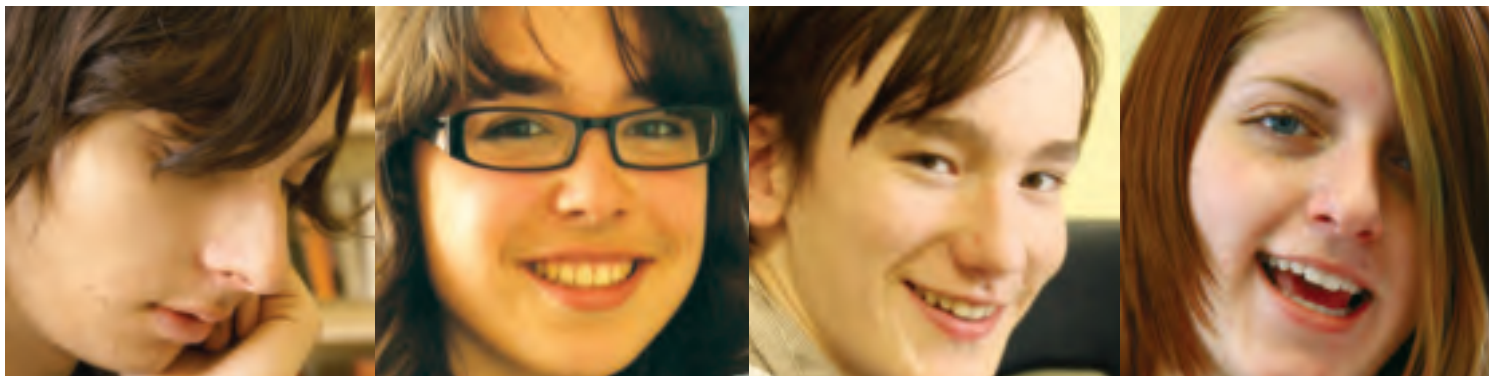
*“I enjoyed my time at Abelard immensely, but have come to appreciate its value even more at university.”* Christopher, alumna, M.Sc, Oxford; Doctoral Candidate in Theoretical Computer Science, University of Cambridge

# OUR PHILOSOPHY

The ideal educational environment is one in which teachers and students work together toward a common goal: to make the world better by our contribution to it.

School should be a place where students discover their strengths and learn how to put them to good use. It should teach them how to master skills and to meet academic challenges. It should introduce them to the great knowledge traditions so that they do not think in a vacuum. It should expose students to the art and culture of the past to enrich their appreciation of the world and inspire them to expand the boundaries of their own creativity. It should illuminate the accomplishments and the mistakes of history so that they will be able to make educated choices in their own lives. School should help students to develop a system of morals and values, both through study and through active participation in community service. It should foster a sense of pride and independence.

**A good school will produce graduates who are on the road to becoming leaders in every field. A good school will produce graduates who will lead rich and interesting lives and who will in turn enrich the lives of those around them.**



# OUR MISSION

At Abelard we provide unparalleled support and individual attention to our students. Our integrated curriculum explores the history of human accomplishment and inspires our students to grow intellectually and to expand their social and cultural awareness while developing sophisticated critical thinking skills. This allows them to understand the origins and contexts of the ideas and events that have shaped our world and prepares them to shape the world of the future.



# WHAT MAKES ABELARD UNIQUE?

## Class Size

The Abelard School is one of the smallest high schools in the city. Our maximum class size is fifteen students. This is a very effective environment, comfortable and intimate but highly stimulating intellectually: no one remains silent at the back of the room. It has allowed our students to progress rapidly with their studies.

## Advanced Placement

All of our Grade 12 courses are taught at the AP level, and AP exams in every subject are offered at our school annually. Over 80% of Abelard students who have written the tests to date have achieved the highest possible score.

## Enriched Curriculum

At a time when the trend in education is toward specialization at an early age, at the Abelard School we take the opposite approach. Our curriculum has been carefully designed so that the courses at all levels are interrelated. Thus, the knowledge we impart is always in context, deepening our students' understanding of any given discipline. Our curriculum is also broad-based, requiring our students to study maths, sciences, social sciences, languages, arts and English language and literature beyond the Ministry's compulsory credits. This ensures that each student who graduates from our school is a well-rounded scholar able to pursue any number of post-secondary options. Our curriculum is based on tradition but designed to foster the innate brilliance and creativity of our students. Our academic standards are high for every course offered, in each case exceeding the Ministry of Education requirements.

## University Preparation

All our graduates have gained admittance to the university of their choice, many with large scholarships. Our students find that while with us they have developed the knowledge base and study skills to enable them to succeed once enrolled. Abelard graduates apply to a wide range of disciplines, from Maths and Sciences, Medicine and Business, to Classical Studies, Languages and Arts and Humanities.



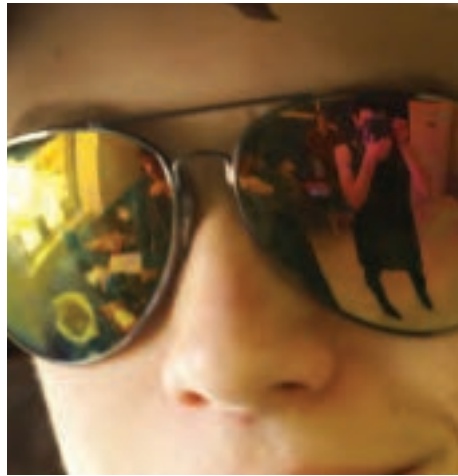
*"A life-changing experience!"*

Paulina, Grade 12



## Our Students

Our students are carefully selected on the basis of ability, enthusiasm and motivation. They are gifted, hard-working, creative, enjoy learning and are always eager to debate. One of the benefits of our intimate environment is that our students become acquainted with one another very quickly, and students of all ages become friends.



## Our Teachers

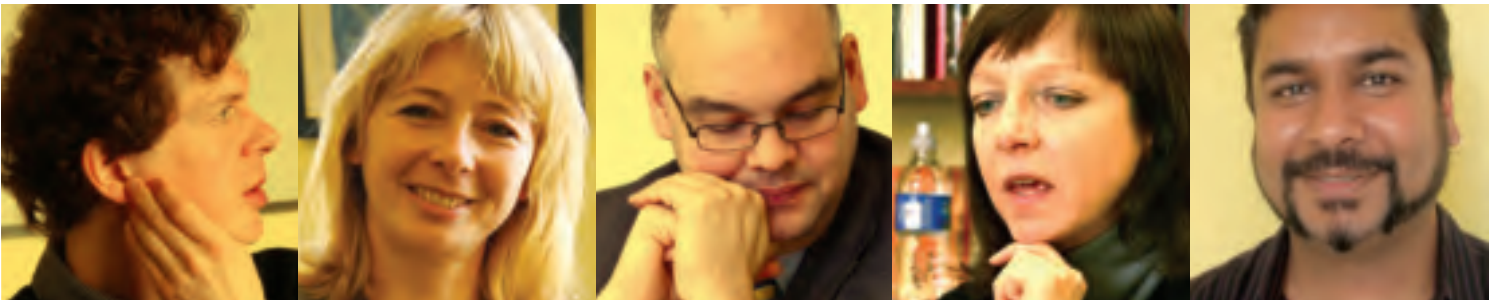
The staff at the Abelard School work as a team; so well, in fact, that the four founding teachers have now worked together for over a decade. All of our teachers are highly dedicated, and selected for their proficiency in their fields as well as their passion for education. They also have experience in the world outside the school, as journalists, researchers, musicians, artists, actors, social activists and volunteers, as well as actively pursuing their own continuing education. This means that the approach they bring to their teaching is always fresh, and that the students are taught out of life experience as well as from text books.



*"The school encourages interaction between students from all grades, creating a strong community."* Lauren, alumna, Hons. B.A. in Psychology, University of Toronto



*"I would describe Abelard as a school where original and articulate thought is encouraged by passionate teachers."* Laura, alumna, Literary Studies, University of Toronto



*"I cherish my memories of every moment I had at the Abelard School, which --- while far from the average high school experience --- showed me the love and joy of learning, gave me a solid and valuable understanding of history and culture, and prepared me incredibly well for the educational journey ahead!"* Noam, alumnus, double major in Classics and Anthropology, Brandeis University



*“The discussion-style classes allow us to personalize learning in an encouraging academic environment.”*

Gabe, alumnus, Hons. B.A. in International Relations, University of Toronto

## Classes

Our small classes are taught in a seminar-discussion atmosphere by experienced and enthusiastic teachers. Students are encouraged to develop their powers of reasoning, understanding, and communication, and to arrive at rational opinions of their own. These opinions must be expressed both verbally and in written form. Throughout this programme, our students are given the freedom to follow their own interests and to develop their own personal mode of thought.

## Instructional Techniques

Our teachers employ a variety of instructional techniques: one day a lecture, another a student-led seminar, on another a guest visit by a specialist in the topic being studied. Students are given many research projects and are encouraged to report their findings back to the group. We believe in the Socratic approach, and often it is the teacher who does the questioning and the students who answer. Note-taking skills, organization, study techniques and memory work are all integral parts of our programme.



*“I am grateful to Abelard, not only for its excellent academic standards and superb staff, but also for the many lasting friendships I made.”* Joseph, alumnus, M.A. in Prehistoric European Archaeology, Universiteit Leiden; M.Sc in Paleoecology of Human Sciences, University College, London





## Community Involvement

We believe that a school should not be isolated from the community around it, and that education should not be purely academic. Therefore, our school is well integrated into the community. School outings and volunteer work allow our students to participate in the social and cultural life of the city. We believe that knowledge should not be taught in a vacuum, and we advocate a sense of social conscience and a global perspective. Each student who graduates from our school has been offered the opportunity to develop into a well-rounded human being.

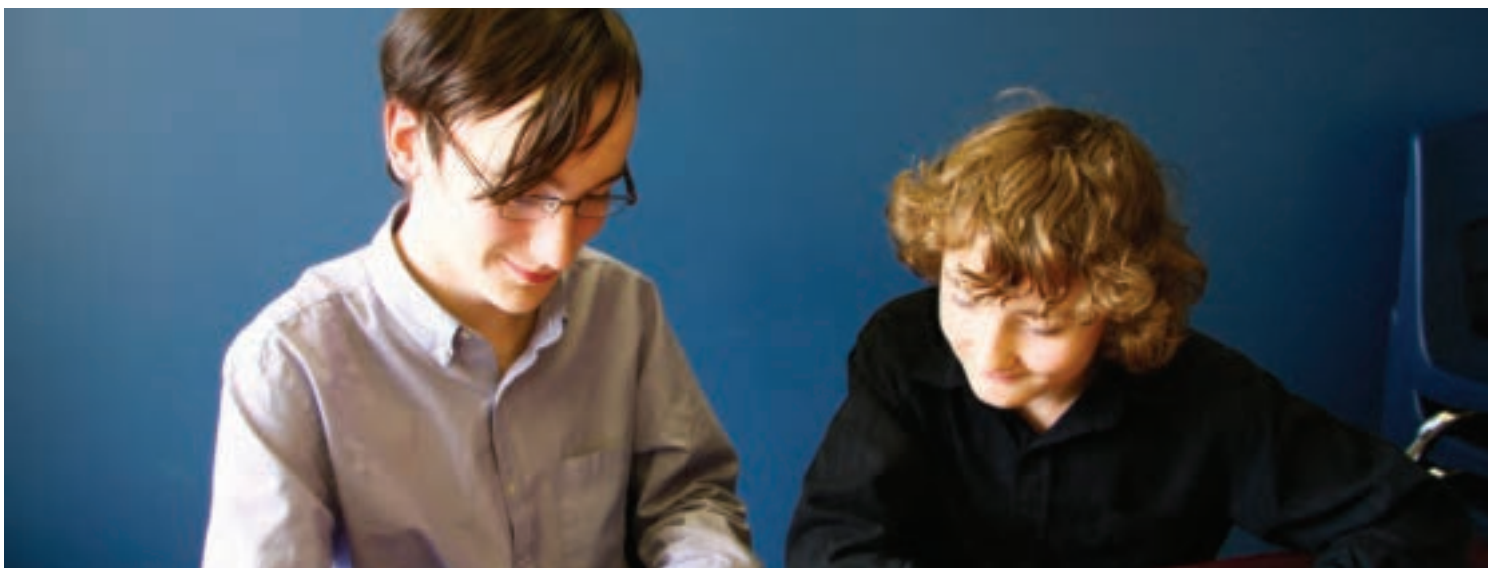


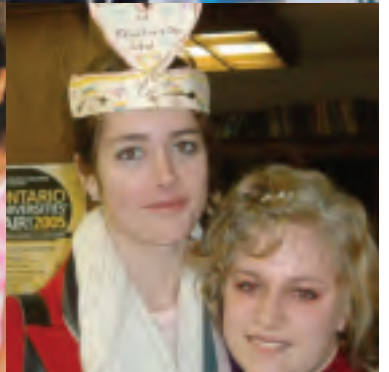
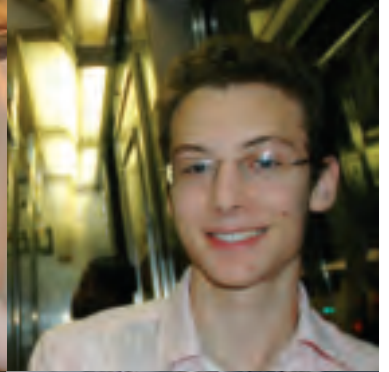
## Why Abelard?

Bright students do well in most settings. However, in larger schools the teachers simply don't have the time to allow students to pursue their particular interests or to develop their particular talents. At Abelard, our curriculum is both strong and flexible. If a student wishes to pursue a topic further, or needs a greater challenge, the teacher is able to respond immediately. (Of course it follows suit that if a student requires extra assistance in a particular area, that need is also readily fulfilled.)



*"I find it exciting that Abelard courses require students to think outside the classroom and teach us to bring knowledge from one subject to another."* Masha, alumna, Hons. B.A. in Political Science, History and French, University of Toronto





# WHAT WE OFFER

## Extracurricular Activities

Abelard is busy before and after school. A weekly yoga class, the badminton club and ski trips keep everyone active. Most of our students are involved in the production of the annual school play, the literary journal and the yearbook. Trips abroad during March Break, participation in the Model United Nations in New York, and regular outings to museums, galleries, theatres and the opera enhance the cultural life of the school. Many of our senior students have the opportunity to work one on one with university professors through the University of Toronto's Mentorship Programme. Participation in provincial and national academic competitions as well as the Abelard Spelling Bee, which draws students from across the city to compete, give our students the opportunity to interact with their peers from other schools. Monthly theme lunches, our December Holiday dinner at a local restaurant, the school Formal, movies, gaming clubs, talent shows and parties add to the school's social life. Our students create lasting friendships here at Abelard, remaining close while they are at university, returning to visit us during the year, participating in our functions, and holding a well attended annual reunion. Once you have become a member of the Abelard community, you are a part of it for life.

*" Abelard gives one the courage to speak one's mind, the knowledge to have something worth saying, and the wisdom to hear what one would rather not. "*

Gavin, alumnus, major in Philosophy  
Columbia University

## Competitions and Awards

Abelard students have won the following prestigious Mathematics and Computing Contests:

CASCON (Center for Advanced Studies Conference) Competition, IBM Canada First Place, (2007)

Pascal (Gr. 9)  
Gold Medal  
Certificate of Distinction

Cayley (Gr. 10)  
Gold Medal  
Certificate of Distinction

Fermat (Gr. 11)  
Gold Medal  
Certificate of Distinction

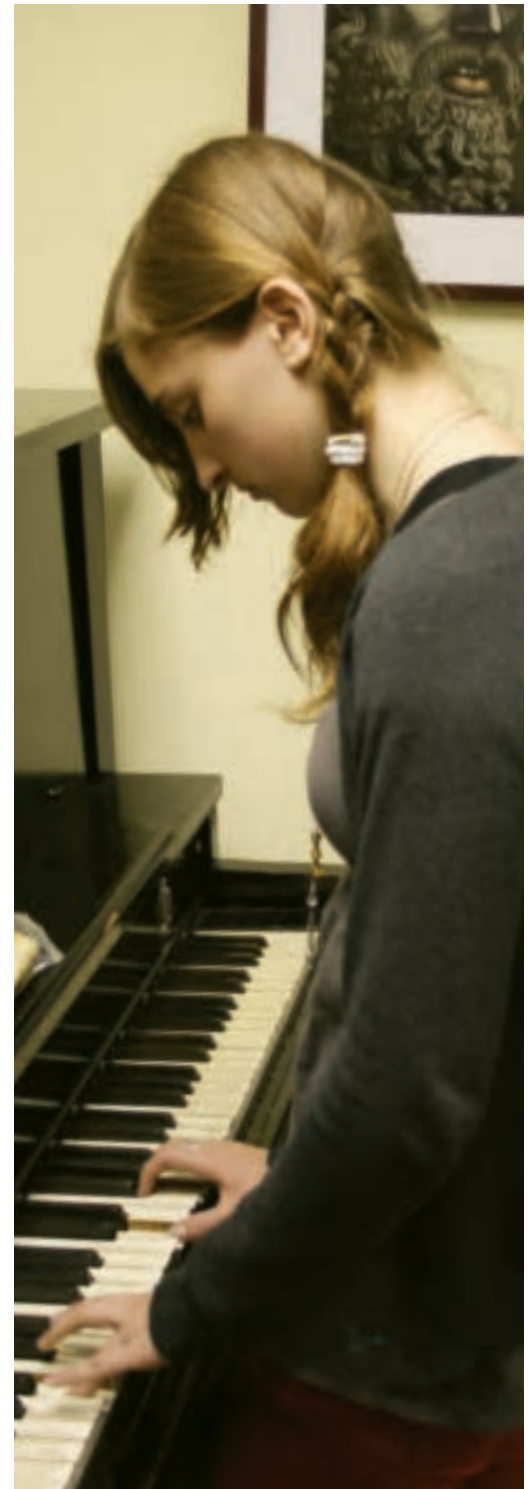
Hypatia (Gr. 11)  
Gold Medal  
Certificate of Distinction

Euclid (Gr. 12)  
Gold Medal  
Certificate of Distinction

Sun Life Financial Canadian Open  
Mathematics Challenge  
Certificate of Distinction

## University Scholarships

In addition to being accepted, most Abelard alumni win university entrance scholarships.



# OUR INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

The Abelard School offers a coherent and unified four-year programme. This integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum leads to the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

In every year of the programme, students take courses in each of the following subject areas:

**English Language and Literature**  
**Social Science**  
**Mathematics**  
**Humanities**  
**Science**

The curricula for these courses have been carefully developed to complement and build on one another. By the completion of their Abelard education, students will have studied and discussed the literature, history, philosophy, political ideologies and sciences of each of the following periods:

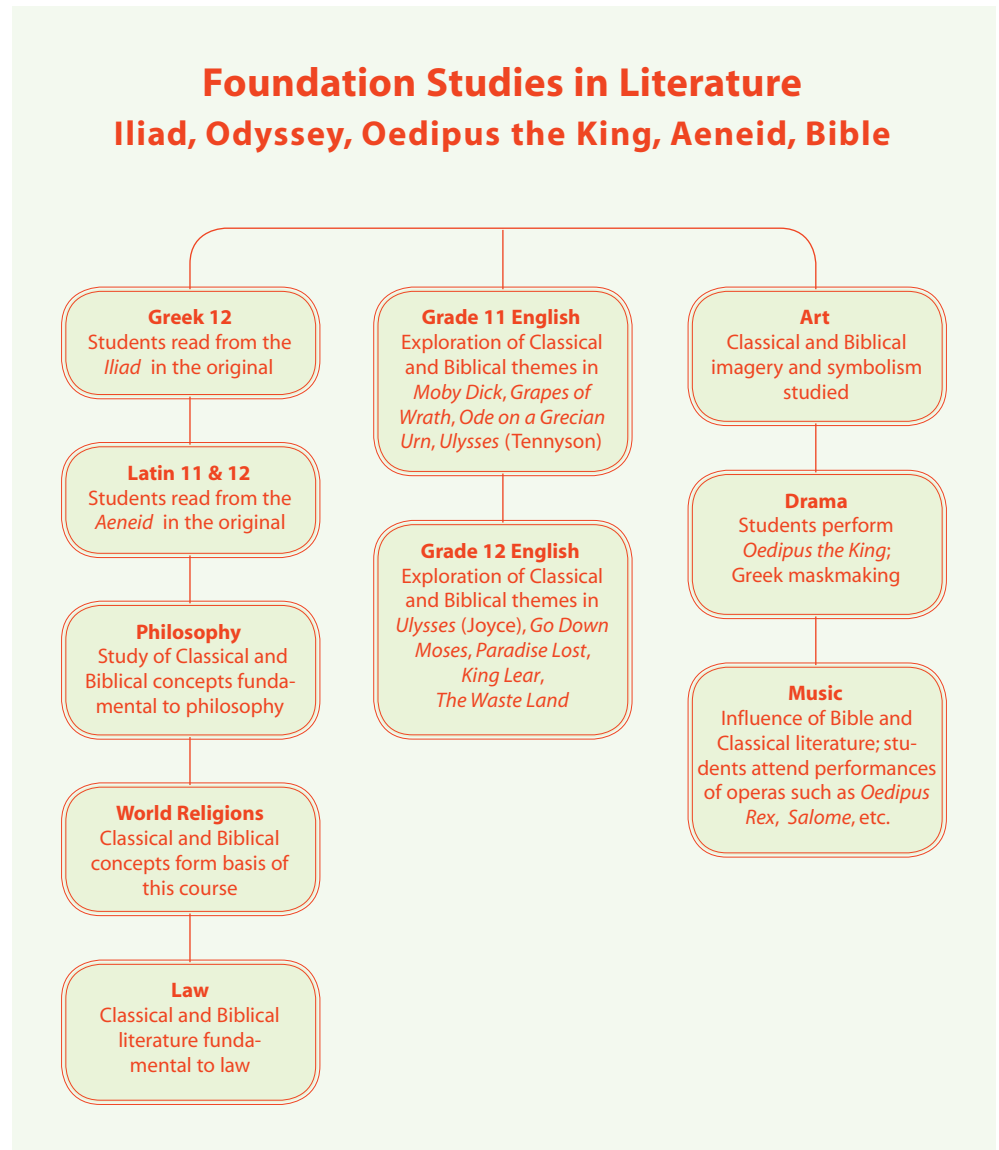
**the Ancient World**  
**the Middle Ages**  
**the Renaissance and Reformation**  
**the Age of Reason**  
**the Era of Revolutions**  
**the Contemporary World**

It is our hope that students educated in this Liberal Arts tradition will be committed to the lifelong pursuit of fundamental knowledge and the search for unifying ideas and patterns.

To cite a specific example of the interrelatedness of the Abelard curriculum, consider our grade ten Foundation Studies in Literature course.

This course provides an introduction to Classical and Biblical literature. In the first half of the year students study Classical Greek and Roman literature: Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The second

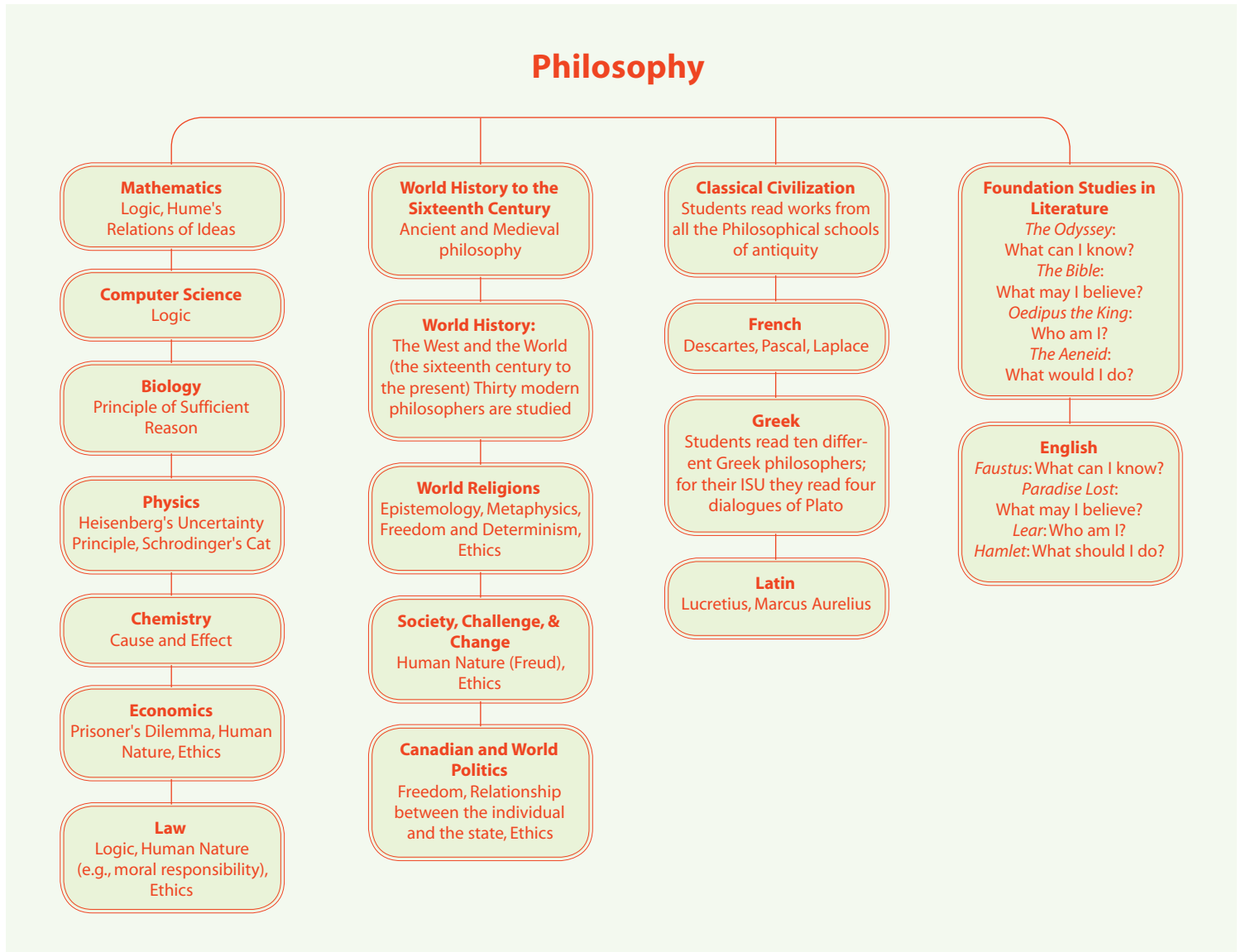
half of the year covers Biblical literature: Genesis, Exodus, Judges & Kings, Job, Daniel, Jonah, Luke, and Acts. The following chart illustrates examples of how this course is related to the rest of the Abelard curriculum:



Our grade twelve Philosophy course provides a second example of the interrelatedness of the Abelard curriculum. Opening with a study of Logic and paradoxes, this course introduces students to four of the main areas of

philosophy: Epistemology (What can I know?), Metaphysics (What may I believe?), Philosophy of Human Nature (Who am I?), and Ethics (What should I do?). In each of these areas, students read excerpts from ten different philosophers

ranging from antiquity to the present day. The following chart illustrates examples of how this course incorporates and synthesizes other subjects in the Abelard curriculum:



# OUR READING LIST

Wherever possible, we employ primary texts rather than textbooks, so that our students have a direct engagement with the works we study. Titles covered by our integrated curriculum include:

## English:

*The Bible*  
*The Upanishads*  
*The Baghavad Gita*  
*The Fire Sermon*, Gautama Buddha  
*The Iliad*, Homer  
*The Odyssey*, Homer  
*Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles  
*Poetics*, Aristotle  
*The Aeneid*, Virgil  
*The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer  
*Macbeth*, Shakespeare  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare  
*The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare  
*Othello*, Shakespeare  
*Hamlet*, Shakespeare  
*King Lear*, Shakespeare  
*Doctor Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe  
*Utopia*, Sir Thomas More  
*The Prince*, Machiavelli  
*The Discourses*, Machiavelli  
*Paradise Lost*, John Milton  
*Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley  
*The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer  
*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain  
*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson  
*Moby Dick*, Herman Melville  
*The Picture of Dorian Grey*, Oscar Wilde  
*Ulysses*, James Joyce  
*The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf  
*Go Down, Moses*, William Faulkner  
*The Waste Land*, T.S. Eliot  
*East of Eden*, John Steinbeck  
*Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley  
*1984*, George Orwell  
*The Letter from Birmingham Jail*, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*The Catcher in the Rye*, J.D. Salinger  
*Being There*, Jerzy Kosinski  
*The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, Wayne Johnston  
*Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy



## Philosophy

Students read primary texts by the following:

Parmenides  
Plato  
Aristotle  
Marcus Aurelius  
Anselm of Canterbury  
Thomas Aquinas  
Thomas Hobbes  
René Descartes  
John Locke  
Gottfried Leibniz  
Pierre Simon de Laplace  
David Hume  
Immanuel Kant  
Jeremy Bentham  
John Stuart Mill  
Friedrich Nietzsche  
Sigmund Freud  
G. E. Moore  
Bertrand Russell  
Erwin Schrödinger  
Ludwig Wittgenstein  
Rudolf Carnap  
Karl Popper  
Oliver Sacks  
Thomas Nagel  
Peter Singer

*“Abelard has given me both copious knowledge and the wisdom to apply it. I have not been schooled, I have been educated.”* Patrick, Grade 12



*“ The school encourages interaction between students from all grades, creating a strong community.”*

Taylor, Grade 11

### Science:

Aristotle - *Physics*

Copernicus - *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*

Galileo - *Discourse on Two New Sciences*

Descartes - *The World*

Newton - *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*

Linnaeus - *Natural System*

Lavoisier - *Elements of Chemistry in a New Systematic Order*

Lamarck - *Zoological Philosophy*

Dalton - *A New System of Chemical Philosophy*

Faraday - *Thoughts on Ray Vibrations*

Darwin - *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*

Mendel - *Experiments in Plant Hybridization*

Maxwell - *Introductory Lecture on Experimental Physics*

Mendeleev - *The Periodic Law of the Chemical Elements*

Einstein - *Essays in Science*

Rutherford - *Collisions of Alpha-particles with Light Atoms IV*

Schrodinger - *What is Life*

### French

Excerpts from Moliere's plays

*Trois Mousquetaires*, Dumas

*Notre-Dame de Paris*, Hugo

*l'Etranger*, Camus,

*Bel-Amis*, Maupassant

*La Reine Margot*, Dumas

Short stories by modern writers:

Gavaldà, Ayme, Mondiano

### French Civilization

Excerpts from major French authors throughout history: Rabelais, Villon, Moliere, Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Hugo, Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert.



*“Abelard has given me the tools to analyse and dissect texts.”*

Ethan, Grade 11

### History:

*Europe*, Norman Davies

*History of Canada*, Robert Bothwell

*Lament for a Nation*, George Grant



# ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS



*“Academically, Abelard gives its students something to sink their teeth into. But it wasn’t just the interesting and rigorous coursework that made me come to love Abelard. Guiding us through such a challenging curriculum was a set of the most intelligent, highly educated, and dedicated teachers I have ever known.”*

## Anne-Marie Zapf-Belanger

Now entering the final year of my BA at Harvard, it is easy to see how instrumental Abelard has been in getting me to where I am today. In preparing me and my classmates for higher learning, in teaching us to read and think critically, and most of all in opening our wondering eyes to the pure excitement of academic learning, Abelard was nothing short of spectacular.

Academically, Abelard gives its students something to sink their teeth into. But it wasn’t just the interesting and rigorous coursework that made me come to love Abelard. Guiding us through such a challenging curriculum was a set of the most intelligent, highly educated, and dedicated teachers I have ever known. Whether to help with a difficult concept, to provide extra information for curious students, or simply to chat about this or that, Abelard’s teachers with their infinite patience were always there for us. And it was with this enriching encouragement that I and each of my classmates could learn to explore our own ideas—both about our schoolwork and about the world around us.

Abelard not only guided me towards a great university experience, but it also gave me the skills I required to thrive here. Many Abelard alumni stay in touch with the school for years after they graduate, and I don’t think this is a coincidence: after an experience like Abelard, some part of you just can’t ever leave.

## C. D. Thompson-Walsh

I was at the Abelard School for four years, covering Grade 9 through the old OAC year. I have now completed both my BA (at Cambridge) and my MSc (at Oxford), and am currently working towards a PhD in Theoretical Computer Science at Cambridge. I enjoyed my time at the Abelard School a great deal, and it has prepared me very well for life “after graduation.”

At Abelard, I had the opportunity to pursue, in depth, a very wide range of disciplines, which were united by being approached as valid and rigorous mental disciplines. I remember learning about such a diverse range of subjects as being a real joy, and I remember becoming conscious that there was and is something genuinely liberating about learning; what flowery tongues have called a citizenship in a republic of ideas.

I liked the people at Abelard; they were vibrant and interesting, and I think that had something to do with our teachers expecting us to be independent, responsible and thinking. Being treated as rational, independent people helped make us such.

I continue to keep in touch with Abelard, and I’m still grateful for my time there. It was and is a special community.





## Joseph Chatto

I attended the Abelard School for four years, and I was consistently impressed by its high academic standards and inspired approach to high school pedagogy. The school's unwavering dedication to its unique vision of education is apparent in all aspects of life at Abelard, and the vibrant enthusiasm of the staff infuses every class with an atmosphere of dynamic intellectual curiosity. Academically, I particularly appreciated the emphasis placed on Classical literature, philosophy, and history. Studying the achievements of ancient generations serves not only to educate and intellectually stimulate our youth, but also provides them with a rare glimpse of aesthetic and philosophical beauty that can have a profoundly edifying effect on an impressionable adolescent. It is precisely this potential to elevate and enlighten which I consider to be the greatest asset of the Abelardian education. Our society places an excessively high premium on "cleverness" – at Abelard, students are also taught the value of wisdom.

Following my graduation from Abelard, I attended the University of Toronto, completing a Bachelor of Arts programme in archaeology. In addition to my course work, I participated in three archaeological excavations. Both archaeological and biological fieldwork require a mixture of independent thinking and cooperative teamwork, and my time at Abelard had prepared me well for work of this nature. After finishing my B.A., I completed a Master of Science programme at University College

London, where I studied the palaeoecology of human societies, and also received an MA from the University of Leiden. I am currently working towards a PhD in History at the University of Toronto.

My studies have been aided and influenced by my extremely positive experience at Abelard, where I acquired a passion for learning and intellectual inquiry. I am eternally grateful to Abelard, not only for its excellent academic standards and superb staff, but also for the many lasting friendships I made while attending the school. It was a privilege and a pleasure to spend four years there.



*“ My studies have been aided and influenced by my extremely positive experience at Abelard, where I acquired a passion for learning and intellectual inquiry. ”*



## Vanessa Robinson

Abelard's small student population and class sizes gave me the unique and enriched learning experience I'm fortunate to have received.

It was at Abelard that I developed an interest in modern languages, and because my French and Italian classes were both small, we could constantly practice conversation and receive individual feedback and instruction. When asked a question, it was no longer possible to mumble something incomprehensible and hope the teacher moved on to someone else. One discovered, with a little patience, that the answer could always be found somewhere.

The social atmosphere of Abelard was very friendly, almost familial. In some ways it felt like we had bypassed a lot of the stereotypical high school social pressures and elitism. In the way that a good play contains a cast of strong and diverse characters, every individual at Abelard had something important to contribute to the school environment.

When I graduated from Abelard, I went to the U of T on scholarship. I have now completed my MA at the University of Edinburgh, and am currently working towards a PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto. I felt well prepared for my university courses after my high school experience. Among the many things I learned at Abelard is the realization that it is always a pleasure to keep learning.

# ADMISSIONS

The students we accept into our programme are those we deem to have the potential to fulfill its requirements, which are moral as well as academic. We are looking for students who are bright, motivated, responsible, have an active concern about their education and wish to become leaders in their fields. For this reason, we carefully assess students on a number of criteria:

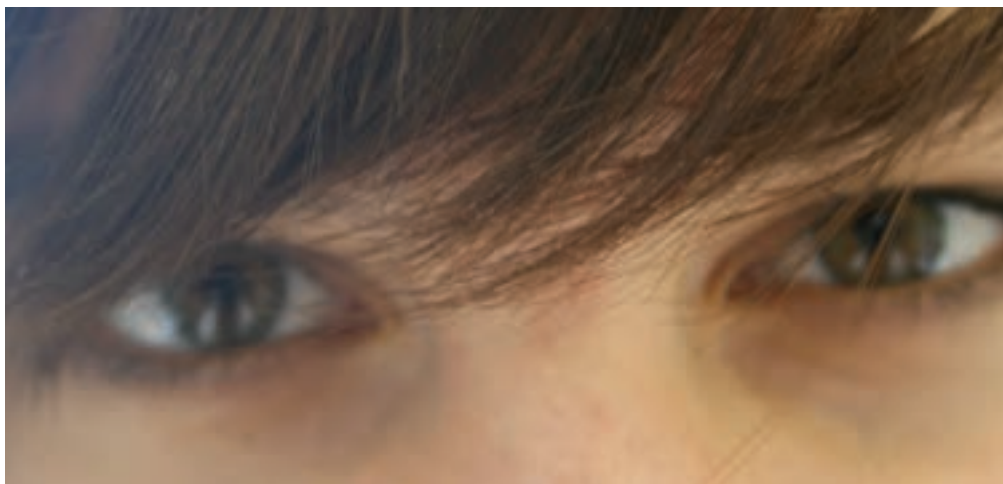
- 1)** Review of record of past achievement. Students must be able to meet our advanced academic curriculum.
- 2)** A portfolio of work of which the student is proud. This may be artwork, writing, CDs of performances, reports, or projects.
- 3)** A brief essay by the applicant describing personal and academic goals, both short-term and long-term. This gives an indication of the student's motivation and self-knowledge.
- 4)** An interview with the Principal. A discussion with the student helps us to determine whether he or she will adapt well to our environment.

- 5)** An admissions test. This judges the student's overall ability.

Admission is a selective process: only students who demonstrate ability, energy, curiosity and commitment are accepted into our programme.

To begin the application process, please complete the enclosed application form. For more information, or to arrange a visit or an interview, please contact the school at **416.944.0661**.

*"I cannot imagine what would have happened if I had attended a school other than Abelard because I know I will never find another school with teachers and students as serious and enthusiastic about learning and education as this one."* Sharon, Grade 11



*"Abelard was unquestionably excellent preparation for study at the highest level."*

Christopher, alumnus, M.Sc, Oxford;  
Doctoral Candidate in Theoretical  
Computer Science,  
University of Cambridge



“If you treat a man as he is, he will stay that way, but if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become that bigger and better man.” Goethe



**the abelard school**

203 College Street, 5th Floor,  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1P9

Tel: 416.944.0661

Fax: 416.944.8902

[info@abelardschool.org](mailto:info@abelardschool.org)

[www.abelardschool.org](http://www.abelardschool.org)