Middle School Electives: Course Descriptions

Art

Art 7-8 focuses on the creation of art works that explore personal identity and other cultures of the world. This course presents students with a wide range of art skills and media. The projects taught are designed to allow students personal expression, art skill development and knowledge about art of other cultures. Students will explore drawing, painting with acrylics, watercolor, collage methods, sculptures, and hand-building clay methods. Students will create art projects inspired by other cultures throughout the globe. Students will then examine how artists' identities are reflected in their art and learn to interpret works of art for themselves. Students will use symbolism to create works of art that represent their growing understanding of who they are.

Woodworking

This is an introductory hands-on course in which students learn the physical properties of wood and how those properties inform the design of a practical and attractive product. They learn to make simple drawings from which to build individual projects. The focus is on shop safety, the safe use of hand tools, and the basic techniques of shaping, joining, and finishing wood. Students develop a foundation for a lifelong interest in wood craftsmanship and explore creative expression in wood. There is little use of power machinery in this course, as many of the techniques of fine craftsmanship depend on competent use of traditional hand saws, planes, and chisels.

Drama Production

In this beginning course of theatre, students are introduced to an overview of drama through the lens of producing and performing a play at the end of the first semester. Basic acting and stage terms are incorporated through a series of activities and simple presentations. The student will identify responsibilities involved in a variety of dramatic presentations. In addition, the student will learn basic evaluative techniques of dramatic productions.

Drama Skills

In this drama course, students explore all aspects of what it takes to produce a play. This includes acting, directing, improvisational work, costume design, set design, and stage management. Classes include acting games as well as brief lessons on the history of theater, television, and film. Students will analyze portions of famous scripts and learn how to "block" short scenes. Students in this course will also have the opportunity to help behind the scenes with the Upper School Drama Production.

Introduction to Guitar

Introduction to Guitar is a beginner's course of fundamental guitar instruction for students with little or no previous experience with the instrument. The course is a hands-on class that allows each student to have daily access to an acoustic guitar in good, playable condition. Students receive a substantial amount of individual instruction in playing notes, scales, and chords and in reading guitar tablature and strum charts. Students can progress at their own rates and focus on types of music that appeal to them. The emphasis is on contemporary guitar music, not classical guitar. In addition, students will learn to play in groups and have opportunities to try other instruments such as keyboard, percussion, banjo, and bass guitar.

Ukulele

Students will learn to play the ukulele and learn the basics of music basics as they explore this fun instrument.

Music 7-8
Have you ever wondered who invented music? Have you ever dreamed of creating your own music? There are no books, there are no tests, there isn't any note reading, and you don't have to put in hours of practice. In this music class you will use technology, found items, and maybe even your voice as your instruments. By the end of the course, you'll know something about how popular music came to be and you'll know a whole lot about making music.

Digital Photography
Students will learn first-hand how to operate a DSLR camera. We will train our eyes to see the world through a viewfinder and archive fleeting moments of life. Students will understand particular functions that can alter the meaning and create artistic expression in a photograph. Students will organize and manage a library of photographs and be able to edit their photographs to enhance the quality and be ready to print. Students will be introduced to editing programs such as iPhoto, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe Lightroom CC Classic. Finally, by seeing pictures that have been taken multiple times working in iteration, students will practice problem solving and connecting their expectation with reality.

Multimedia
Multimedia is for students who want to create and display digital projects. Students will learn to use software to edit digital photos. Videos will be enhanced with visual effects and audio clips. Safety, etiquette, and ethical principles are highlighted while students explore online to find material. Finished projects will be displayed on a blog allowing students to receive feedback from families and faculty members. Multimedia Design is recommended for students who demonstrate a high level of interest in creating projects on a computer.

Computer Programming
Programming teaches students fundamental coding concepts using real Swift code. Students will expand their coding skills and start thinking more like an app developer. Students will work collaboratively to practice their skills, solve puzzles, and design their own creations.

Robotics Team
The Robotics course provides students opportunities to develop skills in engineering, research, innovation, communication, and collaboration with the ultimate aim of competing in the First Lego League's Annual Challenge. Students work as a team to build, program, and operate a robot; research the challenge project, identify a specific problem, develop an innovative solution, and create a presentation of it; and develop the characteristics necessary to meet FLL's core values based on accountability, responsibility, initiative, sportsmanship, curiosity, and communication. The course emphasizes use of the engineering-design process. Students first identify the important characteristics of the robot to be designed. Then, they ideate, implement, and test ideas to develop the best possible robot design. Some students may choose to "specialize" in robot design, competitive strategy, or coding and programming; however, all students in the class will be expected to participate in all aspects of the program and develop basic skills in designing, building, and programming the robot.

Green Garden Project
The Green Garden Project will incorporate working with your hands and activating your mind through researching, planning, and implementing ways to beautify our campus inside and out. TGGP will plant and maintain seasonal produce, herbs, plants, and flowers throughout the semester through a seedling starting project that will then be transferred to a raised garden bed and large planters on campus. We will also incorporate art and ceramics by designing and creating hanging planters and flower vases to support our indoor/outdoor garden projects. Some of our time will be spent supporting a community recycling initiative of paper and cans. Most importantly, this elective's mission will be focused on community, outreach and education, and designing lovely green spaces for our campus to enjoy.

Outdoor Lifestyle
In Outdoor Lifestyle, students will explore the recreational opportunities that the Great Outdoors has to offer. The class will learn valuable and practical skills while gaining an appreciation for proper environmental stewardship and care for the outdoors.

Entrepreneurship

In Entrepreneurship, students will develop their own business idea and present it. Students will learn essential skills and personal qualities needed to succeed as an entrepreneur. The course will primarily focus on an online program through NoticeAbility. Students will have the opportunity to design, launch, and grow their own business through this program. The course will culminate in an event where students present their ideas to the community and their peers.

Wondering About Philosophy

Philosophy is an ancient and universal discipline. The questions posed in this elective receive answers from philosophers who span almost 3,000 years of history and who represent a wide variety of cultures. Topics will be divided into 4 major areas including Values, Knowledge, Reality and Logic. A question and an activity will allow students to explore and form their own philosophical opinion and then discuss and compare their ideas with that of an historical philosopher as well as their classmates.