

8th Grade Course Descriptions 2019-2020

New Saratoga Springs Middle School

REQUIRED CLASSES

DIGITAL LITERACY Semester (\$6.00 Fee)

This course is an introduction to computer literacy. Students will have opportunities to use technology and develop skills that encourage creativity, critical thinking, productivity, digital citizenship, and collaboration in the classroom and day-to-day life. Students will complete this course as a prerequisite to move into more advanced computer literacy courses.

ENGLISH 8 Year (No Fee)

This course continues developing language skills including reading, writing, and oral work, with a major emphasis on grammar review taught through the writing process. The department offers units in such areas as: short stories, library skills, study skills, and a novel unit.

HEALTH Semester (No Fee)

Health education provides opportunities for students to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for practicing lifelong, health-enhancing behaviors. Students will learn that they are responsible for their personal well-being and that building a solid foundation of health literacy and decision-making skills can contribute to a variety of healthy choices for self and others that will be of value throughout life.

INTEGRATED SCIENCE 8 Year (\$5.00 Fee)

Eighth Grade Integrated Science focuses on the theme of "change." Topics from physical, earth, and life, science are integrated to illustrate the concept of change in nature. Students will study chemical and physical changes; changes in force, motion, and energy; changes in the earth's crust and climate.

INTERMEDIATE MATH II Year (No Fee)

Students in Intermediate Math 2 will focus on the study of scientific notation, exponents, functions, linearity, Pythagorean Theorem, rational numbers, irrational numbers, surface area and volume of 3D figures, systems of linear equations, interpreting data, similarity, transformations, congruence and angle relationships.

INTERMEDIATE MATH II H (Accelerated) Year (No Fee)

**Prerequisite of Intermediate Math II Honor placement test required*

Students in Intermediate Math 2 will focus on formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; and analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

SECONDARY MATH I H (Accelerated) Year (No Fee)

This is an accelerated and challenging course, with high expectations for homework completion and assignments. This course includes the study of solving equations, solving literal equations, solving inequalities, geometric constructions, coordinate geometry, quadrilaterals, proofs of quadrilaterals in coordinate plane, functions, exponential functions, and a comparison between exponential and linear functions.

U.S. HISTORY 8 Year (No Fee)

This United States History course is designed to emphasize historic events from the age of exploration to reconstruction and the western movements. Topics covered will include, but are not limited to, the age of exploration, colonization, Revolutionary War, the Constitution, Civil War, reconstruction, and the western movement. The emphasis of this course is on the 18th and 19th centuries.

INTERMEDIATE BOYS & GIRLS PE Semester (\$3.00 Fee)

This course is a sequence of experiences in physical activities which challenge all ability levels. It focuses on social interaction and cognitive learning as well as skill development.

ELECTIVES

ART

ART FOUNDATIONS 1 Semester (\$8.00 Fee)

This course will introduce students to the basic elements and principles of art through drawing in various media. Students will explore the basics of drawing, focusing on the 7 elements of art, using graphite, ink, and color media. It is a prerequisite to all other art classes at Vista Heights.

ART FOUNDATIONS 2 Semester (\$15.00 Fee)

** Prerequisite Art Foundations 1*

This course builds on skills and concepts learned in Art Foundations 1 using various media. Art history, aesthetics, and art criticism will be integrated into all lessons taught.

CERAMICS 1 Semester (\$10.00 Fee)

The student receives instruction in ceramics and designing in ceramic clay. Preparation of clay, use of tools and equipment, and different construction methods are covered.

GTE

DIGITAL DESIGN 1 Semester (\$6.00 Fee)

This class will introduce students to a wide range of communications technologies. Students will apply skills and concepts through the completion of activity-based hands on curriculum, centered in the following areas: Graphic design, Robotics, Drafting, Video and Audio production, Digital Media, 3D Modeling and many more. This course will provide opportunities for students to work individually and in a team, while also developing skills in technological design, innovation, and problem solving.

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY 1 Semester (\$6.00 Fee)

Students will be introduced to the technological systems of aerospace, communications, construction, energy/power/transportation, manufacturing and biotechnology. The course emphasis is on exploration activities using computers, technology, equipment and woodworking tools.

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY 2 Semester (\$6.00 Fee)****Exploring Technology 1 prerequisite***

This course builds on the introduction of technological systems of aerospace, communications, construction, energy/power/transportation, manufacturing and biotechnology. The course emphasis is on exploration activities using computers, technology, equipment and woodworking tools introduced in Exploring Technology 1.

FACS A EXPLORATION: SEWING & INTERIOR DESIGN Semester (\$5.00 Fee)

This course provides students with the opportunity to learn essential life skills. It allows them to develop skills in clothing construction and style, clothing care and maintenance, textiles, fashion, interior design, and consumerism. Students may need to purchase supplies depending on projects chosen.

FACS B EXPLORATION:FOOD & CHILD CARE Semester (\$5.00 Fee)

This course provides students with the opportunity to learn essential life skills. It allows them to develop skills in childcare and safety, consumerism, family relationships, personal responsibility, and job-related tasks. It is designed for students who are interested in understanding the principles of nutrition and maintaining a healthy level of fitness for life.

DANCE**DANCE 1** Semester (\$3.00 Fee)

In this introduction to dance, beginning dance techniques and movements will be taught. This beginning level class will explore rhythms, style, and techniques of modern and jazz dance, emphasizing the basic elements of choreography.

DANCE 1A Semester (\$3.00 Fee)**** Prerequisite Dance 1***

This class is a continuation of Dance 1. Intermediate dance techniques and movements will be taught and different dance styles will be explored. Emphasis will be placed on the elements of modern dance.

MEN'S DANCE Semester (\$3.00 Fee)

This is a beginning to intermediate dance class for males only. The emphasis will be placed on technique and composition through studying modern, jazz, and hip-hop dance. Students will develop a self-concept and awareness, improve fitness level, increase technical skills, and improve creative capacity.

DANCE COMPANY Year (\$10.00/Semester Fee)**** Audition Only***

This class is designed to study dance in techniques, choreography, performance quality, and production. Each member will choreograph and complete a study of dance as an art form as entertainment. Improvement in technique and performance quality will be stressed in all areas of dance, concentrating on modern and jazz.

DRAMA**DRAMA 1** Semester (No Fee)

This class is an advanced study of theatre history, advanced performance skills, trust, Shakespearean acting, resume and audition preparation, and improvisation. Students will be required to see a play each term.

DRAMA 2 Semester (No Fee)

This is an advanced course that will cover the elements of theater and performance with emphasis on self-improvement in performance and public communication. Oral interpretation, scene and monologue study, theater history is taught along with production criticism. The students will study audition techniques, improvisation, acting techniques, scene performance, and an introduction to playwriting and directing.

DRAMA & FILM Semester (No Fee)

This course focuses on the elements of film both behind and in front of the camera. Students will study the elements of film and learn how to analyze techniques of cinematography, direction, acting, film, etc.

MUSICAL THEATRE Semester (\$5.00 Fee)**** Audition Only***

Designed to familiarize performing arts students with the process of auditioning and performing in the realm of musical theatre. Students will work individually and in groups with staging, choreography, etc. Voice repertoire, selection, singing style, acting, coaching, and evaluation will be covered. Students will be required to sing and dance.

STAGE CREW Semester (No Fee)**** Application required***

Students will study theatre lighting, sound, scenery, properties, stage-management, and technical design. Students will be involved in all areas of technical theatre. This class requires evening and out-of-school time during rehearsals and performances.

LANGUAGES**AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE 1** Year (No Fee)

Basic ASL skills will be taught, both receptive and expressive. Basic conversation skills, emphasizing vocabulary building and pragmatics; Introduction to deafness and ASL. This course begins by teaching concepts of American Sign Language with emphasis on receptive and expressive skills to achieve fluency on a grammatically appropriate level. Students use a variety of techniques as a learning tool. This course is taught mainly without using voice.

SPANISH 1 Year (No Fee)

A year long course which focuses on acquiring survival language and skills needed to greet people, hobbies, personal descriptions, preferences. Students will practice language skills through dialogues, reading selections, writing exercises, and real-life practice. Cultural lessons introduce the lifestyle, geography, cooking, art, and music.

MUSIC

BEGINNING BRASS Year (\$2.50/Semester Fee)

Students will learn the fundamentals of music performance, tone production and technique on a brass instrument. This class is an ensemble directed toward building music performance skills in percussion. Curriculum includes 2-4 performances per year including introduction to music theory, history, and composition.

BEGINNING WOODWINDS Year (\$2.50/Semester Fee)

Students will learn the fundamentals of music performance, tone production and technique on a woodwind instrument. This class is an instrumental ensemble directed toward building music performance skills. Curriculum includes several performances per year.

CONCERT BAND Year (\$2.50/Semester Fee)

This intermediate instrumental ensemble is directed toward building music performance skills while developing and refining core concepts and fundamentals introduced in Beginning Brass and Woodwind classes.. This course develops and refines core concepts and fundamentals introduced in Beginning Brass and Woodwind classes. Curriculum includes several performances per year. *Teacher approval required.*

SYMPHONIC BAND Year (\$25.00/Semester Fee)

This course further develops and refines core concepts and fundamentals introduced in Beginning Brass, Beginning Woodwind, and Concert Band classes. Study includes the care and cultivation of a beautiful tone, the ability to read music with increasing fluency, the building of technical skills, team spirit, and responsible rehearsal habits. Students will have opportunities to improvise, compose, strengthen listening skills, analyze performances and relate their music experiences to the time and culture of the pieces they study, as well as to contemporary society. *Pre-requisite course of Beginning Band, or audition.*

JAZZ BAND Year (\$2.50/Semester Fee)

** Application required*

This is an advanced instrumental ensemble directed toward learning and performing big band, jazz, swing, and rock styles of music.

BEGINNING ORCHESTRA Year (\$2.50/Semester Fee)

This course provides opportunities for students to develop their musical potential and aesthetic understanding through learning to play orchestral string instruments. Study includes the care and cultivation of tone, the ability to read music, the building of technical skills, team spirit, and responsible rehearsal habits. Students will have opportunities to improvise, compose, strengthen listening skills, analyze performances and relate their music experiences to the time and culture of the pieces they study, as well as to contemporary society.

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA Year (\$2.50/Semester Fee)

**Pre-requisite course is Beginning Orchestra, or audition. Teacher Approval required.*

This course provides opportunities for students to develop their musical potential and aesthetic understanding through learning to play orchestral string instruments. Study includes the care and cultivation of tone, the ability to read music with increasing fluency, the building of technical skills, team spirit, and responsible rehearsal habits.

ADVANCED ORCHESTRA Year (\$25.00/Semester Fee)

Students will be part of an ensemble of intermediate to advanced string players directed toward performing the finest in classical and contemporary music. *Teacher approval required.*

BEGINNING PERCUSSION Year (\$2.50/Semester + \$17.50 instrument rental/Semester Fee)

**Two years piano or previous instrument experience required + audition.*

This course provides opportunities for students to develop their musical potential and aesthetic understanding through learning to play percussion instruments. Study includes the building of proper technique on all percussion instruments, the ability to read music, team spirit, and responsible rehearsal habits. Students will have opportunities to improvise, compose, strengthen listening skills, analyze performances and relate their music experiences to the time and culture of the pieces they study, as well as to contemporary society.

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA Year (\$2.50/Semester Fee)

**Pre-requisite course is Beginning Orchestra, or audition. Teacher Approval required.*

This course provides opportunities for students to develop their musical potential and aesthetic understanding through learning to play orchestral string instruments. Study includes the care and cultivation of tone, the ability to read music with increasing fluency, the building of technical skills, team spirit, and responsible rehearsal habits.

CONCERT CHOIR Year (\$2.50 Fee)

Students receive experience in rehearsal and performance suitable for mixed voices.

MEN'S CHOIR Semester (\$2.50/Semester + \$15 uniform rental/Semester Fee)

Students receive experience in rehearsal and performance suitable for male voices.

WOMEN'S CHOIR Semester (\$2.50/Semester + \$15 uniform rental/Semester Fee)

Students receive experience in rehearsal and performance suitable for women voices.

ADVANCED CHOIR Year (\$2.50/Semester + \$15.00 per uniform rental/Semester Fee)

** Audition Only*

Excellence in all musical skills and vocal production is stressed in this chorus. Performances at festivals and concerts will be emphasized.

OTHER ELECTIVES

AEROBICS Semester (\$3.00 Fee)

This total body fitness class involves cardiovascular exercises as well as body toning exercises. Exercise routines will be choreographed to music. Basic principles of fitness will be taught and applied in class. *This class does NOT fill any PE credit.*

FITNESS & TEAM SPORTS Semester (\$3.00 Fee)

This course is a sequence of experiences in physical activities which challenge all ability levels. It focuses on social interaction and cognitive learning as well as skill development. A variety of team sports will be introduced.

CREATIVE WRITING Semester (\$5.00 Fee)

This class is designed to provide experiences and activities which will enhance the communication of ideas through written expression.

MYTHOLOGY Semester (\$5.00 Fee)

Study of Greek, Roman, Scandinavian, and American folklore and mythology will help students learn to appreciate the impact they have on our literature.

READING LITERATURE Semester (\$5.00 Fee)

This course is designed for the advanced and avid reader. The class will emphasize the short story and the novel. Advanced reading strategies will be taught.

JOURNALISM A (Intro) Semester (\$5.00 Fee)

Journalism A is an exciting, fast-paced orientation into the highly competitive field of journalism. This course will give students a chance to work in improving writing, interviewing and photography skills.

JOURNALISM B (Newspaper) Year (\$5.00/Semester Fee)

**Application Required*

This course is an advanced journalism course. It builds upon the skills and teaches more advanced writing techniques of the printed media, i.e., interviewing, observing, writing, editing, photography, and computer layout and formatting.

STUDENT COUNCIL Year (Possible Fee)

**Audition Only*

This class provides **elected** officials the opportunity to learn how to operate student school governments.

PEER TUTOR Semester (No Fee)

Students will be involved in peer tutoring students in special education and resource classes in math, English, reading, life skills and other academic areas. This class would be most helpful to students considering a career in teaching, coaching, etc. This course involves working with disabled students. It is extremely important that the students chosen for this class have a very good attendance record. During the school year this class goes on a number of community trips, a few of them may require the student to bring a dollar or so.

PEER LEADERSHIP Semester (No Fee)

**Application required*

This course focuses on the qualities of leadership and works to develop these qualities in the lives of students. This course includes developmental skills in the areas of relationships, communications, human development, decision making, and interpersonal skills.

TEACHER AIDE Semester (No Fee)

**Application required*

In this class you will assist the teacher in any assignments that they have during that day. Your role will be to aid the teacher with whatever responsibilities they may have. You will be required to have homework or a reading book to stay busy for any down time there may be.

MEDIA AIDE Semester (No Fee)

**Application required*

In this class you will assist in the Media center with any assignments or tasks that they have during that day.. You will be required to have homework or a reading book to stay busy for any down time there may be.

CUSTODIAL AIDE Semester (No Fee)

**Application required*

In this class you will assist with custodial assignments or tasks. Your role will be to aid the custodian with whatever responsibilities that they have during that day.. You will be required to have homework or a reading book to stay busy for any down time there may be.

YEARBOOK Year (\$7.50/Semester Fee)

**Application Required*

Students will produce a school annual on computer. Students should be self-motivated and willing to work extra hours to meet deadlines and due dates. They will develop and use skills in writing, editing, art, layout, design, photography, and leadership.