



Home of the Blackhawks
Vista Heights Middle School
Counseling Department

8th Grade Course Descriptions 2015-2016

REQUIRED CLASSES

ENGLISH 8 Year (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. These skills include a review of punctuation and capitalization skills, a unit on composition and usage, a unit on sentence structure and applications of grammar to more effective speaking and writing. The department offers units in such areas as: short stories, library skills, study skills, and a novel unit. *Computer lab fee required.*

INTERMEDIATE MATH II Year

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.

INTERMEDIATE MATH II/SECONDARY MATH I# (Accelerated) Year

This is an accelerated and challenging course, with high expectations for homework completion and assignments. Students in Intermediate Math 2AC 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. *Pre-requisite of Intermediate Math 1AC or Placement test required.*

U.S. HISTORY 8 Year (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, national period, constitutional issues, Civil War, reconstruction, and the western movement. The emphasis of this course is on the 18th and 19th centuries. There will be a continued effort to review and develop content, process, and thinking skills introduced in previous grades.

INTEGRATED SCIENCE 8 Year (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. Hands-on inquiry-based instruction is used to help students value science as a process for obtaining knowledge based on observable evidence. *Science lab fee required.*

HEALTH Semester (Fee)

This course acquaints students with body functions and the problems that might disrupt normal processes. It also helps students develop wise practices and habits that will assure them of sound mental, social and physical health.

PE BOYS & GIRLS BEGINNING FITNESS Semester (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

LANGUAGES

SPANISH I Year (Fee)

This class stresses the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students practice the skills by means of dialogues, structure drills, reading selections and written exercises. Emphasis will be on near-native pronunciation, speaking, listening and writing correct Spanish.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE 1 Year (Fee)

Basic ASL skills, 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.

CHINESE 1 Year (Fee)

In level 1, students begin to communicate sufficiently to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. They can ask and answer some simple questions, respond to and sometimes initiate short statements and maintain simple conversation. Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics. Students will begin to identify and react to perspectives and practices of the target culture.

ART

ART FOUNDATIONS 1 Semester (Fee)

The student learns the basic elements and principles of art through drawing, painting & sculpturing.

INTERMEDIATE ART 8 Semester (Fee)

The student learns the fundamental principles and elements of design, still life, and figure drawing. *Pre-req. Art Foundations 1*

CERAMICS 1 Semester (Fee)

The student receives instruction in ceramics and designing in ceramic clays. Preparation of clay bodies, use of tools and equipment, firing and construction methods, and an introduction to wheel throwing is included. *Pre-req. Art Foundations 1*

MUSIC

BEGINNING BRASS Year (Fee)

This course provides opportunities for students to develop their musical potential through learning to play a brass instrument. Study includes the care and cultivation of a beautiful 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 or the pieces they study, as well as to contemporary society. 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 (Fee)

This course provides opportunities for students to develop their musical potential through learning to play a brass instrument. Study includes the care and cultivation of a beautiful 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 or the pieces they study, as well as to contemporary society; This class is an instrumental ensemble directed toward building music performance skills. Curriculum includes 6-8 performances per year including adjudicated music festivals, introduction to music theory, history and composition.

INTERMEDIATE BAND Year (Fee)

This course further develops and refines core concepts and fundamentals introduced in Beginning Band. 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 is Beginning Band.*

SYMPHONIC BAND Year (Fee)

This course further develops and refines core concepts and fundamentals introduced in Beginning Band. 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 is Beginning Band, or audition.*

ORCHESTRA BEGINNING Year (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 a beautiful 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. *No pre-requisite course is required.*

ORCHESTRA INTERMEDIATE Year (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 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 is Beginning Orchestra, or audition. Teacher Approval required.*

ORCHESTRA ADVANCED Year (Fee)

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

PERCUSSION Year (Fee)

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. *Two years piano or previous instrument experience, audition.*

CHOIR Year (Fee)

Students receive experience in rehearsal and performance of suitable music SATB (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) voices.

DRAMA

DRAMA FOUNDATIONS Semester

This course introduces the student to the beginning elements of theatre and performance with emphasis of self-improvement in performance and public communication. Mime, oral interpretation, scene and monologue study are taught along with production criticism and dramatic and comedic literature. Students will study audition techniques, scene performance, cinema appreciation and criticism, and an introduction to acting.

DRAMA I Semester

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. *Teacher Approval Only & pre-requisite of Drama Foundations required.*

MUSICAL THEATRE (A) Semester (Fee)

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. *Audition Only*

DANCE

DANCE I Semester (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 IA Semester (Fee)

This class is a continuation of Intro to Dance. 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. *Pre-requisite of Dance I.*

CTE

FACS EXPLORATION: SEWING & INTERIOR DESIGN Semester (Fee)

This course provides students the opportunity to learn essential life skills. It allows them to develop skills in clothing construction and style, clothing care and maintenance, textiles, interior design, and consumerism. Students will be required to purchase supplies.

FACS EXPLORATION:FOOD & CHILD CARE Semester (Fee)

This course provides students 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.

EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY 2 Semester (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, and equipment and manufacturing tools.

COMMUNICATIONS TECH 1 Semester (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.

INTERMEDIATE TECH 1 Semester (Fee)

A Technology Education program that introduces basic skills, applications, and impacts related to Construction Technology and students' modern society. Areas of instruction include, but are not limited to math, physics, applied communications, building design and construction, construction systems, residential and commercial construction, thermal systems, plumbing, engineering concepts, electrical and mechanical systems, social and environmental issues and impacts. Understanding the relationship between Construction Technology and other technological systems is essential. Utilizing advanced problem solving skills in a synthesized environment, students will develop skills and attitudes that impact and expand their occupational opportunities. *Class lab fee and project cost required.*

OTHER ELECTIVES

CREATIVE WRITING Semester (Fee)

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

PEER LEADERS Semester

This course focuses on the qualities of leadership and then 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. *Students will be participating in service and activities. Counselor approval and application required.*

PEER TUTOR Semester

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. *Application Required.*

TEACHER AIDE (EC) Semester

A student may be an aide for one period only. Students will help the teacher by doing tasks related to the subject. Teacher and counselor approval required.

P.E. ELECTIVES

AEROBICS Semester (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 TRAINING Semester (Fee)

This class is designed for students to tone, shape and strengthen. Cardiovascular exercise will be incorporated for an overall training program. *This class is elective only and does **NOT** fill any PE credit.*