

Westmount Charter School Mid-School

Course Descriptions - Grades 6 - 8 2019-2020

OPTIONS COURSES FOR GRADE 6 STUDENTS

Choose one second language: French 6 There will be three units: Winter, school and city: vocabulary building; basic sentences, regular verbs in present tense. **OR Spanish 6** This introductory course is a transition for students from our grade 5 second language program, or for students who are being exposed to the language for the first time. Students will learn greetings, numbers, animals, colors and some basic grammar (adjectives, articles, pronouns, and the verb “to be” in the present tense”. It is taught in a friendly environment with games and fun activities that stimulate basic communication.

Music- Junior Concert Band (Grade 6)

The instrumental music program is a year-long course of study that provides each student with a comprehensive introduction to music. Performance skills, music theory, history, composition, research and listening components are foundational to the course. Students learn their primary instrument and also perform with handbells and auxiliary percussion instruments. Off-site activities such as music workshops with professional musicians, festival performances, band camps, and multiple concerts build community and celebrate the ensemble’s progress. Students who enjoy instrumental music are highly encouraged to participate in Junior Jazz Band. It is strongly recommended that students who are new to band at this level take a summer band workshop.

REQUIRED COURSES FOR GRADE 7 STUDENTS

Humanities 7 Humanities 7 offers students an integrated examination of the grade seven Language Arts and Social Studies' curriculum outcomes. Throughout the course of the school year, students will be challenged to consider a variety of perspectives as they examine the numerous peoples who constitute the formation of Canada. In addition, students will examine a variety of literary genres to understand narrative perspective, as they both analyze and create literary works. Typically, students will read poetry, short stories, plays, and novels. Students will participate in a variety simulations throughout the year, as they try to bring their learning to life.

Mathematics 7 Grade 7 students add, subtract, multiply and divide decimals and use percent to solve problems. They add and subtract fractions and integers in their own way. It will be

interesting for your child to learn to use tables, graphs and equations to show number patterns and to solve equations by using objects, pictures, numbers and variables. Grade 7 students study circles, line segments and angles and solve problems involving area. By finding mean, median and mode, they interpret circle graphs and compare data. They connect numbers and shapes to their everyday lives, such as finding the difference in temperature from one day to the next, even with negative numbers, and they discuss how they might solve a problem. For Grade 8 math, see Grade 8 course description below. For Grade 9+ math, see course description in Grade 9 or 10-12 course handbook.

Science 7 Grade 7 science students are introduced to geology - the kinds of materials and changes that occur on Earth's crust and in the interior of Earth. They apply physical science concepts like heat, temperature and forces to analyze, design and build safe and stable structures and devices that reduce heat loss. Students investigate how organisms interact within ecosystems and how these systems are affected by human activities. They also consider decisions and actions for sustainability of the environment and agricultural industries. Students also discover about seed plants, experimenting with plants and learning about the uses of different kinds of plants.

Health and Physical Education 7 Health and Physical Education contributes to a continuum of wellness by focusing on the three priority wellness outcomes: physical activity, healthy eating, and psychosocial well-being. Students develop an understanding of the balance of the dimensions of wellness and how they can be woven throughout other areas in school and their lives. Students are evaluated on their attitude, participation, sportsmanship and skill with a focus on improved physical literacy.

Field Trips: Grade 7 & 8 – skiing, cross-country skiing/ or snowboarding @ Norquay

OPTIONS COURSES FOR GRADE 7 STUDENTS

Art 7 : This course introduces students to many artistic practices and builds skills in perspective, negative space, sequential drawing, and working with proportion and light and shadow. Students will work with a variety of materials to create sculptures, drawings and paintings.

Drama 7: This exciting course is an introduction to drama and an opportunity for students to kinesthetically explore literature, emotions, character and relationships; that not only apply to the arts, but to everyday living. Drama 7 focuses on nurturing and developing a sense of play, confidence and a positive self-concept. Students are challenged to take creative risks in the safety of a supportive classroom community. Each student will have the freedom to explore their creative selves, while developing an appreciation for the

random uniqueness in others. Each unit will conclude with a performance that will assist in reinforcing and demonstrating the skills and theories learned throughout the unit. There is no pre requisite for Drama 7.

Music- Intermediate Concert Band (Grade 7) The instrumental music program is a year-long course of study that provides each student with a detailed exploration of music. Music performance, theory, history, composition, research and listening components are foundational to the course. Students learn their primary instrument and also begin to perform with second instruments. Off-site activities such as music workshops with professional musicians, festival performances, band camps, and multiple concerts build community and celebrate the ensemble's progress. Students who enjoy instrumental music are highly encouraged to participate in Junior Jazz Band. It is strongly recommended that students who are new to band at this level take a summer band workshop.

Music- Junior Jazz Band Club (Grades 5 to 7) Junior Jazz meets twice per week every other week at lunch for 45 minutes. Improvisation techniques and listening components are foundational to this course. The jazz program is a year-long course of study that provides each student with a beginner-level exploration of jazz. Students learn to perform on their secondary instrument. This ensemble can be heard at concerts throughout the year.

Music- Chamber String Orchestra Club (Grades 5 to 9) The Chamber String Orchestra meets after school once a week for 65 minutes. This ensemble performs feature pieces at concerts throughout the year. Students learn to perform chamber string repertoire as well as large-scale orchestral works in conjunction with the woodwind and brass performers from the Grade 9 Band class. Each string student enrolled in this course are also permitted and strongly encouraged to participate in his or her appropriate grade level concert band.

Computers 7: Students interested in computers will have the opportunity to further pursue how computer and information technologies impact us as a society. They will develop an understanding of how to utilize technology to become a more effective learner and communicator, and create a project that deepens their understanding and showcases skills learned in the course.

Innovations 7: Students interested in design technologies and hands-on learning will have the opportunity to develop a project and learn the stages of managing a project from start to finish. A variety of materials and equipment will be available to work with as students explore a potential area of interest and address their own design challenges.

Photography 7: In this course students will learn the basics of picture taking, camera function and editing. For example, they will learn about photo composition, but also how to use the

manual settings on Digital SLR cameras such as ISO, shutter speed and aperture to create various effects. Students will create a series of individual digital portfolios of their work as well as learn to create a short documentary on a topic of their choice. School cameras are available; however, students can bring in their own DSLR equipment for this course. No background knowledge in photography is needed to take this class as this is an introductory level course exclusive for grade 7.

French 7: Prerequisite: French 6 We build on vocabulary around 3 themes: weather, school and schedules, family members and people around me. We expand grammar with the use of common expressions with 'have' and 'do', prepositions, and sentence-building.

Spanish 7: Prerequisite: Spanish 6 This course will offer the opportunity to further develop their listening, speaking and comprehension skills in the language. Students will expand their vocabulary: clothing, food, daily activities and the introduction of action verbs in the present tense. The class takes place in a fast paced environment, but still allows students to communicate and interact comfortably with the language.

Power Writing 7 Do you have fantastic, elaborate ideas but lose them somewhere between your brain and the paper? Struggling to get the images in your head into words? Is your vocabulary great and your sentence structure not so much? Would you rather have a root canal than write a paragraph? Come to Power Writing and learn the skills and strategies you need to make written self-expression a breeze.

Power Math 7: Is math your kryptonite? Do you hate it more than broccoli? Then Power Math is the course for you! Everyone can do math with the right approach. Focussing on visual and kinesthetic approaches to learning math concepts and applications can make the difference you've been looking for. Come to Power Math and hone those skills!

Learning Strategies 7: Are you always doing homework at the last minute? Do you spend more time avoiding your work than doing it? Is organization a goal instead of a reality? Are planning, prioritization and time management foreign concepts? Then Learning Strategies is the place to be. Using your existing course work, learn to balance your workload with your other commitments and stop dreading long projects.

Creative Writing 7: Creative Writing 7 is a course for students who desire to write and share their creative writing projects. Creative Writing 7 is meant to be a bridge from Humanities, with the hope of facilitating long term skill development, and enhancing the enjoyment of creative thinking and writing. As such, students will experiment with self-expression by exploring different forms of writing throughout the semester. Students will also be guided through pursuing possibilities of sharing their work outside of class, including

writing contests or publishing.

In My Back Yard 7: Have you ever wanted to explore the city by train, bus, or bike? How about dropping into Shaw Millennium Park on a skateboard or bike? Have you ever planned a trip to the Glenbow Museum? This locally designed course is set to challenge grade seven students to consider the city they live in, and how to make the most of their emerging freedom as adolescents. Students will be asked to meet a number of challenges in this course, including navigating their way through the city, budgeting for trips and adventures, and critically analyzing the process. In My Backyard demands that students be ready for adventure, and be ready to explore the city with a whole new perspective.

Movement 7: Movement 7 provides additional opportunity to explore how your body moves, develop increased knowledge of personal physical literacy and the confidence to apply basic movement skills across a variety of activities/situations. Students will develop fundamental movement skills and personal physical literacy knowledge through low organized games, cooperative play and individual activities. When applicable students will have the opportunity to review and breakdown movements through video review by recording performances on school supplied iPads. Videos will not be shared with anyone or to other devices and only used for classroom purposes. Students will be supportive of each other throughout and demonstrate respect for all people (teachers, guest speakers, field trip facilitators, etc).

Students will be expected to develop goals and a personal performance plan identifying the movement skills they would like to focus on improving and how they will track their progress. There are high expectations for students to be motivated and take responsibility for their own progress throughout the course. Goal setting, time management, and hard work will be crucial. Successful students of this course will develop a strong base and understanding of movement of the human body.

REQUIRED COURSES FOR GRADE 8 STUDENTS

Humanities 8 Humanities 8 integrates the outcomes for Language Arts, and Social Studies to provide an interdisciplinary look at the broader themes of Worldviews, Perspectives and Power. These themes allow us the opportunity for rich discussion and exploration based on personal opinions, experiences and questions. Students should be ready to consider their own view of the world and to begin to understand the views of others, both within their immediate sphere

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and within the global community. Students will read and discuss short pieces of literature such as poems, short stories and essays as well as longer literary works.

Mathematics 8 Students will explore square numbers and square roots and solve problems involving percents, ratios and rates. They will use personal strategies to multiply and divide fractions and integers and will apply mental mathematics and estimation strategies to solve problems. They will be able to create an equation that represents a problem, and then use the equation or its graph to solve the problem. They will also solve problems involving surface area, volume and the Pythagorean theorem. Students will draw different views of 3D objects and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of data presented in graphs. They will connect numbers and shapes to their everyday life and explore and talk about how they might solve a problem. For Grade 9+ math, see course description in Grade 9 or 10-12 course handbook.

Science 8 From machines that use energy, to the transport of solutions, to the functioning of the eye, the students will see first-hand how science affects their daily life, their career and their future. They will investigate the structure of living things, from the smallest cells to the more complex systems in the human body. Students will also examine the interactions among water, land and climate to better understand the distribution and health of living things, and they will learn to appreciate how the knowledge and skills they are applying in class have led to advances in medical and mechanical technologies.

Health and Physical Education 8 Health and Physical Education contributes to a continuum of wellness by focusing on the three priority wellness outcomes: physical activity, healthy eating, and psychosocial well-being. Students develop an understanding of the balance of the dimensions of wellness and how they can be woven throughout other areas in school and their lives. Students are evaluated on their attitude, participation, sportsmanship and skill with a focus on improved physical literacy.

Field Trips: Grade 7 & 8 – skiing, cross-country skiing/ or snowboarding @ Norquay

OPTIONS COURSES FOR GRADE 8 STUDENTS

Drama 8 is a fun and engaging course that continues to build and develop a students' positive self-concept, communication skills and an ability to creatively collaborate. Areas of specialized focus include developmental improv games, special effects make-up, character development, story creation, theatre genre study, and group playwriting. Each unit will end with a presentation or performance that will assist in

Updated 08/03/2019

demonstrating the skills and theories learned throughout the unit. No prerequisite is required for Drama 8, just an openness and a willingness to play!

Art 8 This class allows students to continue to expand their repertoire to techniques and skills used to record visual information, including the use of pattern and motif, using colour to draw attention, and the use of organic shapes as inspiration for works of art. Students will work with a variety of styles and materials from two-dimensional work to three-dimensional work.

Music- Senior Concert Band (Grade 8 & Grade 9) The instrumental music program is a year-long course of study that provides each student with an in-depth exploration of music. Music performance, theory, history, composition, research and listening components are foundational to the course. Students learn their primary instrument and also perform with second instruments. Off-site activities such as music workshops with professional musicians, festival performances, band camps, tours and multiple concerts build community and celebrate the ensemble's progress. Students who enjoy instrumental music are highly encouraged to participate in Senior Jazz Band.

Music- Senior Jazz Band (Grades 8 to 9) Senior Jazz meets twice per week every other week at lunch for 45 minutes. The Senior Jazz ensemble performs at concerts, various jazz festivals and on tour. The jazz program is a year-long course of study that provides each student with a significant intermediate to advanced-level exploration of jazz. Music performance, jazz theory, jazz history, improvisation techniques, and listening components are foundational to the course. Students learn to perform on their secondary instrument. Off-site activities such as music workshops with professional musicians, festival performances, camps, tours and multiple concerts build community and celebrate the ensemble's progress.

Music- Chamber String Orchestra - (Grades 5 to 9) The Chamber String Orchestra meets after school once a week for 65 minutes. This ensemble performs feature pieces at concerts throughout the year. Students learn to perform chamber string repertoire as well as large-scale orchestral works in conjunction with the woodwind and brass performers from the Grade 9 Band class. Each string student enrolled in this course are also permitted and strongly encouraged to participate in his or her appropriate grade level concert band.

French 8 Prerequisite: French 7 We build on vocabulary around three themes: food, animals and clothing. We expand grammar with the agreement of the adjectives and some irregular verbs relevant to the units.

Spanish 8 Prerequisite: Spanish 7 This course will continue to expand on grammatical structures in both oral and written communication. There is an emphasis on refining grammatical elements in order to improve communication. Some of the objectives students will learn are possessive adjectives, the conjugation of regular and irregular verbs in the

present tense, as well as the use of the imperative and the present progressive tense.

Ethics 8 The goal of the Ethics 8 course is to assist young people in their growth as ethical persons who are able to contribute to the well-being of all individuals and the community. We will discuss values such as respect, responsibility, fairness, justice, tolerance, honesty, kindness, forgiveness and loyalty as they relate to the concepts of “right” and “wrong”. We will also examine the consequences of making ethical or unethical decisions.

Outdoor Education 8 The curriculum for this course is a combination of instruction in environmental issues, responsible outdoor recreation and positive group dynamics. This course is intended to introduce middle school students to the urban aspects of all these things. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the environment impacts, ramifications and responsibilities associated with living in a city in Canada. They will also be introduced to available outdoor recreational opportunities available to them All of this will be framed around building skills in teamwork, communication and peer leadership working towards an overnight trip.

Lego-Botics 8 Lego-Botics gives students the opportunity to learn some of the basics of software and mechanical engineering in a hands-on, project based course. The course involves minimal instruction and requires students to apply problem solving, research and teamwork to overcome design challenges Projects will challenge the students to complete a task under strict guidelines, but with little to no guidance in how that task is to be completed. A successful student will demonstrate self-motivation and a willingness to experiment, make mistakes, and always improve.

Innovations 8 Students can continue their interest in design technologies and hands-on learning as they develop a project and learn the stages of project management. A variety of materials and equipment will be available to work with as students explore their own design challenges.

Power Writing 8 Do you have fantastic, elaborate ideas but lose them somewhere between your brain and the paper? Struggling to get the images in your head into words? Is your vocabulary great and your sentence structure not so much? Would you rather have a root canal than write a paragraph? Come to Power Writing and learn the skills and strategies you need to make written self-expression a breeze.

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Human Condition 8 This course acts an introduction to the Human Condition. By providing local, national, and global perspectives on the human experience, this course asks us to consider the issues that confront students as citizens of the world. Throughout the semester, we will examine the various forces that shape human behavior and that people around the world currently confront, as well as ways in which people of the past and present have sought to address pressing social issues related to human rights. We will also explore, practice, and reflect upon ways in which we can become involved in supporting human rights in our own communities through research, by engaging with guest speakers, and by participating in acts of service.

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