

Westmount Charter School

Course Selection Handbook

Grade 9

2020 - 2021

Program Planning and Course Selection

Students at Westmount Charter going into grade 9 have the opportunity to access a variety of supports when planning their school program.

Students have the opportunity to meet individually with a counsellor from Student Services to go through their program plan, ask specific questions, and get support for planning.

Once program planning meetings have been completed, course selection will be available online. Students will access this through the PowerSchool portal. Please ensure that you have set up access prior to course selection. Information will be sent out via Communications regarding the date it will be available.

Grade 9 Course Descriptions

REQUIRED COURSES

Humanities 9 - full year course

Humanities 9 is an interdisciplinary approach to English Language Arts 9 and Social Studies 9. This full year course will intertwine plays, poetry and prose to notions of governance, economics, citizenship, quality of life and identity. Students will participate in a post-apocalyptic zombie simulation, read classic and dystopian literature, and, through enriched learning materials, thoroughly develop reading, writing, speaking and thinking skills. Additionally, this course will have two designated Humanities teachers who will facilitate the course in a rigorous high school context.

Mathematics 9 - semestered course

The mathematics curriculum is shaped to foster the development of mathematically literate students. It is developed so that students can extend and apply their learning as an active and constructive process. The grade 9 mathematics curriculum consists of the analysis of change, consistency, number sense, patterns, relationships and spatial reasoning through the study of Patterns and relations, Shape and Space and Statistics and Probability. The mathematical processes used include communication, mental mathematics, estimation, problem solving and technology.

Science 9 - semestered course

Science 9 builds on knowledge gained in earlier science courses. Each unit focuses on a major theme within science and will prepare the student to take further courses in the natural and physical sciences. There are five units: Biological Diversity, Matter and Chemical Change, Environmental Chemistry, Electrical Principles and Technologies, Space Exploration.

Physical Education 9 - semestered course

The students are exposed to aspects of the general outcomes (Activity, Benefits Health, Cooperation and Do It Daily For Life), as well as the basic skills progress from “the selection” to “the refinement” of locomotor, non-locomotor and manipulative skills. This is the last year that Health is included in the PE curriculum, including topics such as drugs, alcohol, relationships and sexual education. Field trips typically include squash and rock climbing.

COMPLEMENTARY COURSES

FINE & PERFORMING ARTS COURSES

Art 9

Students will expand their skills and work with a variety of materials to create individual works of art. Students will have the opportunity to explore themes and techniques of interest to them and push their creativity.

Drama 9

Drama 9 is an active class that continues to develop student social, emotional and interpersonal skills. An in depth look at text work and scene study exposes students to creative problem solving and critical thinking that helps deepen their understanding of the various challenges facing society and relationships today. Students also are introduced to Shakespeare and learn the technique of armed and unarmed stage combat. It is a great opportunity to explore various forms of literature and is a terrific opportunity for students who prefer active hand on learning.

Intermediate Band (Level III) 9 - full year course

Prerequisite: Junior 7 Band or minimum 2 years of band experience

This course is for grade 8/9 students with at least 2 years of experience on their instrument, and previous experience playing in a Concert Band. Study is more in-depth than in Junior Band and requires strong commitment to a regular practice routine. The level of difficulty of the music begins the year at Grade 3 and the year ends with some grade 4 repertoire.

SECOND LANGUAGE COURSES

French 9 (9 year program)

Prerequisite: French 8

French 9 is a really good transition course between mid-school and high-school French. Curriculum includes study of sports, francophone communities and housing. Students engage in grammar study (new tenses are introduced), vocabulary games, interactive projects and are

exposed to francophone music. More advanced listening and speaking activities take place in preparation for high-school. Students also participate in a field trip to conclude the francophone community unit.

Spanish 9 (6 year program)

Prerequisite: Spanish 8

In this course, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate listening, oral, and written skills in Spanish in different settings. In this level students are introduced to Spanish literature, culture and more advanced grammatical structures.

Comics books and Philosophy 9 (KABOOM)

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Batman, Jack Kirby, The Matrix, Joseph Campbell, The Punisher and Jim Lee all have something in common. In this course we look at contemporary media, philosophy, visual arts, and the production process. Using media students can relate to and are inundated with, the instructors introduce several veins of philosophical thought, and students are requested to ask themselves some deep questions about who they are. We look at the development of character through the eyes of philosophy, video game design, graphic novels and film. Students are introduced to character design - basic proportion, anatomy and aesthetic choices surrounding characters. We ask students to use these concepts to develop characters and explore what these questions really mean. During the last half of the course students are formed into production teams that mimic a real world comic book studio. In groups of three, students will choose the role of the writer, penciller or inker and develop a small graphic novel. These graphic novels should allow students to illustrate the culmination of their learning and provide them with a new way to address philosophical and real world issues.

Outdoor Education 9

The grade 9 year of the Westmount Outdoor Education program focuses on outdoor recreation and wilderness ethics. It may include a spring or fall backpacking trip in Kananaskis Country and/or a winter cross country skiing/snowshoeing camp to Mosquito Creek. Students will also attend a series of introductory kayaking half-day sessions at the U of C pool as well as a multitude of activities in class such as biking, map work, backcountry cooking to name a few. As this is an experiential class based around developing the skills necessary to safely and responsibly travel in the backcountry these field trips are expectations of the course.

Epistemology 9

The Epistemology 9 course is modelled on the IB program of studies but with the Inside-Out focus utilized at Westmount Charter. It challenges students and their teachers to reflect critically on diverse ways of knowing and areas of knowledge, and to consider the role which knowledge plays in a global society. It encourages students to become aware of themselves as thinkers, to

become aware of the complexity of knowledge, and to recognize the need to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected world. As a thoughtful and purposeful enquiry into different Ways of Knowing, and into different Areas of Knowledge, the Epistemology 9 course is composed almost entirely of questions. The major question examined: What is Truth?

Film Studies 9

In this course we will examine traditional movies as well as the film genre John Grierson describes as the “creative treatment of actuality,” ie. The documentary. Students will be exposed to films spanning cinematic genres including Film Noir, Comedy, Thriller, Early Silent, Foreign, etc.

Over the course of this semester we will:

- View and examine films (critically, creatively, from a research aspect in writing and in discussion)
- Consult with professionals working in the field and discuss their creative and production process (for instance, what it’s like to see a film through from inception right to its presentation).
- Instruction in various production skills necessary to create a video documentary
- and/or students will be asked to critique film content in written and verbal form.

Innovations 9

Students in grade 9 will work directly with a client to build a project that will shape a study of their own interests and passions in a way that aligns with perceived challenges existing within a wider community. In this way they will directly see how their interests are connected to occupations beyond what can be experienced in the classroom, and open up opportunities to design a pathway to Career and Technology Studies credits in high-school beyond what the course handbook can offer.

Journalism 9

Students will experience journalism in the form of print, online, radio and film, as well as hosting guest speakers who work in the field. The classroom itself will have a newsroom atmosphere where students report, photograph and assemble Newspaper style articles and the instructor is their editor. We will meet at the beginning of each class to discuss story ideas progress and to critique completed stories while the bulk of the class is used to work on individual pieces intended to go to print. Students will work independently, researching and preparing news, feature, editorial and investigative articles.

Learning Strategies 9

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? Tired of the sound a deadline

makes as it whooshes past you? Are planning, prioritization and time management foreign concepts? Do you think you can remember everything only to find out you should have taken notes? Would a personalized, responsive approach with one on one teacher interactions make these concepts more meaningful for you? 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. Benefit from small a class size and the opportunity to figure out what you need from school instead of what it needs from you.

Model United Nations 9

In this course, students are introduced to the workings and procedures of the United Nations. Students explore international relations in depth in addition to developing skills such as critical thinking, public speaking and negotiating. Students will be taught and offered opportunities to compete in Model United Nations tournaments at Westmount, as well as around the city. Students will engage in several simulations throughout the year. One of these simulations will be the United Nations Security Council, where students will represent the nations on this council and discuss issues facing society. Students will also be offered the opportunity to join our Model United Nations team and compete around Calgary.

Yoga & Mindfulness 9

Yoga 9 is building upon the roots and philosophy of the eight limbs of ashtanga yoga. There is no prerequisite for this course. Each class will include a guided meditation as well as a physical asana practice. Students will have an opportunity to experience various styles of yoga as well as an exploration of the chakra system. Working with elements such as breathing, mindfulness and stretching, students will acquire skills to self-regulate their emotions and become self-aware. No yoga experience is necessary, just a willingness to be with your breath on the mat.