

Westmount Charter School

Course Selection Handbook

Grade 9

2025 - 2026

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 counselor from Student Services or their Assistant Principal to go through their program plan, ask specific questions, and get support for planning. There will be an info session in their SOURCE classes, including a Q & A, as well as drop in time in Student Services with Admin/Counselors.

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.

Things to consider when choosing courses:

When putting together a schedule, please consider the following to create the most well-rounded schedule for grade 9:

- You must pick 6 complementary courses
 - Note: Band is year long (and each count as 2)
- Grade 9 students are allowed only one of each core per year
- No spares are allowed

Grade 9 Course Descriptions

A list of courses offered can be found [here](#)

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 with 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.

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 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.

****Students who are off level in Math may take the higher level, but may still only complete one level in a year.**

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.

SOURCE & Health 9 - full year course

Every student at Westmount is enrolled in a SOURCE class. The SOURCE program provides meeting times for students to connect with their peers and SOURCE teacher as well as to fulfill Health curriculum, plan for post-secondary, and develop character/life skills. Beginning in grade 9, students loop with the same SOURCE teacher and cohort until they graduate. In grade 9, students will complete the required health curriculum along with opportunities for character development, DEI, and wellness. Students will also have time to consider their upcoming high school experience and mentally prepare for what comes next. SOURCE stands for Sense of Self, Organization, Understanding Relationships, Creative Expression/Career Exploration.

COMPLEMENTARY COURSES (students choose 4-6 of these)

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 and artistic passion. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Drama 9

This exciting and active class focuses on creatively developing social, emotional and interpersonal skills through studies in the dramatic arts. Units may include Improv, scene study, character development, special effects make-up, monologue writing, character voice and movement. Students are encouraged to reflect, grow, dream and inspire. They will work individually and collectively while advancing critical thinking and creative problem solving skills. Drama 9 is a safe, fun, creative, face-to-face learning environment that welcomes activities to strengthen students' understanding of the human condition. Technical theatre (lights, sound, and costume) to enrich final performances may be introduced. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Drama (Mainstage) Production (gr 6-9)

Term 2 Only. After school (2-3 times a week) and some lunch time classes/rehearsals

Pre-requisite: January Audition

***This will replace the current grade 7-9 extracurricular club next year**

Have you always wanted to perform on stage? Would you like to re-experience the joy that being part of a creative ensemble and performing has brought you in the past? Well, now you can! The Mid/High Mainstage Drama Production offers students in grades 6-9 an opportunity to audition and be considered for a role in the springtime mainstage production. Through ensemble building and working towards the common goal of 'the show', students will experience and explore their sense of self, creative and critical thinking, creative risk taking skills, focus, mentorship and leadership through performance, while learning and having fun!

Performing experience is not necessary, confidence will develop. Successful students in this course will have exceptional attendance, be committed to taking creative risks throughout the process and shine in the final production.

This course occurs outside the regular school timetable, with classes occurring from 3:30-5:30 (dates TBD) T-TR and some scheduled lunch hours. Interested students will need to register during course selection and will audition during Term 1 (January). The director/instructor will determine show selection, casting, and the class size will be capped accordingly (Registration guarantees audition only, not a spot in the class.) Regardless of casting, every student is an integral part of the team. Audition information will be available to any students who have opted in by the stated deadline. There is a course fee associated with this class.

Parents with an inclination to help support our production, have time, and have talents in building, sewing, painting, sourcing materials, photography, program building, or errand running, are encouraged to reach out. We'd love to welcome you to the team!

Technical Theatre 9

Students who are curious about the technical elements of theatre and production can explore in this creative, hand-on, practical course. Students will learn about different types of stages, and the various roles and responsibilities of people working behind the scenes. Students placed in small groups will

work as individuals, and at times collectively learn through a rotating schedule of modules. Modules of study may include design and practical application/creation in general theatre terminology and stage safety, script analysis, lighting, sound, costume, properties, special effects make-up. Students working in this course may provide technical support for the mid school drama production and is an excellent introduction to the Technical Theatre 15/25/35 courses offered in High School. Come play! Please note there is a fee for this course.

Senior Concert Band 9 - full year course

Prerequisite: Junior 8 Band or minimum 2 years of band experience

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. Activities such as music workshops with professional musicians, festival performances, band camps, tours, master classes (as possible) and concerts build community and celebrate the ensemble's progress. Students who enjoy instrumental music are highly encouraged to participate in the Senior Jazz Band. Please note there is a fee for this course.

SECOND LANGUAGE COURSES

French 9 (9 year program)

Prerequisite: French 8

French 9 is a transition course between middle school and high school French. Curriculum includes study of sports, communities and housing. Students engage in grammar study, vocabulary games, interactive projects, and are exposed to Francophone culture via various media and food. More advanced listening and speaking activities take place in preparation for high school. Students also participate in a field trip to conclude the Community Unit. Please note there is a field trip fee for this course.

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. At this level, students are introduced to Spanish literature, culture and more advanced grammatical structures such as the past tense (preterit) and learning to speak without redundancy with object pronouns and so much more. Please note there is a field trip fee for this course.

ADDITIONAL COMPLEMENTARY COURSES

Activity & Exploration 9

This Grade 9 activity-based option class will be broken into three sections. Students will have the opportunity to engage in a variety of games and physical activities with a focus on strategy. There will

also be in depth learning of strength based training principles and the implementation of a personalized training program. Finally, students will participate in a creative inquiry portion leading to the development and play of a new sport. Students should be prepared to spend time participating in outdoor activity, the weight room, and off-site alternative spaces. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Comics books and Philosophy 9 (KABOOM)

The Batman, Friedrich Nietzsche, The Matrix, Brian Bolland, Harley Quinn, Joseph Campbell, Playstation 4's, The Journey 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, Mr Crooks will introduce several veins of philosophical thought, and students are required to ask themselves some deep questions about who they are and why we make the choices that we do. We look at the development of character through the eyes of philosophy, video game design, graphic novels and film. Students are introduced to basic drawing techniques, character design - basic proportion, anatomy and aesthetic choices in media. The course asks students to use these concepts to develop characters and explore what these questions really mean. During the last half of the semester students are formed into production teams designed to 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. Please note there is a fee for this course.

***NEW* Community in Action: Problem Solving for a Better Future**

This course empowers Grade 9 students to become changemakers in the world. Through problem-based learning, students tackle various world challenges, propose solutions, and take actionable steps to create meaningful impact. The course fosters collaboration, empathy, critical thinking, and hands-on experience with real-world issues. This course gives students a sense of agency and practical skills while addressing authentic problems. It strengthens connections between the school and the broader community and world, encourages empathy, and prepares students for civic engagement in the future.

Creative Writing 9

This course is designed for students who desire to write and share their creative writing projects. Creative Writing 9 is meant to be a bridge from Humanities, with the aim of facilitating long term skill development, and enhancing the enjoyment of creative thinking and writing. 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.

Film Studies 9

This course offers us a variety of options to cover an introductory study of film. Depending on class interest, we may cover a variety of topics, which may include any combination of the following topics:

- the history of traditional Western film
- aspects of the artistic side of filmmaking: cinematography, mise en scene, direction...
- multiple cinematic genres: comedy, thriller, foreign, musical, science fiction, etc.
- documentary

Forensic Science 9

In this course, students are introduced to the methods and techniques used in the forensic investigation of crimes. Students will explore topics related to types of evidence, collection and processing of evidence and career opportunities in the field. Students will engage in several hands-on laboratory experiences where they will be able to use the techniques studied and apply them to solving crime scene simulations.

Innovations 9

Innovations allows students to develop their creativity by working through the design process in an effort to create something innovative. Students in grade 9 create 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. Please note there is a fee for this course.

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 a small class size and the opportunity to figure out what you need from school instead

of what it needs from you. NOTE: students will be selected for this class. If you have a desire/need for this class, please reach out to your Assistant Principal.

Logic Lab 9

An exciting adventure that introduces grade 9 students to the captivating world of logic puzzles and escape room board games! In this course, students will embark on a journey of critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Students will delve into the art and science of solving intricate problems using deductive reasoning, pattern recognition, and creative thinking. Immerse yourself in thrilling escape room scenarios that require collaboration, quick thinking, and logical deduction to successfully escape. Work on hands-on projects that involve creating your own logic puzzles, applying the skills learned in class. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Model United Nations 9 - modified from previous years

In this course, students are introduced to the goals of the United Nations by exploring the Fantasy world of Tolkien as expressed through Peter Jackson's Hobbit and Lord of the Rings movies but starting with Japanese Director Kemji Kamiyama's 2024 "The War of the Rohirrim". Students will look at the problems encountered in "Middle Earth" and attempt to provide solutions while also looking at parallel problems which exist in the contemporary world. The course blends literature, debate, film studies, impromptu speaking, political science, international relations, creative and critical thinking with a dash of music and meal recipes.

Note this is NOT the MUN club. Interested students may choose to join our competitive Model United Nations Club and experience many different Model United Nations opportunities throughout the City and for some the opportunities may even extend nationally and internationally.

Outdoor Education 9

The grade 9 year of the Westmount Outdoor Education program focuses on outdoor recreation and wilderness ethics. It includes a winter cross country skiing day trip to West Bragg Creek to prepare for a XC skiing/snowshoeing based winter camp to Mosquito Creek. Students will also attend a series of introductory kayaking half-day sessions at the U of C pool and a day trip biking to Baker Park to play disc golf 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. Please note there is a field trip fee for this course.

Speak Up!

This course introduces students to the art of public speaking and formal debate. Students will develop confidence, critical thinking skills, and the ability to structure and deliver persuasive arguments. Through engaging activities, students will refine their speaking style, learn rhetorical techniques, and explore different debate format. Develop confidence and presence in public

speaking, improve argumentation, persuasion, and critical thinking skills, learn different debate structures and styles, and understand the impact of body language, voice, and tone. This class will help students build skills useful in all areas of life—whether they want to become lawyers, leaders, influencers, or just more confident communicators. They'll leave with stronger critical thinking, research, and persuasion abilities while having fun debating real-world issues!

VR Content Design and Creation 9

The VR content Design and Creation Course for middle school students is intended to provide students with the opportunity to learn/implement some basic programming, visual design and experiential design through VR experiences. While a portion of the course will be engaging in learning experiences using VR headsets, the main focus will be on designing and creating VR experiences through the Career & Technology Foundations curriculum. ***Important*** This course requires a decent Windows, Macbook or Linux operating system. Chromebooks are not compatible.

Westmount Assisting Others (WAO) 9

Students examine the role of volunteers in a community, perform as volunteers and evaluate their volunteering experience. Students will have the opportunity to identify, research, and choose two suitable community placements in organizations they would like to support. They will work in partners to create an action plan, make the initial contact with the institution of their choice and as a class we will provide the assistance required. Please note there is a field trip fee for this course.