



Course Overviews for Grade Eight

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Grade 8 Humanities (World History & Geography)

(This course is offered in English, French, and Spanish)

Course Description

The curriculum covers world history during the early modern period (15th - 18th centuries). The overarching question emphasized throughout the course is: *How does the learning of different cultures influence your thinking?*

The essential questions are:

- What guides our understanding of tribes, nations, and empires?
- How did these societies fundamentally shape the political and economic institutions of their respective countries and regions?
- How do primary sources reveal the developing political philosophies in the making?

Students will explore the development of modern nation-states from their origins in the early modern period. They will evaluate the primary sources and major historical events that guide their understanding of how migration (forced and economic), conquest, and self-government laid the basis for the multicultural societies of today. Every unit ends with an exploration of how each of these cultures' legacy is present in our society today.

Along with the curriculum content, students will work with the skills necessary to research and write in a history course. In 8th grade, these discipline-specific skills include how to identify and evaluate a variety of sources, as well as how to develop a historical argument in an essay form following MLA guidelines. Class will stress language skills through readings, listening, writing assignments and in-class discussion.

Units and Topics of Study

- PreColumbian Civilizations
- Exploration Voyages and Colonization of the Americas
- Renaissance
- British Empire: Mughal and British India, and the Thirteen American Colonies
- History and Heritage of Slave Trade
- Edo Japan
- The Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Era (American and French Revolution)

Assessment

Formative Assessments include:

- Thinking Routines
- Peer Feedback
- Reading Comprehension Checks
- Socratic Seminar
- Primary source analysis

Summative Assessments include:

- Research Presentation
- Mock trial
- Japanese Woodblocks Design Project
- Argumentative Essay
- Historiography Project
- Round table symposium

Grade 8 English

The theme for Grade 8 is *Agency is Agency*, and our grade-specific throughline is: *How do my identity and experience empower me to disrupt and mend?*

Grades 6-8 have the following universal throughlines:

- How do we **explore** a work of literature?
- What personal, textual, and global **connections** can we make to literature?
- How can reading and writing about the world help us to **empathize** with others?
- How do we **create** effective communication through written and oral expression?

In Grade 8 English, students develop reading, writing, and thinking skills through independent and group learning opportunities. They demonstrate an understanding of content, organization, style and language in writing assessments. Assignments range from journal writing to formal essays, and informal class conversations to formal discussions.

Our study of literature includes fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction articles. We use the writing process to craft vignettes, literary analysis, personal narrative, and poetry. We engage in class discussions to share our interpretations of literature. We study grammar in the context of the reading and writing we do and using No Red Ink.

Units & Topics of Study

- **Unit 1: Disrupting & Mending Gender Expectations**
 - Text: *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
- **Unit 2: Disrupting & Mending the “American Dream”**
 - Texts: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee & *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- **Unit 3: Disrupting & Mending the “Typical”**
 - Text: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon

Assessment

Formative assessments include annotations of texts, thinking routines, and reading comprehension checks.

Summative assessments include major writing assignments/projects and formal discussions.

Grade 8 Mathematics

Course Description

In the Middle School math program we aim to:

- Extend and strengthen students' mathematics skills with an emphasis on mental agility and accuracy when working with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percents.
- Extend students' ability to interpret and understand the physical world in mathematical terms
- Build students' confidence and enjoyment of mathematics

Course Outline

Unit 1: Expressions and Equations - *In this unit students will...*

- Simplify and evaluate expressions
- Solve one-step, two-step, and multi-step equations
- Clear equations of fractions and decimals
- Recognize the relationships of proportions
- Solve formulas for different variables
- Solve absolute value equations
- Use expressions and equations to solve word problems

Unit 2: Inequalities - *In this unit students will...*

- Solve one-step, two-step, and multi-step equations
- Graph one-variable inequalities on a number line
- Solve compound inequalities
- Solve absolute value inequalities
- Use inequalities to solve word problems

Unit 3: Linear Equations - *In this unit students will...*

- Graph equations using a table, x and y intercepts and the y intercept and slope
- Find the slope when given a graph, coordinates of two points
- Write equations in slope intercept form, standard form, and point slope form
- Find equations of lines when given the y intercept and a slope, any point and slope, any two points
- Write equations for parallel lines
- Write equations for perpendicular lines

Unit 4: Systems of Equations and Inequalities - *In this unit students will...*

- Determine whether an ordered pair is a solution of a systems of equations
- Find the solution of systems of equations by graphing, using substitution or adding and subtracting
- Determine whether a given ordered pair is a solution of an inequality
- Graph inequalities in two variables
- Graph systems of linear inequalities in two variables
- Solve word problems using systems of equations and inequalities

Unit 5: Exponents and Polynomials - *In this unit students will...*

- Use the properties of powers
- Add, subtract, and multiply polynomials
- Recognize and work with difference of squares and perfect squares

Unit 6: Factoring - *In this unit students will...*

- Factor out common factors for polynomials
- Factor trinomials
- Factor by grouping
- Recognize and factor the difference of squares

Unit 7: Quadratics - *In this unit students will...*

- Explore quadratic functions including intercepts, vertex, symmetry
- Solve quadratics by finding the square root
- Solve by factoring
- Solve quadratics by graphing
- Use factorable quadratics to solve problems

Assessment:

The breakdown of grades in this course is the following:

- Formative assessment consists of classwork, homework, and quizzes.
- Summative assessment consists of tests and projects.

Grade 8 Integrated Science

Course Overview

In Grade 8 Integrated Science, students continue a fully integrated approach to learning in science (Biology, Physics, and Chemistry). The topics of study connect and overlap with one another, much like the different science disciplines do. In Grade 9, students will move to stand-alone science subjects.

Emphasis will be placed on scientific and mathematical reasoning using a combination of lab skills, technological tools, problem solving, communication and collaboration.

The aims of the Grade 8 Integrated Science course are to:

- develop practical and analytical skills related to science
- communicate scientific ideas effectively
- promote an understanding of chemistry within our world
- incorporate math and engineering in design of systems
- introduce science disciplines to help students understand the specialties

Content / Units of Study

This is the third year of a three-year course program, reinforcing the study of science as an integrated body rather than separate subjects. The course is divided into six units:

- **Unit 1: Digestive System:**
 - Study of mechanical and chemical digestion, parts of the digestive system, and gastrointestinal illnesses
- **Unit 2: Disease & the Immune System:**
 - Types of pathogens; patterns of infection; case study on current/relevant pathogens; immune system & inflammatory response; disease prevention
- **Unit 3: Phases of Matter**
 - Separation of matter; mathematical analysis and composition of matter; changes between states, solubility
- **Unit 4: Chemical Bonding**
 - Covalent and ionic bonding; understanding of chemical reactions through algebraic equations; malleability and shape changes. Electronic arrangements; metallic bonding; alloys and ores; strengths of materials; plastics and recycling
- **Unit 5: Sound & the Ear:**
 - Production of sound; structure of the ear and decibel levels.
- **Unit 6: Light, Electromagnetic Spectrum, & the Eye:**
 - Properties of waves; features and uses of the different parts of the spectrum; color; ray diagrams using mirrors and lenses; structure of the eye.

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, which include projects, tests, quizzes and class participation. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Summative assessments include: unit tests and quizzes, lab reports (including the Lenses Lab and Solubility lab; written assignments such as the Immune System project and Eye Disease research project).

Formative assessments are ongoing throughout the course. These formative assessments include assessments of science and lab skills, class discussions and debates, and written homework and classwork assignments.

Grade 8 French A (Advanced)

Course Description

The language program in Grade 8 French A aims to explore various global issues through the following learning objectives:

- Develop oral and written skills in French language with help of various documents, textbooks, and novels
- Discover various types of texts and genres, both literary and non-literary
- Read and understand French-speaking texts from all genres and time periods
- Develop literary analytical skills in order to go beyond the simple meaning of a text
- Use language in a creative manner to interact, think deeply and inquire about the contemporary world

Units and Topics of Study

- **Unit 1:** *Le Gone du Chaâba* by Azouz Begag
 - "La banlieue"
 - Immigration
 - The transformation of language
- **Unit 2:** *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo
 - Rights of Children
 - Poverty
 - History
- **Unit 3:** *L'Avare* by Molière
 - Theater and society
 - Functions of comedy
- **Unit 4:** *Poetry unit* through various poems
 - Discovery of francophone cultures
- **Year long unit:** *Dernière Manche*
 - *Dernière Manche* by Catherine Dabadie
 - Immigration
 - Meeting with the writer + email exchanges with her

Assessment

Formative assessment includes quizzes, dictations, homework and grammatical exercises as well as short written or oral assignments.

Written summative assessment includes the following:

- academic writing assignments (literary analysis paragraph, essay, comparative analysis)
- creative writing assignments (portrait, speech, stage directions, etc.)
- Oral presentations
- Projects (acting and directing an additional scene of a play)

Grade 8 French B

Course Description

In their third year of French language, students are becoming more and more independent French speakers. They explore different themes related to the French language, France, and French-speaking countries such as music, fashion, cinema, ecology and more. They are also becoming more independent readers in French. Throughout the year, they also improve their oral and written skills with the help of various documents, textbooks, and novels. In addition, they learn to use French in a creative way. In class, they interact exclusively in French in a complete immersion program.

Here are examples of activities practiced in class: listening, speaking, writing, presenting projects, songs, acting, making videos, and interviewing people.

Texts, Materials, and Supplies:

- Textbook: *Adomania 2* (+ activity booklet)
- Grammar book: *Grammaire en dialogues: niveau grand débutant*

Content / Units of Study:

The course is divided into five units:

- Music and your musical tastes:
 - Vocabulary of music
 - Instruments
 - Songs
 - Types of music
- Fashion
- *Mystère au Grand Hôtel* par Marie-Claire Bertrand et Sarah Guilmault
- Environment and ecology
- Imagine your future and the profession that you would like to do later

Assessment

Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Formative assessments include quizzes, oral presentations, and listening comprehension.

Summative assessments include projects.

Grades 6-8 French Enrichment

Course Description

This course is designed to provide additional skills to enhance students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing proficiency. It is also meant to widely open their minds on the francophone world. In all projects, students will develop a culture of thinking and sharing, and improve their oral and written skills in an enjoyable environment.

Units and Topics of Study in Grade 8:

- Unit 1: Reliving the Parisian experience through cinema (*Amélie*)
- Unit 2: Making choices and analyzing the consequences of such choices through short movies
- Unit 3: Francophone music and its specificities

Assessment

Formative assessment includes the following:

- Document analysis
- Projects
- Short answer questions
- Oral presentations
- Written assignments
- Research projects
- Short plays
- Videos

Grade 8 Spanish A (Advanced)

Course Description

Grade 8 Spanish A is a year-long language and literature course that explores in depth the theme of Global Issues through multiple lenses. The course also focuses on grammar, language variations, diversity among the Spanish speaking countries, and communication skills. The course strengthens critical thinking skills and helps students communicate ideas in written and spoken modes. Students continue to develop reading strategies that lead them to further their critical analysis and incorporate new vocabulary and multiple perspectives. Skill development focuses on annotating, context analysis, and essay writing.

This course encourages students to:

- Study literature and establish deep connections with personal experiences and global issues
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of multiple perspectives of topic analysis
- Develop an understanding of agency within the world
- Express their thinking through different modalities within varying contexts and to diverse audiences

Example of topics of study:

The curriculum explores the concept of Global Issues through different lenses:

- Immigration and refugee crisis
- Perceptions, perspectives, and biases
- Child labor and Children's Rights
- Climate change and Native American Communities
- Bullying, gender discrimination, and hate crimes

Examples of resources include: novels, fiction and non-fiction graphic novels, language textbooks, films, audiobooks and news articles.

Example of Assessment:

The main types of assessment in this course include written analysis, oral presentations, expository essays, Socratic seminars, persuasive speeches, and creative projects. Formative assessment includes short analysis paragraphs, grammar and reading check-ins, class discussions and short presentations.

Grade 8 Spanish B

Course Description

Grade 8 Spanish B is a year-long language acquisition course that explores language skills needed to navigate everyday life in a Spanish-speaking environment. The course focuses on vocabulary acquisition, grammar structures, communication skills, and cultural diversity among Spanish speaking communities. The course strengthens students' abilities to learn a language within its cultural context.

Students practice listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills while communicating their ideas and perspectives. Students study topics of everyday life and learn new vocabulary with real life applications. Skill development focuses on communication and cultural awareness.

This course encourages students to:

- express the ideas
- take risks
- be open minded
- be curious

Topics of study:

The curriculum explores the concept of Identity through different lenses:

- City Life
- School Life
- Travel and Adventure
- Changes in Life
- Literature: Introduction to Magical Realism

Resources:

Textbook and workbook: *Reporteros Internacionales 2 and Reporteros Internacionales 3*

Other resources such as games, videos and films, articles, and short literary works.

Assessment:

The main types of assessment in this course include reading and listening comprehension, oral presentations, role playing, writing short narratives, cultural presentations, and creative projects.

Grades 6-8 Spanish Enrichment

Course Description

The Enrichment course is a semester-long language extension course that expands the communication skills in everyday settings. It is designed for students in Advanced Spanish. It complements the regular Spanish course and gives additional exposure to the language and Spanish-speaking cultures. Students will practice their language skills, with an emphasis on their speaking skills, through activity-based and hands-on educational experiences. This is a project-based class that aims to create a language and culture immersive experience for students.

Topics of Study:

The curriculum explores the concept of Identity through different lenses:

- Latinx historical and cultural contributions
- Personal history and legacy exploration
- Sharing with others passions and interests
- Legends of the Hispanic world
- Theater

Assessment

The main types of assessment in this course include class discussions, oral presentations, story writing, and projects.

Grade 8 Chinese

Course Description

In Grade 8 Chinese, students will be able to achieve the following:

- Understand and respond to a variety of simple and complex authentic multimodal texts.
- Identify explicit and implicit information and can interpret and analyze some conventions and connections presented in these texts to draw conclusions.
- Demonstrate their comprehension by producing a range of simple and some complex spoken and written language using simple and some complex modes.
- Engage in some authentic and spontaneous conversations to communicate their understanding and opinions on everyday personal, social, and in some topics of global significance in a range of familiar and unfamiliar situations in interpersonal and cultural contexts.
- Communicate some required information, organized into a recognizable format, with some sense of audience and purpose to suit the context.

Units and Topics of Study

- Unit 1: Activities: How do we make decisions in our daily life?
 - Lesson 1: Shopping
 - Lesson 2: My day
 - Lesson 3: What are they doing?
- Unit 2: Weather and Transportation: Why do we travel and how have the ways of traveling changed?
 - Lesson 4: Today's weather
 - Lesson 5: Asking directions
 - Lesson 6: Trip to China
- Unit 3: Professions and Hobbies: How do one's profession and hobbies play a crucial role in one's life?
 - Lesson 7: Professions
 - Lesson 8: Hobbies
 - Lesson 9: A sports meet

Assessment

Each language acquisition objective corresponds to one of four equally weighted assessment criteria. Each criterion has 7 possible achievement levels (1-7).

Criterion A: Comprehending spoken and visual text

Criterion B: Comprehending written and visual text

Criterion C: Communicating in response to spoken and/or written and/or visual text

Criterion D: Using language in spoken and/or written form

Major formative assessments are: listening comprehension, reading comprehension, reading fluency, interpersonal and presentational speaking activities, scripts writing, and character dictation.

Major summative assessments are: My Daily Schedule (Presentation), My Imaginary Trip to China (Project), and End of Year Review and Reflection.

Grades 6-8 Design Technology

Course Overview

Students in Grades 6-8 may take Design Technology for one semester as an elective option. Students undertake a variety of challenges and projects, which involve some or all of the five phases of the design cycle: investigate a problem, design a solution or a product, plan the steps through which that solution will be created, create the product and/or solution, and then evaluate product and/or solution.

These challenges and projects are specially set so as to encourage the student to use and extend knowledge acquired in science, math, and other courses. While working through the challenges and projects, students learn a variety of techniques, which enable them to work confidently with a wide variety of materials.

Content/Units of Study

Grade 8

Students review and refresh on orthographic drawings and then use these skills to design and make three projects in this course. They start off with a desk organizer made of wood where they are challenged to fulfill many different requirements. This is followed by group efforts to design and build working prototypes of water filters to use in developing countries. The course culminates in digital and physical design work in which students develop the concept for a board game.

Assessment

Students are often assessed formatively in terms of their “work in progress.” Students are primarily graded on the quality of their work during the design process, as well as how productively, efficiently, and safely they work in class, and how well their product performs up to the specifications of a particular project.

Most projects culminate with self-assessment, allowing students to reflect on what went well with the design/construction process and what did not.

Grade 8 Digital Storytelling

Course Description

The Digital Storytelling course is an introduction to storytelling with media, featuring digital media tools and techniques with a focus on journalism and understanding the online news environment. In this hands-on course, students will produce and publish their own audio, video, and photo content along with written articles for publication in the *International Dateline* (the school newspaper). They will learn about community journalism and tap into our international connections to report with a global focus. Students will conduct interviews, gather information, and learn editing and media production using writing, photography, video, audio, and social media. Students are encouraged to delve deeper into their personal interests by producing a capstone project that includes their choice of photography, video, audio, coding, design, or a combination of multiple elements.

Students will learn to write articles according to accepted journalistic standards and will also engage in producing video, podcasts, and other means of communicating digitally.

The course will be primarily project-based, with students taking on assignments with the purpose of getting them published or broadcast online.

Units and Topics of Study

Students will:

- build skills around critical thinking, ethical discussion, and decision making with an introduction to digital citizenship and media literacy
- explore computer programming with Scratch
- explore basic principles of journalism
- learn digital-media skills such as photography, audio recording/editing, video production
- produce high-quality materials
- practice digital publishing
- conduct independent/exploratory projects

Each unit will feature a project, giving students the opportunity to build an electronic portfolio of their work.

Course Outline:

- Opinion Cartoon Project
- Photo-Audio Profile Slideshow Project
- Mini-units on programming and film/video
- Final Project (Student choice)

Assessment

Formative assessments might include classwork, homework, quizzes, story preparation, short writing exercises and blog posts, reading and critical responses to text and films, interviews, peer feedback, student self-assessments, rough drafts, or storyboards of projects, etc.

Summative assessments might include final projects, portfolios, or tests.

Grade 8 Visual Art

Course Description:

In Grade 8, students expand on their understanding of using elements and principles of art with the added complexity of three-dimensional design and construction. Approaches to learning are emphasized and students are encouraged to move beyond their initial ideas to be open-minded thinkers who take risks with their work. Potential materials and processes we will explore include: painting, paper, wood, plaster, wire, clay, soft sculpture and casting.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to independently use the creative process to generate and execute their own ideas through artwork. The creative process includes four steps: **Plan, Create, Critique, and Reflect.**

- **Plan:** Students gather **inspiration** and generate ideas and questions about a theme. They **organize** these ideas through brainstorming, mind mapping, etc. They conduct **research** which can consist of artist research, materials exploration, skill building, etc.
- **Create:** Students develop multiple drafts of their idea through sketches, 3D models, etc. They visually explore their chosen idea through a final piece, or a series of artworks.
- **Critique:** Students analyze master artworks and determine their success or failure. They provide their peers with feedback to help them improve their artwork.
- **Reflect:** Students work to effectively communicate their process as well as contextualize their artwork in the broader art discourse.

Course Outline

Unit	Topic	
Intro	Creating Community	Students get to know each other, present to their classmates about their personalities and interests, and explore their identities.
1	Perception	Students explore the science behind perception and explore op art, bias, and perspective.
2	Identity	Building on ideas of perception, students visually explore how their identities are formed and understood through multiple lenses and perspectives.
3	Power and Community	Students identify how they impact and interact with their communities and space. They explore power and create artwork that engages with their relationship to power, their community, and social issues.

Course Texts and Resources

- Students should come prepared for class with their charged electronic device.
- All resources will be posted through Google Classroom and Google Drive, which are linked through topics and assignments posted in onCampus.
- Most of the supplies needed for this class are common school supplies listed in WIS materials lists, including pencils, paper, basic coloring supplies, scissors, glue, etc. Additional supplies will be provided based on individual projects, and in the case of distance learning, alternatives will be arranged to meet individual circumstances.

Procedures for arranging to meet with the instructor

Speaking directly with the teacher during work time in class about arranging a time to meet is a good way to arrange for extra help and time to work on projects. Email is also a great way to set up a meeting outside of class. Meetings with students or students and families can also be set up via Zoom at a mutually convenient time.

Grading Policies, Procedures, and Expectations

Students are graded on their application of the creative process and their ability to find and develop ideas, select media/techniques/process, and build skills to support their artistic vision. Students are graded on effort and their improvement -- not where they started, but how they are able to grow.

Grade Breakdown and Weights

Formative -- 70% of final grade

- Planning stages
- Experimentation
- Skill practice
- Discussions
- Formative reflections and peer feedback activities

Summative -- 30% of final grade

- Final Projects
- Presentations
- Summative critique and reflection

Formative work is designed to provide students with ongoing feedback about how they are progressing on the learning objectives for the unit of study, and teachers with information about what students need in order to meet the learning objectives.

Summative work usually comes at the end of a unit of study and is designed to assess a student's level of understanding and mastery of the learning objectives.

Grading and Feedback Turnaround (Department Policy)

Formative assignments such as discussions, formative critique, planning stages, and smaller projects, will be graded within one week of the day they are due.

Summative assignments, which are larger, longer projects and may include final critiques, reports, or presentations, will be graded within two weeks of the day they are due.

Students will often have formative assignments that are not graded. These will contribute to overall ATL (Approaches to Learning) assessment.

Retake Policy (Department Policy)

Tasks, skills, and projects in this class build upon knowledge over the course of the semester, so it is important to try to work along with the class timeline so we move together as we shift focus and investigate different processes. If you feel that you would like to revise and resubmit a summative project for a higher grade, you may do so no later than two weeks before the final grading day of the semester.

Grades 6-8 Instrumental Music

Course Overview

The aim of instrumental music is to instill in students an understanding and appreciation of music that will enable them to be a lifelong participant in music. The course is to provide each student an opportunity to express themselves musically on a chosen instrument for serious music study and recreational playing, developing music reading and playing skills and providing a variety of instrumental ensemble experience. The following are specific aims:

- to become familiar with the standard repertoire for the particular instrument and ensemble combinations and to perform standard repertoire whenever feasible;
- to perform with different combinations of instruments;
- to perform a variety of musical styles and cultures;
- to develop reading and listening skills;
- to develop playing and performance skills; and
- to develop ensemble skills.

Units and Topics of Study

Throughout the course, students will:

- Learn and apply proper playing techniques on chosen instrument
- Read and play a variety of music in a progression demanding more complex musical concepts, including developing a wider playing range, in different key signatures, more complex rhythmic patterns and meters, form, dynamics, stylistic ornaments and interpretation
- Play major, minor, melodic, harmonic, chromatic scales and arpeggios
- Read and play independent parts as part of an ensemble
- Sight read
- Identify composers and their historical era
- Identify historical music eras and various styles
- Prepare for Winter and Spring concerts
- Complete homework/playing assignments for each class

Assessment

Assessment in this course is the following:

- Informal ongoing assessment in every class
- Formative assignment (70%)
 - Short recording assignments (methods book and/or concert music)
 - Class participation (prepared for class (instrument, music, pencil) and instrument playing performance)
 - Quizzes on music theory and history
 - Playing proficiency
- Summative Assignments (30%)
 - Tests and quizzes (music theory, history, and in-class videos)
 - Full recording assignments (concert pieces)
 - Concert performances and reflection

Grades 6-8 Theater Arts

Course Description

Theater Arts at WIS introduces and explores theatre from page to stage. Topics include the relationship between theater and society, dramatic structure, theatrical representation, and the crafts and responsibilities of theatre artists such as directors, designers, playwrights, dramaturgs, actors and audience.

At the heart of the journey are these three questions:

- Why do humans tell stories?
- How do we tell stories?
- Why do we need to hear stories?

Learning objectives:

Students will:

- learn and apply theatre techniques and styles including improvisation, character development, playwriting
- acquire skills that will boost self-esteem, group dynamics, confidence and public speaking skills
- collaborate within an ensemble to create and express themselves and nurture creativity and expression in others.

Guiding Questions

- How does theater impact culture?
- How does culture and community impact theater art?
- How does studying theater affect my worldview?
- What do I have to say, and how can I say it through my theater artistry?
- Can I create effective theater?
- Does theater have to be effective to succeed?

Units and Topics of Study

As we work through the semester we explore storytelling, building and creating stories, and character development. Key learning activities can include:

- Anne Bogart's Viewpoints Exercises
- Stanislavski's Given Circumstances
- Creating character, what is the rest of the story?
- Monologues and Scene work from published play texts
- Director's Notebook
- Designer's Vision
- Devised Play
- Directing

Assessment

Students will be assessed on performances, presentations, and studio work. All graded work carries the same weight. Classwork (small assignments, viewing and responding to films, readings, etc.) will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Most units have three graded components: research and writing, rehearsal/studio work, and presentation/performance.

Grading criteria includes:

- **Understanding Concepts:** demonstrate an ability to articulate practices and methodologies.
- **Application:** ability to develop and advance use of materials/investigation; developing personally unique methodologies.
- **Critical awareness:** reflection; ability to analyze own/ others' work objectively and use of appropriate vocabulary.
- **Growth and Personal engagement:** individual initiative, preparedness, and participation; appropriate behavior and use of materials.

Grades 6-8 Vocal Music

Course Description

The Grades 6-8 Vocal Music class focuses on the development of comprehensive choral musicianship through the performance experience. Members will be exposed to a breadth of music literature with an emphasis on high quality performance and thorough understanding. This ensemble performs throughout the year. All students are expected to attend all required concerts for their choir.

Course Goal: The overarching aim of the middle school vocal class is to cultivate a genuine love for music, improve vocal skills, build a strong foundation in singing techniques, and inspire self-expression and creativity through musical exploration.

Course Objectives: By the completion of the year, all students will be expected to accomplish the following:

Vocal Skills

1. Demonstrate appropriate music reading and aural skills in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.
2. Demonstrate appropriate vocal technique (including proper breath control and good tone quality) in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.
3. Demonstrate appropriate choral singing technique (including balance, blend, and intonation) in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.
4. Demonstrate musical performance of all the focus literature* (including note accuracy, memorization, and musicality) in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.

Musical Knowledge

1. Demonstrate knowledge of all musical terminology reflected in the focus literature.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic form and structure of the focus literature as presented in rehearsals.
3. Demonstrate the ability to critically listen and evaluate the musical performance of the ensemble.
4. Introduce music appreciation through the exploration of diverse musical genres, artists, and historical periods.

Assessment

Students are assessed through singing, vocal technique, theory, participation, written assignments, and quizzes.

Grades 6-8 Physical Education

Course Overview

The aim of our physical education course is to develop physically fit, emotionally aware, and socially adept individuals who are comfortable taking risks and thriving in a globally-complex environment. Through inquiry and with an emphasis on personal responsibility, we create learners who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy and embrace a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

Course Content/Units of Study

In physical education, students may have the opportunity to participate in the following units. They include:

- Cooperative games (variety of collaborative and community building activities)
- Games (badminton, basketball, volleyball, team handball)
- Fitness (fitness testing, weight training, strength and conditioning)
- Lifetime activities (dance, self-defense, and yoga)

Learning Outcomes

The PE class learning outcomes are based on the following National Physical Education Standards:

The physically literate individual...

- Standard 1: demonstrates competency in a variety of **motor skills** and **movement patterns**.
- Standard 2: applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to **movement and performance**.
- Standard 3: demonstrates the knowledge and skills to **achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness**.
- Standard 4: exhibits **responsible personal and social behavior** that **respects self and others**.
- Standard 5: recognizes the value of **physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction**

Assessment

Assessment includes peer assessment, self-assessment such as reflections, and teacher assessment.

The majority of a student's grade is derived from formative assessments and includes the following:

- Fitness journals
- Performance
- Social skills

Summative assessments include end-of-unit assessments such as:

- Tests and quizzes
- Presentations
- Research projects

Grades 6-8 Health

Course Overview

All Middle School students take the Health course once a cycle. WIS's health education program encompasses a broad spectrum of topics in an integrated and holistic way. This course is designed to assist students in obtaining accurate information, developing lifelong positive attitudes and behaviors, and making wise decisions related to their personal health.

The ultimate goal is to facilitate the development of positive attitudes and increase student's knowledge of what is necessary for healthy everyday living. This will be obtained through formal and informal instruction, support services, and a healthy school environment.

Units and Topics of Study

Study will include concussions, sleep, addictions, sex education, stress management, nutrition, self-esteem, peer pressure, injury prevention, and transition to Upper School.

Certain topics will be covered in multiple years to provide developmentally appropriate scaffolding in knowledge acquisition. Other topics are covered in only one year. Additionally, this class has been used to cover topics of need throughout the school year when an issue in any grade level is recognized.

Assessment

This course is a pass/fail course. All students keep a health journal throughout the year in which notes and writing assignments are maintained. Additionally, students may have a project to accomplish each semester, usually during class time. These, along with participation in class discussions, are considered in the student's final grade.

Grade 8 LearnServe

(This course is taught in Spanish and French)

Course Description

This is a semester-long course. LearnServe is a program based on the belief that young people have the power to change the world, and that schools can play a critical role in preparing them with the tools and self-confidence to take action. LearnServe's social entrepreneurship curriculum orients students towards becoming part of the solution. In the process they will be learning the business and leadership skills they will carry with them through their academic and professional careers.

LearnServe aims at making young people take charge and develop a project of their own to support their community and fight an issue that is relevant to them. To achieve these goals, we use three techniques:

- **Change self-perception.** We shift students' focus from simply being annoyed by the problems around them, or waiting for someone else (often an adult) to fix things, towards being the problem-solvers themselves.
- **Focus on the conversation.** Social problems often seem (and are) really big. We guide students to start with a "bite-sized" idea—and then grow the approach if successful. Students champion causes that move them; engage their communities in demonstrating need; and draw on the skills and experiences they uniquely bring to the topic.
- **Get started!** There is little more powerful than just doing. Planning is important—but sometimes we spend so much time planning we never get to the action. We encourage students to experience the "doing" as soon as possible—so they better see themselves as "doers," learn from their mistakes, and refine their plans.

Units and Topics of Study

- Analyze: Introduction to social entrepreneurship, identifying the problem, finding sources of information, conducting human centered research, and creating surveys.
- Innovate: solutions ideation, creating prototypes, envisioning impact, elevator pitch.

Assessment

Over the course of the semester, students will create and launch their own social venture, an action project to serve their school and community. In the process, students will learn and be evaluated on different technical skills—public speaking, budgeting, fundraising, impact measurement.