

WMS Grade 8 Electives Course Descriptions 2019

GRADE 8 ACTING & IMPROVISATION: Acting skills are taught through theater games and improvisation. Students develop a range of characters and work together as an ensemble to dramatize their ideas. Projects may include creating original plays and working with written dramatic material.

GRADE 8 CONTEMPORARY ART: Art is alive, and artists are speaking to the issues of our time right now! In this course, WMS artists will explore themes, techniques and materials that are currently trending in today's art community. In doing so they will learn how to make real-world connections, experience and appreciate the world of visual art. Course projects will be inspired by current Metro-Boston exhibits, and driven by individual student interest. The experience will culminate in a museum field trip each spring.

GRADE 8 DANCE: Students will learn basic dance steps and build them into short dances at the end of each class. We move in a variety of dance styles to a wide range of recorded music, as well having some classes with a live musician. Students do not need prior dance experience—just a willingness to move and have fun with it! Students will also be exposed to trends in dance history and the current dance scene, and will also learn to choreograph some of their own dances.

GRADE 8 DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY: This course introduces students to digital image building. Source images acquired from the web, digital cameras, and scans provide material for image enhancement and manipulation using Adobe PhotoShop software. References to image development in history are discussed as useful to contemporary work. High quality printing techniques on various photo and art papers are also covered. The skills learned provide students with an important foundation for future computer graphic work at the High School and beyond.

GRADE 8 DRAWING: Through a series of drawing exercises in contour, gesture, tone and color layering, students are provided with a foundation of techniques that allow for the development of a personal style. Projects such as self-portraits are accomplished in pencil, charcoal, Craypas, and mixed media. Realism, which is stressed early in the course, naturally evolves into a more expressive or abstract handling of subject and materials.

GRADE 8 ENGINEERING / ARTS: This elective course gives students experience in design, technological problem-solving, and craftsmanship in woodworking techniques, using both hand and power tools. Students begin by reviewing shop safety, tool use, and technical drawing, in the context of a simple wood project such as a sanding block. Next, they learn the use of miter saws, routers, bandsaws, sanders, drill presses, and finishing techniques through the design and construction of a fine art miter-joint box or bandsaw box of their own design. In a final project, they design and construct a small table or chair, building a scratch model, then using mortise-and-tenons and other joinery concepts to construct a final product.

GRADE 8 MUSICAL THEATER: Students will learn about the genre of the American Musical Theater by studying its history, creating their own original musical scenes, and performing scenes from some of our most famous creators of musicals, such as Rogers and Hammerstein or Stephen Sondheim. Students will also be involved in all aspects of the production of their scenes from costuming, sets and lighting to singing, acting and dancing.

GRADE 8 MUSIC THEORY AND COMPOSITION: This course will provide 8th grade students with all the tools necessary to enter high school as musically competent individuals, regardless of their specific musical interests. The following topics will be covered at an introductory level, with emphasis placed on their relevance to performing ensembles and the students' prior musical interests: reading and writing musical notation, understanding basic musical concepts (pitch, rhythm, chords, etc.) and basic composition, listening critically, and making connections and applications across musical genres. This course will utilize computer lab technology, allowing students to make use of interactive software and MIDI keyboards, making theory and composition both engaging and enjoyable.

GRADE 8 ROBOTICS: Students will tackle challenge-based projects in a group format to investigate robotic behaviors as a result of structural design as well as programming design. Students will learn control theory including on-off control and the basics of PID control. This course builds on topics taught in robotics 7, but it is not mandatory to have taken to enroll in robotics 8.

GRADE 8 SCENE STUDY: Students will learn the basics of directing, rehearsing and performing scenes from published plays. For a culminating project, classes choose from a variety of options such as performing a one-act play, presenting a performance of scenes, or working on individual auditions and monologues. This is a more advanced acting experience for the student who would like to perform for an audience.

GRADE 8 SCULPTURE: Students will work with a variety of materials to learn how to create large scale three-dimensional forms. They will develop a deep understanding of the design process beginning with researching, planning and sketching, to constructing a foundation and adding texture and then finally exploring palettes of color as they relates to a light source. Possible projects may include: mask making, wire forms, ceramic sculpture, and wooden constructions.

GRADE 8 VIDEO PRODUCTION: Students in this course will be introduced to various forms of media (like audio, video, photos, music), and have the responsibility of producing, writing, filming and editing a video production. They will learn skills in the areas of organization, time-management, teamwork, and critiquing their own work. Using the student video lab, students will create a video that not only exhibits sound technical elements, but also demonstrates a responsible use of this technology and media.