

Elective Course Descriptions

*Please note, courses highlighted in blue are available to 7th and 8th grade students only

2D Art	The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the practice of creating two dimensional artwork with an emphasis on the Principles of Design. Through the use of various media, students will develop an understanding of different methods and techniques to create different compositions; both realistic as well as abstract.
7 Habits of Highly Effective MS Stu	This class for 7th grade students will examine the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Middle School Students, which encourage the development of life-readiness skills that prepare you to lead your best life and face difficult challenges.
Ancient World Civilization	What is civilization and what does it mean for humans? What can ancient humanity tell us about ourselves? Students in this course will investigate these questions through broad exploration of ancient human societies around the world. Investigating a wide range of artifacts, we will deepen our understanding of the unique stories that arise from different historical contexts; and ask serious questions about human culture as a whole.
Brain Benders	This course requires students to collaborate on engaging activities that will allow them to solve problems through reasoning and perseverance. Students will discover techniques for solving problems through appropriate activities, which will include logic puzzles and games. Students will use deductive reasoning and adaptable thinking skills while fostering imagination and creativity, all in the framework of group dynamics.
Cardboard Arcade Challenge	Using materials that you have around the house, you'll build pinball games, bowling alleys, mini golf, and more. Learn more about Cain's Cardboard Arcade and celebrate 10 years of Imagine day of play which was first celebrated In October 2012. As a class, you will design, schedule, participate in and organize an arcade day for others in the school.
Ceramics	This ceramics course will expose students to the historical origins of the uses of clay. This course will also cover basic clay concepts, techniques, vocabulary, and 3D ceramic design. Students will design a variety of fun projects using various clay strategies.
Chemical Reactions	Students explore the concept that chemical reactions involve the breaking of bonds between atoms in the reactants, and the rearrangement and rebonding of these atoms to make the products. Students investigate reactions which produce a gas, form a precipitate, and cause a color change. Students also explore endothermic and exothermic reactions.
Choir	This course is focused on vocal performance. Students will refine their vocal skills, their ability to sight sing music, and experience singing in a multi-part ensemble. As singers, we will discover how to manipulate aspects of the voice to achieve a particular sound. Our repertoire will include traditional choral music as well as pop and Broadway music.
Creative Writing	This course is designed to help students pursue their own creative writing endeavors. We will discuss how to generate ideas, and how to incorporate those ideas into our writing. We will break the writing process down and look at the decisions a writer must make when building a story. Students will develop their creative writing skills by engaging in the act of creative writing and will develop skills and knowledge that will help them to complete their creative projects on their own.
Cryptography	Students will learn about what cryptography is and how it's been used throughout time, from the Ancient Egyptians, to WWII, and in modern times. In this class you will learn different methods of cracking codes that have been used historically, and apply what you have learned to solve puzzles or encrypt your own codes. We will also see how modern cryptography is used in information security to keep messages and data safe from thieves and hackers.
Digital Media Content Creation	This course is for students interested in learning the process of creating high quality digital media content for platforms such as YouTube. We will work through the entire content creation process including planning, design, branding, elements of photography and cinematography, storyboarding, filming, and editing. Students will have the opportunity to create short film and media projects including graphic arts and short films.
Drama/Theater	In this course students will study theater and drama. There are many important roles to fill in any theater production, both on and off the stage, which we will learn about. As a group we will rehearse and perform a one act play, developing an understanding of the theatrical elements that are incorporated into every performance.
Early Childhood	This course will explore the development of children from birth to 8 years old. In this course we will learn about the physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development of children at different stages. Students will get a first hand opportunity to observe and work with students in an early childhood program.
Electronic Music Production	This class is designed for students interested in learning how to write, record, and produce music. We will develop musical skills such as ear training, music theory, and computer skills to make music. Students will gain the knowledge of how to use a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) for creating and sharing music. Students will be provided opportunities throughout the term to showcase their work to the class and the school and receive feedback on their compositions.

Exploring Dance and Choreography	Learn about the different styles of dance while exploring the basic techniques and terminology that go along with each genre. Students will learn the elements of choreography and analyze different dances. Each student will create their own choreographed dance.
Farm to Table	This course is designed to develop Middle School student's awareness of the relationship between the seasons, the food we eat, where it comes from, and the science behind keeping and preserving food from those places. Major concepts to be covered will be types of agriculture, sustainability, seasonality of produce/recipes, and the history and science of various methods of food preservation. Students will come away from this course having fundamental knowledge of the impact of agriculture on our planet and our lives, and will get hands-on knowledge of how to preserve food they grow or purchase.
Forensic Science	Become a Forensic Scientist and solve a crime scene by looking examining the evidence. Learn about the unique features of bite marks and fingerprints. Find the pen and find the answer. Explore how chemical analysis of ink can solve the crime.
French 1	*This is a full year course. This class is designed for students interested in learning how to speak French. Learning a foreign language is challenging but also very rewarding. We will learn the fundamentals of the French language and beginning conversational French. Students must be willing to speak in French as we learn, this includes daily practice of new sounds, and new vocabulary. We will also be learning about France, French culture, and other French-speaking countries around the world.
Great Big World of M	This class is designed for students who desire a broad understanding of all music with a passion for music without a specific area of interest. We will go over a variety of topics including: The History of All Music, Western and Non-Western music, Music in Film, Music Science, Modern Popular Music, Careers in Music, Live Sound & Recording Music, What Makes Music Good, Why People Make Music, From Large to Small: Genres to Sub-Genres, Chords in Music and Theory, The Musical Experience, and Experimental Music.
Instrumental Workshop	This class is designed for instrumental musicians to experience music making in an advanced ensemble setting. In previous years students elected to create a variety of musical groups including a percussion ensemble. Students will democratically choose the style of ensemble for the class. We will develop our technical, musical, and teamwork skills through performing music together. Students will be provided opportunities throughout the term to practice leadership skills and perform music for an audience. This class is highly recommended for any students interested in participating in All-State music festivals.
Leadership	This class is designed to help you discover and develop your talents as a leader. Everyone has the potential to lead, and every day provides you with opportunities and possibilities to lead. As you learn how to integrate your leadership skills into your everyday life you will become more confident in your potential and your abilities as a leader.
Lessons for Living your Best Life	This class is designed for students interested in learning how to live their best life. This class will help students learn strategies to help navigate through life's challenges. Students will learn how to solve problems, overcome difficulties, and work with others toward common goals. Students will learn how to create meaningful goals and make plans for achieving those goals.
Music Composition	In this course students will be able to compose their own pieces of music, with an understanding of music theory, form, structure, genre, and style. Students will have the chance to improvise music, compose on real instruments, and compose using music technology.
Painting	This painting course will introduce students to various painting styles, techniques, and time periods. Through the study of water color, tempera and acrylic paint, students will create different compositions utilizing the Elements and Principles of Design.
Personal Finance - The Cost of Living	Students will explore personal finances that they may encounter as they get older and graduate from high school. Topics will include: Intro to Personal Finance, Savings (college, vacation, retirement etc.), Budgeting, Living Expenses, Credit vs. Debt
Plant Pathology/Plant Evolutions	Students will study the various origins of the plants we know today. All plants have an ancestral background and stories to tell about how they evolved to interact with the natural world we live in today. Students will study parts and functions of plants to gain a deeper understanding of their needs and how to care for them. Students will also learn about specific diseases plants battle, how to identify when and why plants become stressed, and learn basic tools towards alleviating those ailments.
Plants as Medicine	Every leaf, stem, flower, seed, and fruit have been used for thousands of years, across vast civilizations to enhance and promote proper human health. Students will learn the stories and backgrounds of a wide variety of plant species and how early humans used each part of the plant for a variety of purposes. Modern medicine is a compilation of ancient agricultural properties mixed with new technological developments. In this course, students will study techniques from the past and how we have integrated that knowledge into today's medicinal world.
Practical Life	This class is designed to teach students basic life skills that will lead to personal growth and independence. . . Students will be surveyed in the beginning of this course to choose specific life skills they want to learn about. Topics that will be offered to students range from CPR, sewing, cooking, financial literacy, to dining etiquette, laundry and more. By the end of this course students will have a firm understanding of skills that they can use for life.

Song Writing	This class is designed for students interested in learning how to write songs. Songwriting is an art form that combines poetic literature and music to communicate ideas. Students will learn both how to construct a chord progression and melody as well as how to write lyrics for their songs. Students should have some experience with playing an instrument prior to joining the class. Students will be provided opportunities throughout the term to showcase their work to the class and the school and receive feedback on their work.
Spanish 1	*This is a full year course. This class is designed for students interested in learning Spanish. Learning a foreign language is a challenging but valuable experience. Students will learn the fundamentals of the Spanish language and beginning conversational Spanish. Students must be willing to speak in Spanish during class, which includes daily practice of new sounds and vocabulary. They will also learn about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries.
Sustainability and Technology Across	This course is designed to educate students to become more aware of all the different ways we can use technology towards growing/cultivating plants. There have been many advances made in the past few decades which have enabled us to enhance our plant production. Utilizing our natural resources (water, land, air) humans have been able to redesign growing techniques for plant productions in the most unlikely scenarios. We have learned how to grow food in aquatic settings, change DNA dynamics of seeds to be more drought resistant, and repel insects. We have learned how to take a healthy productive plant and clone its properties to replicate all of its bounty. We will explore these ideas and many more throughout the duration of this course.
Travel into Space	Follow along with NASA scientists and engineers as they work in a wide range of settings around the country, from laboratories to airfields to wind tunnels to control rooms. While completing five challenges students will learn about Aeronautics and identify how flight technologies have practical applications on Earth and improve our ability to explore space. They will explore how new technologies and spacecraft make human and robotic exploration more affordable and sustainable.
Ukulele	This class is designed for students interested in learning how to play the ukulele and sing. Ukulele is a great instrument to learn if you are interested in learning to play guitar or write your own songs. We will learn the theory behind chord progressions in music and how to perform them on ukuleles. We will also go over the history of the ukulele and musical culture in the Pacific Islands. Singing is a key component of ukulele music and many people use the instrument as accompaniment for their own songs. Students will be provided opportunities throughout the term to showcase their work to the class and the school and receive feedback on their work.
Yearbook/Publications	In this course students will help to create and design the FSMA yearbook. Students will produce layouts, photographs, graphic design, digital images and manage the production of the yearbook. Students will also learn journalistic forms and techniques and apply these skills to identify and report "newsworthy" events in our FSMA community.