

Middle School Elective Course Descriptions 2022-2023



Codes for the credit category are listed under each class description.

AC	<i>Academic Support and Enrichment</i>
CT	<i>Career and Technical Education</i>
FA	<i>Fine Arts – Art (AR), Music (MU), and Performing Arts (PA)</i>
HU	<i>Humanities – English, Literature and Social Sciences</i>
FL	<i>Foreign Languages – Chinese, French, Spanish</i>
SM	<i>STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math</i>
WE	<i>Wellness, Health and Physical Fitness</i>

Academic Support and Enrichment

- 1. Academic Strategies (Teachers Vary)** - Designed to help students improve study skills, notes, test taking, writing, following directions, organization, catch up on technology knowledge, and overall how to succeed at Ashbrook and throughout high school.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: AC*
- 2. Math Lab (Teachers Vary)** - Students at all levels will hone their math skills in this class where each one's individual needs will be addressed. All students can benefit from this class; some students might be assigned to take it.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: AC*

Career and Technical Education

- 1. Digital Design (Mr. Hunt)** - Through various projects students will learn the fundamentals of graphic design. This course will allow middle school students to learn the basics of Adobe Photoshop Elements by editing images and using layers. Students will also learn the basics of Adobe Illustrator and use the software to create vector graphics used to make stickers, t-shirt designs, and laser cut/engraved designs.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: CT or SM*
- 2. Game Design (Mr. Hunt)** - Students will learn to design exciting and professional-looking computer games using Game Maker game creation tool. They will begin by looking at basic games like Pong and then move to more intricate examples and programming language. They will learn to control characters, objects, and outcomes in the game, and then they will increase the difficulty level and add more features.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: CT or SM*
- 3. Logic: Board Games and Puzzles (Dr. Steckler)** - Logic is the backbone to understanding math and science as well as many other disciplines. Hone your sense of logic through board games, logic puzzles, and other activities.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: CT or SM*

Fine Arts

Art

- 1. 8th Grade Art (Mr. Olson)** - Students will do a series of culminating activities including the 8th grade graduation boards. 8th Grade Art is required during spring term of the 8th grade year.
 - **Homework: None**
 - **Credit: FA: AR**
 - **8th Grade only**
- 2. Art Core (Mr. Olson)** - Through various slide lectures and classroom activities the students will develop an understanding of the basics of art history and the philosophy of aesthetics. They will be able to walk into any art museum in the world and understand and appreciate the diversity they will find there. The students will understand that the history of art is their legacy and an invitation from their ancestors directly to them. Art Core is required 1 time during Middle School and cannot be repeated.
 - **Homework: None**
 - **Credit: FA: AR**
- 3. Calligraphy (Mrs. Washburn)** - Dip-pen calligraphy is a delicate craft which elevates lettering into artwork. Learning to use pens and nibs can be challenging, but the results produced are stunning. You'll learn how to hold and use both straight and oblique pens, and practice a variety of lettering styles and embellishments. Finally, you'll design a capstone project of your own.
 - **Homework: None**
 - **Credit: FA: AR**
- 4. Cartooning (Mr. Olson)** - Through creating many different kinds of cartoons and graphic stories the students will become familiar with the main tools artists use to combine pictures and written stories. We will look at funny cartoons, political cartoons, and graphic novels and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each type of storytelling device. Then we will use our knowledge to create our own short cartoons.
 - **Homework: None**
 - **Credit: FA: AR**
- 5. Ceramics (Mr. Olson)** - Through various projects students will learn the fundamentals of ceramics. The students will learn 4 hand building techniques. The course will emphasize creative problem solving to manipulate the clay to meet our artistic requirements.
 - **Homework: None**
 - **Credit: FA: AR**
- 6. Drawing (Mr. Olson)** - Through various projects students will learn the fundamentals of drawing and drawing tools including a wide variety of pencils, charcoal, graphite, erasers, papers, and smearing tools. The students will complete work in the classic genres: Still life, Landscape, Portrait, and Symbolic self-expression. The course will emphasize how we struggle to really see our world and to understand how we learn about our world by struggling to draw it.
 - **Homework: None**
 - **Credit: FA: AR**
- 7. Hand Lettering (Mrs. Washburn)** - Check out social media and you'll find countless creatives practicing the art of hand lettering. In this course you will learn the essential techniques of hand lettering, and have ample opportunities to develop and improve your abilities in this medium. You'll create multiple projects, including a final assignment of your own choosing.
 - **Homework: None**
 - **Credit: FA: AR**
 - **Fee: \$15 students should purchase their own set of pens**

8. **Painting (Mr. Olson)** - Through various projects students will learn the fundamentals of painting. The students will learn a wide variety of painting styles and techniques they have likely never tried before. The course will emphasize how we struggle to really see our world and to understand how we learn about our world by struggling to paint it.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: FA: AR*
9. **Scrapbooking (Dr. Steckler)** - Students will be able to explore creative techniques to make a visually appealing scrapbook. Students need to bring 30-50 pictures of an event or their life as well as a blank scrapbook. We will look at ways of framing the pictures, add cutouts and lettering using a Cricut machine, and adding stickers and other embellishments.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: FA: AR*
10. **Sculpture (Mr. Olson)** - Through various projects students will learn the fundamentals of sculpture. The students will work with clay, plaster, soap, and wood to finish their projects. The course will emphasize creative problem solving to manipulate the materials to meet our artistic requirements.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: FA: AR*

Music

1. **Beginning Band (Mr. Hoge)** - This class includes all fifth graders but is also open to older students who wish to begin playing a wind, brass, or percussion instrument. The emphasis is primarily on learning the instrument and performing as a band, though there may be some opportunities to sing or play other types of music and instruments.
 - *Homework: Light*
 - *Credit: FA: MU*
 - *This is a year-long class*
2. **Intermediate Band (Mr. Hoge)** – An ensemble open to all students in 6-8th grades. This course is a great option for students who enjoy playing in an ensemble and feeling musically challenged, but are not ready for the high musical expectations and practicing time commitment of Advanced Band. Homework: Weekly homework/practice assignments are given during class and posted on SmartMusic - Assigned at the beginning of each week and due on Fridays.
 - *Homework: Light*
 - *Credit: FA: MU*
 - *This is a year-long class*
3. **Advanced Band (Mr. Hoge)** - An audition-based ensemble for 6-8th grade students. Advanced Band is a class designed for middle school students who are ready for the time commitment and independent practicing expectations this ensemble demands. Homework: Weekly homework/practice assignments are given during class and posted on SmartMusic - Assigned at the beginning of each week and due on Fridays. Auditions for this ensemble will take place during the last two weeks of school (June 6th-17th). Email dhoge@ashbrookschoool.org for the audition music.
 - *Homework: Medium*
 - *Credit: FA: MU*
 - *This is a year-long class*

Performing Arts

1. **Acting Lab (Ms. Shaub)** – This exciting course will cover basic stage skills and techniques. Using a hands-on approach to learning about acting, students will explore a wide range of theatrical experiences: improvisation, pantomime, voice work, and character building, as well as monologues and scenes. Theater terminology is also studied. Students will present short scenes and/or monologues in class.

- *Homework: Light*
 - *Credit: FA: PA*
2. **Basic Dungeons & Dragons - 1983 Edition (Mr. Washburn)** - Students will roll up first-level characters according to the Basic Dungeons & Dragons Rulebook (1983 Edition). Then, using math and improvisational acting, they will complete a short, pulse-pounding Mr. Washburn-original adventure full of dangerous adversaries, traps, and precious treasures. Keep in mind, the game is cooperative, not competitive. You work with the other players, not against them.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: FA: PA*
 3. **Behind the Scenes (Ms. Shaub)** - Explore behind the scenes areas like props, set, lights, sound, stage management, rigging, running crew, and theater maintenance and organization. Class will support the Spring Play through in-class projects. Volunteering for the Spring Play crew is optional. Also dabble in stage make up, costuming, and set design.
 - *Homework: Light*
 - *Credit: FA: PA*
 4. **Playwright Lab (Ms. Shaub)** – This is a writing lab for aspiring playwrights. We will use writing prompts, play writing techniques and workshoping techniques to create and refine scenes, monologues, and short plays. All writing will be done in class.
 - *Homework: Light*
 - *Credit: FA: PA or HU*
 5. **Readers Theater (Ms. Shaub)** - Students read scripts aloud to convey story and character using their voice, facial expressions, and gestures. The only requirement is the script, but signature costume pieces and a prop or two might be added for dramatic effect.
 - *Homework: Light*
 - *Credit: FA: PA or HU*

Foreign Languages

Foreign Languages: Ashbrook offers French, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish.

Beginning in 5th grade, students can choose one of two options:

- Middle School FL Sequence 1 - language was started in grade 5
- Middle School FL Sequence 2 - language was continued from Lower School
- Both Sequences move through Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Levels based on language proficiency.
- New Middle School students will automatically be placed in a Beginning Level Class unless they can demonstrate formal Foreign Language study at their previous school or test out of a Beginning Level Class in the placement test.
- Students remain in the same language for all four years.

Humanities

1. **Comic Book History (Mr. Washburn)** – Students will trace the evolution of (mostly superhero) comic books from the 1930s through the current Marvel and DC Cinematic Universes. Stops along the way will include the 1954 Senate hearings on juvenile delinquency, the counterculture boom, and Marvel’s near bankruptcy in 1996.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
2. **Creative Writing (Mr. Washburn)** – The students will design their own writing projects. In this workshop setting, students are encouraged to collaborate with their classmates and to share their independent work among themselves for insights and varied perspectives.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*

3. **Detective Fiction (Mr. Washburn)** - The students will read or view detectives in a wide range of settings and situations, starting with works by Edgar Allan Poe. Stops along the way will include Sherlock Holmes, Philip Marlow, Bat Man, and Harry Dresden. We will compare and contrast the characters and discuss new possibilities for detectives in the future.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
4. **Faeries (Mr. Washburn)** – Students will read some fairytales, but the focus will be on the faeries themselves. Students will examine the similarities and differences of faeries in various cultures and seek out evidence of them in modern day books, movies, and television shows. Faeries are not all Tinkerbell-like pixies. There are scary ones too, like redcaps and kelpies.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
5. **Heroes, Myths & Legends: The Classical World (Mrs. Washburn)** - Names like Odysseus, Achilles, Paris, and Hector are familiar to many modern readers because tales of their adventures have been enjoyed through the centuries. In this class you'll read excerpts from *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, the *Ramayana*, and other tales from classical cultures. You'll engage with the tales through dramatic performances, creative writing, storyboard activities, and an independent end-of-term project.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
6. **Model United Nations (Mrs. Washburn)** - Ready to save the world? The Oregon Model United Nations Conference brings together high school (and a few select middle school) students from around the state to join together in deliberations designed to resolve major global issues. This class will prepare you to represent the political and social views of a particular country by writing two position papers on agenda topics set by the Oregon Model United Nations Secretariat. Participation in the conference is not mandatory, but why would you want to miss it? Please note: Topics in this course can cover a variety of emotionally-charged issues such as genocide and human rights abuses.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
 - *Fee: \$250-\$350 for 3 day Oregon MUN Annual Conference in April**
 - *7th and 8th grade only*
7. **Mythology: Norse (Mr. Washburn)** – Students will learn about Norse gods and goddesses and read some of their principal myths. Then, they will trace their evolution through modern day books, comic books, movies, and shows.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
8. **Oregon History Day (Mrs. Washburn)** - National History Day is a chance for you to engage in independent historical research, and then create an exhibit, website, group performance, documentary film, or paper about your findings. You'll also be eligible to compete in the Oregon History Day competition, which brings together students from across the state to show their work to a panel of judges who provide feedback—and announce prize winners! The 2023 theme is Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU or CT*
9. **Russian History Survey (Mrs. Washburn)** - Modern Russia spans eleven percent of the world's landmass. A country that large boasts a history to match! In this survey class, you'll look at the early princes who staked their claim to power and were ultimately overthrown by the Mongol invasions. You'll learn about the rule of Russian monarchs like Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, Alexander I, and Nicholas II--the final tsar of Russia--and then about the chaos of the Russian Revolution and Civil War. You'll also examine Russia's role in the later twentieth century, including what happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*

- 10. TEDTalks & Genius Projects (Mrs. Washburn)** - Inspired by Google's practice of encouraging employees to spend twenty percent of their time learning about things which interest them and the motto of TEDTalks, "ideas worth spreading," this course is a chance for you to indulge in studying something which matters to you and sharing your findings through a TED-style talk. We'll follow advice from the folks at TED on how to plan, assemble, perform, and record your talk—and possibly have our own TED forum night!
- *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
- 11. Tolkien Lore (Mr. Washburn)** – Students will start with a brief overview of the history of Arda, which is the world that contains Middle Earth. Once they have their bearings, students will be invited to research characters and events which intrigue them and then share their findings with the class. Characters who appear in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* often have rich and very long histories, and this is a chance for some deep dives.
- *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
- 12. Twentieth-Century History Survey (Mrs. Washburn)** - Many students express an interest in learning more about the turbulent history of the twentieth century—and this is your chance to explore! You'll get a chance to dig deeper into the major international conflicts which dominated the century, and take a look at social movements which also shaped societies. This is a general global survey, but we'll examine some particularly American topics too.
- *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*
- 13. Writing Short Stories for Publication (Mr. Washburn)** – Students will start the class by examining some of the nuts-and-bolts of short story writing. The bulk of the class will focus upon planning, writing, revising, and editing short stories which will be gathered in an anthology and shared with the Ashbrook community.
- *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: HU*

STEM

- 1. Boat Building (Mr. Hunt and Mr. Olson)** - This boat is not a mini-boat for your bathtub. Groups will be responsible for constructing a sea-worthy vessel capable of carrying one or more members of the group in a water race at the end of the school year. Boats will be built out of cardboard or recycled materials such as milk cartons, bottles, or cans. One of the goals of the project is to build group skills and improve the student's ability to work cooperatively with others.
- *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: SM or FA: AR*
 - *Fee: \$20 for boat supplies**
 - *7th and 8th grade only*
- 2. Chemistry 1 – High School (Dr. Steckler)** - H.S. Chemistry 1 is a one year double elective that covers high school chemistry. It is open to all students in grades 7 and 8 who want to study chemistry at an advanced level and are willing to put in the work that is required. We will cover all the major topics of high school chemistry including the structure of the atom, ionic and covalent compounds, nomenclature, chemical reactions, stoichiometry, gasses, energy and chemical change, reaction rates, chemical equilibrium, and acids and bases. We move at a rate that matches the ability of the class. Students choosing this elective should be very interested in a challenge and are willing to work hard with strong support from the instructor. Note - this elective will meet every day of the week. It will be both an A class and a B class.
- *Homework: Heavy*
 - *Credit: SM*
 - *7th and 8th grade only*
 - *This is a year-long class*
 - *Fee: \$40 for labs**

3. **Chemistry 2 – High School (Dr. Steckler)** - H.S. Chemistry 2 is a continuation class for the 8th graders who took the chemistry elective last year. This class will meet in the normal elective schedule (every other day). It is a one year elective that will cover the material we did not get to last year. It is open to only those students who took chemistry last year. Other students interested in taking chemistry should enroll in the double elective course titled High School Chemistry. We move at a rate that matches the ability of the class. Students choosing this elective should be very interested in a challenge and are willing to work hard with strong support from the instructor.
 - *Homework: Heavy*
 - *Credit: SM*
 - *8th grade only who completed Chemistry 1*
 - *This is a year-long class*
 - *Fee: \$25 for labs**

4. **DNA & Genetics (Dr. Steckler)** - DNA and Genetics is an advanced course that takes off where Life Science ended. This lab-based course allows the student to go deeper into the topic (beyond Mendellian genetics) and do additional lab experiments including Gel electrophoresis that we didn't have time to cover in the core course. The course is designed for those students with a deep interest in science and who are ready to cover material at a High School level. There is a small lab fee for this course to help cover the cost of additional lab supplies and equipment and to cover breakage.
 - *Homework: Medium*
 - *Credit: SM*
 - *7th and 8th grade only*
 - *Fee: \$20**

5. **Robots: Electronics & Coding (Dr. Steckler)** - This is a class in basic electronics and computer programming for both novices and experienced programmers. We will be building a robot based on a raspberry pi computer and then programming it using a block language similar to Scratch (Bloxter) for novice programmers or in Python for those who would like to learn a text-based computer programming language. We will use GoPiGo robot platform which has a hat that runs on top of the raspberry pi. Students can choose to program in pascal or in a special drag and drop program accessible to all 7th/8th grade students.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: SM*
 - *7th and 8th grade only*
 - *Fee: \$25**

6. **Study of Probability (Mr. Hunt)** - Students will practice various card games, including poker, to exercise their brains, lift their spirits, and develop an acute sense of probability. Students must maintain a B- or above in all classes in order to participate in that day's games, otherwise it can be used as a study period.
 - *Homework: None*
 - *Credit: SM*

Wellness, Health and Physical Fitness (6th-8th grade PE/Health are required courses)

1. **Active Oregon (Ms. Weber)** - Students would learn how to stay physically active and safe while utilizing the great outdoors of the Pacific Northwest. We live in such a beautiful state and I would love to show students just how much is out there for them to explore. We would cover skills like team building, hiking safety, camping tips and tricks, wilderness First Aid, orienteering, and fishing and explore the different activity options like kayaking/canoeing, biking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, XC skiing, paddle boarding, rock climbing, ropes course, rafting, etc.
 - *Homework: Light*
 - *Credit: WE*

2. **Bullet Journal: Basics and Exploration (Mrs. Washburn)** - Are you interested in making better use of your time? In reflecting on your day-to-day living? In organizing your schedule? Maybe a Bullet Journal is for you. Using Ryder Carroll's "analog method for the digital age," students will create and maintain a basic BuJo, then add elements as the course progresses. Basic layouts, collections, projects, and notebook migrations will be

covered. Students will also have the opportunity to design their own layouts and tailor their BuJos to their own unique situations.

- **Homework:** *None*
- **Credit:** *WE*
- **Materials:** *Students must supply a dot-grid notebook and pack of colored pens*

- 3. Fit for Life (Ms. Weber)** - Students get to explore different opportunities to stay fit and active throughout their lifetime! This class allows us the freedom to explore activities and programs important to individual students! Some activities could include: Yoga, Weight Lifting, Gym etiquette and protocols, Running / Jogging, Games & Sports, What we cover will be completely customizable to the students of this course!
 - **Homework:** *None to Light*
 - **Credit:** *WE*
- 4. Invasion Games (Ms. Weber)** - Sports and activities are broken up into different categories of play. This class is set up for us to take a deeper dive into a variety of invasion style games (games with an interacting offense and defense, where you can “invade” the other teams playing area). This includes games like soccer, basketball, football, ultimate Frisbee, rugby, hockey, polo, quidditch, etc.
 - **Homework:** *None*
 - **Credit:** *WE*
- 5. Mountain Biking Madness (Doc)** - Mountain Biking Madness students will explore a variety of terrain as offered to, from, and within Willamette Park. Newer riders will learn to navigate technical elements and more experienced riders will learn to challenge themselves and grow in their skills. Participants should be avid and fit cyclists, be OK with sweat and mud, and able to ride for an hour with minimal breaks.
 - **Homework:** *None*
 - **Credit:** *WE*
 - **Bicycle in good riding condition with at least a 26” wheel diameter, a spare tube, a water bottle or hydration pack, a helmet, and a string or day pack.**
- 6. Muggle Quidditch (Ms. Weber)** - A fast paced, high energy game, adapted right from the wizarding world of Harry Potter. The game involves 2 teams competing to earn the most points. You do play on brooms and there are quaffles, bludgers and a snitch to catch! We will sort you into your own house teams, break down and practice each position, get to know the rules of play, compete for house points and hold an end of term Quidditch cup tournament!
 - **Homework:** *None*
 - **Credit:** *WE*
- 7. Target Games (Ms. Weber)** - Sports and activities are broken up into different categories of play. This class is set up for us to take a deeper dive into a variety of target style games (Game play involves accuracy and precise aim towards a target). This includes games like; bowling, KanJam, all forms of golf (regular, disc golf, soccer golf, put put), bocce, kubb, polish horseshoes, shuffleboard, horseshoes, and archery.
 - **Homework:** *None*
 - **Credit:** *WE*
- 8. Ultimate Frisbee (Mr. Hunt)** – Students leaving this class have been successful ultimate players in high school and beyond. Students will primarily participate in ultimate games, but also may play Durango Boot, Box, or other Frisbee related games.
 - **Homework:** *None*
 - **Credit:** *WE*

**Elective course fees are waived for students receiving financial aid.*