



MIDDLE SCHOOL ELECTIVES  
COURSE CATALOG

2022-2023

Dear Middle School Parents and Students,

We are excited to offer the following elective choices for Middle School. We encourage you to have a conversation with your child about their choices and goals for the upcoming year. The choices should be made by students with parental input. Every student will take P.E. each trimester. The winter trimester elective period is used for a required course on Israel. Descriptions are included below, but all students take the course for their grade level. Once students have made their decisions, please submit your choices to Mr. Schmidt through the link provided: <https://forms.gle/34fSWcuAhUwgWc8AA>

Be sure to choose a 1<sup>st</sup> choice and 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate. Eighth graders' choices will be considered first. If your child is disappointed with being placed in a second choice class, please remind them that by eighth grade, they will have many first choice placements. We look forward to an exciting year!

Rick Schmidt  
Middle School Coordinator

**Listing By Trimester and Period**

	<b>First Period</b>	<b>Seventh Period</b>
<b>FIRST TRIMESTER</b>		
	PE	PE
	Intro to Sewing	Quilting 101
	Elements of Storytelling: Theatre	Heroes, Myths, and Legends
	Band	Robotics
	Jewish Art Lab	
<b>SECOND TRIMESTER</b>		
	PE	PE
	The Modern State of Israel, from Vision to Establishment - 7TH GRADE REQUIRED COURSE	The Modern State of Israel, from Vision to Establishment - 8TH GRADE REQUIRED COURSE
	Israel on the Map - 6TH GRADE REQUIRED COURSE	
<b>THIRD TRIMESTER</b>		
	Band	Skateboard Science
	PE	PE
	Math in Art	The Wildness of our World
	Elements of Storytelling: Comics and Graphic Novels	Truman Awards: Books Made for Us

## **Band (First and Third Trimester) - Dr. Mark Connor**

The Middle School Band class offers instruction on woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments with a focus on the skills necessary for long-term student success. Students will improve basic musicianship skills through the practice and performance of concert works and exercises in a large ensemble setting. Fundamentals stressed include proper posture and playing position, development of characteristic tone quality and training in music literacy. Students will take Band all together on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

## **Judaic and Hebrew Course Descriptions**

### **Jewish Art Lab (First Trimester) - Reb Scott**

We will collaboratively think, play, study, design, and install art in "PaRDeS Planting" to spice up the space and inspire our community to take our work there to the next level.

### **The Modern State of Israel, from Vision to Establishment. - 8th Grade Required Course (Second Trimester) - Morah Becky**

How did Herzl come to the understanding that the Jewish people should have their own state? Who was living in the land before the establishment of the state? Who declared independence, and what happened next? How did so many Jews arrive in the time periods before and after the creation of the state? In this class we will examine what our legacy and responsibility is in understanding this epic event in Jewish history.

### **The Modern State of Israel, from Vision to Establishment - 7th Grade - Required Course (Second Trimester) - Morah Becky**

How did Herzl come to the understanding that the Jewish people should have their own state? Who was living in the land before the establishment of the state? Who declared independence, and what happened next? How did so many Jews arrive in the time periods before and after the creation of the state? In this class we will examine what our legacy and responsibility is in understanding this epic event in Jewish history.

## **Israel On The Map - 6th Grade Required Course (Second Trimester) - Coach Gary**

What are some of the reasons there are many maps of Israel? How do different maps of Israel tell different stories? Maps are creative, visual representations of information and stories, representing particular points of view and perspectives. They are visual documents that can be read and interpreted like text. In this class we explore many ways of correctly mapping Israel, and create our own maps, to convey a variety of information.

### **SCIENCE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

#### **ROBOTICS (Limit of 20 students)(First Trimester) - Mr. Schmidt**

Introduces students to real-world engineering challenges by building LEGO-based robots to complete tasks on a thematic playing surface. FLL teams, guided by their imaginations and adult coaches, discover exciting career possibilities and, through the process, learn to make positive contributions to society.

*The Middle-School students get to:*

- Design, build, test and program robots using LEGO MINDSTORMS® technology
- Apply real-world math and science concepts
- Research challenges facing today's scientists
- Learn critical thinking, team-building and presentation skills
- Participate in tournaments and celebrations

This will be a first trimester class. Additional time outside of the regular class will be required in preparation for and during competitions. Competitions will take place on a Sunday to be determined and full-day team member participation is required.

#### **Skateboard Science (Third Trimester) - Mr. Schmidt**

Students build and experiment with three-dimensional models of skate park equipment to explore the physics of skateboarding. Once constructed, they send glass marble "skaters" through their park, and explain how the skater and each piece of equipment demonstrate concepts of physics including potential and kinetic energy, friction, and momentum.

## **ELA COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Elements of Storytelling: Theatre (First Trimester)- Morah Bethany**

*(This elective will investigate the way that writers, film-makers, playwrights, artists, etc. tell stories using non-traditional methods. Each trimester will look at a different medium, including theatre, film, comics, music, and other forms of art, as the storytelling conventions of each genre are unique. This particular trimester I would like to look at theatre.)*

Students will review key elements of storytelling such as characterization, tone, irony, imagery, setting, etc. and explore how producers, directors, and performers approach these elements to “tell” stories in a different way. The class will explore popular performances and productions to explore alternative methods of building a world and telling a meaningful story. At the end of the class, students will have the opportunity to work together to “storyboard” and design their own production using the elements we have explored together.

### **Heroes, Myths, and Legends (First Trimester) - Morah Bethany**

In this class, students will investigate what it means to be a hero by exploring significant myths, legends, and stories from world cultures, including contemporary American heroes. What society holds up as “heroic” can tell us a lot about the values of that society. By studying heroes from other cultures, we will develop the tools to look at our own heroes with deeper understanding and appreciation for the culture that created them. At the end of this class, students will reflect on the values they personally uphold and create a hero and a story that reflects those values.

### **Elements of Storytelling: Comics and Graphic Novels (Third Trimester) - Morah Bethany**

Students will review key elements of storytelling such as characterization, tone, irony, imagery, setting, etc. and explore how illustrators and writers of comics and graphic novels approach storytelling in a unique way. The class will explore alternative methods of building a world and telling a meaningful story. At the end of the class, students will have the opportunity to work together to adapt a story into a comic using the conventions of the genre to maintain the integrity of the story using methods appropriate to the genre.

## **Truman Awards: Books Made for Us ( Third Trimester) - Morah Bethany**

Each year, the Missouri Association of School Librarians choose a selection of recent novels written for 6-8th grade audiences based on a variety of criteria including genre diversity, gender representation, range of reading level, racial diversity, and diversity of social, political, economic, and religious viewpoints. In this class, we will choose a few of the novels for the 22-23 school year and work through them together as a class and in book clubs. At the end of the class, students will have the opportunity to cast their official vote for the book they believe should be the Truman Award Winner and write a letter recommending the book based on the award criteria listed. This is a great class for students who love to read, and for students who haven't found the right book just yet.

## **MATH COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Quilting 101 - Mrs. James - First Trimester**

Never quilted? Well here's your chance to learn. What is a quarter inch seam? What is batting? How can I quilt something on my machine? All those questions will be answered and more. If students have their own machine, this is helpful. Students will be asked to buy material during this course.

### **Sewing 101 - Mrs. James - First Trimester**

Always wanted to sew but never learned? Own a sewing machine that gathers dust? Let me help you learn how to sew a pillow, make a pencil bag or an Ipad stand, and ultimately learn how to use your machine.

### **Math in Art - Mrs. James - Third Trimester**

Students will use the concept of ratio, proportion, and scale to create both 2D and 3D art. Students will create scale drawings, make fractal art, and weave based upon a binomial square in this elective.

## **The Wildness of our World - Mrs. James - Third Trimester**

### **“In wildness is the preservation of the world” - Thoreau**

Do you love to explore the woods around school and learn about the natural world that surrounds Mirowitz? Is your passion for nature and protecting our environment something you want to spend more time doing? If you answered yes to those questions, then this class is for you. During our time together, there will be a three-pronged focus: Data collecting and identifying species of animals and plants that thrive at/around school, learning about biodiversity and how we can help cultivate and sustain it, and lastly, form a Stream Team and conduct a stream survey near Mirowitz. This class will also help restart programs around the school that prevent plastic from entering our environment and help fellow staff and students in reducing our carbon footprint. This class will require outdoor experiences so proper attire is important. Students will need to bring bug spray of their choice, hats, sunscreen when needed, and shoes/boots that can handle outdoor messy activities.