

# HIGHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Related Arts & Elective Course Descriptions

**African American History: Colonialism to Reconstruction.** Gr 6, 7, 8. It is impossible to understand United States history without knowing African-Americans' history. This course teaches African-American history from colonization to Reconstruction. Emphasis on African heritage; African-American contributions; slavery and quasi-freedom.

**African American History: Reconstruction to Civil Rights.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This class will allow students to examine significant events and people in African American history. Students will gain an in depth knowledge of key people and events from the end of slavery (Reconstruction) to the end of the Civil Rights Movement. Students will learn about the roles these individuals and events played in the fight for social justices and inequality. Topics covered include: Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, Reconstruction, Black Codes, Jim Crow Laws, Malcolm X, Freedom Rides, Little Rock 9 and Martin Luther King, Jr.

**AP Art Portfolio.** Gr 7, 8. Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation. An advanced-level course in drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and ceramics. An emphasis is placed on the development of a greater depth of understanding and the application of the elements and principles of art in their work. Students will create works of art in a variety of media. Each student will demonstrate progress over time by developing a body of work (portfolio) and participate in an exhibit at the end of the school year.

**AP Choir.** Gr 7, 8. Prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir class and recommendation of director. This course is for students who are planning to audition for All-State, All-County and Solo/Ensemble festival. Students will be singing musicals, popular music and possibly learn how to put on a musical.

**AP (Full) Orchestra.** Gr 7, 8. Prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra or Band Class and recommendation of director. This course will focus on the collaboration of strings, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. Students will study orchestral music of different time periods and styles. This class will also include performances at school, KMEA assessment and in the community.

**Big Buddies Peer Tutoring.** Gr 7,8. This course will allow regular education students to interact with students who have special needs by helping with schoolwork, going to the library together, building social skills, and many other fun events. If you have ever been interested in working with people who have special needs or just generally like being a helpful person, then this class is for you!

**Biological & Environmental Sciences.** Gr 7, 8. This course will provide students with the scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies required to understand the interrelationships of the natural world, to identify and analyze environmental problems both natural and human-made, to evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and to examine alternative solutions for resolving or preventing them. The class will focus on six main topics: Earth systems and resources, the living world, land and water use, energy resources and consumption, pollution, and global change.

**Computer Applications.** Gr. 6, 7. In this course students will be using the Microsoft Office suite and online tools to assist students with their understanding of these tools. Students will also cover information related to digital literacy and responsibility. Students will be prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Assessment, which is administered in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and is a JCPS graduation requirement.

**Computer Programming.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course is designed to enable students to create computer programs that will help them learn to collaborate with others, develop problem-solving skills, and persist through difficult tasks. They will study programming concepts, computational thinking, digital citizenship, and develop interactive games or stories they can share. The semester will begin with the foundational concepts of programming using drag and drop blocks and transition into the utilization of Arduino, where microcontrollers are programmed using a dialect of features from the programming languages [C](#) and [C++](#).

**Consumerism.** Gr 7, 8. Through the *Junior Achievement Program*, students learn how to manage a bank account, make credit decisions, invest money, how to calculate taxes, make smart shopping decisions and how to create a budget.

**3-Dimensional Math.** Gr 7, 8. Through exploration and hands-on construction, this course will create and explore 2-D and 3-D models of buildings, bridges, roads, parks, monuments and other structures that governments consider when developing their communities. The culminating project will include scaled student contributions to the “Highland Model Community.”

**Creative Writing.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course develops the creative expression of student writing. Students will study a variety of forms of prose and poetry and write creatively in different genres. Students will read and evaluate the effectiveness of fiction of varying styles, then workshop with others to develop their own short stories and poems.

**Current Events Connections.** Gr 6, 7, 8. A student-led analysis and discussion of current events and their connections to our lives, our community, and our history.

**Digital Presentation.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course provides students the choice to research topics that they want to learn about; then, students will create electronic versions of presentations using videos, Prezi, SlideShare, Google Drive, and many others! We will focus on creating interesting, colorful presentations that others will engage an audience. These skills will help in ANY class and will prepare you for high school and beyond.

**Endangered Species.** Gr 7, 8. Are you wild about wildlife? In this class you will explore and learn about endangered animals and their habitat. You will learn about why they are struggling to live, what is being done to save them and much more. Students can expect to participate in a variety of activities and class time projects.

**Global Security, Terrorism and 9/11.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course focuses on the unique challenges of our times. The goals are to: learn about the complexities of social issues in today’s world, explore threats to global safety and security, investigate how to contribute to our world positively in hopes of eliminating similar tragedies in the future, and to better understand what happened on 9/11.

**Holocaust & Genocide Studies.** Gr 8. This course examines the stages and causes of genocide. Students will study the nature of prejudices and examine how these prejudices can lead to genocides, such as the Holocaust. This course will have a main focus on the Holocaust of World War II genocide, but will also examine the genocides of Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur, and Syria.

**IB Service Learning Project.** Gr 8. This course is designed for students who wish to refine their IB MYP experience as they prepare for to high school. Students will utilize their knowledge from the classroom to make a positive impact on our community through collaboration and inquiry.

**Intro to Algebraic Concepts.** Gr 7. Prerequisite: A or B in Advanced 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math and recommendation of 6<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher. This course serves as a bridge between elementary mathematics and Algebra. Extending beyond the standard 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, this “pre-algebra” course will build a foundation of algebraic concepts through the use of technology, manipulatives, problem solving, and cooperative learning. Students will learn to utilize the graphing calculator in appropriate situations. This course is designed to better prepare students for 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra I.

**Jazz Band.** Gr. 7, 8. Prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Concert Band class. This class is offered to students who wish to learn to play basic styles of jazz. Emphasis is placed on the swing and rock styles and improvisation using the blues scale. Jazz band is considered an upper level course and students will be playing fun yet challenging jazz literature. Only traditional big band instruments are used in this course. Other aspects of this course include participation in school concerts, KMEA Jazz Assessment, and community performances.

**Newspaper.** Gr 7, 8. This course is designed to give students a basic understanding of journalism and newspaper writing techniques. Students will engage in the process of researching stories, creating content, and publishing original work. Students will learn to interview, write, edit, and layout several issues of the school newspaper, both in print and in an online version as well as submit various news articles to local community newspapers. Students in this course do all the work for publication of each issue of the paper. Students will develop their writing abilities and editing skills by creating several articles for the school paper. In addition to the development of a newspaper, students will complete an analysis of mass media and its effects on our society. The course will also require some after school deadlines as well as some out-of-school time for news coverage.

**Poetry.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course will experiment with word play, ideas, and the devices used to construct poems. Students will explore figurative language and analyze poems appropriate to the middle school level. Students will use online poetry forums to allow students choice about poems to use in class and also as a way to publish our own poetry.

**Psychology.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course is designed to engage students in the growing field of psychology. Psychological studies like criminology and forensics, mental health, and the ways in which humans are affected by their environments have become more and more popular in recent years, and areas of study and careers in the topic are growing as well. This course will introduce students to the foundations of psychology and may inspire students to continue their interest as they further their education.

**Public Speaking.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course will have students learn and practice the art of public speaking. Students will tailor speeches for a given audience and apply skills necessary for writing and delivering speeches.

**Robotics.** Gr 6, 7, 8. This course provides an excellent introduction into the world of model building, computer-programming, creative learning and fun. Students will create robots using LEGO Mindstorm NXT 2.0/EV3 bricks, motors, sensors, and will bring their robots to life by using an icon-based drag and drop software. Math, engineering, technology and science concepts will be combined in the construction and programming of the robots. Students will develop an appreciation for how things work, build self-confidence, problem solving skills and foster teamwork.

**Pop Music History in the U.S.** Gr 7, 8. This course will focus on the history of music from the 1900s to modern day trends in the US. Students will learn the historical context behind different genres including the development of blues and jazz in America, music from the civil rights movement, the Beatles coming to the US, rap history, and selections from the 80s and 90s including grunge music like Nirvana and girl power groups like the Spice Girls. Students will learn how music has developed based on the social and political atmospheres of the US during certain times throughout our history.

**Rock N Roll History.** Gr 7, 8. This course will explore two unique directions of American music. The first direction is the beginning of call-and-response singing during slavery, rhythm and blues which evolved from the African American churches, to Rock N' Roll and its many forms resulting in contemporary rap and hip-hop. The other direction led to another unique American form of music, jazz, beginning with the influences of African and Caribbean rhythms in New Orleans. The course will end with current jazz, rock n' roll, country, and hip-hop artists and their influence on American culture. This course will also focus on the power of music and its influences on culture-war, poverty, racism, entertainment and more.

**Spanish/French Culture.** Gr 7, 8. Prerequisite: Current enrollment in Spanish or French. Students will learn the language and experience the culture of their world language. This class will prepare students to become better world citizens by acquiring fluency on their second language by reading, writing, acting out, reciting poems, singing songs, drawing pictures related to the target culture, and much more. Students will become leaders by organizing an international festival and creating an international school environment. Students will have fun by: having cooking classes and field trips to local typical restaurants and groceries; following the most recent cultural, social and political events in the target culture; and using the target language when speaking, writing, and discussing literature and movies related to educational topics of the target culture.

**Theatre.** Gr 7, 8. This course is designed to teach about the theatre arts and how they can support, reinforce, and enrich your life. This course will focus on: inspiring creative expression; enriching communication skills and social interaction through improv and theatre games; using drama to promote and cultivate reading, writing, and speaking; deepening understanding of human behavior within the context of drama; promoting cultural understanding; acquiring historical perspective by exploring different periods and styles of theatre.

**Yearbook.** Gr 7, 8. Students will learn the tools necessary to create the school's yearbook. Students will learn the basics of digital photography, photo editing, layout and graphic design. The Highland yearbook will emerge as the final product of this course.