

MILL VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
2015-2016 7th / 8th Grade Elective Descriptions

Seventh and eighth grade students are able to choose two different electives in their course schedule. In addition to the Art or Music electives twice a week, we offer Spanish, French, Technology, Drama, and Global Citizenship electives that meet four times per week. Parents and students should read the class descriptions and decide which elective choices would be most appropriate. Students will be enrolled in **ONE** Art or Music elective **and** **ONE** Foreign Language, Technology, Drama, or Global Citizenship elective. Please number your choices 1, 2, and 3 for each section on the Elective Class Placement Form. Space is limited in many electives, and some require pre-requisites or a minimum GPA, please read each description carefully.

CHOOSE ONE FROM THE FOLLOWING ART OR MUSIC OPTIONS:

ART

Art – 7th Grade concentrates on the creative exploration of the elements of art: color, form, line, value, shape, space and texture. Students also learn the principles of design: balance, contrast, rhythm, unity, emphasis, pattern and movement. Students apply the elements and principles as they further explore a variety of media and techniques and expand upon knowledge gained from the K-6 art program.

Art – 8th Grade is based on in-depth studio based art projects. Students use their knowledge of art principles to create, invent, experiment, take risks and solve artistic problems. Students study art history and aesthetics, while expressing themselves in ceramics, printmaking, painting, drawing, and sculpture.

MUSIC

Chorus - Choral music students will develop sight-reading and ear training skills, proper vocal technique, and basic musical elements such as phrasing, dynamics, diction, and artistic expression. A variety of literature in multiple languages, styles, and eras will be chosen at the teacher's discretion. Repertoire will be challenging, but appropriate to the group's ability level. Although this is a one-year course, it is most successful for students (and the program) with a multi-year commitment (6th, 7th, and 8th grade). This course includes public performances outside of school hours (calendar to be given at the beginning of the school year).

World Music Ensemble: This elective is open to students who want to explore music from many cultures through percussion and voice. While a major component of this class will focus on the continued study of West African drums, students will also branch out into the traditions of percussion from other indigenous cultures around the world, as well as collaborating with the choral program vocally, participating in the all-choir pieces at MVMS Choral Concerts.

***Band** - Band is open to any student with at least 1 year of playing experience. This class is designed to develop the musical skills of the student, foster an appreciation for music, promote teamwork and encourage all students to strive for excellence. There will be several performances during the school year. *Students interested in beginning an instrument should contact Mr. Carnahan directly at ccarnahan@mvschools.org.*

Music Technology:

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY 1:

This course is designed to introduce students to the world of digital audio recording. By using the tools of digital recording, the students will be able to create their own music compositions and

arrangements to produce audio recordings. The course will explore audio recording, composition, music production and sound engineering using programs such as Garage Band, iMovie and iTrack. (max 50 students). This class is open to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY 2:

This course is a continuation of Music Technology 1. We will continue to work on composition and audio recording with a focus on live sound. We will also explore various music apps. Prerequisite- Music Tech 1 (max 50 students). This class is open to 7th and 8th grade students who have successfully completed Music Tech 1.

***Percussion Ensemble** - Percussion Ensemble is open to all percussion students with at least 1 year of playing experience. Students will learn to read sheet music and play a variety of percussion instruments, including the piano. While there will be some instruction time spent on learning to play the drum set, it will not be the primary focus of the class. There will be several performances during the school year.

***Beginning Guitar** - Beginning Guitar is open to all MVMS students interested in playing the guitar. Students will learn to play chords, read sheet music (no tabs), and the fundamentals of playing guitar. Students must provide their own six-string acoustic guitar for class (no electric guitars will be used in class, although they may be used at home). This class also covers the history of Rock and Roll and lineage of influential guitarists. There will be two performances during the school year. Space is limited for this elective.

***Intermediate Guitar** - Intermediate Guitar is only open to students who have completed the Beginning Guitar class. Students will learn to play chords, improvise, read sheet music, tabs, and the fundamentals of playing guitar. Students need to provide their own six-string acoustic guitar for class (no electric guitars will be used in class, although they may be used at home). There will be two performances during the school year.

***Advanced Guitar** - Advanced Guitar is only open to students who have completed the Intermediate Guitar class. Students will learn to play chords, improvise, read sheet music, tabs, and the fundamentals of playing guitar. Students need to provide their own six-string acoustic guitar for class (no electric guitars will be used in class, although they may be used at home). There will be two performances during the school year.

***Orchestra / Beginning Strings** - Students with no prior instrumental experience on a stringed instrument can learn the rudiments of playing the violin, viola or cello. Note reading and instrument technique are learned side by side. There is a string method book that accompanies the course as well as supplementary materials from the teacher. There will be two informal performances in the winter and spring semester. Students will perform music of various styles such as folk, classical and pop. Students at the end of a year of study may be eligible to perform with the middle school orchestras if enough skill is developed. This course may be repeated. Daily practice is required.

***Orchestra** - Orchestra is open to all students with at least one year of previous instruction on violin, viola, cello or bass. In this class students learn and perform a variety of music, explore music theory, history, cover concepts of musicality and string sound, develop sight reading, and learn how to work together and rehearse as a string orchestra. Students will be placed according to their skill level. This course includes public performances outside of school hours (calendar to be given at the beginning of the school year).

***All instrument classes require 30 minutes of practice per day (as homework) and the student is responsible for transporting his/her instrument between home and school.**

CHOOSE ONE FROM THE FOLLOWING ELECTIVE OPTIONS:

Spanish or French 1 or 2- These classes are communication-based and aimed at the development of the four skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Frequent oral work in pairs and small groups will be used to reinforce acquisition of the new language. Students will also develop a sense of the cultural aspects of the target language. Homework is assigned most days and there will be projects that will be completed outside of class. Students who successfully complete Spanish 1/French 1 in 7th grade will proceed to Spanish 2/French 2 in 8th grade. This program is designed so that students who successfully complete the 2-year course of study at MVMS are eligible to enter the second year of Spanish or French as high school freshmen. Students who take a language class must have a minimum 2.5 GPA.

Tech 2

Tech 2 is an advanced technology course with a STEAM focus (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics). The course is made of two related but separate parts: Tech 2 Lab and Tech 2 Engineering. Each trimester students rotate between these two sections with an equal amount of time in each. This class is open to all seventh graders who have completed Tech Wheel in sixth grade.

- Tech 2 Lab** builds on the Tech portion of the sixth grade Wheel class. Areas of focus include improvement of correct keyboarding skills, increased mastery of Internet navigation and storage, expansion of skills in applications students already know, and exposure to new applications. Tech 2 Lab also fosters a great deal of independence and problem-solving skills. This is a course that broadly covers a range of topics. Examples of applications and topics students will use and explore include, but aren't limited to, word processing, spreadsheets, coding, Google Docs, iMovie, GarageBand, and SketchUp.
- Tech 2 Engineering** students work together in teams to design, build, test and refine various projects. Much of the year will be focused on building and programming robots made with LEGO EV3 software and hardware to become familiar with engineering and programming concepts. There is an emphasis on critical thinking and working collaboratively in a team with other students to find creative solutions to challenges.

Tech 3

Tech 3 builds upon the STEAM concepts worked on in Tech 2. Like Tech 2, Tech 3 consists of two sections: Tech 3 Lab and Tech 3 Engineering. This class is open to all eighth graders who have completed Tech Wheel in sixth grade.

- Tech 3 Lab** students work on digital art, digital storytelling and visual communication projects. Students will have opportunities to extend their existing skills and personal interests with self-designed projects using technology. Projects in Tech 3 Lab often use more than one application and often include internet research, note-taking, discussion, and writing. Examples of applications students will use include: Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, iMovie, and Scratch. Over the course of the year, students will build a portfolio of work they can show to future teachers/employers to demonstrate skill level and competencies.
- Tech 3 Engineering** students will continue working together in teams to design, build, and test various projects. Much of the class will be focused on open-ended design challenges designed to foster an ability to not only solve problems, but also define them. Actively working on developing effective problem solving strategies is a part of this class. Laptops and iPads are available for teams to use on projects when using them will enhance the design challenge.

Drama: This year long elective course will exercise your body (through pantomime), voice (through voice exercises, reader's theater, and speech), and mind (through improvisation). Each trimester has a focus all its own that together will make you a more courageous and skilled performer and presenter. You will learn to be quick witted, whether it's pantomiming that you're a member of an orchestra, giving an impromptu speech on the existence of extraterrestrials, performing an improvisational of unlikely superheroes, or participating in multiple mini-performances throughout the year. This will be a safe and enriching learning experience. Come join the fun!

Global Citizenship Dialogue and Debate: In this elective, students will have the opportunity to study current events and delve deeper into the important issues that impact our world today. Students will explore the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of global citizenship. Students will research topics that impact people on a local as well as a global level, exposing various viewpoints. Students will learn the art of persuasion, participate in debates, and develop projects to make a positive impact on our world community.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **Students who have an IEP are scheduled for an Academic Support period instead of one of the electives from the second category.**
- **Electives have a limited space available in them as most are offered as a single section.**
- **Students who would like to work as an Office Aide or Teacher's Aide instead of one of the above electives OR Art or Music should mark the box on the registration form and also make an appointment to meet with their counselor.**