



**Elective Class Booklet**  
*Middle School Course Selection*  
2020-2021

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## Middle School Mandatory Classes

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
English 6	English 7	English 8
Math 6	Math 7 - Pre-Algebra	Algebra I / Algebra I - Accelerated
Latin 6 (Latin IA)	Latin 7 (Latin IB)	Latin 8 (Latin II)
Earth Science	Life Science	Physical Science IPC
History – Biblical History	History - World Geography	History - US History
Academic Skills (mandatory)	N.B. - Incoming 7th and 8th grade students who have never taken Latin will take a Latin class designed to prepare them for Latin I in the 9th grade.	

## Elective Offerings

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Art Band* Choir Highland Dancing Oral Presentation PE Quiz Bowl Spanish 6 String Ensemble BattleBots and More Intro to Logic Study Hall Cryptography MATHCOUNTS	Art Band* Choir Highland Dancing Oral Presentation PE Quiz Bowl Spanish 7 String Ensemble BattleBots and More English Grammar Intro to Programming 1 Intro to Programming 2 Journalism Study Hall Logic and Debate Cryptography MATHCOUNTS	Art Band* Choir Highland Dancing Oral Presentation PE Quiz Bowl Spanish 8 - Accelerated Spanish 8 String Ensemble BattleBots and More English Grammar Intro to Programming 1 Intro to Programming 2 Journalism Study Hall Logic/ Pre-Rhetoric Chinese 8 French 8 Cryptography MATHCOUNTS

## Please note:

- Electives may be changed only within the scheduling change period during the first two weeks of school. There will be **no exceptions** to this rule.
- Enrollment numbers may be capped for each elective.
- There will be a six-student minimum for each elective course. If the enrollment number drops after the two-week change period, the decision to keep or drop the elective will be made on a case by case basis.
- Conduct grades are given in every class and will count towards the Honor Roll and Dean's List
- \*Due to a change in the teaching schedule for band, middle and upper school band students must sign up for two non-band electives. Depending on their skill level, some students will receive private band lessons. Please view the video on how these lessons will be scheduled. ([Click here to view the video](#))

## Academic vs. Non-Academic Classes:

- Most elective classes are considered non-academic classes, but sometimes an elective is classified as an academic class. Please read the descriptions or look at the list at the end of the booklet to see which electives are academic classes and which are non-academic classes. An academic class, even if taken as an elective, can influence a student's Dean's List and Honor Roll status. Numerical grades for non-academic classes will not affect Dean's List or Honor Roll status, but the conduct grades for these classes will. The requirements for Dean's List and Honor Roll are described below.
  - Dean's List: All weighted grades must be 89.5 or greater and a student must not have a B- or lower in any conduct grade.
  - Honor Roll: All weighted grades must be 79.5 or greater and the number of A's in academic classes must be equal to or greater than the number of B's in academic classes. A student must not have a B- or lower in any conduct grade.

## **6th GRADE ELECTIVES**

### **ART**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*  
*Grading System: Numeric*

*Non-Academic*  
*Prerequisite: None*

*Meets every OTHER day*

An introduction to the basic elements of art and principles of design are woven into lessons that are inspired by the students' life experiences, environment, and interests. Drawing, painting and ceramic skills are explored while creating 2 and 3-dimensional works of art. Grading is numerical, reflecting the "Scope & Sequence" of knowledge attained during projects, a "100%" will appear under the heading "Mastery of Skill" or "Strong Understanding of Skill" or "Emerging Development of Skill". A weekly grade reflecting the students' effort and perseverance is the main focus.

### **BAND**

*Grade 6 (2 semesters)*  
*Prerequisite: Instructor Approval*

*Non-Academic*  
*Students will receive individual lessons on a rotation basis.*

*Grading System: Numeric*

Students involved in the band program will receive first-class instruction on the Great Highland bagpipe or Scottish snare, tenor, or bass drum. Participation in any of the A, B, or C bands requires students to compete in pipe band competitions and perform at select school functions. Students who reach the A Band earn the chance to perform in Scotland and to compete in the World Pipe Band Championship in Glasgow. All band members participate in the annual "Sounds of Scotland" concert.

### **CHOIR**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*  
*Grading System: Numeric*

*Non-Academic*  
*Prerequisites: Demonstrated ability to match pitch*

*Meets every OTHER day*

Choir students enjoy singing sacred, classical, folk, and other secular music while extending their high and low vocal ranges and learning focused tonal placement through proper breath support and vowel placement. Students are encouraged to participate in group and individual singing competitions and may perform choral, community service projects or be eligible to go on tour. Students study music theory and sight reading and are vocal leaders in the chapel service. Public concerts are held at Christmas and in the spring. Students are required to purchase concert attire.

### **HIGHLAND DANCING**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*  
*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Non-Academic*  
*Prerequisite: None*

*Meets every OTHER day*

Highland Dancing is open to all students. Students who participate in highland dancing will perform in the annual Sounds of Scotland event. Students may also participate in Medals Tests. Counts as a P.E. credit.

## **ORAL PRESENTATION**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

This course focuses on stage, acting, and speech techniques, which should translate not only into the arts, but also into the real world as they pertain to employment, college interviews, and social circumstances. Games and improvisation encourage spontaneity and confidence. Exercises and projects promote team building and ensemble work. The assigned presentations will be a combination of material familiar and comfortable to the middle school student and material which is more challenging, such as Shakespeare. Methods to be introduced include Laban Movement Analysis, Stanislavski, and Pantomime. Diction, projection, posture, and poise will be addressed. In addition to theatrical pieces, speeches, and sonnets, elements of stage combat and musical theatre will be introduced.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

Students will learn the principles of physical fitness and wellness. The class will include strength conditioning and sport-specific skill related components. The emphasis will be on team competition and sports offered on campus.

## **QUIZ BOWL**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

If you love gaining new knowledge and competition, then this is the class for you. Quiz Bowl is a competitive, academic, interscholastic competition that includes questions from areas of knowledge including history, literature, science, fine arts, current events, sports, and popular culture. The Academic Games course will be a 3-day elective and will focus on different topics each session to hone student knowledge and skills. Activities will include studying geography and history, staying abreast of current events including sports, entertainment, and political events, as well as, competing against one another in trivia games and mock Quiz Bowl tournaments. The course will be student-driven, and students will be expected to become experts in certain fields to share their knowledge with other students.

## **SPANISH 6**

*Grade 6 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

Spanish 6 is a communicative novice-low Spanish course. Students will begin to develop their Spanish proficiency and cultural competency through extensive interaction in Spanish. This year-long course is equivalent and is an introductory course for Spanish I, which is offered in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **STRING ENSEMBLE**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: Instructor Approval - Students new to St. Thomas' must schedule an audition with Mrs. Lofthouse*

Students with prior experience and the appropriate level of note reading and technical skills on violin, viola, cello, and bass will be instructed in orchestral technique, ensemble, and performance. Performing opportunities include Christmas and spring concerts, Chapel services, and competitions as well as community concerts and activities.

## **BATTLEBOTS AND MORE**

*Grade 6-8 (2 Semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

If you ever wanted to “invent” the super machine or a monster destroyer car, come explore what you can do with LEGO equipment. First, you will build the test model and learn how to “drive” it. Then, after competing with your first wheeled machine, you can pick your own model to construct and test for the next competition. After each round, you can modify your design to improve its performance and compete again. All models must be able to move, turn, “sense” light (color/intensity) and use ultrasound to “sense” objects. Weaponry is limited to an appendage that can strike an object. This class is a fun way to learn a little about using engineering and programming basics as you make your robot into the champion of the challenge.

## **INTRO TO LOGIC**

*Grade 6 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

This course introduces and develops the knowledge and skills essential to the art of thinking well. We begin by studying logical fallacies and traditional logic. We learn how to create syllogisms and create logical arguments. We will also discuss and learn many current logical fallacies found daily in numerous media/mediums. Also, students will advance their rhetorical vocabulary and acumen, learn to utilize standards in order to judge an argument's strength, and spend much time with current events, teenage issues/concerns, and other topics via in-class debates, discussions, and Socratic seminars to further hone listening, thinking, and speaking skills.

### **Texts:**

*The Fallacy Detective*

*The Art of Argument*

## **STUDY HALL**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: None*

*Prerequisite: None*

Study Hall provides a supervised environment in which students may complete homework, read quietly for a class, or get ahead in their studies. Each student is required to come to Study Hall with all of the materials necessary to complete at least two assignments or tasks. Extra textbooks and computers will be available for the students' use. Students may utilize this time to meet with teachers, tutors, or study buddies on an as-need basis. Please note that Study Hall is a respected and serious workspace, designed to be a productive environment for each student – chatting and wasting time is not allowed.

Consistent inability to follow Study Hall procedures, distracting neighbors, or poor conduct will lower Study Hall conduct grades. Persistent poor behavior will result in removal from Study Hall permanently.

## **CRYPTOGRAPHY**

*Grade 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

Students in this course will explore different methods to encrypt/decrypt messages and how to decrypt an intercepted secret message. This elective is for grades 6-8. A strong understanding of basic algebra and number sense is required since we will be working with functions and algorithms.

## **MATHCOUNTS**

*Grade 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

MATHCOUNTS elective is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with a high interest in mathematics. The focus during the 2nd quarter of the school year will be to prepare for the school, regional and if qualifying, the state and national MATHCOUNTS competition. MATHCOUNTS is a national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes math achievement through a series of engaging “bee” style contests. When competition preparation is complete (3rd quarter of the school year), students will participate in other activities including membership in the National Math Club which provides the school with math enrichment and problem-solving materials.



## **7th GRADE ELECTIVES**

### **ART**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*  
*Grading System: Numeric*

*Non-Academic*  
*Prerequisite: None*

*Meets every OTHER day*

An introduction to the basic elements of art and principles of design are woven into lessons that are inspired by the students' life experiences, environment, and interests. Drawing, painting and ceramic skills are explored while creating 2 and 3-dimensional works of art. Grading is numerical, reflecting the "Scope & Sequence" of knowledge attained during projects, a "100%" will appear under the heading "Mastery of Skill" or "Strong Understanding of Skill" or "Emerging Development of Skill". A weekly grade reflecting the students' effort and perseverance is the main focus.

### **BAND**

*Grade 7 (2 semesters)*  
*Prerequisite: Instructor Approval*

*Non-Academic*  
*Students will receive individual lessons on a rotation basis.*

*Grading System: Numeric*

Students involved in the band program will receive first-class instruction on the Great Highland bagpipe or Scottish snare, tenor, or bass drum. Participation in any of the A, B, or C bands requires students to compete in pipe band competitions and perform at select school functions. Students who reach the A band earn the chance to perform in Scotland and to compete in the World Pipe Band Championship in Glasgow. All band members participate in the annual "Sounds of Scotland" concert.

### **CHOIR**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*  
*Grading System: Numeric*

*Non-Academic*  
*Prerequisites: Demonstrated ability to match pitch*

*Meets every OTHER day*

Choir students enjoy singing sacred, classical, folk, and other secular music while extending their high and low vocal ranges and learning focused tonal placement through proper breath support and vowel placement. Students are encouraged to participate in group and individual singing competitions and may perform choral, community service projects or be eligible to go on tour. Students study music theory and sight reading and are vocal leaders in the chapel service. Public concerts are held at Christmas and in the spring. Students are required to purchase concert attire.

### **HIGHLAND DANCING**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*  
*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Non-Academic*  
*Prerequisite: None*

*Meets every OTHER day*

Highland Dancing is open to all students. Students who participate in highland dancing will perform in the annual Sounds of Scotland event. Students may also participate in Medals Tests.

Counts as a P.E. credit.

## **ORAL PRESENTATION**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

This course focuses on stage, acting, and speech techniques, which should translate not only into the arts, but also into the real world as they pertain to employment, college interviews, and social circumstances. Games and improvisation encourage spontaneity and confidence. Exercises and projects promote team building and ensemble work. The assigned presentations will be a combination of material familiar and comfortable to the middle school student and material which is more challenging, such as Shakespeare. Methods to be introduced include Laban Movement Analysis, Stanislavski, and Pantomime. Diction, projection, posture, and poise will be addressed. In addition to theatrical pieces, speeches, and sonnets, elements of stage combat and musical theatre will be introduced.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

Students will learn the principles of physical fitness and wellness. The class will include strength conditioning and sport-specific skill related components. The emphasis will be on team competition and sports offered on campus.

## **QUIZ BOWL**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

If you love gaining new knowledge and competition, then this is the class for you. Quiz Bowl is a competitive, academic, interscholastic competition that includes questions from areas of knowledge including history, literature, science, fine arts, current events, sports, and popular culture. The Academic Games course will be a 3-day elective and will focus on different topics each session to hone student knowledge and skills. Activities will include studying geography and history, staying abreast of current events including sports, entertainment, and political events, as well as, competing against one another in trivia games and mock Quiz Bowl tournaments. The course will be student-driven, and students will be expected to become experts in certain fields to share their knowledge with other students.

## **SPANISH 7**

*Grade 7 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: Spanish 6*

Spanish 7 is a communicative novice-high Spanish course. Students will continue to develop their Spanish proficiency and cultural competency through extensive interaction in Spanish. This year-long course is equivalent and is an introductory course for Spanish I, which is offered in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **STRING ENSEMBLE**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: Instructor Approval - Students new to St. Thomas' must schedule an audition with Mrs. Lofthouse*

Students with prior experience and the appropriate level of note reading and technical skills on violin, viola, cello, and bass will be instructed in orchestral technique, ensemble, and performance. Performing opportunities include Christmas and spring concerts, Chapel services, and competitions as well as community concerts and activities.

## **BATTLEBOTS AND MORE**

*Grade 6-8 (2 Semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

If you ever wanted to “invent” the super machine or a monster destroyer car, come explore what you can do with LEGO equipment. First, you will build the test model and learn how to “drive” it. Then, after competing with your first wheeled machine, you can pick your own model to construct and test for the next competition. After each round, you can modify your design to improve its performance and compete again. All models must be able to move, turn, “sense” light (color/intensity) and use ultrasound to “sense” objects. Weaponry is limited to an appendage that can strike an object. This class is a fun way to learn a little about using engineering and programming basics as you make your robot into the champion of the challenge.

## **ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

*Grades 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

The middle school English Grammar Elective will be available to qualifying 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who are new, incoming students or recommended by their English teachers. The English Grammar Elective will help students increase their understanding of primary grammar principles and help students apply those principles to their writing. Students will benefit from grammar lessons and practice with individualized instruction. There will not be any homework in this class, and students will often have the opportunity to work on their core English class assignments. Teachers will identify who qualifies for this elective through the students' performance on grammar assignments throughout the year and a year-end grammar test. The class will take place every other day.

## **INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMMING 1**

*Grade 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

Many young people with access to computers participate as consumers, rather than designers or creators. This course will attempt to give to our students the knowledge, practices, and fundamental literacies that they need to understand what they already use and to be able to create the types of dynamic and interactive computational media that they enjoy in their daily lives. We will use a variety of resources to quickly teach them the basics of computer science. We will base most of our teaching on Scratch with many game- building examples. Some of our activities will be connected to scientific or mathematical concepts. If we have enough time and interest we will proceed to JavaScript and HTML, giving them the ability to create their own Web pages.

## **INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMMING 2**

*Grade 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: Previous Experience in Programming or Special Interest*

This course will be based on the previous one but is not a requirement.

We will start by explaining how the internet works and introducing the concepts of networks and internet protocols. We will learn HTML and use our knowledge to produce web pages. We will then learn JavaScript, with the dual goal of introducing the students to a real programming language and making our web pages fully interactive. If we have enough time and interest we will proceed to Python, a language still reasonably easy to learn and very widely used on the internet and in colleges, especially to develop little scientific applications.

## **JOURNALISM**

*Grades 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: Written request/Approval from Instructor*

Students will become more discerning consumers of information as they are introduced to the principles and elements of media literacy and learn to apply these principles to a variety of print and non-print media for analysis and discussion, with an emphasis on how those principles apply specifically to print newspapers and their online counterparts. Students will become journalists as they learn about journalistic ethics, informed analysis of news sources, conducting interviews, styles of journalistic writing, and text structures for writing. Students will serve in roles of reporter, editor, and publisher as they apply their new understandings to create articles for publication in the middle school newspaper, The Loop.

## STUDY HALL

Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)

Non-Academic

Meets every OTHER day

Grading System: None

Prerequisite: None

Study Hall provides a supervised environment in which students may complete homework, read quietly for a class, or get ahead in their studies. Each student is required to come to Study Hall with all of the materials necessary to complete at least two assignments or tasks. Extra textbooks and computers will be available for the students' use. Students may utilize this time to meet with teachers, tutors, or study buddies on an as-need basis. Please note that Study Hall is a respected and serious workspace, designed to be a productive environment for each student – chatting and wasting time is not allowed.

Consistent inability to follow Study Hall procedures, distracting neighbors, or poor conduct will lower Study Hall conduct grades. Persistent poor behavior will result in removal from Study Hall permanently.

## LOGIC AND DEBATE

Grade 7 (2 semesters)

Non-Academic

Meets every OTHER day

Grading System: Numeric

Prerequisite: Intro to Logic

This course introduces and develops the knowledge and skills essential to the art of thinking well and debating. We begin by reviewing traditional logic and syllogisms. We will learn what an argument is, identifying why arguments are valuable, and developing techniques to analyze arguments. We will use Aristotle's notion and examples of logos, pathos, and ethos in his *The Art of Rhetoric* to help guide us. We will also discuss and learn many current logical fallacies found daily in numerous media/mediums. Also, students will advance their rhetorical vocabulary and acumen, learn to utilize standards in order to judge an argument's strength, and spend much time with current events, teenage issues/concerns, and other topics via in-class debates, discussions, and Socratic seminars to further hone listening, thinking, and speaking skills.

## CRYPTOGRAPHY

Grade 6-8 (2 semesters)

Academic

Meets every OTHER day

Grading System: Numeric

Prerequisite: None

Students in this course will explore different methods to encrypt/decrypt messages and how to decrypt an intercepted secret message. This elective is for grades 6-8. A strong understanding of basic algebra and number sense is required since we will be working with functions and algorithms.

## MATHCOUNTS

Grade 6-8 (2 semesters)

Academic

Meets every OTHER day

Grading System: Numeric

Prerequisite: None

MATHCOUNTS elective is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with a high interest in mathematics. The focus during the 2nd quarter of the school year will be to prepare for the school, regional and if qualifying, the state and national MATHCOUNTS competition. MATHCOUNTS is a national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes math achievement through a series of engaging "bee" style contests. When competition preparation is complete (3rd quarter of the school year), students will

participate in other activities including membership in the National Math Club which provides the school with math enrichment and problem-solving materials.

## **8th GRADE ELECTIVES**

### **ART**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

An introduction to the basic elements of art and principles of design are woven into lessons that are inspired by the students' life experiences, environment, and interests. Drawing, painting and ceramic skills are explored while creating 2 and 3-dimensional works of art. Grading is numerical, reflecting the "Scope & Sequence" of knowledge attained during projects, a "100%" will appear under the heading "Mastery of Skill" or "Strong Understanding of Skill" or "Emerging Development of Skill". A weekly grade reflecting the students' effort and perseverance is the main focus.

### **BAND**

*Grade 6 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: Instructor Approval*

*Students will receive individual lessons on a rotation basis.*

Students involved in the band program will receive first-class instruction on the Great Highland bagpipe or Scottish snare, tenor, or bass drum. Participation in any of the A, B, or C bands requires students to compete in pipe band competitions and perform at select school functions. Students who reach the A Band earn the chance to perform in Scotland and to compete in the World Pipe Band Championship in Glasgow. All band members participate in the annual "Sounds of Scotland" concert.

### **CHOIR**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisites: Demonstrated ability to match pitch*

Choir students enjoy singing sacred, classical, folk, and other secular music while extending their high and low vocal ranges and learning focused tonal placement through proper breath support and vowel placement. Students are encouraged to participate in group and individual singing competitions and may perform choral, community service projects or be eligible to go on tour. Students study music theory and sight reading and are vocal leaders in the chapel service. Public concerts are held at Christmas and in the spring. Students are required to purchase concert attire.

### **HIGHLAND DANCING**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

Highland Dancing is open to all students. Students who participate in highland dancing will perform in the annual Sounds of Scotland event. Students may also participate in Medals Tests.

Counts as a P.E. credit.

## **ORAL PRESENTATION**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

This course focuses on stage, acting, and speech techniques, which should translate not only into the arts, but also into the real world as they pertain to employment, college interviews, and social circumstances. Games and improvisation encourage spontaneity and confidence. Exercises and projects promote team building and ensemble work. The assigned presentations will be a combination of material familiar and comfortable to the middle school student and material which is more challenging, such as Shakespeare. Methods to be introduced include Laban Movement Analysis, Stanislavski, and Pantomime. Diction, projection, posture, and poise will be addressed. In addition to theatrical pieces, speeches, and sonnets, elements of stage combat and musical theatre will be introduced.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

Students will learn the principles of physical fitness and wellness. The class will include strength conditioning and sport-specific skill related components. The emphasis will be on team competition and sports offered on campus.

## **QUIZ BOWL**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

If you love gaining new knowledge and competition, then this is the class for you. Quiz Bowl is a competitive, academic, interscholastic competition that includes questions from areas of knowledge including history, literature, science, fine arts, current events, sports, and popular culture. The Academic Games course will be a 3-day elective and will focus on different topics each session to hone student knowledge and skills. Activities will include studying geography and history, staying abreast of current events including sports, entertainment, and political events, as well as, competing against one another in trivia games and mock Quiz Bowl tournaments. The course will be student-driven and students will be expected to become experts in certain fields to share their knowledge with other students.

## **SPANISH 8 - Accelerated**

*Grade 8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets EVERY day (2 electives)*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: Spanish 6 & 7*

This course is a foundational course for students with previous experience with Spanish in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Students will continue their journey toward language proficiency and cultural competency through an in-depth and accelerated curriculum in Spanish. Successful completion of this course is equivalent to completing Spanish I in high school.

## **SPANISH 8**

*Grade 8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets EVERY day (2 electives)*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

This course is a foundational course for students with little to no previous experience with Spanish. Students will begin their journey toward language proficiency and cultural competency through extensive interaction in Spanish. Successful completion of this course is equivalent to completing Spanish I in high school.

## **STRING ENSEMBLE**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: Instructor Approval - Students new to St. Thomas' must schedule an audition with Mrs. Lofthouse*

Students with prior experience and the appropriate level of note reading and technical skills on violin, viola, cello, and bass will be instructed in orchestral technique, ensemble, and performance. Performing opportunities include Christmas and spring concerts, Chapel services, and competitions as well as community concerts and activities.

## **BATTLEBOTS AND MORE**

*Grade 6-8 (2 Semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

If you ever wanted to “invent” the super machine or a monster destroyer car, come explore what you can do with LEGO equipment. First, you will build the test model and learn how to “drive” it. Then, after competing with your first wheeled machine, you can pick your own model to construct and test for the next competition. After each round, you can modify your design to improve its performance and compete again. All models must be able to move, turn, “sense” light (color/intensity) and use ultrasound to “sense” objects. Weaponry is limited to an appendage that can strike an object. This class is a fun way to learn a little about using engineering and programming basics as you make your robot into the champion of the challenge.

## **ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

*Grades 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

The middle school English Grammar Elective will be available to qualifying 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who are new, incoming students or recommended by their English teachers. The English Grammar Elective will help students increase their understanding of primary grammar principles and help students apply those principles to their writing. Students will benefit from grammar lessons and practice with individualized instruction. There will not be any homework in this class, and students will often work on their core English class assignments. Teachers will identify who qualifies for this elective through the students' performance on grammar assignments throughout the year and a year-end grammar test. The class will take place every other day.



## **INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMMING 1**

*Grade 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: None*

Many young people with access to computers participate as consumers, rather than designers or creators. This course will attempt to give to our students the knowledge, practices, and fundamental literacies that they need to understand what they already use and to be able to create the types of dynamic and interactive computational media that they enjoy in their daily lives. We will use a variety of resources to quickly teach them the basics of computer science. We will base most of our teaching on Scratch with many game- building examples. Some of our activities will be connected to scientific or mathematical concepts. If we have enough time and interest we will proceed to JavaScript and HTML, giving them the ability to create their own Web pages.

## **INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMMING 2**

*Grade 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: Previous Experience in Programming or Special Interest*

This course will be based on the previous one but is not a requirement.

We will start by explaining how the internet works and introducing the concepts of networks and internet protocols. We will learn HTML and use our knowledge to produce web pages. We will then learn JavaScript, with the dual goal of introducing the students to a real programming language and making our web pages fully interactive. If we have enough time and interest we will proceed to Python, a language still reasonably easy to learn and very widely used on the internet and in colleges, especially to develop little scientific applications.

## **JOURNALISM**

*Grades 7-8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Pass/Fail*

*Prerequisite: Written request/Approval from Instructor*

Students will become more discerning consumers of information as they are introduced to the principles and elements of media literacy and learn to apply these principles to a variety of print and non-print media for analysis and discussion, with an emphasis on how those principles apply specifically to print newspapers and their online counterparts. Students will become journalists as they learn about journalistic ethics, informed analysis of news sources, conducting interviews, styles of journalistic writing, and text structures for writing. Students will serve in roles of reporter, editor, and publisher as they apply their new understandings to create articles for publication in the middle school newspaper, The Loop.

## **STUDY HALL**

*Grades 6-8 (2 semesters)*

*Non-Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: None*

*Prerequisite: None*

Study Hall provides a supervised environment in which students may complete homework, read quietly for a class, or get ahead in their studies. Each student is required to come to Study Hall with all of the materials necessary to complete at least two assignments or tasks. Extra textbooks and computers will be available for the students' use. Students may utilize this time to meet with teachers, tutors, or study buddies on an as-need basis. Please note that Study Hall is a respected and serious workspace, designed to be a productive environment for each student – chatting and wasting time is not allowed.

Consistent inability to follow Study Hall procedures, distracting neighbors, or poor conduct will lower Study Hall conduct grades. Persistent poor behavior will result in removal from Study Hall permanently.

## **LOGIC/ PRE-RHETORIC**

*Grade 8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets every OTHER day*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: Logic and Debate*

Students first study the logical structure of good arguments and then study how to use several lines of argument (a.k.a. the common topics), such as examples, analogy, comparison, testimony, and statistics. Formal logic studies how an argument is put together—the form or structure of an argument. We will emphasize the practical and real-world application of soundly structured deductive logic. Using methods such as Socratic dialogue, ample discussion, and integration of other subjects, we will teach formal logic in the best way for creating properly thinking students.

## **CHINESE 8**

*Grade 8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets EVERY day (2 electives)*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

This course is offered to students who have little or no Mandarin Chinese language background. The course will provide instruction in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). It will also cover the Chinese pinyin Romanization system, simplified character writing, and grammar. Students will learn basic conversational skills via situational activities and tasks in class. In addition, students will be required to use Chinese typing skills as a means of learning Chinese. This course meets five days per week.

## **FRENCH 8**

*Grade 8 (2 semesters)*

*Academic*

*Meets EVERY day (2 electives)*

*Grading System: Numeric*

*Prerequisite: None*

This course is a foundational course for students with little to no previous experience with French. Students will begin their journey toward language proficiency and cultural competency through extensive interaction in French.

## **CRYPTOGRAPHY**

Grade 6-8 (2 semesters)

Academic

Meets every OTHER day

Grading System: Numeric

Prerequisite: None

Students in this course will explore different methods to encrypt/decrypt messages and how to decrypt an intercepted secret message. This elective is for grades 6-8. A strong understanding of basic algebra and number sense is required since we will be working with functions and algorithms.

## **MATHCOUNTS**

Grade 6-8 (2 semesters)

Academic

Meets every OTHER day

Grading System: Numeric

Prerequisite: None

MATHCOUNTS elective is open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders with a high interest in mathematics. The focus during the 2nd quarter of the school year will be to prepare for the school, regional and if qualifying, the state and national MATHCOUNTS competition. MATHCOUNTS is a national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes math achievement through a series of engaging “bee” style contests. When competition preparation is complete (3rd quarter of the school year), students will participate in other activities including membership in the National Math Club which provides the school with math enrichment and problem-solving materials.

### **ACADEMIC ELECTIVE CLASSES**

- Chinese 8
- English Grammar
- Intro to Logic
- Intro to Programming 1
- Intro to Programming 2
- Journalism
- Logic/Pre-Rhetoric
- Skills
- Spanish 6
- Spanish 7
- Spanish 8
- Spanish 8 – Accelerated
- Quiz Bowl
- Cryptography
- MATHCOUNTS
- French 8

### **NON-ACADEMIC ELECTIVE CLASSES**

- Art
- BattleBots and More
- Band
- Choir
- Highland Dance
- Drumming
- Piping
- Logic and Debate
- String Ensemble
- Oral Presentation
- Physical Education
- Study Hall