



**UPPER SCHOOL
ELECTIVE & EXPEDITION PROGRAM**
Course Catalogue

Program Overview

Mission

The Cascades Academy Upper School Elective and Expedition Program work in partnership to cultivate the schools' core values:

Ignite curiosity

Learn by doing

Foster belonging

Empower individuality

Embrace challenge

Share joyfulness

Additionally, the program aims to build skills that live outside our core curriculum through the use of experiential learning pedagogy.

In [Electives](#), we seek to ignite curiosity by providing the chance to broaden or deepen areas of interest. While we seek to empower individuality and allow student choice, we also believe competent global citizens require a set of well-rounded skills. Thus, each year, a student must take one elective in each of the three categories: mind, body, creative spirit.

In [Expeditions](#), students deepen connections beyond our school through purposeful community partnership. In collaboration, students work to inspire goodness, developing meaning and shaping impact.

Requirements

As the Elective and Expedition Program delivers the core of a Cascades Academy education, these programs are required for all enrolled students. They include correlating performance indicators for the Mastery Transcript and serve on a credit/no credit basis.

Offerings

Courses are offered on a two-year rotation indicated in the table below by Year A and Year B. Each year, the annual offerings will be shared. This catalogue provides an overview of the entire two-year program.

Program Overview

Fall Offerings

MIND	BODY	CREATIVE SPIRIT
Forensic Science (A)	Mountain Biking Skills (A&B)	Journalism (A)
Financial Literacy (B)	Self-Defense (A&B)	Fermentation Science (A)
Anthropology (A)		Visual Arts (A&B)
Know your Place (B)		Music for Performance (A&B)

Winter Offerings

MIND	BODY	CREATIVE SPIRIT
Mock Trial (A&B)	Dance (B)	Robotics (A&B)
Film Studies (A)	Yoga (A&B)	Yearbook (A&B)
Books! Books! Books! (A)	Outdoor Skills (A)	Printmaking (B)
	HIIT Training (A)	Visual Arts (A&B)
		Music for Performance (A&B)

Spring Offerings

MIND	BODY	CREATIVE SPIRIT
Mountainscapes (A)	Bouldering (A&B)	Upcycle (A)
Psychology (B)	Ultimate Frisbee (A&B)	Graphic Design (B)
		Visual Arts (A&B)
		Music for Performance (A&B)
		Fiber Arts (A)

Course Descriptions

Repeating Courses

Visual Arts

Our ability to perceive the world around us and record the way we interpret it through our individual set of eyes is truly what defines us as artists. Even if you don't view yourself as an "artist" or a creative person, this class is designed to give you the tools, inspiration, and techniques necessary to successfully express your ideas through visual art. Mixed media such as painting, drawing, collage, ceramics and digital art will be explored throughout the year (not necessarily in a single trimester), and we will learn how to take the elements of art and principles of design and successfully incorporate them into your compositions for dynamic and meaningful art.

Music for Performance

The goal of this program is to meet students where they are in their musical journey, whether as seasoned musicians or new players. Students will be exposed to as many areas of music as possible. This begins with the basic fundamentals of rhythm and melody, including singing together and performing in a drum circle in order to create this foundation. From there, students take on instruments of their own and have the opportunity to write and record their own songs, exploring chords and lyrics. The study of music history continues through examining the roots of students' favorite music, including the genres of blues and jazz and their influence on the popular music that we all listen to today. While they work on their individual instruments (guitar, drums, bass, vocals), students come together in a Rock Band to learn the challenges and rewards of performing as a group.

Fall

Forensic Science

Forensic Science is the application of science (chemistry, physics, and biology) to criminal and civil law investigations. Topics include the investigation of fingerprinting, fiber/hair analysis, ballistics, trace evidence analysis, poisons, drugs, blood spatters, and blood samples. Students are taught the proper collection, preservation, and laboratory analysis of various samples. The end of the elective will culminate in a crime scene investigation.

Financial Literacy

In this Financial Literacy elective, students will learn valuable skills and knowledge to prepare them for making important financial decisions in the present and future. Topics to be covered include money, banking, credit cards, loans, interest rates, credit scores, financing higher education, renting versus owning a home, taxes, insurance, consumer protections, investing, saving for retirement (IRAs, 401k, 403b), stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. We will also take a look into the historical significance and current debate related to these topics and others such as social security and health insurance programs.

Outdoor Skills

This program provides students the chance to develop a foundation of outdoor technical skills in order to develop competency and independence in the great outdoors. Topics will include culinary skills including how to operate a variety of stoves and prepare a surprisingly ambitious menu with such minimal tools, as well as how to build shelters, start fires from a range of resources, tie a range of knots, and much more.

Mountain Biking Skills

Students will up their mountain bike game by practicing MTB-specific trail skills such as cornering, climbing, descending, maintaining momentum, basic jumping, and more. Students are required to bring their own MTB, in good working order. We will learn how to safely spot each other and “session” obstacles in order to build our skills. At the end of the course, students will have increased confidence and skills on their mountain bike.

Journalism

This class is for anyone looking to be involved in first-hand reporting in our school and community. We collaborate to build a newsmagazine by breaking the whole publishing process into steps, from learning to conduct interviews, to writing articles, designing pages, creating a brand, and copy editing before publishing. Students will become familiar with the school community and look to report the stories that matter most to their readers, uncovering the details that bely the school community and culture.

Fermentation

Do you love food? Are you interested in microbes? This course is designed to engage our curiosities about the foods we eat, including sourdough, pickles, lacto-ferments, koji, and potentially so much more. Students will engage with projects like pickling their favorite foods, learning the traditions of kraut & kimchi, and creating their own sourdough starter. Along the way students will learn about microbes, how they ferment various foods, and the cultures/traditions that have been practiced for generations. During the elective there may be opportunities to tour local shops/artisans that use fermentation. This course is graded based on participation, the completion of various tasks during class time, and a short final project.

Anthropology

Who are we as human beings? The class will explore this branch of social science that involves the study of humans and humanity as a whole. Here, students will examine the wide range of disciplines that make up the field of anthropology including human biology, human behavior, societies, linguistics, culture, and more in a past and present context. For those interested in enhancing their knowledge about human ancestors, and how societies have evolved, this introduction to anthropology is the perfect fit.

Self-Defense

In Self-Defense, students work with coaches in intensive, individualized classes. The instructors instill discipline, confidence, courage, self-respect, and respect for others. The techniques taught are geared toward tactics over brute strength. The training largely draws from Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, focusing on joint locks, escapes, and strategies for utilizing leverage akin to a physical game of chess. In

addition to self-defense, this course prioritizes a healthy, balanced lifestyle in each of their classes. This approach to martial arts instruction has also been shown to improve problem-solving and critical thinking abilities both in and out of the classroom.

Winter

Books! Books! Books!

This course is designed to develop and stoke a love of reading. Students will read works of their own choosing from a variety of genres, set personalized reading goals to measure growth throughout the term, and come together as a group to share insights. The goals of this course are to cultivate a lifelong appreciation for literature and a habit of reading. With this in mind, reading schedules will be individually tailored to encourage motivation, self-sufficiency, and community around the lifelong benefits of enjoying good books.

Mock Trial

Mock Trial is a state-wide competitive program that is part puzzle, part performance theater, and part legal strategy. Throughout the program, a group of students review provided materials around a fictional legal case and bring to life the courtroom scene. With the support of local lawyers and hired coaches, the team learns about strategy, argument, public speaking, and performance. This elective will require some out-of-school commitments and will result in performing the CACO case at a regional court house in mid-February. Should we do well in this regional competition, we'll have the chance to move onto the state competition in Portland in March.

Film Studies

Film Studies is an introductory look at film as a literary genre. In this class, we will explore a collection of films from major movements in the industry. For each unit, we will discuss the implications of the film, its impact on viewers, and the composition of the film as a piece of literature. We will learn to write about films as critics and we will view films for reasons far beyond the surface entertainment value.

Dance

In the dance elective, we will learn techniques and short routines from a variety of dance genres and styles. Students will learn what musical and movement components define various genres and styles of dance. Content will range from popular tiktok dances to styles that move through geography and time. Anyone of any ability is welcome!

Yoga

Yoga is a practice that merges strengthening, mental training, balance, and breath work to result in a calmer, more flexible, stronger, aligned body and mind. Students will learn the basics of a yoga practice, build upon the set of poses with which they are familiar, and learn some of the philosophy behind this ancient practice during this winter elective.

Robotics

Students in the US FIRST Robotics elective will be members of Cascades Academy's FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) Team. Students will compete in a national competition where students team up with engineers to design and build a 120-lb robot in 6-weeks to compete against teams from

around the state and at regional competitions. In addition to the winter elective class, attendance at weekend/after-school team work-sessions is encouraged to provide enough time for students to successfully complete the challenge. If you want to be in the elective and not attend any additional sessions, please talk with Mr. Snape before signing up. The robot build season is a whirlwind of activity and the 3-day competitions are equally intense and hectic, but the payoff is huge. FRC provides students the opportunity to delve into mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, project management, computer animation and computer programming and then immediately apply their new knowledge to solve authentic engineering challenges. They develop strong engineering and problem-solving skill sets and will emerge from the program confident in their ability to apply these skills. Professional engineers will meet with the class during elective and after school to provide their expertise.

Upcycle

In the upcycle elective, students will explore their ability to creatively reuse. In our modern day there are incredible ways to build, design, and reuse “waste” material. Not only will students learn new skills that will allow them to repurpose materials headed for the waste stream, but students will enhance their understanding of the impacts of these changes (or lack of changes) on the environment and on society as a whole.

Print-Making

Printmaking builds on the basis that a print is a transfer of ink that can be replicated. This elective explores the history, importance, and practice of printmaking style. Beginning by looking at how money is a print, what lithographs are, and specific artists. We aim to take inspiration from nature by walking the campus and looking at various textures, color patterns, and other points of interest. Throughout the elective students primarily focus on creating lino block prints. Each student may create at least 3 prints during the trimester, if desiring more students may be responsible to purchase materials on their own. The final project is a group collage based on a selected theme that presents our work and learning to the school community. Students leave this class with a basic understanding of printmaking and the tools to further pursue this passion at their leisure.

HIIT Training

Get your stretchy pants and sweatbands ready, we’re working out! This elective will challenge students to push their bodies to the physical limit by participating in high intensity interval training (HIIT). Students will learn and practice proper form and technique for a variety of physical exercises via a new 30-minute HIIT workout each week. Participants are expected to come prepared in appropriate attire, try their best, and bring water!

Spring

Know Your Place

Relationships are central to any community, and our individual relationship with the natural world is central to our interactions with the ecological community of which we are a part. In the “Know your Place” elective, students will meet their ecological neighbors, learning the names of plants and animals that share this space, and the roles that they play within ecosystems. Students will learn to approach a landscape with a detectives mindset, looking for clues regarding the ecological processes

that have created what we now see. They will apply what they learn about the natural history of this place to better understand our present and future world and their place within it.

Ultimate Frisbee

Come learn how to play ultimate (Frisbee) and goaltimate. We'll learn how to throw a backhand, flick, hammer, push pass and maybe scoobers, thumbers, and chicken wings for the advanced throwers. Offensive (vertical and horizontal stacks) and defensive strategies (man and zone) will be practiced. Come each day prepared to learn and run hard. It is likely that we will also schedule a scrimmage or two with another local team.

Fiber Arts

Students will delve into the world of yarn and handmade wearable items. By the end of this elective, students will have produced one knit hat and one crochet hat. Students will learn how to read a pattern, wield the appropriate tools (crochet hook and knitting needles), and understand the particulars of yarn. Through the acts of knitting/crocheting, students will exercise perseverance, resilience, creativity, and patience. Materials provided!

Mountainscapes

This course will combine a geographic and cultural tour of some of earth's most significant mountain ranges. Students will address why some people are drawn to mountains and how mountain communities and cultures are shaped by their environments. In doing so, the class will study the cultural, economic, and political significance of mountainscapes worldwide. This course will also explore the pursuit of climbing mountains through key players in mountaineering history and discuss the impact of tourism on mountain cultures and communities. By the end of the course, students will gain an understanding of the gear, training, and costs associated with a variety of climbing disciplines. Finally, each student will demonstrate the ability to organize a trip into a mountainscape of their choice – complete with a budget, gear list, and mock itinerary.

Psychology

Through the exploration of its historical origins, theories, and research, students will gain a fundamental understanding of the science of psychology and its relevance to everyday life. This class will encompass a multi-modal approach to include some lecture, discussion, film viewing, reading, and interactive elements. Students will learn how psychology impacts culture and policy, as well as our understanding of interpersonal relationships and self-concept. By the end of this course, students should be able to use their understanding of psychology to better inform their experience of people, relationships, and broader social dynamics.

Bouldering

The bouldering elective provides participants with 2 one hour sessions at the Circuit climbing gym weekly. This is an open air facility catered specifically to bouldering on the North end of Bend. Participants will be able to learn the basics of climbing including foot work, grip placements, and spotting. Participants will be able to rent all necessary equipment or acquire through a secondhand gear store like Gear Fix in Bend. More advanced climbers are also welcome and will be able to progress their skills. We will take at least one trip to an outdoor location during the Fall. All levels are highly encouraged, can't wait to climb with you all this Fall! *Elective caps at 8 participants.

Plant Propagation

The popularity of keeping houseplants has exploded in recent years. For some, houseplants improve internal environments both aesthetically and in terms of air quality. Others find that caring for houseplants can positively affect mental health. Regardless of the reason, a key skill in growing a houseplant collection is learning techniques to propagate. In this elective, students will learn why the various tropical and temperate plants that have found their ways into our homes reproduce in the way that they do, and what benefits or disadvantages come with the different types of reproduction. They will learn basic plant anatomy, and use that knowledge to apply to the propagation process. Students will learn to when, how, and why to propagate a plant from seed, from a leaf cutting, from a stem cutting, or from a root cutting. Students will learn and practice the different techniques using different mediums, and will collect data to assess the effectiveness of the different methods.

Graphic Design

Graphic design permeates our modern world. In this course, students will explore the fundamentals of graphic design and typography by looking at examples of classic and cutting-edge design in order to examine the interplay between “rules” of design and creativity. We will utilize various software packages to produce different types of graphic design and consider the impact that different media can have on design. Students will design and execute graphic design projects based on their own interests and/or on external requirements.