

2023-2024

# MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE CATALOG



SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

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## **A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Dear STA Middle School Families,

I am thrilled to introduce the 2023-2024 Middle School Course Catalog. Middle School at Saint Thomas Academy marks a new milestone in your son's educational journey. Often, it is the first time he is exposed to the challenges and opportunities a departmentalized approach to scheduling brings forth. I think you will find that the program of study provides a challenging and engaging academic program that emphasizes the four pillars of college-prep, Catholic, leadership and all-male.

Middle School courses are designed to cultivate the essential components of an excellent education - critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration and character. This program of studies has been designed to help students and their parents plan an academic schedule that stimulates curiosity and motivates students to explore new areas of learning through elective courses. During the middle school years, students have their first opportunity to select courses based on both interests and abilities. Current teachers, advisors, and counselors are available to make recommendations and guide course placement and elective choices. Our learners have proven themselves to rise to the challenges of the curricular program, emerging as confident, articulate, young men who are prepared for our Upper School.

I encourage you and your son(s) to carefully review this year's Course Catalog and to familiarize yourself with Saint Thomas's academic policies. As our Assistant Headmaster, John Buethe shared with our Upper School families, Indeed, our students are expected to meet certain academic standards; understanding and following these criteria is the first step toward getting the most out of a Saint Thomas Academy education.

Thank you for taking time to review these pages and for entrusting us with your son's educational journey. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have questions.

Warmly,

Michelle Mechtel  
Director of Middle School





## SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

### OUR MISSION

*“The excellence of an institution is found in the class of students it sends forth each year to fight the battles of life.”*

- Archbishop John Ireland, Founder of Saint Thomas Academy

It is our mission to help each student discover and develop his potential talents and abilities by providing an excellent college- preparatory education that instills qualities of everlasting value: leadership, a sense of brotherhood, a strong moral compass, self-confidence, a faith guided by the Catholic tradition, and an awareness of the importance of service to others.

### OUR FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS

- College Preparatory
- Catholic
- Military/Leadership Training
- All-Male

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### COURSE SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR 2023-2024

To ensure that we have an accurate and efficient registration process we ask that:

- Parents and students review this book, taking time to discuss next year's plans
- Students review course selections with their current instructors and in advisory. Class time will be provided to make sure students receive advice about the most appropriate selections for next year
- Students complete the Enrollment Intent Form by a deadline determined by the Director of the Middle School

Note, as a college prep school, all students are encouraged to carry a full schedule.

### COURSE REGISTRATION PROCESS

The Registrar will plot course enrollments for the coming year based on student demand as evinced by the intent to enroll form that students complete in April. This process ends when Cadets receive their course schedules early summer.

## COURSE AVAILABILITY AND PLACEMENT

In order to maximize our instructional resources, the Academy is faced with a few constraints in terms of class scheduling. Please observe that:

- A course may be canceled if enrollment is insufficient
- There is no guarantee that students will be able to fit all desired courses into their schedules
- The Director of the Middle School, in consultation with department chairs, reserves the right to place students based on demonstrative aptitude.

## ADD/DROP POLICY

All core courses in the Middle School are year-long courses, unless otherwise noted. As such, a course may only be added during the first week of the first semester. Requests to add courses after the first full week of the semester are subject to instructor approval. Requests to drop courses must also be made within one week of the first semester. After the first week, requests to drop are decided by the Director of Academic Life and Middle School Director in consultation with the department chair and instructor.

## CORE ACADEMIC GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Middle School students who matriculate at STA the first semester of their sixth-grade year enroll in a total of 32 class sections across six semesters. These core requirements are:

English	6 semesters (3 years)
Fine Arts	3 semesters (1.5 years)
Physical Education/Health	4 semesters (2 years)
Mathematics	6 semesters (3 years)
Science	6 semesters (3 years)
Social Studies	6 semesters (3 years)
Theology	6 semesters (3 years)
World Language	2 semesters (1 year)

\*Middle School students will also take a variety of electives equivalent to 6 semesters, as schedules dictate.

## COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Students who receive a grade of D+ or below in English, Math or World Language are strongly encouraged to improve weak skills over the summer in order to be ready for the next level the following fall. Students are encouraged to seek out tutorials or summer classes or sessions at learning centers to improve these skills.

## GRADING

The following grading system is in use at Saint Thomas Academy:

A = 4 points	I (Incomplete) = 0 points
B = 3 points	S (Satisfactory) = 0 points
C = 2 points	U (Unsatisfactory) = 0 points
D = 1 point	
F = 0 points	

All required courses listed are transcribed on a semester basis. In other words, grades received at the end of the first and second semester appear on a student's transcript whereas quarter grades do not. Likewise, GPA points are calculated by semester, which is an amalgam of quarter and final exam grades.

## CALCULATING GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

The following chart illustrates how letter grades, depending on the course weight, are converted to grade points. A student's grade point average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the total points earned by the number of courses taken in a semester.

### GPA CALCULATION TABLE

Quality Point Conversion

Grade	1.0 Weight	1.1 Weight
A	4.00	4.40
A-	3.67	4.04
B+	3.33	3.67
B	3.00	3.30
B-	2.67	2.94
C+	2.33	2.57
C	2.00	2.20
C-	1.67	1.84
D+	1.33	1.47
D	1.00	1.10
D-	0.67	0.74
F, I or W	0	0

## INCOMPLETE GRADES

An instructor may assign an incomplete grade in cases where a student's ability to submit work by the end of the term is inhibited by unexpected circumstances beyond their control. Unless otherwise approved by the Director of Middle School, all incomplete work must be submitted to the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the subsequent term.

Incomplete work that is not completed and submitted by this deadline converts to an 'F' grade and included in the final grade calculation.

A student who fails to sit his exam for whatever reason will be assigned an incomplete grade for the course. Students are ineligible for athletic competition and formal co-curricular involvement until the incomplete grade is resolved.

## CREDIT RECOVERY

A student who fails a course required for graduation must make up the credit. It is the parents or student's responsibility to arrange for making up a failed course. Prior approval from the Director of Middle School is required for courses taken outside Saint Thomas Academy.

Failed courses may be made up in the following ways:

- By retaking the course during the next school year at Saint Thomas Academy, if allowable by course trajectory. The grade replaces the previous grade on the transcript and in calculating the GPA.
- By completing an equivalent course in an accredited and approved summer school program. Upon receipt of an official transcript, the grade replaces the previous grade on the transcript and in calculating the GPA. Formal approval from the Director of Middle School is required for courses taken outside Saint Thomas Academy prior to enrollment.

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Saint Thomas Academy defines the following as satisfactory academic progress:

- A cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0
- No outstanding incomplete grades
- No 'F' grades in the most recent academic term

Students who fail to meet one or more of these criteria are placed on Academic Probation. Please see the student handbook for more information about Academic Probation, including its impact on cocurricular eligibility.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

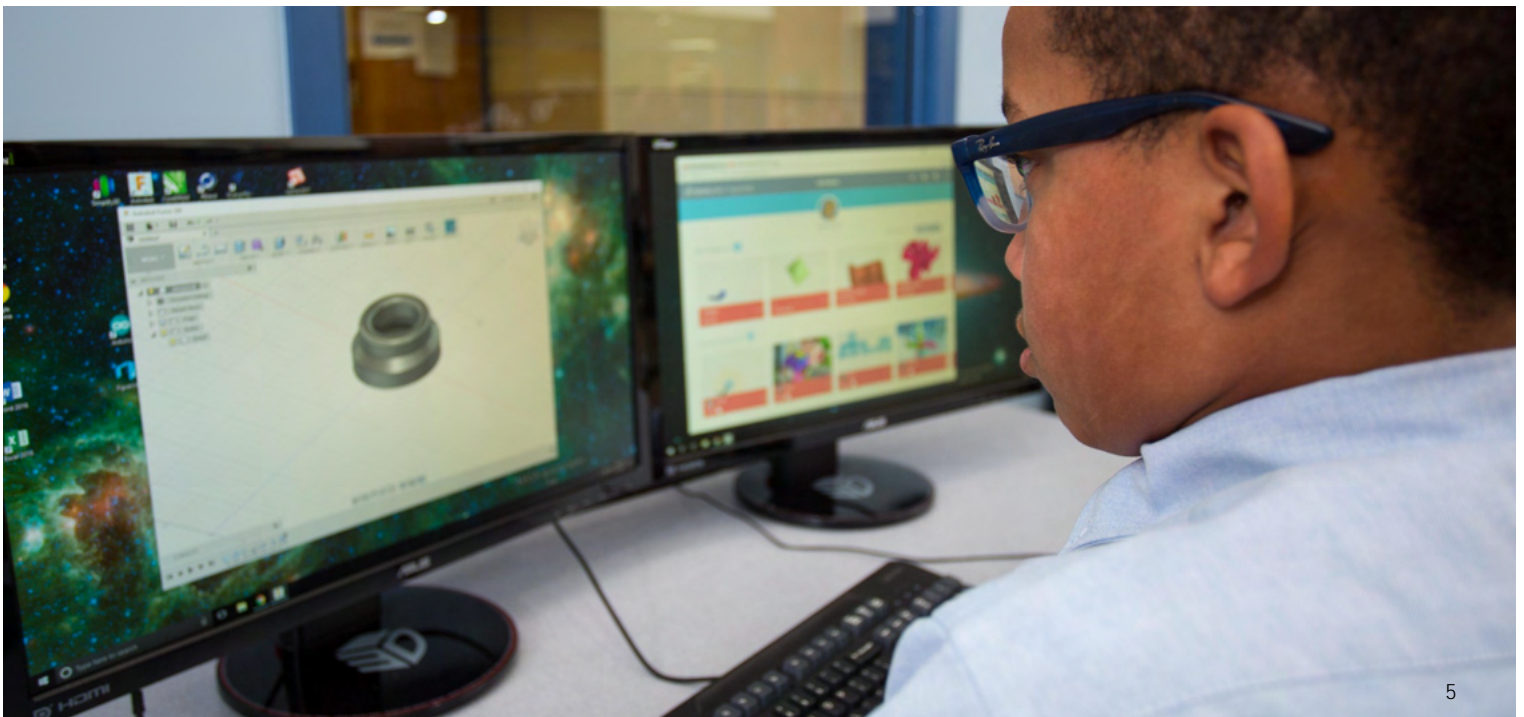
Saint Thomas Academy is committed to the highest standards of personal and academic integrity. Academic misconduct in the form of, inter alia, plagiarism, cheating, or deception is intolerable. The Academy is committed to academic honesty and responds proportionally when this trust is breached. Please see the student handbook for more on the Academy's response to academic misconduct.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Academic accommodations are intended to ensure access to educational opportunities for students with learning, cognitive, and sensory differences. Saint Thomas Academy is committed to helping students realize their full potential and achieve independence by providing reasonable services needed to accommodate individuals with learning differences.

Based on the recommendations included in the documentation of a learning difference provided by the student's parent/guardian, the Learning Specialist and Director of Student Services determines and arranges all academic accommodations for students with learning differences.

Accommodations may include alternative testing arrangements (e.g., extended time and oral clarification), assistance from peer note takers, and preferential seating. Please reach out to the office for student services should you believe that you or your son has a documented difference that may qualify for a learning accommodation.



# COURSE OFFERINGS

## ENGLISH

The English program at Saint Thomas Academy provides students with the opportunity to develop increasing mastery of skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Middle School classes emphasize language skills necessary for successful study in high school and at the college level. The underlying assumption of our program is that individuals who understand and can use language effectively will enjoy more fulfilling lives. Students will learn to:

- Read with understanding and critical insight
- Express ideas clearly in a variety of written forms
- Develop skills necessary for effective oral communication
- Improve listening skills
- Develop critical viewing abilities

### **ENGLISH 6** - Grade Level: 6

This course stresses general language skills. Formal comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, research, and public speaking instruction are introduced. Expository and creative writing assignments focus on the composition of paragraphs and short multi-paragraph pieces meeting various benchmarks of organization and writing skills. Students are encouraged to develop a love of reading through frequent independent reading time and projects.

### **ENGLISH 7** - Grade Level: 7

This course builds upon the general language skills developed in sixth grade English. It continues to integrate a study of grammar and vocabulary in connection to composition, speech and literature. Several literary selections are chosen as a complement to Geography 7. Writing assignments expand to various types of essays, research presentations, and creative works such as poetry and short stories.

### **ENGLISH 8** - Grade Level: 8

This course expands on the advancing writing and language skills explored in seventh grade English. It continues to build on established grammar and vocabulary study in conjunction with composition, speech, and literature. Both creative and expository writing build on previously established skills.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Health and Physical Education – Required each year of Saint Thomas Academy Middle School enrollment.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6** – Grade Level: 6

Middle School Physical Education will focus on developing personal motor skills and be introduced to strategies and concepts of playground games and activities. As a support to their social development, students will analyze the influence of family, peers and their culture including social media and technology in the context of their personal health behaviors. Class graded S/U.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH 7 (FIT & FUN)**- Grade Level: 7

FITness and FUNction, is a course designed to be taught to Middle School students in grade 7, that provides foundation for developing character. The course enlarges the traditional Physical Education-only approach and incorporates personal skill development, social awareness, interpersonal relationships and develops a healthy lifestyle that includes life-long physical activities and responsibilities. Being fit, physically, socially and mentally is the goal of the course. Class graded A-F.



## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8 – Grade Level: 8**

Middle School Physical Education will focus on developing personal motor skills and be introduced to strategies and concepts of playground games and activities. As a support to their social development, students will analyze the influence of family, peers and their culture including social media and technology in the context of their personal health behaviors. Class graded S/U.

Health topics for discussion in Middle School will include:

Understanding emotional behavior swings and dealing with new stressors.

Awareness of unhealthy substances and conveying the impact of substance abuse.

Nutritional guidelines for food and beverages that promote a healthy life-style.

A Satisfactory (S) grade is recorded for successful completion of the Physical Education requirement and is not included in the overall GPA. Project-based learning and formative assessments will be used to evaluate Middle School Physical Education, health and wellness learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The mathematics program at Saint Thomas Academy is designed to challenge students with an enriched curriculum and to make appropriate courses available to all students. It is our objective that the students:

- Become proficient at basic arithmetic and algebra skills.
- Develop the ability to solve both routine and non-routine problems using a variety of strategies.
- Become familiar with the use of mathematical tools, such as compasses, protractors, and calculators. Grade level refers to the year(s) students typically take the course. Students with varying math backgrounds may take a course during different years.

## **FOUNDATIONS OF MATHEMATICS - Grade Level: 6**

This course is the introduction to algebraic concepts with a strong emphasis placed on computations with fractions, decimals, and percents. Students will engage in an in-depth study of number theory, positive rational number computation, two and three-dimensional geometry and measurement, probability and statistics, and apply this learning to solve real-world mathematical problems. This course prepares students to be mathematically literate, as well as prepare them for future math courses.

## **PRE-ALGEBRA - Grade Level: 6-8**

This course is the foundation for algebraic concepts. Students will engage in an in-depth study of equations and expressions, similarity, proportional reasoning, integers, measures of center and data variability, and apply this learning to solve real-world mathematical problems. This course prepares students to be mathematically literate, as well as prepare them for future math courses.

## **ALGEBRA I LINEAR - Grade Level: 8**

**Prerequisite:** Instructor approval.

Algebra I – Linear topics include the structure of the real number system, the use of algebraic symbols; a study of first-degree equations and graphs; systems of first-degree equations; introduction to exponents and square roots.

## **ALGEBRA I QUADRATIC - Grade Level: 8**

**Prerequisite:** Instructor approval.

Algebra I – Quadratic reviews structure of the real number system, algebraic symbols, and first-degree equations; it then moves quickly into the study of all aspects surrounding second degree equations and graphs; expanded systems of first-degree Equations; factoring second- degree functions and the quadratic formula; exponents and square roots; rational functions.

## **ALGEBRA I HONORS** - Grade Level: 6-8

**Prerequisite:** Instructor approval; entrance exam score

Advanced Algebra I deals with the structure of the real number system, the use of algebraic symbols, a study of first and second-degree equations and graphs, systems of first-degree equations, as well as factoring, square roots, and the quadratic formula. Some uses of a graphing calculator are explored.

## **GEOMETRY HONORS** - Grade Level: 8 (*weighted as a high school class of 1.1*)

**Prerequisite:** Selection based on instructor approval and grade of A in Honors Algebra I

This course first establishes the tools of geometry: methods of reasoning, construction, the coordinate plane, and types of measurement. Subsequently, it focuses on properties and applications of lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, similarity, right triangle trigonometry, circles, and transformations.

# **SCIENCE**

The Middle School science program at Saint Thomas Academy is designed to develop the skills students will need for success in the high school science program. It is our intent that our students will:

- Be able to intelligently react to the role of science and technology in their lives and be able to make valid decisions in this area.
- Begin to value the potential they may possess as far as a career in science might be concerned.
- Understand the methods of science to enable them to become more effective learners.
- Be more sensitive to the global implications of our life-styles.

## **EARTH SCIENCE: 6** - Grade Level: 6

Topics covered in this class involve the earth and its place in the universe. Students begin to develop laboratory and study skills, and analytical skills. Specific areas covered include rocks and minerals, changes of earth's surface, global water, weather and climate, the solar system and the universe.

## **LIFE SCIENCE: 7** - Grade Level: 7

Topics covered in this course are cellular structure, classification of living organisms, an overview of the domains and kingdoms, human anatomy, physiology, genetics, and ecology. All of this material is presented in an introductory manner, and emphasis is placed on developing learning, laboratory, and organizational skills.

## **PHYSICAL SCIENCE: 8** - Grade Level: 8

Eighth grade Physical Science introduces students to physics and chemistry in order to explore relationships between matter and energy. Laboratory activities teach skills such as measuring, recording data, interpreting information, and using evidence to make conclusions as well as extend scientific reasoning and inquiry skills.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies Department at Saint Thomas Academy designs its courses to provide a learning environment that promotes academic excellence and recognizes the uniqueness of each individual student. It is the objective of the Social Studies Department that the students will:

- Acquire geographical skills and be able to identify geographically major areas of the world.
- Acquire the ability to connect the past and the present by applying methods of historical research; use a variety of sources to demonstrate cause and effect relationships in history.
- Acquire basic economic literacy of U.S. economic institutions in order to effectively pursue citizenship responsibilities and to enhance personal economic decision-making.
- Acquire basic political literacy to enable students to effectively participate in the U.S. democratic process.
- Understand controversial issues and develop thinking skills through the use of position papers and position statement analysis on tests and in debates.
- Develop a multicultural awareness and sensitivity, recognizing that our judgments about people of different cultures are usually shaped and influenced by the standards and values of the culture in which we live.
- Develop the competency to acquire, organize, evaluate, and report information for the purposes of solving problems and clarifying issues.
- Emphasize study skills throughout the year in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **MINNESOTA HISTORY** - Grade Level: 6

This course is designed for the student to gain insight and understanding of Minnesota from its physical features 12,000 years ago to its current role in today's world. The student will identify themes involving indigenous people, war, industry, economies, industrialization, the common good, equality and social change through the lens of Minnesota while understanding how their learning applies to the United States and the world. Current events are integrated into the course.

### **GEOGRAPHY** - Grade Level: 7

Geography tries to make sense of the world around us. It helps us understand how people, places, and environments came to be and how they affect each other. In this class, we ask where is something? Why is it there? How did it get there? How does it affect the natural environment in this area? Every world region is examined, including Canada and the USA, Latin America, Europe and Russia, Africa, Southwest and Central Asia, South and East Asia, and Oceania. Each unit seeks to answer an essential question that tackles a challenging social issue. There is a strong emphasis on working with maps and other related social studies skills.

### **U.S. HISTORY** - Grade Level: 8

This course is designed to show the students the growth of the U.S. in economic, political, and social areas. The students analyze the great changes in American life since the birth of the nation, as well as elements that have endured to build American's heritage. Students also study political and military conflict and evaluate the role of America in the world. Students continue to build and use skills in geography and learn historical writing and data analysis skills. All 8th grade students participate in the History Day competition, based on the topic of their choice, structured around a theme chosen each year by the National History Day organization.

## THEOLOGY

The mission of Saint Thomas Academy is to create Christian leaders. The Theology Department is an integral element in this educational process. As a department, we stress the moral dimension of leadership. We strive to help young men be capable, just, compassionate, and forthright citizens. In assisting students in their faith formation, we seek to develop a spirituality that encourages young men to desire personal holiness as well as to become servant leaders who welcome and care for each other. It is our hope that each student will come to know the mystery of God's abiding presence and the depth of God's love for all. It is our goal as a department to develop educated and informed Catholics who seek to be knowledgeable in their faith, who are willing to embrace the challenges of Christianity in the new millennium, and who are ready to work for the Church's social mission of justice and peace.

The following is a list of general curriculum objectives which identify what will be covered within the Theology Department curriculum:

- Students will possess basic Biblical interpretation skills and demonstrate a reverence for and appreciation of God's word found in sacred Scripture.
- Students will understand the basic teachings of the Church as articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (i.e., sacraments, creed, Ten Commandments, beatitudes, spiritual/corporal works of mercy, virtues, precepts of Church).
- Students will understand their obligation to act morally and ethically as responsible Christians according to the dictates of a well informed and formed conscience.
- Students will know and understand the Church's teaching pertaining to sexual morality and respect for life in all forms.
- Students will have a basic understanding of the history and theology of the Church.
- Students will have a knowledge and appreciation of contemporary religious and spiritual leaders.
- Students will be able to understand the nature of liturgy and prayer and the movement from liturgy and prayer to service.
- Students will explore Christ's invitation to discipleship and the call to personal holiness by exploring those lifestyles that are compatible with this common Christian vocation.
- Students will know the key principles of Catholic social teaching and will be able to identify these as central and essential elements of their faith.
- Students will learn to respect the diversity of religious traditions.
- Students will develop reflective and critical thinking skills; moral and creative imaging skills; and prayer and dialogical skills, which allow them to research and identify, assess and evaluate, discern, judge, and determine action in light of Gospel values and Church teaching.

### **FAITH IN GOD AND GOD'S CALL - Grade Level: 6**

This course is designed for sixth graders and has as its primary focus the history and message of God in the Old Testament of the Sacred Scriptures. Students are encouraged to study God's call to us, God's saving action, God's invitation, God's reminder to do God's will, and God's promise of Everlasting Life. Students study the Old Testament and take part in weekly discussions of the Scripture's doctrine and morality. All students take part in the planning and celebration of prayer through prayer services and liturgies. Students also participate in Middle School service projects and will experience an annual retreat.

### **FAITH IN JESUS - Grade Level: 7**

This course is designed for seventh graders and has as its primary focus the person, history, and message of Jesus Christ. Students are encouraged to not only study the life and times of Jesus, but to adapt His message to their daily lives. Students study the Gospels and take part in weekly discussions of the Scripture's doctrine and morality. All students take part in the planning and celebration of prayer through prayer services and liturgies. Students also participate in Middle School service projects and will experience an annual retreat.

## **FAITH IN THE CHURCH - Grade Level: 8**

This course is designed for eighth graders and places its focus on the story of the Church. The first semester of the course serves as an introductory analysis of the Catholic Church from the Pentecost to the 21st century. The second semester is divided into several components: prayer, parish life, Christian art and music, and an introduction to social justice issues. Students will discuss life issues as adolescent members of the global church as well members of a local parish of faith community. Students also participate in Middle School service projects and will experience an annual retreat.

## **WORLD LANGUAGE**

Our language program is designed to challenge students with classes in Chinese, French and Spanish. At the upper school level, we offer Honors or AP for many of these courses.

The goals of our department are to teach effective communication, language proficiency, and cultural understanding. To successfully communicate in a world language, it is important to understand the relevance of diversity and culture, and to have a true appreciation of the global society in which we live. At Saint Thomas Academy, our teachers are dedicated to creating high-quality, student-centered learning environments that prepare our boys to excel in college.

### **THROUGH THE STUDY OF WORLD LANGUAGES, STUDENTS WILL:**

- Gain skills that enable them to communicate orally and in writing with speakers of another language.
- Develop a greater understanding about people across national boundaries by giving them insight into the ways of life and ways of thinking of the people who speak the language they are learning.
- Expand their understanding of how language functions, including their own language.
- Learn to read with comprehension so that they may keep up with current writing, research, and information in the studied language.
- Develop critical thinking skills by understanding perspectives, exchanging opinions, and presenting ideas.
- Be prepared to think and interact in a global community.
- Be inspired and prepared to study a world language and culture in college.

Note: Placement is determined by exam scores, satisfactory completion of a lower-level course, and/or teacher recommendation. A student whose native language is other than English is encouraged to study a third language in the World Language Department.

Based on student interest and demonstrated proficiency, higher level language courses are available. Please refer to the Upper School Course Description Book for more information.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL CHINESE 1A - Grade Level: 6-8**

Students begin to learn Mandarin Chinese and simplified characters in a systematic way. Besides learning the four linguistic skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will also develop their intercultural competences. At this introductory level, students will learn to carry simple conversations in Chinese on topics that include greetings, name, age, nationality, school, grade, family, addresses, dates, school items, and food. They will be able to memorize 80 basic characters in writing and 100 different characters in reading.



## **MIDDLE SCHOOL CHINESE 1B** - Grade Level: 6-8

**Prerequisite:** Must pass Chinese 1A or equivalent with instructor approval

Students culminate their Level 1A knowledge of the language and culture of China, using everyday Mandarin Chinese in the classroom. They will continue to develop conversational competence on topics of color, clothes, appearance, animals, sports, transportations, direction, shopping, weather, and learning languages. They will continue to master the vocabulary and grammar introduced in their readings. Students are expected to expand their vocabulary to 100 characters or writing and 120 characters in reading at this level. Students who successfully pass this level are ready for Upper School Chinese II.

## **FRENCH I** – Grade Level: 7-10

The study of topics involving weather, time, and seasons; family and friends; the home and neighborhood; and items found in everyday life are the core of this year's curriculum. Through the use of the basic text and oral comprehension program, the student learns to express himself in the present tense and is introduced to the use and practice of progressive future and recent past tense. He also is introduced to the diversity of the French language and culture through units that present the French-speaking countries around the world. This is an Upper School level course.

## **FRENCH II** - Grade Level: 8-12

**Prerequisite:** Must pass French I or equivalent with instructor approval

The study of topics involving food and eating and nature and the environment are the core of this year's curriculum. Through the use of the basic text and oral comprehension program, the student grows to better express himself in the present, progressive future, recent past, and compound past tenses. French 2 is a year-long course for you to continue to learn the language, geography and cultures of French-speaking countries. This course is designed for you to expand your skills to communicate by speaking, reading, writing, and understanding written and spoken French. This is an Upper School level course.

## **SPANISH IA** – Grade Level: 6-7

This course introduces the skills of communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in Spanish. It also attempts to instill in students an understanding of persons belonging to social, cultural, and ethnic groups different from their own. This course is for students who have had very little or no previous experience studying Spanish. The course begins with the very basics; alphabet, numbers, colors, greetings, calendar, etc. It then moves into conversational Spanish and grammatical practices; noun/adjective/verb agreement, verb conjugations, etc.

## **SPANISH IB** - Grade Level: 7-8

**Prerequisite:** Must pass Spanish 1A or equivalent with instructor approval

This course is for students who have studied Spanish but need to develop stronger foundational skills before advancing to a more rigorous Spanish 2. Prerequisites include strong study skills as well as knowledge of basic vocabulary and communicative functions such as numbers, telling time, date, weather description, family, pastimes, food and likes/dislikes. Students should have knowledge of regular present tense verb conjugations and should be able to speak and write in simple sentences in Spanish. Students should be familiar with comprehension strategies and have a basic level of comprehension of written and spoken Spanish. In Spanish IB, students will reinforce their basic knowledge of Spanish communicative skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking while continuing to develop new vocabulary and grammatical concepts. Previously learned vocabulary and grammatical structures will also be reinforced.

## **SPANISH I** - Grade Level: 8-9

This course introduces the skills of communication (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in Spanish. It also attempts to instill in students an understanding and appreciation of persons belonging to social, cultural, and ethnic groups different from their own. This course is for students who have had little or no previous experience studying Spanish. This is an Upper School level course.

## **SPANISH II** - Grade Level: 8-12

**Prerequisite:** Must pass Spanish I or equivalent with instructor approval

This course offers the opportunity to continue developing and deepening the skills of communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in Spanish, to investigate and experience the richness of cultures, and to continue forming those study skills which help students become lifelong learners. There is an increased emphasis on grammatical skills at this level. This is an Upper School level course.

## ELECTIVE OFFERINGS

*Middle School students will have an opportunity to take electives within multiple discipline areas. Courses will be presented to Middle School students during the registration process. A sampling of electives is found below.*

### FINE ARTS ELECTIVES

**VISUAL ARTS** - The art program is designed to give students a working knowledge of the tools and language of the visual arts so that they are able to think effectively, work creatively, and know firsthand the artistic experience. The offerings of the program are varied and aim to meet the individual needs of the student at any level of development and from any background of artistic experience.

**MUSIC** - The music program at Saint Thomas Academy is designed to promote and direct musical growth, help members become proficient on their chosen instruments or with their voices, and provide a creative outlet for musical talent. The music department also serves as a support group for the Academy at athletic events, liturgies, parades, and concerts where the general public is invited.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL FINE ARTS I** – Grade Level 6-7

Middle School Fine Arts I is an introductory course designed to give students a sampling of art projects that emphasize the elements (line, form, color, value, texture) and principles of art (balance, variety, harmony, emphasis). Understanding and appreciation of self and others through art history and culture is emphasized. A variety of media and techniques create an active learning experience. Class graded A-F.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL FINE ARTS II** – Grade Level 7-8

Middle School Fine Arts II introduces students to a wide variety of art media; emphasis placed on the basic techniques of drawing, painting, and multimedia. Students will explore materials to create original works of art that will show basic understanding of techniques and traditions. Students will create and utilize a wide range of subject matter and creative ideas into their own original works. They will understand and apply art elements and principles of design into their original artworks. Students will learn not only how to reflect on their own work, but how to critique others work, giving constructive criticism in order to find ways to improve and move forward. Class graded A-F. Prerequisite: Middle School Fine Arts I

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL DIGITAL ARTS I** – Grade Level 6-7

Middle School Digital Arts I introduces students to utilizing computer technology to produce artistic images. Student will learn computer illustration techniques, image manipulation, and graphic design principles. As students are introduced to the various fields in the digital arts, they will learn and apply the fundamentals of design with computer applications (Adobe Creative Suite). By the end of this course, students will have an introductory knowledge of Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. Class graded A-F.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL DIGITAL ARTS II** – Grade Level 7-8

Middle School Digital Arts II builds on knowledge and skills gained in MS Digital Arts I. Students will continue to apply the fundamentals of design while furthering their technical skills in the Adobe Creative Suite Programs. This course introduces students to the basics of motion media (film, video, and animation) and builds on their previous work in Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Class graded A-F. Prerequisite: Middle School Digital Arts I

#### **BEGINNING BAND** - Grade Level: 6-8

Students without any previous band experience may register for beginning band to learn to play a wind or percussion instrument. Students will learn the basics of playing an instrument and learn to play in an ensemble. Students who make enough progress may have an opportunity to move into Intermediate Band 2nd semester. Instrument selection can be completed with the Band Director before the beginning of the school year.

Class graded A-F.

### **INTERMEDIATE BAND - Grade Level: 6-8**

Band at Saint Thomas Academy is open to any student with at least one year of experience playing a wind or percussion instrument. The band rehearses 2-3 times per week in preparation for concerts and other school and community functions. Band is a great way to become more proficient on a musical instrument and to enjoy the participation and teamwork of ensemble playing. Class graded A-F.

### **INTRO TO MUSIC - Grade Level: 6-7**

The INTRO TO MUSIC class introduces students to the amazing world of music. Students will explore, create and experience a variety of fun music activities in class such as: Learn the basics about West African drumming, participate in rhythm game challenges, create music videos and iMovies, learn about form in music so you can compose a hit song, sing with your classmates, and take an acting lesson from a pro.

Class graded A-F.

### **SCHOOL OF ROCK EXPLORATION - Grade Level: 7-8**

The School of Rock Class offers each student a chance to discover their own talent and create music in different ways, while exploring music from around the world. This course begins with West African Circle Drumming. We have amazing djembe drums in all sizes, enough for everyone to use! Next, we learn about Boom Whackers. These are musical tubes that have different pitches. Students learn how to create and compose music with them. This is a favorite activity, thanks to the world famous, “Blue Man Group”, who started playing with much larger tubes. Students also create music videos, work with iMovie, sing and participate in at least one concert during the semester. Students experience the value of working together as a team, while creating and exploring the world of music. Class graded A- F.

### **PIANO: BEGINNING – Grade Level: 6-8**

Beginning piano is an entry-level fine arts elective course for those students who want to learn and develop their individual playing skills, gain a deep understanding of music, and experience the joy of independent playing. Throughout the course students will learn to read music with an approach that is easy to understand, study basic music theory, discover the world of music at your fingertips such as classical, folk, pop, jazz, blues, and spirituals. Students will work individually and play and perform in groups to master the techniques of playing. Formal and Informal assessments will be part of the course, (quizzes, tests, performance-based rubrics, and class participation. STA will provide electric Yamaha pianos and the piano course books for students. Class graded A-F.

### **PIANO: EARLY INTERMEDIATE - Grade Level: 8-12**

**Prerequisite:** Students must have already taken a Beginning piano course or students who have had basic piano lessons before.

This fine arts elective course is for those students who want to further develop their individual playing skills, gain a deeper understanding of music, and experience the joy of independent playing. Throughout the course students will learn to read music with an approach that is easy to understand, study basic music theory, discover the world of music at your fingertips such as classical, folk, pop, jazz, blues, and spirituals. Students will work individually and play and perform in groups to master the techniques of playing. Formal and Informal assessments will be part of the course, (quizzes, tests, performance-based rubrics, and class participation. STA will provide electric Yamaha pianos and the piano course books for students. Class graded A-F.

## SCIENCE ELECTIVES

### **INTRODUCTION TO 2D AND 3D DESIGN** – Grade Level: 7-8

This class is designed to give students an introduction to two-dimensional and three-dimensional design with the use of the Innovation Center's computers and fabrication equipment. Students will be introduced to the engineering cycle and how it is used to design, fabricate, and test prototypes. Students will learn how to use Coral Draw to make their own vinyl decals and laser engraved/cut parts. The 3D printers will be used by students to fabricate parts that they design with CAD (computer aided design) programs TinkerCAD and Fusion 360. Students will leave the elective with a better idea of how the Innovation Center can be utilized for future projects during middle and high school. Need instructor approval to take this course a second time. Class graded A-F.

### **LEGO DESIGN, ENGINEERING, AND CODING** - Grade Level: 6-8

In this course participants will work to solve open-ended problem-solving activities in a context that makes it fun and engaging to learn using science, technology, architecture, engineering, mathematics, and coding. These concepts are combined with soft skills, such as creative thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and communication following a design engineering process. Need instructor approval to take this course a second time. Class graded A-F.

## SOCIAL STUDIES ELECTIVES

### **INTRODUCTION TO SPEECH AND DEBATE** – Grade Level 7-8

This elective will help students learn to communicate their ideas to the world around them. Students will develop the habits of confident public speakers, learning tips and techniques for establishing a solid stance, making eye contact with the audience, and eliminating distracting filler words. These skills will then be applied to structured debates, which will teach students how to research and organize information and think on their feet. Topics will range from fun informal storytelling to current events of national importance. This course can only be taken a single time with rare exceptions. Class graded A-F.

### **CHESS, QUIZ BOWL, AND GAMES OF STRATEGY** – Grade Level 6-8

This class will instruct students in using skills such as logic, reasoning, visualization, planning and mental agility. The student will be able to learn the key tactical concepts, patterns, calculation, as well as strategic planning and thinking through games of strategy popular throughout the world. This class is for both total beginners, and players that want to advance their playing abilities. Students are expected to put into practice the concept that both winning and losing serve as important experiences of transition to more accomplished gameplay. The quiz bowl aspect of this class is separate from the after-school co-curricular activity. Students learn the rules of competition, form teams, and compete in friendly matches. Assessment will be based on knowledge of the rules and strategies, sportsmanship, classroom behavior and effort. Class graded S/U.





**SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY**

**CADETS FIGHT SONG**

**FIGHT CADETS FIGHT**

**CARRY HIGH THE**

**BLUE AND WHITE**

**WIN CADETS WIN**

**FIGHT ON**

**AND DON'T GIVE IN**

**RAH, RAH, RAH**

**FIGHT ALL THE WAY**

**TO VICTORY TODAY**

**WE'LL FIGHT,**

**FIGHT, FIGHT**

**WITH ALL OUR MIGHT**

**FOR**

**STMA!**



SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY