

EIGHTH GRADE ELECTIVE PROGRAM 2026-2027
CARLETON W. WASHBURNE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The Washburne Related Studies Program offers a range of unique courses that provide Winnetka students the creative and practical skills to enhance their academic studies and thrive as 21st Century learners. Within the department, students can explore woodworking, visual art, technology, drama, music, and media arts. They learn technical skills required to articulate content area-specific tasks while engaging in design-based thinking, creating solutions to problems in the ever-changing world around them. Over the course of their two years at Washburne, students are encouraged to take a variety of classes in both the *fine and performing arts* as well as the *applied technology and media arts* realms so that their experiences reflect the robust program offerings.

The following is an overview of the eighth-grade program at Washburne. All students will take English, mathematics, science, social studies, kinetic wellness, and lunch.

PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE DESCRIPTIONS AND THEN COMPLETE THE ONLINE REGISTRATION.

FRENCH 8 Students who successfully completed 7th grade French will be enrolled in 8th grade French to complete the 3rd year of the sequence. The three years in total equal the first year of high school French. French should be thought of as a full-fledged academic subject with the expectation of daily assignments (10-15 minutes per night). Emphasis is placed on reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension.

SPANISH 8 Students who successfully completed 7th grade Spanish will be enrolled in 8th grade Spanish. Second to English, Spanish is the most spoken language in the United States and the second most spoken language in the world. Students who have completed two or more years of Spanish will continue to develop their proficiency in 8th grade at Washburne. This class focuses on improving your ability to understand and communicate in Spanish. Language and culture are explored through the reading of short novels and conversations.

KINETIC WELLNESS

All students take a kinetic wellness course at Washburne. 8th graders have a choice between the following options.

KINETIC WELLNESS 8 Kinetic Wellness incorporates the whole child which integrates health and skill related components of fitness, health and mental health education, team building and a variety of team and individual sports. General KW will have a balance between skill development, strategy and game play.

KINETIC WELLNESS SPORT Kinetic Wellness Sports incorporates the whole child which integrates health and skill related components of fitness, health and mental health education, and team building. KW Sports places an emphasis on competitive sport experiences, advanced strategy and skill development.

KINETIC WELLNESS LIFETIME ACTIVITIES Kinetic Wellness Lifetime Activities incorporates the whole child which integrates health and skill related components of fitness, health and mental health education, and team building. KW Lifetime Activities offers opportunities for personalized achievement and enjoyment in movement. While participating alongside peers, the focus is on individual progress, skill development at one's own pace, and building self-assurance through positive movement experience.

FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS CLASSES

3-D SCULPTURE 7/8

This class will explore the 3-dimensional form through a variety of building techniques and materials specific to papier-mache, ceramics, and found object sculpture. Students will work on projects independently as well as collaboratively. Students will keep a sketchbook for their ideas.

* **THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE**

ART & DESIGN: SPECIAL PROJECTS 7/8 Develop your visual language and process development in this special projects class. Students will be exposed to a variety of topics such as typography, graphic design, design for theater, and installation work. This class is designed for students with previous art experience and interest.

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

BEGINNING GUITAR 7/8 - Have you always wanted to learn guitar but never found the time or had access to an instrument? This beginner-friendly class is the perfect place to start. Students will explore fundamental guitar skills, including proper technique, chord shapes, strumming patterns, and basic note reading. Through consistent daily practice and performing music from a variety of styles, students will build confidence and develop the ability to play selected songs on their own. No prior experience is required—just a willingness to learn and make music!

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

BEGINNING PIANO 7/8 Have you always wanted to learn how to play the piano but never had the time or access to an instrument? This beginner-friendly course is designed for students with little to no prior piano experience. Students will learn foundational piano techniques, proper hand positioning, and essential music theory concepts in an accessible and practical way. Through daily practice and performance opportunities featuring pop and classical repertoire, students will build confidence and develop the skills needed to play songs independently. By the end of the course, students will have a strong musical foundation and the ability to perform selected pieces on their own.

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

CENTER STAGE 7/8 Do you like to act? Learn the necessary skills to create a believable character and play a role in a dramatic production. Explore the process of bringing a script to life while developing your performance skills. **Some extracurricular commitments are involved** as the trimesters culminate with an opportunity for students to showcase their work for parents and peers.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

CREATIVE WRITING 7/8 Do you have stories you're dying to tell? Or maybe you're a poet? Here's your chance to write the stories and poems you're imagining. Learn strategies for developing complex characters, engaging plots, and authentic dialogue. Learn to write meaningful poems about topics of your choice. Students will be encouraged to work through the entire writing process, eventually attempting publication via contests or class books. Instruction will be differentiated to meet each writer's needs, interests, and strengths.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

CREATIVE READING 7/8

In this class, students will take their independent reading to the next level. Students will pursue the joy of reading many types of texts, including novels, while developing their own reading habits and preferences. Students will think and share about their reading through fun and meaningful projects. This class offers students the opportunity for choice and exploration in a variety of reading experiences including book clubs, artistic expressions, and student-driven inquiry.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

DRAMA & IMPROV 7/8

Students will explore a variety of theatrical elements including storytelling, acting, and improvisation. As they tap into their inner creativity learning to improvise through games and scene work, students connect with other student writers, actors, and directors. This course offers students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of theatre and enhance individual performance techniques in a non-threatening and collaborative environment.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

MUSIC APPRECIATION & EXPLORATION 7/8 - In *Music Appreciation and Exploration*, students will examine how music is used in everyday life and across cultures. Through listening, discussion, performance, and hands-on activities, students will learn the fundamentals of music while exploring why people create and engage with music. The course introduces the seven musical elements while developing skills in percussion, ukulele, ensemble performance, and collaborative projects. Students will explore a variety of musical genres, investigate careers in music, and complete projects that demonstrate their understanding of how music functions in different settings. By the end of the course, students will strengthen their musical knowledge and perform in group settings.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

MUSICAL THEATER I & II (Trimesters 2 & 3 -students in this class must make a two-trimester commitment) In this performance class, students learn the necessary skills needed to create a well-rounded musical theatre production, weaving music, drama and movement together. It offers dramatic acting opportunities for those who are interested, as well as a chance for both solo and ensemble musical work. **Some extracurricular commitments are involved** as the trimesters culminate with an opportunity for students to showcase their work for parents and peers.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

STUDIO ART 8 Studio Art focuses on improving observation, intention, and visual communication skills via the study of art history and theories of design. This is a general course that focuses on understanding themes within Modernist

and Contemporary art movements as well as the elements and principles of visual design. Creativity and problem solving skills are developed through a variety of individual and group projects. Students will create a portrait using materials of their choice, a graphic Warhol Soup can, and an observational drawing.

APPLIED TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA ARTS CLASSES

CODING, PROGRAMMING, AND ROBOTICS 7/8 - Looking for a course that combines creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on tech? In Coding, Programming, and Robotics, students learn the fundamentals of computer science by designing their own games and coding interactive projects. Along the way, they collaborate with peers, give and receive feedback, and build confidence as both learners and leaders. In the robotics unit, students assemble and program VEX robots to complete challenges—applying their coding skills in a fun, physical way. Whether they're programming movement or fine-tuning their bot's performance, students get a true hands-on experience with innovation and engineering. With a mix of digital design and real-world building, this course offers the perfect balance of creativity, logic, and teamwork—all in a supportive, challenge-based environment.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

FURNITURE MAKING 7/8 In this class, students will design and build a variety of furniture pieces for themselves or the school community. Students will complete individual take-home projects and participate in a mass production simulation where the entire class works together to mass-produce furniture. Students will learn about furniture construction, finishing techniques and how to plan for mass production. This is a class for students who want to develop or advance their woodworking skills and enjoy working as a team.

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

INDUSTRIAL ARTS 7/8 This is a hands-on course that introduces students to a wide range of woodworking tools and materials. Emphasis is placed on proper tool use, finishing techniques, craftsmanship and the design process. Students will complete various individual take-home projects throughout the trimester. This class is for students who want to develop their woodworking skills, master the design process and enjoy working independently.

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE (I.D.E.A) 7/8 If you are a student who likes to be challenged, this class is for you! Students will be posed with a variety of problems to solve in the areas of industrial design, engineering and architecture. This is not your typical “shop class.” Time will be spent constructing projects from a set of plans, building mechanical devices, creating multi-view drawings, using drawing software, designing floor plans for a house, and learning about electronics.

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY 7/8 Looking for a class that's hands-on, creative, and driven by student choice? In Innovation Technology, students take on exciting STE(A)M challenges that range from 3D design, architecture, robotics, and computer science to low-tech, hands-on builds and circuitry. Students choose challenges that interest them, set meaningful goals, and develop real-world skills as they design, build, and problem-solve. Along the way, they document their progress and create a reflection video to share what they learned and accomplished. This course is perfect for curious, creative minds who love to explore, experiment, and bring their ideas to life.

**** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.***

MEDIA LITERACY 7/8

Media literacy is the ability to analyze, create, and access information in all its forms, and that is what students will be practicing in this class! Students will explore a variety of digital media while also creating their own. They will learn how to critically evaluate videos, social media, news in all its forms, and more. Students will also investigate how artificial intelligence connects with media and will practice using it responsibly.

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

MOVIE MAKERS 7/8 Do you love movies? Have you ever wondered what actually goes into making one? Enter into the world of filmmaking and learn how movies are made by making them yourself! Try your hand at each part of this collaborative process from story development and screenwriting to the basics of cinematography and camera angles to acting, directing, scoring, and editing a variety of student-made films. The trimester culminates with a mini-film festival for the class to view their best works on the big screen.

**** THIS CLASS MAY NOT BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7th GRADE***

MUSIC PRODUCTION 7/8 Want to learn how to make music? In Music Production, you will explore the exciting world of music composition using Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs). They will learn the fundamentals of producing music, including arranging, editing, and mixing your own compositions. You will experiment with various sounds, instruments, and effects to create unique pieces of music. By the end of the course, learners will have produced original tracks, showcasing their creativity and newfound skills in music technology.

*** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.**

STAGECRAFT 7/8 Learn what goes on behind the scenes for a theatrical production. You will create the scenery, costumes, and props for a stage production. Activities include set design and construction, costume design, painting, lighting, and prop construction. Some extracurricular work may be involved as students serve as the running crew for the performance at the end of the trimester.

*** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.**

CWB BROADCASTING & VIDEO PRODUCTION Step into the spotlight and experience the exciting world of broadcasting and video production! In this hands-on course, students take creative control—developing their own video projects from concept to completion. From storyboarding and scripting to filming, editing, and publishing, students learn every step of the production process in a collaborative, real-world setting. Using professional tools in our updated Washburne Video Production Studio, students build essential skills in storytelling, camera work, editing, and media design. Along the way, they receive and give peer feedback to refine their ideas and strengthen their final projects. In our studio, everyone has a role to play—sometimes as the expert, sometimes as the learner—as we work together to build a positive, team-based production environment. Whether you're passionate about being behind the camera or in front of it, this course is where your voice, creativity, and stories come to life.

*** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.**

YEARBOOK: AN INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOJOURNALISM

The purpose of the *Washburne Yearbook* is to foster civic responsibility as students create a comprehensive record of the people, organizations, and events at Washburne Middle School. Also, students will gain experience building their publishing skills. Students will learn the basics of digital photography, interviewing, writing articles, proofreading, and layout design principles. Because the yearbook is produced through a web-based program, students will also learn to use the latest design software. Throughout the process, students will learn to collaborate and to meet the demands of a production schedule and a publication deadline through first-hand experience. Yearbook is now a single-trimester class.

*** THIS CLASS MAY BE REPEATED IF TAKEN IN 7TH GRADE.**

Performance Ensembles Electives

Students are able to take band, orchestra, or chorus as one of their daily electives. Students can also participate in multiple ensembles.

BAND Band is a full-year elective course. In addition to in-school class period rehearsals, students will meet one morning a week in a smaller rehearsal grouped by woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Performances include ILMEA district band auditions, Winter and Spring evening concerts, IGSMMA solo/ensemble contest, and a March combined musical experience with other school district music programs. Students are required to attend all rehearsals and concert performances and are expected to practice assigned music and developmental material at home. No prior experience on an instrument is needed, but the directors need to hear and approve instrument selection.

ORCHESTRA This class requires a **full year commitment** and meets every day during the school day. This class is a continuation of the 6th grade orchestra at Skokie. The main objective of this course is to further the exploration of a wide variety of repertoire while continuing to refine ensemble playing both as a string group and as part of a full orchestra. Performances include IMEA District honors orchestra tryouts; winter and spring evening concerts; IGSMMA solo ensemble contest in late winter; and tour of the grade schools in the spring. Performance at Graduation ends the year. **Students are required to attend all rehearsals and concert performances and are expected to practice assigned music and developmental material at home.**

CHORUS Chorus is a full-year class that meets during the school day. This ensemble performs a wide variety of music, including contemporary, traditional, musical theatre, and pop, and is open to all 7th and 8th grade students. Throughout the year, students participate in fall, winter, and spring vocal showcases, special performances and field

trips. Additional opportunities include the New Trier Township Fine Arts Festival and a Chorus Tour of the District 36 elementary schools.

Extra-Curricular Ensembles

JAZZ ENSEMBLES All students playing appropriate jazz instruments are eligible based on audition placement. Jazz Ensemble rehearses on Monday after school from 2:35pm to 3:45pm. Lion Jazz Ensemble meets on Friday at 7:30am. Additional sectionals are occasionally called before major concerts. Performances include the District elementary school tour, New Trier Jazz Festival, Jazz night, IGSMA jazz contest, school assemblies, and various other community events. Since we rehearse once a week, attendance at all practices is important.

Due to class capacities and scheduling conflicts, it may not be possible to accommodate every selection. If you have a question about a specific course or how to make your requests online, please contact Ben Horwitz, Assistant Principal, at benhorwitz@winnetka36.org.

READ COURSE DESCRIPTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR ONLINE REGISTRATION!

ONLINE REGISTRATION MUST BE COMPLETED

BY FRIDAY, May 22nd, 2026