Curriculum & Instruction

SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Content Area: Cycles
Course: Independent Study
Grade(s): 7th and 8th

Course Overview

Provide a written summary of the goals and learning experiences included in this course. Include any prerequisite courses required.

This course is intended for students who are committed to completing a long-term, independent project. The 7th and 8th students who have met the qualifications will research and design a project of their choosing, culminating in a final product to be shared with their peers.

In the first portion of this class, students will research and analyze a topic that they are passionate about, learning about the history of their chosen topic and its current development. They will then report on their personal involvement, motivation, and the significance of this topic.

The second portion of the course will have students design and create an original product related to their topic of study. These projects will be unique and authentic to each student and can be presented in any form (video, piece of artwork, short story, website, etc.). The overarching goal of this project is to encourage students to examine their own passion and its place in the local or global community so their point of view, voice, and reflection will be included. Throughout the course, students will also engage in multiple peer feedback workshops. This will foster awareness of other perspectives, encourage active dialogue, and model professional peer review processes.

At the conclusion of this course, the student will present their final projects and reflect on their learning experiences. Since this course may be taken in both 7th and 8th grade, students will have the option to extend their previous passion project in the 8th grade year. This opportunity can provide students with further growth and reflection opportunities.

New Jersey State Learning Standards

Summit Public Schools curriculum aligns with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards,

Content Area Standards:

List content specific standards here.

NJSLS-ELA
L.KL.8.2.A. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
W.IW.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events,

scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
W.WP.8.4 With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
SL.PI.8.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
SL.UM.8.5 Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

Interdisciplinary Standards:

List other relevant content standards here (at least one).

NJSLS for ELA Companion Standards
NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
NJSLSA.W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
NJSLSA.W7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
NJSLSA.W8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism

Skills Standards:

List any CKLA standards here (at least one)

NJSLS Life Literacies and Key Skills
9.4.8.CI.2: Repurpose an existing resource in an innovative way (e.g., 8.2.8.NT.3).
9.4.8.CT.3: Compare past problem-solving solutions to local, national, or global issues and analyze the factors that led to a positive or negative outcome.
9.4.8.DC.2: Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products (e.g., W.6.8).
9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, 2.1.8.CHSS/IV.8.AI.1, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8).
9.4.8.IML.12: Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
9.4.12.CI.1: Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas (e.g., 1.1.12prof.CR3a).

Computer Science and Design Thinking Standards:

List any CSDT standards here, if relevant.

Career Ready Practices (list if relevant)
CRP 1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP 2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP 3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
CRP 4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP 5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP 6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP 7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP 8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP 9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
CRP 10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
CRP 11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
CRP 12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

New Jersey Curriculum Mandates: (list only relevant ones)

This curriculum integrates lessons that address the following interdisciplinary New Jersey Curriculum Mandates:

- Diversity and Inclusion (Grades K - 12)
- Holocaust & Genocide Education (Grades K - 12)
- Amistad Act (Grades K - 12)
- Climate Change Education (Grades K - 12)
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Grades K - 12)
- History and Contributions of Individuals with Disabilities and LGBTQ persons (Grades 6 - 12 Only)

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are clear, specific statements that define what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of a lesson or course.

Students will be able to:

- Research and analyze a topic that they are passionate about, providing them with a voice in their learning experience.
- Connect their personal interests to the larger world around them and promote dynamic relationships between students and the environment, society, culture, and arts.
- Design and create an original and authentic product related to their topic of study to be presented in any form (video, piece of artwork, short story, website, etc.).
- Engage in peer feedback workshops to encourage active dialogue and model professional peer review processes.
- Reflect on feedback provided to aid in the revisions of their work.
- Present their final projects and reflect on their learning experiences.

Units of Study

Units of study are organized collections of lessons and learning experiences focused on a specific topic and set of skills within a course. Each unit is guided by a set of essential questions.

Unit: Personal Passion Writing (3 Weeks)

- What role can I play in my own learning?
- What is the relationship between my personal interests and society?
- How can I provide respectful and beneficial feedback to peers on their work?

Unit: Personal Passion Project (3 Weeks)

- How can I best represent my learning and knowledge of a particular topic to a larger audience and inspire engagement?
- How can I provide respectful and beneficial feedback to peers on their work?
- How can I reflect on my own work in a meaningful way?

Instructional Resources and Materials

Instructional resources are the information sources teachers utilize to guide their teaching and assessing. Instructional materials are the texts students read or review. The instructional resources and materials may vary in order to meet the learning needs of students.

- Noodletools
- Libguides and other library resources
- Presentation tools including, but not limited to, WeVideo, Canva, Google Slides, Google Sites, CodeHS, TinkerCAD, etc.

Assessment Strategies

Assessment measures a student's mastery of a course standard and learning objective. Assessment can be used for both instructional purposes and for evaluative purposes. Teachers may choose one or more of the following ideas to assess learners. They may also modify these ideas to make the assessment more responsive to students' interests and needs.

Formative:

- Individual Conferences during Weeks 2-5
- Peer Feedback
- Written Reflections

Summative:

- Personal Passion Paper (8th Grade)
- Passion Paragraphs (7th Grade)
- Passion Projects

Benchmark:

- Project Planning Agreement

Alternative:

- Passion Projects can be completed in any format

Suggested Strategies for Modification & Differentiation

Modifications Chart (update for your content area)