

Utica Community Schools

Middle Schools Course Offerings

Grade 8

Bemis Middle School
Davis Middle School
Eppler Middle School
Jeannette Middle School
Malow Middle School
Shelby Middle School

Utica Community Schools Middle Schools Plan of Study

8th Grade	
English or Honors English – 8A and 8B	
Math 8, **Algebra I, or Accelerated Geometry** – 8A and 8B	
Science – 8A and 8B	
United States History or Accelerated United States History – 8A and 8B	
Elective Options: • Yearbook • **Human Geography (AP)** • **French I** • **German I** • **Spanish I** • Band 8– Full year course • Jazz Band – Full year course • AVID 8– Full year course • Theatre 7/8** • Vocal Music** • Computer Science Discoveries I	• Computer Science Discoveries II • Wood 8 • Exploratory Design and Engineering I • Exploratory Design and Engineering II • Exploring Life Skills • Introduction to Art • Introduction to Drawing & Design • Introduction to Sculpture & Design • Introduction of Photo & Film • Physical Education and Health – *completion of this course is required in grade 7 or 8*

*Required Course

**Course may be taken for 20 weeks or a full year course

"A" is the first semester part of the course, "B" is the second semester.

Bold Courses are High School Course – Student will receive a letter grade for the course. Grade will be reflected on transcript and count toward high school GPA.

EIGHTH GRADE

Types of Courses

Core Level Courses: Full year courses that are required courses in which all students are enrolled. These courses provide instruction aligned to grade-level standards and the essential knowledge and skills for each subject.	**Honors/Accelerated Level Courses:** Full year courses that provide increased academic challenge through greater depth, complexity, and pace of instruction. These courses are designed for students who are ready to engage with content at a more advanced level and may require additional independent learning and critical thinking.

Subject Area Courses

English 8: This course emphasizes listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. The study of grammar, along with literature, editing skills, and vocabulary are taught as part of the writing process. Students develop reading skills through a study of drama, poetry, short stories, and novels.	**Honors English 8:** Honors English covers the standard curriculum of English 8. The class will delve deeper into content by applying additional concepts to literature, independently reading additional novels, collaborating with others through discussion processes, and using critical thinking skills to analyze information. Students are expected to be independent and self-directed learners.

Math 8: The following topics are explored in this course: irrational numbers, radicals, exponents, proportional relationships, linear equations, inequalities, systems of linear equations, functions, congruence and similarity of geometric shapes, Pythagorean Theorem, volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres, bivariate data analysis.	**Advanced Math Courses:** See the Selective Classes Section for further information. **Placement in this class is based on criteria established by Utica Community Schools**

Science 8: This course is an exploratory science course that seeks to answer phenomena in the world around us. This course is designed to build students' curiosity of the world and increase their confidence in solving problems through questioning, investigating, and communicating their findings with a scientific community.

United States History: This course explores the development of the United States through the study of significant people, places, events, ideas, and founding documents. Students strengthen social studies skills, including reading, writing, and interpreting maps, charts, and diagrams.	**Accelerated United States History:** This accelerated course explores the development of the United States through an in-depth study of significant people, places, events, ideas, and founding documents. Students engage with more complex historical texts and sources while strengthening social studies skills, including critical reading, analytical writing, and the interpretation of maps, charts, and diagrams.

Selective Classes

Selective classes are designed to provide each student with the support he or she requires for success. Students are assigned to these classes based on data. These classes are not options for students to choose during scheduling.

Algebra I: (Full year course, High School Credit)
Prerequisite: Placement determined by data team, completion of summer work
The following topics are explored in this course: linear, quadratic, polynomial, exponential, rational and irrational numbers, data analysis including center, data distribution, and topics in bivariate data.
Placement is based on criteria established by Utica Community Schools. Refer to the UCS Graduation Requirements *(https://www.uticak12.org/academics-programs/secondary/ucs-graduation-requirements)* document for additional information.
Students taking a high school course prior to entering high school will earn a letter grade for the course according to the UCS grading policy for high school students. The high school course will be placed on the high school transcript, and the grade will count towards the Grade Point Average (GPA) and class ranking. Any student taking a high school course prior to grade 9 can have the course removed from their transcript and may retake the course if the following criteria are met. A parent or guardian must submit the UCS Request Form for Letter Grade and Credit Removal from Student Academic Record *(https://www.uticak12.org/academics-programs/secondary/ucs-letter-grade-and-credit-removal-request-form)* to the building principal prior to the first day of the student starting grade 9, requesting the course to be removed from the student's high school transcript and for the student to retake the course. Credits that are removed will act as if the course was never taken.
Placement in this class is based on criteria established by Utica Community Schools.

Accelerated Geometry: (Full year course, High School Credit): The following topics are explored in this course: angle relationships, polygon properties, congruency, similarity, transformations, right triangles, trigonometry, circles, proofs, area, volume, relationships between two- and three-dimensional objects.
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Placement in this class is based on criteria established by Utica Community Schools.

Math Boost - Discover, Think, Apply: Math Boost: Discover, Think, Apply is a companion course designed to provide students with additional opportunities to strengthen mathematical understanding, build confidence, and develop problem-solving skills. Students engage in guided practice, collaborative learning experiences, mathematical investigations, and real-world applications aligned with their mathematics coursework. The course supports learners at all achievement levels by providing opportunities for reinforcement, enrichment, conceptual development, and academic growth. Students also develop effective study habits, organization, perseverance, and mathematical reasoning skills that support success in current and future mathematics courses.
Placement in this class is based on criteria established by Utica Community Schools.

ELA - Read, Write, Think: Read, Write, Think is a companion course that provides students with additional opportunities to strengthen literacy skills, build confidence and develop critical thinking abilities. The course complements, but does not replace, core English Language Arts instruction by offering targeted support, reinforcement, and enrichment aligned to individual student needs.
Designed for students at all achievement levels, Read, Write, Think engages students in reading, writing, speaking, listening, discussion, research and analysis while developing disciplinary literacy skills that support success across content areas. Through guided practice, collaboration and authentic learning experiences, students strengthen communication, problem-solving and academic habits while becoming more confident readers, writers, thinkers, and communicators.
Placement in this class is based on criteria established by Utica Community Schools.

Elective Classes

Elective classes are those in which students may choose to enroll.

Yearbook: This course focuses on many aspects of yearbook journalism, including photography, layout design, interviewing, writing, editing, and desktop publishing.

Human Geography (AP) (Full year course, High School Credit): This class is an academic, yearlong course designed to represent a systematic study of the earth & its inhabitants. Advanced Placement Human Geography mirrors a typical undergraduate level Introduction to Human Geography course and covers the following seven units; the geographic perspective; population; cultural patterns and processes; political organization of space; agricultural and rural land use; industrialization and economic development, and cities and urban land use. This course should help students understand how cultural, economic, and political systems relate to the distribution of human activities, the nature of places, and people's interaction with their environment. Note: If a course is taken in grade 8, the course name is Human Geography Elective.
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French I (Full year course, High School Credit): This dynamic course dives straight into communicative proficiency, giving you the confidence to speak, read, and understand French in authentic, real-life settings. Explore the vibrant culture and customs of French-speaking people across the globe, including France, Canada, Africa, and the Caribbean through theme-based projects and gain valuable interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational language skills. Exposure to real-life film, music, and media of the French speaking world. Cultural studies will include French cuisine, schools, family life, calendar, music, famous people, art, and geography.

Refer to the UCS Graduation Requirements *(https://www.uticak12.org/academics-programs/secondary/ucs-graduation-requirements)* document for additional information.

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German I (Full year course, High School Credit): Say hello to German! Los Geht's

Start learning one of the world's most spoken languages in a fun, interactive way. In this beginner class, you will practice daily phrases, explore German culture through games and activities, and build confidence to hold simple conversations. No experience needed—just curiosity and enthusiasm!

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Spanish I (Full year course, High School Credit): ¡Vamos! A Beginner's Adventure in Real-World Spanish
Get ready to *actually use* Spanish in your life—not just memorize lists! Spanish I is a high-energy, beginner-friendly course designed to help you communicate with confidence while exploring the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world as they exist *today.*
By the end of Spanish I, you will be able to navigate everyday situations, understand more than you think, and share your world in a new language. ¡Prepárate! Your Spanish journey starts here.
Refer to the UCS Graduation Requirements *(https://www.uticak12.org/academics-programs/secondary/ucs-graduation-requirements)* document for additional information.
Students taking a high school course prior to entering high school will earn a letter grade for the course according to the UCS grading policy for high school students. The high school course will be placed on the high school transcript, and the grade will count towards the Grade Point Average (GPA) and class ranking. Any student taking a high school course prior to grade 9 can have the course removed from their transcript and may retake the course if the following criteria are met. A parent or guardian must submit the UCS Request Form for Letter Grade and Credit Removal from Student Academic Record *(https://www.uticak12.org/academics-programs/secondary/ucs-letter-grade-and-credit-removal-request-form)* to the building principal prior to the first day of the student starting grade 9, requesting the course to be removed from the student's high school transcript and for the student to retake the course. Credits that are removed will act as if the course was never taken.

Band (Full year course): Band gives students the opportunity to learn and understand musical notes, symbols and terms, and a chance to develop proficiency on their musical instruments. Members of this group are expected to develop and refine those skills that will lead to advancement into the 8th grade band. All members are expected to practice regularly and give their utmost dedication to this group. Prior musical instrument training is required for any seventh grader who would like to take this class.
All members are required to attend all performances.

Jazz Band: Jazz Band is a full year course that is a performing group that will consist of instrumental students who wish to perform a range of styles of music. Improvisation will be a main component of this class. Because this is a performing group, members will be required to attend all rehearsals and performances.
All members are required to attend all performances.

AVID (Full year course): Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a college readiness system designed to increase the number of students who will enroll in four-year colleges or post-secondary institutions. AVID targets students in the academic middle – B, C, and even D students – who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard. AVID elective teachers support these students by providing academic training, by facilitating tutorials, by working with other faculty and parents, and by helping students to develop long-range academic and personal goals. AVID is supported by 30 years of research.
Application and Interview Required

Theatre 7/8: This elective allows students to learn the basics of acting and the fundamentals of stagecraft. Students also experience working together in pairs and groups to perform scenes. Communication skills draw on the students' resourcefulness and help build self-confidence.
All members are required to attend all performances.
Course may be repeated each semester in grades 7 and 8.

Vocal Music: Vocal Music offers students a chance to perform and enjoy group singing. Students study singing, choreography, and musical theory.
All members are required to attend all performances.
Course may be repeated each semester in grades 7 and 8.

Computer Science Discoveries I: Computer Science Discoveries I is a one semester introductory computer science survey course targeted at grades 7-8. The course takes a wide range of lenses on computer science by covering topics such as digital footprints, intellectual property, programming, JavaScript, and HTML/CSS. Students are empowered to create authentic artifacts and engage with Computer Science as a medium for creativity, communication, problem solving, and fun. Computer Science Discoveries I will explore the problem-solving process and the different ways humans and computers solve problems, discover the languages powering the web by building websites in HTML and CSS using Web Lab, and learn the foundational programming languages by building interactive animations and games in JavaScript using Game Lab. Implementation of this course will create a natural pathway for students to enroll in high school computer science courses. **This semester course is available only for those students who did not take it in the 7th grade.**

Computer Science Discoveries II: Prerequisite: Computer Science Discoveries I
Students are empowered to create authentic artifacts and engage with Computer Science as a medium for creativity, communication, problem solving, and fun. Computer Science Discoveries II is a continuation of Computer Science Discoveries I and will follow the design process to identify and empathize with problems faced by a target audience by prototyping an app using App Lab. Students will develop binary representations of diverse kinds of information. They will collect, analyze, visualize, and make automated decisions using data. Finally, students will explore the relationship between hardware and software while building interactive projects using Adafruit's Circuit Playground. Implementation of this course will create a natural pathway for students to enroll in high school computer science courses. **This semester course is available only for those students who did not take it in the 7th grade.**

Wood 8: This is a co-educational course designed to teach the principles of safety in the woodshop and the basic skills of woodworking with hand tools. These principles and skills are addressed through informational text, worksheets, lectures, and demonstrations. This course incorporates the use of mathematical skills and measurement skills. Woodshops require proper attire.

Exploratory Design and Engineering I: This introductory course is designed for students who have an interest in drawing, design, and engineering. The course will provide students with fundamentals and an appreciation for the basic knowledge of mechanical, architectural, and engineering design. This course encompasses proper lettering, use of measuring scales, use of design equipment, single, multi view and isometric drawings, and basic residential design. The Engineering Design Process will be followed as students identify, analyze, predict, and test solutions to problem-based projects. The students will analyze and interpret data, construct explanations, and design solutions. This course will provide students a foundation for the Design & Engineering and Architecture programs at the high school. **This semester course is available only for those students who did not take it in the 7th grade.**	**Exploratory Design and Engineering II:** Prerequisite: Exploratory Design and Engineering I Exploratory Design and Engineering II will be a project-based course which will focus on skills in math, science, technology, and engineering as it applies to electric vehicles. The course will provide students with fundamentals and an appreciation for electronics, sources of energy, and mechanical design. The students will further their drafting and design skills acquired in Exploratory Design and Engineering I (EDE I). The course will encourage students to seriously consider the CTE and STEM options that exist in high school.

Exploring Life Skills: Life Skills promotes a positive self-esteem to guide students toward effective living. Students will explore career pathways, goal setting, success skills and develop a presentation to be shared in a tradeshow format. This course includes academic links and study skills. Student success is enhanced using hands-on projects and cooperative learning experiences.

Introduction to Art: This class helps develop drawing skills using nature, figures, still life, and perspective studies. The student will gain an understanding of composition by working with the elements of art: color, line, space, shape, texture, value, and form; and the principles of art: balance, variety, movement/rhythm, harmony/unity, proportion, contrast (size) and emphasis. The class will provide training and experience in painting, printmaking, lettering, sculpture, pottery, and/or technology. A sketchbook containing outside assignments will be kept helping the student develop sequential thought processes, and creative ideas. **This semester course is available only for those students who did not take it in the 7th grade.**

Introduction to Drawing and Design: Did you every say, "I can't draw a straight line" or "I don't know how to draw"? This course is designed to teach you the 'tricks' of drawing. What an artist inherently knows about looking, seeing, and spatial relationships can be learned. The right side of the brain is the creative side. By learning to tap this creativity, anyone can learn to draw better. The book Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, by Betty Edwards, is used as the main resource for this class. By practicing the techniques learned in this class and studying other artists' work, anyone can become more skilled at drawing, the beginner as well as the advanced artist. Methods of drawing include contour, spatial relationships, and proportional relationships. **This semester course is available only for those students who did not take it in the 7th grade.**

Introduction to Sculpture & Design: Introduction to Sculpture and Design is a semester course which provides students with an environment to explore the Elements of Art and Principles of Design through various media, including but not limited to, ceramic arts, fiber arts, jewelry, and assemblage. Students will explore styles and concepts of current and historic artists while discovering their own identity. This course is recommended for students who have an interest in learning and improving their three-dimensional art skills. This course will prepare students for pathways for future courses. Students will explore art history, art in society, and art careers.

Introduction to Photo & Film: This course is an in-depth study of digital photography and digital video/editing concepts. During the course students will address a variety of issues and demands that prepare students for ongoing 21st Century Skills using Digital Technology. Students will be asked to demonstrate their understanding of digital technologies using digital cameras, digital video, and computers for digital editing of both the photographs and videos.

Physical Education 8: In this exploratory program, students become acquainted with activities which include floor hockey, football, volleyball, basketball, badminton, softball, track, soccer, and many other facets of physical education that lead to lifelong leisure activities.