

Millennium Charter Academy Upper School



Exploratory Course Descriptions, Grades 6-8

2022-2023

Dear Families of Rising Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Graders,

At MCA, we offer a wide array of exploratory courses that span subject areas and special interests. These classes are selected based upon the school's philosophy of education, which requires meaningful, substantive material that promotes evaluation, generalization, and synthesis. Secondly, but of equal importance, a teacher's passion for the subject is factored into the selection. Students will receive percentage grades for all exploratory courses.

Each student will have the four core courses: English, history/geography, science, and math. All core courses are taught with academic rigor in mind, and our exploratory courses, which take place during first and eighth periods, are equally conscientious as well as delightful.

Students likely will be placed in one of their top three selections for each period of each semester. The more quickly students submit their choices, the more likely they are to receive their first choices. Space in each course is limited.

kindest Regards,

Dr. Jarrid K. Looney
Upper School Director
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Exploratory Courses

First Period

SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2
Animal Advocacy, Mrs. Harrison	Acting, Mr. Dawes
Beginning Band, Mr. Money ***Yearlong Course	Beginning Band, Mr. Money ***Yearlong Course
Beginning Choir, Mrs. Davis ***Yearlong Course	Beginning Choir, Mrs. Davis ***Yearlong Course
History of War, Mr. Dawes	Lettering, Mrs. Moore
Lettering, Mrs. Moore	Mediation and Social-Emotional Intelligence, Mrs. Utt
Mediation and Social-Emotional Intelligence, Mrs. Utt	Origami, Mrs. Harrison
Pottery and Tiles, Mrs. McCormick	Reading Refuge, Mrs. Reece
Reading Refuge, Mrs. Reece	Strength Training, Mr. Mitchell
Strength Training, Mr. Mitchell	Visual Journaling, Mrs. McCormick
Yearbook, Mr. Sealey ***Yearlong Course	Yearbook, Mr. Sealey ***Yearlong Course



Exploratory Courses

Eighth Period

SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2
Body Mysteries, Mrs. Meadows ***Yearlong Course	1960 - 1974, Mr. Dawes
Creative Writing, Mrs. Moore	Beautification, Mrs. Harrison
Crocheting, Mrs. Harrison	Body Mysteries, Mrs. Meadows ***Yearlong Course
Drawing, Mrs. McCormick	Computer Programming, Mr. Sealey
History through Film, Mrs. Reece	Female Fitness, Mrs. Reece
Intermediate Band, Mr. Money ***Yearlong Course <i>Students must have performed in the band for at least one year before enrolling in this course.</i>	Fine Art, Mrs. McCormick
Intermediate Choir, Mrs. Davis ***Yearlong Course <i>Students must have performed in the choir for at least one year before enrolling in this course.</i>	Intermediate Band, Mr. Money ***Yearlong Course <i>Students must have performed in the band for at least one year before enrolling in this course.</i>
Outdoor Flying Disc Experience, Mr. Sealey	Intermediate Choir, Mrs. Davis ***Yearlong Course <i>Students must have performed in the choir for at least one year before enrolling in this course.</i>
Public Speaking, Mr. Dawes	Poetry Place, Mrs. Moore



Course Descriptions

1960 - 1974 — *Neal Dawes*

This course explores the major people and events from this pivotal time period in American History. Major topics include the presidencies of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon; the Civil Rights Movement; the Vietnam War and the anti-war protest movement; the Space Race; the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy; the Environmental, American Indian, Farmworkers, and Women's Movements; and music, television, and sports from the period.

Acting — *Neal Dawes*

The major goal of this course is to introduce students to the basics of performing in theater and to strengthen public-speaking skills. Students explore how theatre is the art of telling stories through live acting. They will learn to work together, build trust, and involve every member in a performance. We will explore how pantomime and behavior help tell a story; how being present, listening and reacting are an important part of being a performer; and to understand the importance of articulation, projection and voice variation.

This elective will focus on developing your skills in acting and will likely involve helping out/performing in the Spring production.

Animal Advocacy — *Deana Harrison*

This course is for the civic-minded animal enthusiast. We focus on issues that animals face in our community, in our country and around the globe. We cover topics such as big cat ownership, the ivory trade, endangered species conservation efforts, invasive species and much more. This year, we will also study about our local pollinators and use that knowledge to add to our current pollinator garden at school.

Beautification — *Deana Harrison*

Are you looking to play a leadership role in our school? You will work with your peers and be involved in school beautification projects around our school. We will lead our school by serving it. Together we can find beauty in stewarding our resources, bringing energy, pride, and morale to our school and community.

Beginning Band — *Rodney Money*

This course is offered to students with no previous music experience who plan on being in band in high school. Emphasis for this class will be mainly on development of basic technical skills. The students are required to either buy or rent their own instruments and purchase the book "Tradition of Excellence" which can be found in most music stores. Beginning Band students from the 2021-2022 school year may also choose to take this class as a review or even to learn a new instrument.



Beginning Choir — *Danielle Davis*

Beginning choir is a course dedicated to introducing proper singing techniques while exploring all sorts of different choral styles. A student may not take this course if s/he has already been a part of the MCA choir.

Body Mysteries — *Amanda Meadows*

One would think doctors and scientists would have charted every aspect of their home turf by now, but they haven't. We've nailed down many mysteries, but there are some shockingly simple questions to which we don't have very solid answers yet. If it's a good mystery you are after, look no further than your bathroom mirror. We all know our bodies are magnificent works of art, but the mysteries of the human body still consume the mind as incomprehensible and strange. Join me as we explore the "Mysteries of the Human Body."

Choir — *Danielle Davis*

Choir elective is for those with basic singing experience. A light audition/placement will be required. This course will be excellent preparation for participating in high school choir. Throughout this course, we will be exploring eclectic musical genres, advancing performance skills, creating harmonies with part-singing, advancing sight-singing, learning proper vocal-health practices, and learning to develop a deep love of singing and performing. Students are required to perform in winter concerts, spring concerts, and after school activities. Students may also get an opportunity to travel outside of MCA to share their talents with the community, as well as compete in a competition choir setting.

Computer Programming — *Charlie Sealey*

Students will take an in-depth look at Scratch, an online programming tool. Various animations and games will be created using Scratch. We will use other online programming resources such as Code.org and Codecombat to also learn different coding languages.

Crocheting — *Deana Harrison*

Some of the best memories are made of the simplest things in life. Crochet is a process of creating fabric by interlocking loops of yarn, threads, or strands of other materials using a crochet hook. During this semester-long class, you will learn the basics of crocheting and you will be able to create your own blanket by the end of the class.

Female Fitness — *Sally Reece*

This is an introductory course that is designed to provide students with correct physical training techniques, emphasizing a healthy lifestyle. Students will improve their physical conditions and will develop a personalized health program.

Drawing — *Mary Perry-McCormick*

This course is designed to be a classical style studio course. Students will learn about specific kinds of drawings and techniques such as line, contour, value, color media, ink, charcoal, still life, self-portraiture, etc. There will be "How-to" tutorials in the class. Anime cartooning will be covered as one of many topics. If you are looking to improve your drawing skills this will be a good choice for you.



Fine Art — *Mary Perry-McCormick*

This course focuses on 2 dimensional design and traditional art media, using drawing, acrylic painting, watercolor painting, printmaking, and zentangling. If you want to get a good basic overview of art skills, this class will get your creative juices jumping.

History of War — *Neal Dawes*

We will study how early types of warfare developed, the advancement of the weapons of war, and key strategies that have been effective throughout the ages in war. We will also look at important generals and the keys to their success and reasons for their failures as well as women and war, spies in war, health conditions and treatment of the injured in warfare, and how wars have been presented in art and media over time.

History through Film — *Sally Reece*

Film can be a beautiful reflection of history. This class will explore major events in human history through the lens of a movie camera. Students will learn to intelligently and thoughtfully critique films, and they will learn to separate fact from fiction by paying close attention to cinematic depictions of both historical and emotional truth.

Intermediate Music — *Rodney Money*

This year-long, high-level course focuses on performance. Students must be self-motivated, able to work well with others, and able to count eighth-note rhythms. Students are required to perform in at least two Christmas concerts, two spring concerts and other events, possibly outside regular school hours. Students may have the opportunity to travel as well. Students interested in Intermediate Music are required to do a light, non-threatening audition to make sure the student understands the basic concepts of reading and counting music.

Lettering — *Ann Moore*

Writing in fancy letters is all the rage! People even make money from writing words, phrases, and even just letters on objects such as wood or tile. In this elective, we will explore some of the hand-lettering fonts and old-world calligraphy. We will even create our own stationery to send to people for birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc. Come and help beautify the world! Students will need to purchase a set of dual-tipped markers with beveled edges.

Mediation and Social-Emotional Intelligence — *Kelly Utt*

Have you ever wished you had more tools to solve the conflicts in your life? Through the process of mediation, we will learn a peaceful alternative to tough situations. The capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle relationships judiciously and empathetically while feeling empowered. This is the definition of Emotional Intelligence. Would you like to join the Emotionally Intelligent Club? If so, sign up for this course.



Origami — *Deana Harrison*

Origami, the ancient art of paper folding, is making a comeback. While some of the oldest pieces of origami have been found in ancient China and Japan, origami can make an impact on your education too. This art form engages you and sneakily enhances your skills -- including improved spatial perception, logical and sequential thinking, understanding of fractions, geometry, and is just plain fun!

Outdoor Flying Disc Experience — *Charlie Sealey*

Students taking this course will learn the rules and how to play a number of flying discs sports. These will include Disc Golf, Ultimate Frisbee and a few other flying disc games.

Poetry Place — *Ann Moore*

How many types of poetry can you write? There are many different types just waiting for you to explore. Come and discover your favorite type. It may be one you have never heard of before! We will share our original poetry with each other and create a book that will amaze your family and friends.

Pottery and Tiles — *Mary Perry-McCormick*

If you are interested in working with ceramic clay, this is the class for you. Students will focus on creating 3-dimensional clay pieces. Fine craft clay vessels, functional ware, and tiles will be made during this class. Emphasis will be placed on surface decoration and sculptural form. Texture will also be emphasized. Although pottery will be the focus, there will be ample opportunities to work sculpturally.

Public Speaking — *Neal Dawes*

Everyone will at some point in their life be called upon to speak in front of others. In this elective, students will have the opportunity to learn and practice how to effectively speak in front of an audience and how to give different kinds of speeches, providing them with an important skill that will last a lifetime.

Reading Refuge — *Sally Reece*

Homework, studying, and projects - When will it ever end? Do you wish you had time to just read without having to analyze each chapter? Join Reading Refuge and have time to just read, read, read. Students will read books of their choosing from a variety of genres. At the end of the quarter, we will have a book talk to advertise our favorite books.

Strength Training — *Michael Mitchell*

This *strength training program for students* will address every major muscle group in the body: chest, upper back, shoulders, biceps, triceps, neck (for collision sports), abdominals, lower back, hips & glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings, and calves. There will be a systematic and progressive overload of the musculature. In most cases, 1-3 sets will be performed for each exercise and 15-20 working sets (not including warm-up sets) will be performed in the entire workout. To better optimize the students time, they are encouraged to come to class dressed for their workout since this class will be the first class of their day. They will be given adequate time to change into appropriate school attire.



Visual Journaling Portfolio — *Mary Perry-McCormick*

One of the most exciting and free-form art courses offered in the middle school, Visual Journaling will focus on combining drawn/painted images and/or photographic collage to create a portfolio of pages that tells a personal story. Similar to scrapbooking, but the class focuses on fine art materials and personal narrative. Contemporary and historical artists who create/d personal artwork will be studied as inspiration.

