

Overview

THE ARTS

DCD fosters the belief that the arts are an essential part of educating the whole child. The school has a long and rich tradition in the arts and believes that effective self-expression comes from commitment, hard work, and exploration. The solid foundation, established in early grades, gives children an opportunity to develop the confidence, creativity, and appreciation of the artistic process that flowers in the middle school program. To ensure a balanced experience in the arts, students are engaged throughout the year in four disciplines: music, drama, woodworking, and visual arts.

In middle school, students are required to take three arts courses per term (for a total of nine courses per year), including at least one course from each discipline (music, visual art, woodworking, drama/technology) during the course of the year. In addition, sixth graders are required to take World Music; seventh-graders are required to take Art History, and eighth-graders are required to take *Smooth Talk*. *Smooth Talk* is a course dedicated to public speaking, introspective thinking and writing, and interview skill building to prepare students for the secondary school application process and transition to high school. Middle School Band and Middle School Chorus are also available as full year arts offerings. For their remaining electives, students select from the courses detailed below.

All arts courses meet two days out of six per term (unless otherwise specified). All arts classes meet one day out of three per term (unless otherwise specified). With the exception of the grade-specific requirements named above and each grade's class play, arts classes are cross-grade offerings, resulting in classroom environments of mixed ages and developmental levels. Class enrollments are kept small to allow teachers to provide meaningful, individualized attention and instruction.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

DRAMA

Smooth Talk **Ms. Sidoli and Mr. Edie**

This course will give eighth grade students the opportunity to take an advance public speaking course that is specifically geared towards the leaders of our school. Students will write and perform a speech, take part in group debates, develop vocal skills, and learn drama exercises. The course will help students gain confidence in their final year at DCD, and for their life outside our school.

Please note: This course is required for all eighth graders

Director's Cut **Ms. Sidoli**

This course is an introduction to the skills needed to become a director. Students will watch scenes from famous movies and critique the work of such well-known directors as George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. Students will have the opportunity to direct scenes from plays and to create storyboards for a movie idea. There will also be the opportunity to act in directed scenes.

Let's Act and Let's Direct **Ms. Sidoli**

Let's Act and Let's Direct is an acting, playwriting, and directing course. Students learn how to create, write, perform in their own mini-plays, while also studying the work of professional film directors.

Class Play **Ms. Sidoli**

Students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades who have chosen to act in their class play will have the exciting opportunity to learn speaking roles, develop acting skills, and put on a full production of a play. Students who wish to act should be willing to accept a role that contributes to an authentic theatrical experience.

Creative Writing - Fiction **Mr. Thacher**

The fiction creative writing course combines direct instruction in elements of fiction (plot structure, narrative voice and perspective, dialogue, imagery) with peer-to-peer workshop opportunities and free writing time. Students will produce at least one polished final story for submission to *Dream, Create, Discover*, DCD's art and literary annual.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

Creative Writing - Poetry

Mr. Thacher

The poetry creative writing course combines direct instruction in elements of poetry (image, sound, structure, and symbol) with peer-to-peer workshop opportunities and free writing time. Students will produce a portfolio of finished poems, including at least one for submission to *Dream, Create, Discover*, DCD's art and literary annual.

WOODWORKING

Cutting Boards

Ms. Levi

In this course students will explore the process of creating cutting blocks and boards for use in the home kitchen. Through this process they will learn more about the art of choosing wood carefully, composing the grain, edge-glueing boards together, and executing a glue-up with composure and skill. They will use an array of hand tools including saws of various types, drills, and will also have the opportunity to learn about planing wood both by hand using traditional tools and with a power planer. Boards may be stylized by drilling holes and attaching lanyards, wood burning, painting, and employing a variety of other decorative touches.

Hand Carved Bowl

Ms. Levi

This course will focus on the making of small hand carved bowls and the design aspects that makes them pleasing to the eye. Students learn about the harvesting of local hardwoods and watch the process of Ms. Levi cut up bowl blanks with a chainsaw. Design considerations such as scale and dimension will be examined and discussed. Types of wood will include green and seasoned, wormy wood and figured woods. An array of gouges will be used in the carving out of the bowls, as well as the band saw, power drills with sanding attachments, and a variety of hand tools for roughing out the bowls. Paint and oil finishes will be discussed and presented for possible use, along with a variety of surface treatments as the class time allows.

Puzzle Making

Ms. Levi

Make your own wooden toys or puzzles! In this course students will be encouraged to work independently to design and build a wooden toy or puzzle of their choice. Puzzle options include an "O-C-C" puzzle, burr puzzles, sliding puzzles, or jigsaw puzzles. Toys could include "String and ring" toys, push toys (on wheels), or articulated toys with gears. A few examples will be shared and baseline designs offered, and from there, students can decide what level of complexity they would like to take on. This sequence of lessons teaches the skills of toy design, joinery, precise measuring, making accurate cuts, and choosing the right finish. Various types of wood and finishes will be offered and toys/puzzles may be painted or decorated!



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

Service Woodworking

Ms. Levi

During this course we will prioritize making utilitarian products for others and considering woodworking as an act of giving. Past projects have included wall hangings for the school and vegetable storage boxes for a local farmer. We will learn techniques for working on commission such as budget and material estimation, cost-benefit analysis, plan drawing, creating scaled prototypes, managing time to meet deadlines, and communicating with clients. Other project ideas include working with local nonprofit organizations and working on campus with facilities and teachers who need classroom items/furniture.

Lamp Making

Ms. Levi

During this course students will design and construct lamps. Each design is encouraged to be unique and sculptural. Woodworking is emphasized in this course. Throughout the course, students will be given demonstrations of basic hand and power tools such as the Japanese Hand Saw, Power Drill, Band Saw, Combination Square, File, and shown best practices for the uses of each. They will then incorporate those new skills into the design of their unique lamp, finishing it off with a socket and lampshade that are provided. If there is extra time students will have the opportunity to make their own lampshade and finish their project in a variety of ways (woodburning, paint, oil, carving, etc).

Milk Stool

Ms. Levi

This course will offer an opportunity to build a traditional wooden milk stool. These stools have been made in Europe and America for centuries, and were often handmade by New England farmers as a winter project during the era of family-run dairies. Milking stools came in many shapes and sizes, each unique to their maker. They could have three legs or four, extensions to rest a bucket on, be collapsible (to be carried out into the field), have interesting seat shapes, or varying combinations of wood or joinery techniques. Students will have a chance to learn more about this fascinating history, design their own stool, and use it at home for years to come.

Box Creation

Ms. Levi

Do you have things you'd like to stow away in a special place? Do you have an attention to detail and enjoy the satisfaction of fitting things together? Make a hardwood box and take on the challenge of creating a box with finger joints or even dovetail or splined miter joints. There will be emphasis on process and preparation in this course that teaches tips to accurately use a combination square and sharp pencil to create an accurate layout, and to use a saw with precision. We'll have the option of adding hinges, inlaid tops, and practicing a variety of surface treatments such as painting, carving, and woodturning as time allows. Top designs can include imagery of the student's choice and can utilize several types of wood.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

Vehicle Design

Ms. Levi

In this course students will have the opportunity to design and build something that moves on wheels. There is the potential to build soapbox derby cars, toy cars/trains, ripsticks, or even simple wagons. We will decide if all students want to build the same thing with a pre-existing plan or, dependent on experience, folks might have the opportunity to take more of an independent-study route and make their own plans. Students will be provided with wheels and trucks and be challenged to build something 'rideable' on top of a base.

Kitchen Tool

Ms. Levi

This course takes spoon carving to the next level and provides an opportunity to enrich every meal with a handmade object. Students will craft a "kitchen tool" of their choice. Options may include forks, tongs, ladles, stirring spoons, butter knives, and any kitchen tool students can dream up! If they'd like they can carve a spoon in this course, since spoon carving will not be offered this year. They will create drafts and full-scale sketches of their tool, choose their wood based on its' function, create, and complete the tool with a food safe finish.

VISUAL ART

Ceramics

Mr. Coakley

Students will use hand-building techniques to construct ceramic pieces of varying sizes. Students will start small to become adept with the skills necessary to produce a successful piece and then progress to larger forms. Students will also have the opportunity to work on the potter's wheel to create simple, functional pottery. A variety of methods will be used to finish the fired pots.

Calligraphy

Mrs. Eutemey

This course is an introduction to Italic Cursive calligraphy. We will practice letter formation and learn about spacing and page layout. Present a hand-lettered motivational quote, poem or an excerpt from a favorite book as your final project.

Printmaking

Mrs. Eutemey (Winter) & Mr. Coakley (Spring)

In this class, there will be a heavy emphasis on the design process. Safe cutting techniques will be stressed. Students will be able to focus on building their print portfolios using imaginative approaches to printmaking.

Knitting

Ms. Webster

In this class, students will be introduced to the fundamentals of knitting. After learning some basic techniques, students will design and knit a hat. The remaining time in the class will be spent pursuing an independent project.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

Drawing

Mrs. Eutemey

The emphasis in this class will be on skill-building: observational skills, physical skills and your powers of imagination. Various exercises will teach concepts such as contour, value, composition, perspective, pattern and texture, facial and body proportions, and positive and negative space. We will use a range of mark-making materials.

Set Design

Mrs. Eutemey

Be a part of the team that designs and creates scenery and props for DCD's famous productions! You will cooperate with classmates to design and create whatever is needed to transform the stage into a professional theatrical setting for a class play.

Fibers

Mrs. Eutemey

Students will learn different ways of working with fibers. They will practice flat and circular weaving and will learn how to coil baskets. Students can choose to work with natural materials, as well. After learning the basics, students will be able to focus and expand on one method for a final project.

Watercolors

Mrs. Eutemey

In this class, we will learn about layering washes of color to create interesting textures and various tonal ranges. Students will learn how to mix colors and different water-based media to express a range of feelings with this versatile material.

Art History

Mr. Coakley

In this course, students will be introduced to several eras of the history of art. Students will begin to learn how to look at and discuss works of art. PowerPoint presentations will allow us to study the lives and works of famous artists in history. Time will also be spent in the studio using the techniques of the artists studied to create original works.

Please note: This course is required for all seventh graders

Artists Trading Cards and Other Miniatures

Mrs. Eutemey

Students will learn about the origin of Artist Trading Cards. They will develop several editions using various art methods, including drawing, painting, mixed media work and hand swing.

Ceramic Platters

Mr. Coakley

Students will learn to use traditional hand-building techniques to create a wide array of functional platters. Pieces will be finished with colorful, high-fired glazes.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

MUSIC

DCD Band

Ms. Lien

Band offers dedicated and experienced instrumentalists an ensemble experience where they can expand and hone their musical skills. Drawing on repertoire from blues, jazz, and pop/rock literatures, this course will allow students to learn and perform music in a range of styles while developing reading, listening, and ensemble/performance skills. The repertoire will be accessible yet challenging. Students are expected to devote regular outside-of-class practice time to preparing for rehearsals and performances. The band will perform in various holiday and performing arts programs throughout the year.

Please note: Students are expected to participate in all three terms.

Songwriting: Exploring History and Creativity

Mr. Velez

In this course, students will explore the rich history of songwriting, analyze popular songs, and develop their own creative voices through project-based learning. No prior experience in songwriting is required, but a background in an instrument can be helpful. Throughout the course, students will examine the different components of songs, including melody, harmony, rhythm, and lyrics. They will learn how to analyze and deconstruct songs, identifying the structures and patterns that make them successful. Students will then use this knowledge to craft their own original pieces, experimenting with different styles and genres. The course will be project-based, with students working on a series of assignments that build towards a final songwriting project. By the end of the course, students will have gained a deeper appreciation for the art of songwriting, as well as the skills and tools needed to create their own original music.

Introduction to Guitar

Mr. Miller

Students will be introduced to basic chord progressions, note reading, and the music theory behind learning to play guitar. Knowledge of reading music is not required. Each student will be given a variety of songs to practice, sing, and play. School-owned acoustic guitars will be loaned to each student for the term. Practicing is considered homework and is a requirement of the course.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

Chorus

Mr. Velez

The Chorus is a performing group that meets for three consecutive terms. Students choosing to participate must do so for all three terms. This group is a Middle School elective for students wishing to learn more about singing and performing. Singers of all abilities are welcome to join. The overall objective is for students to learn to work together while creating music. Suitable vocal repertoire will be introduced, which will incorporate multiple themes, genres, and traditions. Students who choose to sing in the chorus are expected to participate in all three performances.

Performances for each term:

Fall: Thanksgiving Assembly

Winter: Holiday Assembly

Spring: Visual and Performing Arts Assembly

Please note: Students are expected to participate in all three terms. Also, concert dress is a requirement for all performances, unless otherwise noted.

Percussion Ensemble

Ms. Lien

Boom-ba-da-bing! Percussion Ensemble allows you to try your hand at a range of percussion instruments. We will use mallets, latin percussion, hand drums, and traditional concert percussion to create a colorful blend of rhythm. Prior experience is not necessary but may be helpful.

Sound Sculpture

Mr. Thacher

Using primarily acoustic instruments and sound sources (both traditional and spontaneous), students will learn to create composed and improvised works. Emphasis will be placed on using mood and texture to create expressive and evocative pieces. Students will listen and respond to a variety of contemporary musical examples. Using recording software on their laptops, students will record and edit their works. No instrumental proficiency or experience is required to participate.

Introduction to Ukulele

Mr. Miller

Students will be introduced to basic chord progressions, note reading, and the music theory behind learning to play ukulele. Knowledge of reading music is not required. Each student will be given a variety of songs to practice, sing, and play. School-owned ukuleles will be loaned to each student for the term. Practicing is considered homework and is a requirement of the course.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

World Music

Ms. Lien

Like people, music comes in all shapes, sizes, colors, and textures. In this course, students will listen to music from a wide variety of styles and cultures; learn how music functions in different cultures, societies, and settings; and determine how music from other cultures has influenced the music we listen to today. Students will discover that music has a powerful influence on people and is an important part of every culture on earth.

Please note: This course is required for all sixth graders

Songwriting: Exploring History and Creativity

Mr. Velez

In this course, students will explore the rich history of songwriting, analyze popular songs, and develop their own creative voices through project-based learning. No prior experience in songwriting is required, but a background in an instrument can be helpful. Throughout the course, students will examine the different components of songs, including melody, harmony, rhythm, and lyrics. They will learn how to analyze and deconstruct songs, identifying the structures and patterns that make them successful. Students will then use this knowledge to craft their own original pieces, experimenting with different styles and genres. The course will be project-based, with students working on a series of assignments that build towards a final songwriting project. By the end of the course, students will have gained a deeper appreciation for the art of songwriting, as well as the skills and tools needed to create their own original music.

Intro to Music Production and Recording Techniques

Mr. Velez

In this course, students will learn the art and science behind capturing and shaping sound, while gaining hands-on experience with various recording equipment and software. Throughout the course, students will explore the fundamental principles of audio recording, including microphone selection and placement, signal flow, mixing, and editing. They will learn about different types of microphones, their characteristics, and how to choose the right microphone for specific instruments and vocalists. Throughout the course, students will work on individual and collaborative projects, experimenting with different genres and musical styles. They will have the opportunity to record their own performances, as well as mix and produce songs using professional techniques.

Introduction to A Capella

Mr. Velez

Those looking to sing for one term will find this class fun and rewarding. Students will learn the basics of singing in a group without accompanying instruments. This newly-formed group will find informal opportunities to perform throughout the term.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

African American Music in the 20th Century

Mr. Velez

In this course, students will explore the rich history of African American music in the 20th century, from blues and jazz to gospel and hip hop. Through engaging lectures, discussions, and multimedia resources, students will gain a deeper understanding of the cultural, social, and political contexts that shaped this vibrant and influential musical tradition. The course will be divided into several units, each focusing on a different genre or time period in African American music. Students will examine the musical styles, techniques, and themes of each genre, as well as the historical and cultural events that influenced their development. They will also learn about the key figures who shaped African American music, from iconic performers like Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong to contemporary artists like Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar. In addition to studying the music itself, students will also learn about the broader social and cultural issues that African American music has addressed throughout the 20th century, including racism, segregation, civil rights, and black identity. They will explore how music has been used as a form of protest, celebration, and storytelling, and how it has influenced and been influenced by broader cultural trends. By the end of the course, students will have gained a deeper appreciation for the diverse and dynamic tradition of African American music, as well as a greater understanding of the historical and cultural contexts in which it emerged. They will be able to identify and analyze different genres of African American music, as well as the key historical figures and events that shaped them.

Soundtracks

Ms. Lien

A good soundtrack can add enormous impact to the effectiveness of a film, radio broadcast, or even a static image. A well-crafted soundtrack has the capacity to deepen the effect of a scene and bring certain aspects of a story into sharper focus. In this class, students will study various types of soundtracks where original music is particularly effective. They will examine the role of storyline, musical characterization, and the qualities that enable music to enhance a particular scene. Using sequencing, sound editing, and video software, students will create original soundtracks to accompany film/animation clips and storylines.



2023-24 Middle School Arts Course Descriptions

TECHNOLOGY

Digital Photography

Ms. LeComte

In digital photography, students will learn the technical aspects of using a digital camera on manual. They will focus on compositional elements and practice capturing the world from a different perspective. They will be encouraged to create work that expresses and evokes emotion. Students will be able to share their work with the class biweekly and learn how to give and receive constructive criticism.

Filmmaking

Ms. LeComte

Students will work together to create a cohesive film on a subject of the groups' choosing. Students will create storyboards and look at cinematic examples for inspiration. Working in production "teams" to complete individual story chapters, we'll utilize film techniques as the "rule of thirds," effective microphone placement, and perspective to create a cohesive finished piece. Students will then showcase their short films to the class.

Photoshop

Ms. LeComte

This course teaches students to manipulate digital images using Photoshop, a powerful graphic tool that can be used to enhance desktop publishing, hypermedia, or Web sites. Students will learn the tools of Photoshop to edit and create images.

Environmental Photography

Ms. LeComte

Students will learn about photographing landscape and macro to capture the essence of nature and manmade structures. We will reference other nature photographers and practice their techniques. We focus on utilizing natural light and being aware of our environment. Students will learn alternative ways of capturing imagery.

Graphic Design

Mrs. Holden

Students will engage their creativity through graphic design. Combining artistic expression with technological skills. Students will plan, create, and improve their designs through the design process. Students will explore digital tools, software, and hardware to create. Starting as a sketch, developing their idea further, creating digital designs, and finally, deciding on the appropriate material to make a final product. Graphic design will allow you to unleash the imagination on the creative canvas.