

Millennium Charter Academy Upper School

Exploratory Course Descriptions

2019-2020

First Period

Year-long Exploratories

Spanish IA (seventh grade only)—*Sr. Chappell*

This course will cover topics such as grammar, vocabulary, and cultural concepts, providing the students with further language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will begin to develop a wide range of vocabulary and the necessary grammatical structures to support growing Spanish fluency. By the end of the course, they will be able to converse, read, and write in basic, grammatically correct sentences in Spanish. This course is open to seventh grade students. Those who also take Spanish I B in eighth grade will receive one high school credit.

Latin IA (seventh grade only)—*Mrs. Davidson*

As the precursor of all Romance languages, Latin provides an excellent foundation for all language study. In this course of study, we use a combination of reading and listening to acquire Latin. The focus is on language acquisition — the ability to read Latin — instead of language decoding. This approach to language study focuses on learning in the context of stories and Roman culture rather than memorization of immense vocabulary lists. This course is open to seventh grade students. Those who also take Latin I B in eighth grade will receive one high school credit.

Latin IB (8th graders who have completed Latin IA only)—*Mrs. Davidson*

For students who have completed Latin IA, Latin IB allows them to complete their introductory study of the Latin language and Roman culture. It will help prepare them for future language studies as well. In conjunction with the completion of Latin IA, those who complete Latin IB will receive high school credit.

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 2016-2017 school year may also choose to take this class as a review or even to learn a new instrument.

First Semester

Mock Trial—*Donald Jellison*

Students in this class will dive into the dynamics of the legal system. They will learn how the law relates to certain “mock” trial cases that are developed by the North Carolina Bar Association. Students will be required to participate in the mock trial competition. The class will be split into two teams: One team will represent the defendant in the respected case. The other team will represent the prosecutors. Students will be assigned positions within their team. The positions for each team include, attorneys (3), witnesses (3), timekeeper (1), and bailiff (1). The Mock Trial team that is created through this class will travel to the regional competition to compete against other teams in the hopes of advancing to the State competition. Competition is mandatory for this class.

Quarterly Exploratories

Introduction to Philosophy (*Grade 8*)--*first and second quarters*)- *Eric Cook*

Building on your 7th grade Art of Argument class, we will explore how to think and think well. The class will explore nine classic areas of philosophy by looking at how various classical philosophers have thought about thinking, friendship and love, power, civic virtue, beauty and art, justice, natural law, and goodness. We will start with the Wisdom Literature of the ancient Near East and work our way through Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, and selected other modern philosophers on the way. We will delve into thinking clearly, not only for the sake of our intellectual life but also for our moral and social lives.

Art of Argument (*Grade 7*)--*third and fourth quarters*, *Donald Jellison*

During this course, students will learn the importance of critical thinking and reasoning with clarity, relevance and purpose. By examining several informal fallacies, students are able to apply their learning to current social, commercial, and political issues. In addition to inferential reasoning, students will be introduced to formal logic and deductive reasoning.

Mysteries of the Body, Part I, *first and second quarters* -*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 many mysteries down, but there are some shockingly simple questions we don't have very solid answers to 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.” You must take part 1 prior to taking part 2.

Mysteries of the Body, Part II -*third and fourth quarters* -*Amanda Meadows*

Now that you are familiar with our amazing human bodies, it's time to take it to the next level. Spend some time exploring specific conditions, diseases and some fascinating “mysteries” that have yet to be solved by today's brightest medical minds. This course will be action packed with labs and a touch of anatomy...Join me to further explore all the “Mysteries of the Human Body.” You must take part 1 prior to taking part 2.

Weightlifting for Girls - first and third quarters

This is an introductory course that is designed to provide students with correct weight training techniques, emphasizing a healthy lifestyle. Students will improve muscular strength and develop a personalized weight training program.

Reading Refuge - first and third quarters

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.

Finding the Facts in Fiction, first quarter—Maria Kern

Have you ever read a book and wondered if that can really happen? Is that really true? In this class, we will read various fictional pieces and then research the “alleged truths” to see what the experts say.

Physical Conditioning, first and fourth quarters—Susan Gunter

This course is an intense physical education class designed to give you the opportunity to learn fitness concepts and conditioning techniques used for obtaining optimal physical fitness. Students will learn the basic fundamentals of strength training, aerobic training, and overall fitness training and conditioning. Weather permitting each student will be timed in the parkour playground challenge. Students will be empowered to make wise choices, meet challenges, and develop positive behaviors in fitness, wellness, and movement activity for a lifetime.

Basic Drawing, first quarter—Mary 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.

Literature through Film, first quarter, Paul Rezzo

Film can bring literature to life in new ways. In some cases, the film adaptation may illuminate ideas and thoughts that we never considered previously. In other cases, the film may modify the book in ways that upset our imagination or change the original message of the story. Students will learn to intelligently and thoughtfully critique films and communicate interesting thoughts on the differences between film and literature.

Conflict Resolution: Within and Without, first and third quarters--Stephanie Johnson

Are you tired of drama? Would you like to get along with everyone, even though you may not agree with them? Do you find yourself at times tense and conflicted? If so, this course is for you. In this course we will explore skills and strategies for calming ourselves, achieving inner peace, and resolving conflicts with others.

Living Well (grades 7&8), second quarter—Maria Kern

Get ready to be healthy! Join this elective for an exciting approach to a lifelong healthy lifestyle. This elective introduces students to various forms of fun fitness, such as circuit training, aerobics, and kickboxing. Healthy cooking, label reading, dealing with teenage self-esteem and peer pressure are also among the many things incorporated into this elective.

Basic Sports Skills, second quarter—Susan Gunter

During this elective you will learn, improve, practice and master the basic skill of many sports such as volleyball, basketball, track, roller blading and soccer. By the end of each sport, you will take the skills you learn and apply them to real game situations. This would be a great elective for students who are between playing on MCA sports teams, and still want to stay in shape.

Three Dimensional Design, second quarter—Mary McCormick

This course will follow the core knowledge curriculum course of study while focusing on creating 3-dimensional forms and fine craft. Examples of art forms used in this course are clay whistles, wire sculpture, cardboard, mobiles, paper mache, origami, and craft media. If you like manipulating materials and creating things that are not flat, you will enjoy this class.

Co-Ed Weightlifting - second and fourth quarters

This is an introductory course that is designed to provide students with correct weight training techniques, emphasizing a healthy lifestyle. Students will improve muscular strength and develop a personalized weight training program.

Speech & Theater Workshop- second quarter, Paul Rezzo

The major goal of this course is to introduce students to the basics of performing in both theater and competitive public speaking. This will be accomplished through theater and public speaking games, improvisation, and rehearsed monologues and scenes. In this class, students can choose to perform material from their favorite books, plays, films, or poetry. By the end of the course, students will have also learned the basics of several competitive speaking events including humorous or dramatic interpretation, extemporaneous speaking, and duo interpretation. This class is open to all students, whether you are new to performing and public speaking or want to polish existing skills.

Geometric Art, third quarter—Mary Richardson

In this course, students will create original works of art through the exploration of geometric drawings with the use of a compass and straightedge. Through the art of geometry, students will learn how to inscribe a hexagon in a circle, create a mystic rose, construct a Koch snowflake, design a tessellation, draw a Fibonacci spiral, build a Sierpinski pyramid, and create beautiful designs with concentric circles, ellipses, cardioids, and more.

Forensic Science, third quarter—Maria Kern

Put on your Crime Scene Investigation hat and solve daily CSI challenges. In this elective, we will examine evidence, study fibers and fingerprints, learn about blood basics, and much more! Are you up to the thinking challenge?

Off the Wall Sports, third quarter—Susan Gunter

Maybe you are not a sports fanatic but enjoy being active and learning new things? If so, this elective is for you. We will explore and learn many different activities including speed stacks, badminton, field hockey, wall ball, pickle ball and much more! (Basketball and dodgeball are **NOT** part of this course.

Fine Art, third quarter—Mary McCormick

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

History through Film, third quarter - Paul Rezzo

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.

Dollars and Sense, fourth quarter—Mary Richardson

Students learn how to handle money matters in a practical way by becoming actively involved in the wise use of money. This course is designed to give students background and practice with the many ways in which we deal with money in our everyday lives. Students will learn about the stock market, basic banking skills, how to earn money, balancing spending and saving through budgeting, and other money matters.

Genre Journey -second and fourth quarters

Come take a journey through a variety of genres! You may choose to move from the world of fantasy through science fiction to historical fiction and biography. In this elective, you will have the opportunity to read books of your choosing in various genres. You will discuss with your peers the benefits found by widening the purview of authors and styles.

Land and Water, fourth quarter—Maria Kern

Think about how the Grand Canyon formed. What does the water cycle have to do with its formation? Take this elective to get your hands down in the dirt as we model erosion and deposition, along with weathering to see the connection between land and water. Let's explore geology together!

Craft, fourth quarter—Mary McCormick

This course will follow the core knowledge curriculum course of study while focusing on traditional and fine craft media; for example, weaving, pottery, book making, stitchery, jewelry making, and other exciting media. If you like learning different techniques this is the class for you.

Baseball: American History and our National Pastime - fourth quarter, Paul Rezzo

America's national pastime is an iconic part of the American story. This class will explore American history through baseball's sights and sounds from the beginning of our nation to today. Additionally, students will look through the lens of fan, player, manager, owner, and more to learn about the current state of the game and basic statistics, rules, and strategies.

Conflict Resolution II: Within and Without, fourth quarter--Stephanie Johnson

This course is a continuation of skills learned in the first class. It will focus on skills of negotiation and third party mediation. Students will also explore new strategies for reducing stress and achieving calmness. In addition, we may explore peaceful societies and individual who have been peacemakers.

Seventh Period

Year-long Exploratories

Spanish IB (eighth grade)—*Sr. Donabo*

This class is a continuation of Spanish IA and introduces the fundamental elements of the Spanish language within a cultural context. Emphasis is placed on the development of basic listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Upon completion, students will be able to comprehend basic vocabulary and grammatical structures through listening and reading in Spanish. Students will be able to communicate orally using basic phrases in Spanish. Students will be able to respond in writing to common elementary level questions in Spanish. Students will be able to demonstrate a cultural awareness of the many Spanish speaking countries and peoples. Students will be able to engage in critical thinking through actively using the Spanish language and through analyzing various cultural topics related to Spanish speaking countries. Students who successfully complete this course will receive one high school credit and will qualify to take Spanish II in high school.

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. 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.

Advanced 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 Advanced Music are required to do a light, non-threatening audition to make sure the student understands the basic concepts of reading and counting music.

Second Semester

American Agriculture—*Brittany Branch*

Join this class to learn all about American agriculture and its impact on what we eat. We will spend time learning about horticulture and crop science while growing plants in the school greenhouse and gardens. We will also learn about animal science and livestock. All of our knowledge about farming in America will come together through an exploration of the various methods used to grow our food as we explore the difference between the industrial food system, the organic industrial food system and the local sustainable food system. We will read portions of Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma* (young readers edition) as we interact with these food systems and cook meals based on each.

Quarterly Exploratories

Introduction to Philosophy (Grade 8), *third and fourth quarters--Eric Cook*

Building on your 7th grade Art of Argument class, we will explore how to think and think well. The class will explore nine classic areas of philosophy by looking at how various classical philosophers have thought about thinking, friendship and love, power, civic virtue, beauty and art, justice, natural law, and goodness. We will start with the Wisdom Literature of the ancient Near East and work our way through Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, and selected other modern philosophers on the way. We will delve into thinking clearly, not only for the sake of our intellectual life but also for our moral and social lives.

Intro to MCA, *first quarter, Ann Moore*

Are you new to MCA and hoping to make a smooth and successful transition? This special class is designed to give you the support you need. You will learn about MCA's unique culture, character expectations and academic expectations. This will also be a time for identifying and closing any gaps that may exist. If you are transferring to MCA from another school, this course will help you get up to speed.

Art of Argument (Grade 7), *first and second quarters--Mary Richardson*

During this course, students will learn the importance of critical thinking and reasoning with clarity, relevance and purpose. By examining several informal fallacies, students are able to apply their learning to current social, commercial, and political issues. In addition to inferential reasoning, students will be introduced to formal logic and deductive reasoning.

Road Trip, *first quarter—Dawn Rook*

In this fun and engaging way to understand the geography and culture of our country, students in this class will plan a virtual road trip across several states, mapping their route, balancing a budget, and booking hotels and attractions. The class will culminate with students creating an album of their adventures. Parents should not be surprised if they want to take this trip for real!

Structural Integrity, *first quarter—Brittany Branch*

This class will focus on developing an understanding of the architectural design of structures, particularly those intended to support mass. We will learn about the geometry behind bridge and tower design. Students will build and test bridges and towers based on their own designs.

Research Methods, first quarter—Bethany Shepherd

Get a head start on your science project. This class provides dedicated time to work on your science project. Students will explore the scientific process of inquiry-based research and experimentation. The class begins with small group investigations and culminates in individually designed investigations based on authentic inquiry (your science project). This class is for those who desire to take their science investigation skills and research to a higher level.

Public Speaking, first quarter—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.

Robotics, first quarter—Charlie Sealey

This course provides an introduction to robotics using LEGO Mindstorm EV3 kits and the LEGO Mindstorm software. Students will be involved in the development, building, and programming of a Lego Mindstorm robot. Students will work hands-on in teams to design, build, program and document their progress. Student-designed robots will be programmed to compete in various courses as developed by First Lego League.

Science Olympiad, second quarter—Brittany Branch

Join the team as we prepare for the Science Olympiad tournament in February. Students will participate in 23 events including bottle rockets, human anatomy, hovercraft, tower building, astronomy, programming and more. It is sure to be a whirlwind course. Students interested in this competition will need to complete a separate application in order to be considered for the team. Team members may be expected to provide resources for their build events.

Introduction to Psychology part 1, first and third quarters—Susan Gunter

Have you ever wondered why people act the way they do? Psychology - the scientific study of the mind and behavior - looks deeper than intuitions and feelings to search for the true roots of behavior. This course will introduce topics including the history of psychology, research methods, biological basis of behavior, development across the lifespan, learning, memory, personality, and professions in the field. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the science of psychology.

Introduction to Psychology part 2, second and fourth quarters - Susan Gunter

Now that you are familiar with basic psychological concepts, we will delve even deeper in the psyche in part 2. We will touch back on a few of the concepts in part 1 and take them a step further, as well as cover new topics such as intelligence, sleep and dreams, emotion, stress, the role of diet on mental health, psychological disorders and treatment methods, and other relevant topics. Introduction to Psychology part 1 is a prerequisite to taking this class.

Leadership Academy, second quarter—Kelly Cummings

The topics range as follows: Citizenship, communication, ethics, conflict resolution, goal setting, leadership styles, respect for others and self as well as team building. You will spend time with a notable leader of history throughout the quarter and report what you have learned in a slide presentation.

Lettering, fourth quarter - Ann Moore

We will explore various lettering techniques, including calligraphy and modern calligraphy. Students will need to purchase a set of calligraphy markers (Walmart, Staples, etc.)(thinner markers with a beveled edge). Find your favorite personal style to use on stationary or posters!

Photography and Graphic Design, second quarter—Bethany Shepherd

Learn the basics of graphic design and photography as we explore this visual world. You will learn new terms as you lay out a page in a balanced manner that is pleasing and easy to understand. In photography we will explore the rule of thirds, foreground, background, and more. Best photographs will be submitted for use in the yearbook.

History of War, second quarter—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.

Creative Writing, second quarter—Ann Moore

Do you just wish there was a time set aside when you could write a good story? Come to creative writing and have the time to write your very own novella your way. A charged computer is a must for this elective. Come, write, and let those creative juices flow!

Animal Advocacy first and third quarter —Kelly Cummings

This elective is designed for the civic-minded animal enthusiast. In this elective, we will focus on issues that animals face in our community, in our country, and around the globe. We will learn about subjects such as community cats, humane education and encouraging the adoption of pets from shelters, endangered species conservation efforts, wildlife rehabilitation and sanctuaries, invasive species and much more. We will then design and implement an animal-related service project to benefit a local animal welfare organization.

Green Thumb, fourth quarter - Kelly Cummings

Come work in the dirt and share my passion for gardening. Learn the basics of organic gardening. You will learn how to germinate seeds of all kinds and grow plants from cuttings. You will learn which flowers attract our bee pollinators. We will taste as many exotic fruits and vegetables as we can find. We will make mini greenhouses and do some container gardening.

Lion's Roar Store, second quarter—Dawn Rook

Students will plan what merchandise to purchase with their initial budget in order to generate customer interest and demand. They will market their store, decide hours of operation, schedule employees, maintain accounting books and determine the prices to charge customers. Products will include snacks, office supplies, etc., and they will take turns working at the store during lunch two days a week.

Debate I, second quarter- Lori Spencer

In this class you will study and learn the art of debate and research. You will learn to listen as well as speak to provide yourself the best advantage in situations where you will have to express yourself. Learn

to organize your thoughts before you speak, and use critical thinking skills to develop sound reasons and offer an educated argument.

Debate II, third quarter—Lori Spencer

This class is for those who excelled in Debate I. You will hone your debate skills and refine your arguments for formal debate situations.

Yearbook, second and third quarter—Charlie Sealey

Document your 2019-2020 school year in photos. This class will be privileged and responsible for creation of MCA's yearbook. From page layout to electronic design, we will capture classes (K-12), sports teams, important events and much, much more. Students new to this class will learn design basics and how to utilize the web-based yearbook site. Graphic design and photography experience are a plus but not required. New and returning students all welcome.

Envirothon, third quarter—Bethany Shepherd

Students work in cooperative groups to employ critical thinking as they develop scientific knowledge of environmental stewardship, helping them make decisions regarding the protection, use and management of natural resources. This is a competition team with a March competition date. Class maximum: 15 students (3 five person teams). Team dedication and strong work ethic are necessities. Competition is required and included in final grade.

Cooking Around the World, third quarter—Dawn Rook

Students taking this tasty course will experience foods from many countries and learn about the culture and customs of the country. We will learn new skills and sample new and different cuisines as we practice the process of meal preparation: selecting recipes, preparing dishes, and cleaning up the workspace. Some ingredients will need to be brought from home. This class requires teamwork and attention to detail—and the results are sure to be yummy!

1960-1974, Part I, third quarter—Neal Dawes

This is the first half of a two-part course dealing with the time period from 1960-1974. Taking both part one and part two of the course is suggested, but not required. The first part of the course will look at key developments that happened following World War II that would shape the United States during the 1960's. We will also look at events that occurred during the presidency of John F. Kennedy and learn about his tragic assassination. The Civil Rights Movement will also be a major focal point during this part of the course and students will conduct research and write about two of the significant Civil Rights events. We will listen to different musical genres of the time period and students will create a presentation on a popular musical genre, artist, or group from the time period.

Poetry Place, third quarter—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.

TED Talks, fourth quarter—Dawn Rook

The organizers of the TED Talk series define themselves as a nonprofit organization devoted to ideas worth spreading, believing that ideas can change the world. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, and Design. The challenge of each TED talk speaker is to present their ideas in the most innovative and

engaging way they can. In this class we'll not only view and discuss TED Talks (beginning with selections from TED Under 20, created by innovators under the age of 20), but we'll also create and film some TED Talks of our own. Come explore how others, and how we, can change our world through spreading ideas!

Journaling through Nature, *fourth quarter—Bethany Shepherd*

See and draw a caterpillar's spiracles. Learn how to distinguish a moth from a butterfly and record in your journal along with other fascinating facts based on intense observation. This class uses in-depth daily observations and research to create individual nature journals from blank books. Daily outdoor excursions on our school's campus provide an abundance of nature-based observation experiences. The grade based on highly detailed recordings of observations and not on artistic skills.

1960-1974, Part II, *fourth quarter—Neal Dawes*

This is the second part of the course covering the years 1960-1974. It is not a requirement to have taken Part One of the course to be in this class. This section of the course will focus on the Vietnam War and the peace protests that were conducted in response to the war. We will also study the emergence of the US space program and race to the moon. We will discuss the Presidency of Richard Nixon and examine the Watergate scandal that led to his downfall. Key changes that occurred in other regions of the world, particularly in China and Africa, will be discussed at the end of the course. On a cultural note, students will learn about the popular television programs, movies, and plays that impacted society during the time period from 1960-1974.

Computer Programming, *fourth quarter—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.

Intro to Sociology, *fourth quarter--Lori Spencer*

What is society? How can we understand it? What is the role of the individual in society, and how does society affect individual lives, and how can an individual life impact society? This course introduces students to the field of sociology. This class will equip the student with the ability to think beyond our personal lives and to connect the experiences of individuals with large social structures. Gain a better understanding of self and how society shapes and is shaped by the people who make up its culture.

