

**SAINT JAMES MIDDLE SCHOOL**

***COURSE OF STUDY***

**2017-2018**

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The middle school program for sixth through eighth grades serves as a transition between elementary school and high school in both environment and course material. Students are introduced to advisory groups, exploratory courses, and electives. The middle school provides the structure that supports these changes.

We recognize the individuality of students and appreciate their talents, interests, and needs. Students learn in an environment where mutual respect, shared responsibility, and the value of each individual are emphasized. All students are held to high expectations and the process of learning as a lifelong experience is encouraged. Academic programs are geared toward providing a challenging college preparatory curriculum while recognizing that middle school students also need structure, support, consistency, and encouragement as they mature through these vital years.

Each middle school student is issued an iPad each year, which has become an invaluable learning tool in our curriculum. This 1:1 program allows the students to always have access to the tools and resources of the 21st Century classroom. Our finding is that students learn best and are more engaged when they are able to access, analyze, and synthesize information using digital tools. The 1:1 iPad program helps our students to achieve and be successful in a fully digital learning environment.

Although emphasis is given to the core academic instruction, an integrated curriculum is the focus for middle school instruction. The middle school program is designed to promote the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and cultural well being of each of our students. We strive to develop maturity, self-confidence, skills and knowledge.

Through advisory periods, exploratory courses, electives, and core academic courses, students strengthen their abilities and explore and develop individual talents. We strive to create classroom environments that are inviting and conducive to learning, taking into account the varied learning styles of our students.

Middle School Students are nurtured in an environment created especially for the needs of their age group in which they are encouraged to develop a sense of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-reliance.

# COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## SIXTH GRADE COURSES

### English 6

Students focus on grammar, reading, and composition with emphasis on effective communication for academic success. Grammar instruction centers around mastering parts of speech, usage, mechanics, and sentence structures. Students read informational text, as well as long and short forms of fiction from a variety of genres. Composition instruction focuses on understanding the writing process, writing correct and varied sentences, and introducing students to various types of short essays. Students are introduced to writing in MLA format.

### Math 6

Students build on their knowledge of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing with whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and integers. Order of operations, exponents, and variables continue to be used. Pre-Algebra concepts are introduced as students study properties, solve one and two-step equations and inequalities, and learn about functions. Percent, ratio, and proportion are studied, as well as statistics, data analysis with graphs, and probability. Geometry is also a part of this course with students finding perimeter, area, and circumference, classifying angles and polygons, and graphing ordered pairs on a coordinate plane. Both the metric and customary units of measure are used in Math 6. An emphasis is placed on math vocabulary and problem solving.

(Students who complete Math 6 with a grade of 90 or higher for both semesters will be recommended for Advanced Pre-Algebra.)

### Science 6

Students develop scientific thinking and process skills through hands on experiences. Students develop a knowledge base of specific scientific facts and organizing principles. They use the scientific method in which they state a hypothesis, follow a procedure, make observations, collect data, and draw conclusions. The integrated curriculum includes earth science, physical science, and life science.

### Social Studies 6

World Cultures is the focus of the sixth grade social studies class. The students study ancient river valley civilizations such as Egypt and the Huang civilization in China, military empires such as the Assyrians and Persians, the Greek and Roman empires, European Medieval times, and

the European Renaissance. Skills such as map usage, research, reading comprehension, and note-taking are emphasized. Art is incorporated as an element students use to explore these areas of civilization. The students develop an understanding of how classical civilizations contributed to modern society.

### Vocabulary 6

The vocabulary course expands a student's knowledge of words with a study of definitions, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, and spelling. Proper usage of the words and application in sentences is emphasized as well. Students also increase their vocabulary by reading a book each quarter and taking an Accelerated Reader test on the book. Students will have this class with their Advisor.

## **SIXTH GRADE EXPLORATORY COURSES**

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for a period of 9 weeks. All sixth graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

### Technology Tools I

This is an introductory class in which students will utilize digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students will produce creative word documents and multimedia projects. Students are introduced to various web browsers as they begin exploring use of the Internet as a research tool. In an interdisciplinary unit, students learn to create a basic slide presentation. Competent use of MacBooks, iPads and other appropriate digital devices will be a focus of the course.

### Explore Art

Sixth Grade Art Exploratory is designed to broaden student's knowledge of time periods in art, selected artists, and the works of those artists. Students will be introduced to historical content about the time periods and artists as well as select works. Students will use similar techniques to create individual visual interpretations of the time period and the artist studied. Students will maintain an art portfolio of drawings, watercolors, sketches, and projects.

## Explore Math

Explore Math is designed to enhance a student's knowledge of math in a fun way. The class will include hands-on experiences with tessellations, tangrams, patterns, geometric shapes, and pentominoes. Using logic, graphing coordinates, discovering the value of Pi, and drawing maps are part of the course. Probability is explained as we play math games, and customary and metric units of measure are reviewed. With tessellations and patterns, we will integrate a study of M.C. Escher's art, stained glass art, and quilt patterns.

## Exploratory Language I

The goal of this course is to give students a taste of the Spanish and French language and culture during the nine weeks. Specifically, students will be able to see grammatical and cultural similarities and differences among these two romance languages. In regards to the basic vocabulary and grammar of each language, the following topics will be looked at: Greetings, expressions of courtesy, numbers, colors, the alphabet, subject pronouns, some verb conjugation, adjectives, and sentence formation.

## **SIXTH GRADE ELECTIVE COURSES**

Sixth grade students must choose an elective(s) from those listed below.

### 1st Semester Art 6\*

The sixth grade course will involve a review and build upon the elements and principles of design that were introduced at the elementary level. It will encompass an in depth study of drawing techniques as well as an introduction to acrylic and watercolor painting. The art history component will consist of a comprehensive study of Egyptian, Italian Renaissance, and West African art. Students will be introduced to various aesthetic viewpoints as well as standards of art criticism. Students will use an iPad sketchbook for drawing and notes (Paper 53).

**\*An art fee is required.**

### 2nd Semester Art 6\*

The sixth grade course will involve a review and build upon the elements and principles of design that were introduced at the elementary level. It will encompass an in depth study of drawing techniques as well as an introduction to three dimensional art. The art history component will consist of 19th century European art including Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Fauvism. Aesthetic viewpoints and standards of art criticism will be reviewed. Students will use an iPad sketchbook for drawing and notes (Paper 53).

**\*An art fee is required.**

## Beginning Band

The Beginning Band is the introductory instrumental ensemble at Saint James. It functions as a performing group of beginning musicians with no previous experience. The class meets the entire year and students learn aspects of instrumental music performance that include position, flexibility, style, blend, theory, dynamics, articulation, tone, listening, teamwork, breath control, rhythm, and intonation. The Beginning Band requires a commitment to pursue excellence in all aspects of the instrumental music program. Beginning Band members perform in the winter/holiday concert and the spring concert.

Our band director spends a good deal of time helping our 6<sup>th</sup> graders choose the best instrument for the individual student. Parents will be responsible for purchasing or renting an instrument and respective method book. Please keep in mind that the cost of renting an instrument will vary depending on the instrument and vendor. Our band program works closely with Art's Music Store and Capitol Music but you are not limited to using these vendors. However, to give you an idea of the cost, you can visit these websites at <http://www.artsmusicshop.com/studentrental/> or <http://www.capitolmusicusa.com/rental.html>. Other supplies may also be required.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir

The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir is a performance based music class. The students, using technology and their iPads, will learn a variety of music, singing alone and with others; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; and evaluating and listening to music performances. Technology and iPads will be further used to explore music theory and music composition throughout the year. Throughout the year, the students have the opportunity to perform in various settings such as the Saint James Holiday Convocation, the Holiday Concert, District and State Festival, the Spring Concert, the Annual Choral Music Department Cabaret Fundraiser, and other community events. **There are three required performances which impact on a student's grade: Holiday and Spring Concerts, the District and State Musical Festival, and serving at the Saturday Performance of the Cabaret Fundraiser.** Individuals can develop their talents further through extra-curricular activities such as Solo and Ensemble Competition, ACDA Honor Choir, and the STJewels Show Choir. Participation in any of these extra-curricular opportunities requires a high degree of commitment on the part of students, attendance at practices before or after school, and may require an additional costume. Emphasis in class is placed on teamwork and vocal development through practice. Parents are required to purchase a performance uniform: a tuxedo for the guys, and a choral dress for the ladies.

## Read, Write, Create (Semester Course)

This course blends Reading Workshop and Writing Workshop with student-directed research projects. Students read and respond to self-selected, as well as class wide, novels. Through a variety of writing activities students become more skillful and confident authors. Students also

perform individual projects that involve research and presentation.

### Robotics (Semester Course)

Students take on the roles of mechanical engineers, computer scientists and electrical engineers. Students assemble and program robots using robotic kits. All areas of the scientific method are reinforced such as formulating a question, writing a hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a conclusion. Teamwork is emphasized through the construction of a basic robot.

### Beginning Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies\*

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. **Students will alternate class attendance between Beginning Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should alter, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance.** Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Beginning Band and the grade assigned for 6th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher. These teachers' approval will be based on teacher recommendation and a parent/teacher conference. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice. Parents will be responsible for purchasing a uniform: a tux for the guys and a choral dress for the ladies.

\*Requires teacher recommendation and parent/teacher conference.

**\*Priority in scheduling for all electives is based on the date registration fees are paid.\***

## SEVENTH GRADE COURSES

### English 7

English 7 focuses on literature, writing, and grammar. Students broaden their understanding of grammar with a study of the parts of speech, parts of a sentence, usage, and mechanics. Their knowledge of grammar is put into practice when they compose personal writing and literary responses through expository, descriptive, narrative, or persuasive paragraphs. Students also learn to publish in MLA format, cite sources, and create a works cited page. As they read and discuss short stories, poems, and the classic novel *Where the Red Fern Grows*, students identify literary techniques, analyze plot and characterization, and explore theme, point of view, and setting. The goal of the English 7 class is to further refine grammar skills, study literary works, write effective personal selections, and compose thoughtful responses to literature.

### Geography 7

Seventh grade World Geography is a study of the earth, emphasizing both human geography and physical geography. Studies include world cultures, economic development, world trade, and world resources. Special emphasis is placed on map identification as each of the earth's regions are explored.

### Life Science 7

The seventh grade course, Life Science, is an introduction to biology. The students learn about living organisms from one-celled organisms to the complex human body. The five kingdoms are studied with an emphasis on the processes that maintain life. The novel, *The Call of the Wild*, will also be incorporated into the science program. The human body is investigated through a systems approach. Rodin's *The Thinker* is used to study the human muscular system.

### Pre-Algebra

*Prerequisite for Pre-Algebra: Successful completion of 6th grade math.*

Pre-Algebra is a study of basic algebraic concepts beginning with operations with integers. This study is then extended to include rational numbers. Applying the rules for orders operations with positive and negative numbers; solving equations, inequalities, and proportions; finding slopes of lines; and graphing linear equations and inequalities are significant components of this course. Another important aspect of Pre-Algebra is solving word problems using algebraic concept. Basic geometric principles are also introduced. Solving of simultaneous systems is also introduced in this course. At this level, calculator use is limited, allowing students to



continue to improve basic skills.

(Students who have at least an 82 average for both semesters in Pre-Algebra during the 7th grade year will take Algebra I in the 8th grade. This will allow them to take Geometry in the 9th grade. Students that have below an 82 in 7th grade Pre-Algebra will take Transitional Algebra in the 8th grade. This will enable them to take Algebra I in the 9th grade. In order to be able to progress to Advanced Algebra I, students must maintain an average of at least 97 for both semesters in Pre-Algebra **and** have a teacher recommendation.)

### Advanced Pre-Algebra

*Prerequisite for Advanced Pre-Algebra: All students that earned a grade of 90 or above for both semesters in 6th grade Math will be placed in this course.*

Advanced Pre-Algebra is a study of basic algebraic concepts beginning with operations with integers. This study is then extended to include rational numbers. Applying the rules for orders operations with positive and negative numbers; solving equations, inequalities, and proportions; finding slopes of lines; and graphing linear equations and inequalities are significant components of this course. Another important aspect of Advanced Pre-Algebra is solving word problems using algebraic concept. Basic geometric principles are also introduced. Applications to reflections and translations of figures on a coordinate plane are made. Solving of simultaneous systems is also introduced in this course. At this level, calculator use is limited, allowing students to continue to improve basic skills.

(In order to progress to Advanced Algebra I in eighth grade, students must maintain a grade of 92 or above for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra. Students who have at least a 82 average for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra during the 7th grade year will take Algebra I in the 8th grade. This will allow them to take Geometry in the 9th grade. Students that have below a 82 in 7th grade Advanced Pre-Algebra will take Transitional Algebra in the 8th grade. This will enable them to take Algebra I in the 9th grade.)

### Vocabulary 7

The vocabulary 7 study is designed to guide and stimulate systematic vocabulary growth. The study includes word meanings, pronunciation, spelling, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, analogies, usage and critical thinking exercises. Reinforcement of and exposure to vocabulary is reiterated as students read assigned novels and complete various writing activities.

***In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds space available, placement may be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.***

## **SEVENTH GRADE EXPLORATORY COURSES**

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for a period of 9 weeks. All seventh graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

### Technology Tools II

This is an intermediate technology class designed to further the understanding of the programs that were introduced in the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Exploratory. Students will continue improving keyboarding proficiency and learn to navigate the filing system of the operating system and the Internet. Students will complete a project using the AVL and other online databases to research biographical information and complete an assignment using a variety of technologies to compare and contrast works of artists or composers. In an interdisciplinary unit, students will do research using online databases and develop a multimedia presentation. Competent use of MacBooks, iPads and other appropriate digital devices will be a focus of the course.

### Take Your Chances

This exploratory is designed to strengthen the understanding of probability and odds in a fun and engaging manner. These concepts will be explored mathematically and experimentally. This course also emphasizes the difference between dependent and independent events in probability. Combinations and permutations will be introduced and evaluated. Coding on the iPad and mathematics will also be linked.

### Introduction to Speech Communication

The goal of this course is to introduce students to skills that promote effective communication. We will study different forms of group communication, listening and discussion skills, and interpretation. Students will work in groups to prepare class presentations.

### Exploratory Language II

This course is an introduction to the French language and Francophone cultures. Students will have the opportunity to develop some basic communication skills while learning vocabulary and grammar. They will also explore the customs and traditions that are practiced in French-speaking societies around the world.

## SEVENTH GRADE ELECTIVES

Seventh grade students must choose an elective(s) from those listed below.

### Art 7\*

This semester course will review and build upon the elements and principles of design as well as aspects of aesthetics and criticism. It will encompass an in-depth study of drawing techniques as well as a study of various styles of Art. Acrylic and watercolor techniques will be reviewed. Students will use an iPad sketchbook for drawing and notes (Paper 53). Students will study glass as an art form and will learn the basic techniques of glass fusing. Students will study clay pottery as an art form and will learn the basic techniques of extruding pottery and firing pottery. Aesthetic viewpoints and standards of art criticism will be reviewed.

\*An art fee is required.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir

The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir is a performance based music class. The students, using technology and their iPads, will learn a variety of music, singing alone and with others; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; and evaluating and listening to music performances. Technology and iPads will be further used to explore music theory and music composition throughout the year. Throughout the year, the students have the opportunity to perform in various settings such as the Saint James Holiday Convocation, the Holiday Concert, District and State Festival, the Spring Concert, the Annual Choral Music Department Cabaret Fundraiser, and other community events. **There are three required performances which impact on a student's grade: Holiday and Spring Concerts, District and State Festivals, and serving at the Saturday night performance of the Cabaret Fundraiser.** Individuals can develop their talents further through extra-curricular activities such as Solo and Ensemble Competition, ACDA Honor Choir, and the STJewels Show Choir. Participation in any of these extra-curricular opportunities requires a high degree of commitment on the part of students, attendance at practices before or after school, and may require an additional costume. Emphasis in class is placed on teamwork and vocal development through practice. Parents are required to purchase a performance uniform: a tuxedo for the guys, and a choral dress for the ladies.

### Intermediate Band

*Prerequisite for Intermediate Band is membership in the Saint James Beginning Band or one year of previous band membership at another school or students wishing to become a member of the Intermediate band who were not a part of Beginning Band should arrange for private lessons and contact the band director for approval.*

The Intermediate Band meets during the second year of instrumental music. The class meets the entire year and its members are drawn primarily from Beginning Band. Students will continue to learn aspects of instrumental music performance that include position, flexibility, style, blend, embouchure, coordination, theory, dynamics, articulation, composing, technique, teamwork, rhythm, history, and balance. Intermediate Band students perform at the winter/holiday and spring concerts and will travel to one music festival each year. Intermediate Band members have the option to audition to become a member of the Trojan Marching Band in addition to their regular class. The Saint James Intermediate Band requires a commitment to pursue excellence in all aspects of the instrumental music program. Parents will be responsible for renting or purchasing an instrument and respective method book. Other supplies may be required.

### Knowledge Quest (Semester Course)

Do you like to challenge your friends with your knowledge and skills in different subjects through competitive games? Then Knowledge Quest may be for you! This course gives students an opportunity to explore selected topics in an investigative, hands-on environment while allowing them to broaden their knowledge base. Students will explore topics related to science, math, social studies, and the arts. Activities will include library and computer investigations, lab-type experiments and construction, and critical thinking exercises.

### Healthy Living (Semester Course)

This course consists of hands-on activities designed to teach students how to live a healthy life. We will spend time studying each body system, learning what we can do to keep that system healthy, and dissecting an organ from some of the systems we study. Students will have the opportunity to dissect a heart, brain, kidney and eyeball. We will also discuss nutrition and exercise as part of a healthy life. Students will learn to choose healthier snacks and explore different types of exercise. This course will be a fun and exciting way to become a healthier individual.

### The Write Stuff (Semester Course)

This course is designed to foster the love of reading and writing. Students will participate in the reading and discussion of individual literary selections as well as a class novel. Also, students will experience various opportunities to write creatively in different forms...poems, journal entries, stories, commercials or skits. Various literary techniques will be used to enhance their writing. Most, if not all, work will be completed in class, and students should expect to enjoy a relaxed environment where they can explore their writing talent and nurture their love of reading.

### Intermediate Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies\*

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. Students **will alternate class attendance between Intermediate Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should alter, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance.** Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Intermediate Band and the grade assigned for 7th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher, which will be based on teacher recommendation and a parent/teacher conference. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice. Parents will be responsible for purchasing a uniform: a tux for the guys and a choral dress for the ladies.

\*Requires teacher recommendation and parent/teacher conference.

**\*Priority in scheduling for all electives is based on the date registration fees are paid.\***

## EIGHTH GRADE COURSES

### English 8

Eighth grade English encompasses literature, grammar, and writing. Students continue to identify, to interpret, and to analyze literary elements and techniques as they read and study selected short stories, non-fiction, dramatic pieces, and novels. There continues to be concentration of studying grammar, mechanics, and usage. Emphasis is placed on proficiency and creativity in student writing as well as the further development of writing skills using MLA format.

### Advanced English 8

An Advanced English class is offered to students. Admission is based on 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher recommendation. Eighth grade Advanced English also encompasses literature, grammar, and writing. Students continue to identify, to interpret, and to analyze literary elements and techniques as they read and study selected short stories, non-fiction, dramatic pieces, and novels. There continues to be concentration of studying grammar, mechanics, and usage. Emphasis is placed on proficiency in student writing as well as the further development of writing and research skills using MLA format. Further emphasis will be placed on critical thinking and higher level discussion skills. Students in advanced English explore modern classic literature and write papers every quarter.

### Transitional Algebra

Transitional Algebra is offered to students who desire to gain a deeper understanding of the basic algebraic concepts before moving on to Algebra I. These concepts include operations with rational numbers; solving equations, inequalities, and proportions; the basics of geometry and finding area and volume of geometric figures; finding slope and rate of change; and graphing linear equations and inequalities. Students will also make real-life applications with these concepts through a variety of word-problems and projects. At this level, calculator use is limited allowing students to continue to improve basic skills. Successful completion of this course will allow the students to take Algebra I in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Algebra I

*Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 82 for both semesters in Pre-Algebra and a teacher recommendation.*

Algebra I extends the study of algebraic expressions and the graphing of linear and nonlinear equations and inequalities. Students will solve algebraically and graphically both with and without the graphing calculator. Emphasis will also be placed on factoring polynomials and

simplifying terms with integral exponents. Real life applications will include use of technology in predicting outcomes of a variety of situations. Successful completion of this course will allow students to take Geometry in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Advanced Algebra I

*Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 92 for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra or a 97 for both semesters in Pre Algebra **and** teacher recommendation.*

Advanced Algebra I provides an opportunity for students to advance their understanding of the concepts from Algebra I by exploring additional concepts that will broaden their math foundation for Geometry, Algebra II, and Trigonometry. Therefore, several more types of functions, their inverses and asymptotes, and real-life situations involving the concepts of mixture and distance-rate-time will be covered in addition to those of Algebra I. In addition, the use of technology is more heavily emphasized in areas of graphing, statistics, and probability. Successful completion of this course will allow students to take Advanced Geometry in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

### U.S. History 8

Eighth Grade United States History takes the students on a journey from the discovery of America to modern day history. Along this journey, students will encounter and discuss issues, controversies, and decisions that have impacted our country. Students will also take in-depth looks at crucial turning points in our history through hands-on projects, self-studies, lectures, and group discussions. The skill of taking notes from outlines and lectures will be stressed and students will utilize many primary source documents in their studies. Historical novels will be used to complement the study of particular periods. With our emerging use of technology, online activities that are historically-based will be utilized and primary sources, paintings, documents, etc., will be readily available for the students to see history come alive.

### Advanced U.S. History 8

An Advanced United States History class is offered for students. Admission is based on 7th grade teacher recommendation. Students in this class will study American History from discovery through the modern era. Advanced students will study and discuss issues, controversies, and decisions that have impacted our country through in-depth discussion and document based questions which utilize primary sources. Along with hands-on projects, self-studies, lectures, and a mock trial, advanced students will have the opportunity to delve deeper into the study of American History through supplemental readings and responsive essays. Advanced students will be participating in an historical mock trial that will coincide with our unit of study. With our emerging use of technology, online activities that are historically-based will be utilized and primary sources, paintings, documents, etc., will be readily available for the students to see history come alive.

## Earth Science 8

Earth Science is the study of the Earth, its history, its changes, and its place in the universe. The four branches of Earth Science will be studied using the text, *Earth & Space iScience*, a ConnectED digital textbook, and other online resources and materials. Earth Science integrates the disciplines of astronomy, oceanography, geology, and meteorology with emphasis placed in the areas of geology and oceanography. Earth Science presents opportunities for “Hands on/Minds on” science through the incorporation of the following learning approaches: classroom research, problem/solution activities, exploration of the scientific method, lab experiences, writing, cooperative learning activities, computer enrichment, use of the Smart board, meaningful subject related videos, and interdisciplinary studies.

## Physical Science\*\*

*\*\*In order to be eligible to take Physical Science in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students must have a 92 or above average for each semester in both Life Science and Pre-Algebra. Final eligibility will be reviewed again at the end of the year and students who need to make a schedule change at that time will be notified. **Students who are eligible and opt to take Physical Science in 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be REQUIRED to take ADVANCED Biology in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and Chemistry in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.***

Physical Science is an introductory course that covers extensive topics in chemistry and physics and limited topics in earth and space science. Chemistry topics include properties of matter, states of matter, atomic structure, the periodic table, chemical bonds, chemical reactions, solutions, acids and bases, and carbon chemistry. Physics includes a study of motion and forces, work, power and machines, energy, mechanical waves and sound, and electricity and magnetism.

**In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds space available, placement may be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.**

## Vocabulary 8

The vocabulary 8 study is designed to guide and stimulate systematic vocabulary growth in students. The study includes word meanings, pronunciation, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, analogies, usage and critical thinking exercises.



## **EIGHTH GRADE EXPLORATORY COURSES**

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for a period of 9 weeks. All eighth graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

### Technology Tools III

Students build on skills and knowledge from the previous computer exploratory courses to begin studying additional components of Keynote, and iMovie. Throughout the course, general keyboarding skills are emphasized. The students will take pictures and create innovative projects. Students are reminded of the Alabama Virtual Library and school purchased databases available to them and will use these databases in research projects. The students will collaborate with their classmates to create a video presentation using various digital devices.

### Public Speaking

The goal of this course is to introduce students to formal public speaking and debate. Students will begin with learning about writing an argument, organizing a logically flowing case, and practicing basic presentation skills. They will then advance to preparing a researched debate case, persuasive appeals, and advanced delivery.

### Exploratory Language III

This course is designed to prepare students for high school Spanish. Students will begin with a review over the basics, such as greetings, expressions of courtesy, the Spanish alphabet, days of the week, months of the year, numbers, colors, classroom objects, Spanish commands, etc. In addition, students will learn verb conjugation, subject pronouns, possessive adjectives, adjective agreement, describing things, definite and indefinite articles, question words, telling time, and other important vocabulary.

### Trojan Reading Guild

This exploratory creates an exciting opportunity for students to learn firsthand the benefits and joys of reading for pleasure as they select, read, and discuss contemporary, age appropriate novels. Students will use both classroom activities and the library as they learn to select material that will be enjoyable to them, will enhance their knowledge, and will further advance their communication skills. Students will participate in literature circles, which will guide them in learning to discuss literature with their peers. Students will also use technology to create a product that will aid the students in sharing their literature circle books with the entire class.

## EIGHTH GRADE ELECTIVE COURSES

Eighth grade students must choose an elective(s) from those listed below.

### Art and Photography\*

The eighth grade art program will continue to build upon the elements and principles of design. The program will include a study of various styles of art; focusing on building drawing skills as well as using an iPad sketchbook for drawing and notes (Paper 53). The photography component will include the history of photography as well as an investigation of important photographers. Students will explore black and white photography using a Holga pinhole camera while creating a variety of techniques in the darkroom. Due to the photography component and the size of the darkroom, class size is limited to 15 students.

**\*An art fee is required.**

### Advanced Band

Prerequisite: Two years previous experience in the Saint James band program or two years experience in a band program at another school or meeting and audition with the band director.

The Advanced Band (High School Varsity Band) meets during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of instruction and its class meets in conjunction with the High School Symphonic Band and Trojan Marching Band. Advanced Band is taught the last period of the day and will not be dismissed until 3:20 each day, which is the regular high school dismissal time. This class meets the entire year. The daily rehearsals of this group build upon fundamentals learned in Beginning and Intermediate Band. The Trojan Marching Band's membership functions as a marching band during the fall of the year attending all high school football games and play-offs as well as marching competitions and festivals across the Southeastern United States. Students are required to attend band camp in the summer prior to the beginning of school and maintain an after school rehearsal schedule through October. Additional Visual Ensembles are part of this group that includes guard, twirlers, and dancers. The Symphonic Band performs at various concerts throughout the year and regularly attends district and state competitions. Parents will be responsible for purchasing or renting instruments and other necessary supplies.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Choir is a performance based music class. The students, using technology and their iPads, will learn a variety of music, singing alone and with others; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; and evaluating and listening to music performances. Technology and iPads will be further used to explore music theory and music

composition throughout the year. Throughout the year, the students have the opportunity to perform in various settings such as the Saint James Holiday Convocation, the Holiday Concert, District and State Festival, the Spring Concert, the Annual Choral Music Department Cabaret Fundraiser, and other community events. **There are three required performances which impact on a student's grade: Holiday and Spring Concerts, District and State Festivals, and serving in the Saturday night performance of the Cabaret Fundraiser.** Individuals can develop their talents further through extra-curricular activities such as Solo and Ensemble Competition, ACDA Honor Choir, and the STJewels Show Choir. Participation in any of these extra-curricular opportunities requires a high degree of commitment on the part of students, attendance at practices before or after school, and may require an additional costume. Emphasis in class is placed on teamwork and vocal development through practice. Parents are required to purchase a performance uniform: a tuxedo for the guys, and a choral dress for the ladies.

### Fundamentals of Drama

Fundamentals of Drama is a yearlong course geared toward those with an interest in performing. Students will learn various aspects of theater including, but not limited to, improvisation, interpretation, movement, character analysis, basic acting techniques, audition techniques and theater terminology. Students will work, individually and as part of an ensemble, on monologues, scenes, and various other forms of drama.

### Invention Convention: Exploring Science

Students who elect to take this course will have the opportunity to participate in challenging "hands-on" science related activities. The activities will involve demonstrations, lab opportunities, and problem solving experiences related to all areas of science. Developing and utilizing critical thinking skills is prioritized through the activities planned for this class. Activities emphasizing the integration of science, art, and music are included. Science related videos are included as a component of this class and students are expected to critique some selected videos in written format. All students who are interested in pursuing scientific investigation and exploration are encouraged to consider this class.

### Digital Journalism

Students will study the basics of journalism and put what they learn into practice as they use computers, a scanner, iPads, and other digital devices to create a digital newspaper for the Middle School four times each school year. They will study newspapers and the types of writing included in them. Students will participate in activities that will improve their basic writing skills, build their vocabularies, and practice word processing. Students will organize still pictures and create a video of the 8th grader's trip to Washington D.C. Students will create a video to be shown at the end of the year for the 8th grade class which consists of pictures taken of the students during their middle school years at Saint James.

### Speech and Debate Team

Students are introduced to a full range of speech and debate competitive events. They will learn the fundamentals of debate, Student Congress, public speaking, and interpretive events. The goal of this course is to enable students to identify areas of skill and interest for future participation in competitions.

### Study Hall

Many Saint James students are involved in numerous extracurricular activities, especially athletics. Study Hall is designed to provide students with the opportunity to jump start their homework assignments and/or to study and prepare for quizzes and tests. Students will be expected to come to class prepared with appropriate study materials, including applicable textbooks, workbooks, handouts, and class binders. Students are expected to work constructively, diligently and quietly, in a non-disruptive manner so that all students may profit from this experience. This is not a time for tutoring or requesting information from teachers. Students will be required to be on time, remain in study hall and dress in appropriate uniform attire. In keeping with the Saint James Handbook, infractions will be given when appropriate. **NO GRADES WILL BE AWARDED FOR THIS ELECTIVE.**

### Advanced Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies\*

\*Requires teacher recommendation and parent/teacher conference.

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. Students **will alternate class attendance between Advanced Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should alter, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance.** Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Advanced Band and the grade assigned for 8th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher, which will be based on teacher recommendation and a parent/teacher conference. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice. Parents will be responsible for purchasing a uniform: a tux for the guys and a choral dress for the ladies.

### There's More to the Story

There's More to the Story is an elective that will give students a deeper understanding of history and the social sciences. Following chronologically with American History, students will learn more about:

- History's greatest crimes and trials (*Criminology, Sociology, Psychology*)
- The anatomy of a crime and consequences (*Criminology, Sociology, Psychology*)
- How our government works and has changed throughout the years (*Government*)
- Learn how to write and debate bills to get ready for Youth Legislature (*Government*)
- How history is portrayed through film (*History*)
- Developing leadership and character by following the examples of people in the past (*History, Psychology, Sociology*)
- Economic impacts of events in our history and tie in to personal budgeting (*Economics*)
- Current Events (*All Social Sciences*)

This will be a class that is interactive with exciting information and discussion. There is the possibility of a field trip (TBD) which could incur a one time cost of no more than \$40. There will be days where we might be asked to help out with a school project and we will embrace those opportunities as ones to learn about service and being a good citizen.

**\*Priority in scheduling for all electives is based on the date registration fees are paid.\***

## **GRADES 6, 7, AND 8**

### Exploratory and Elective Courses

New exploratory and elective courses may be developed to meet the changing needs of students.

### Physical Education and Health

Each student must complete three years of physical education in Middle School. Students receive instruction in team sports, individual and dual sports, and fitness activities. Classes are designed to develop skills, knowledge, and interest through the enjoyment of physical activity by exposing students to a variety of activities, both in sports and fitness units. Development and display of sportsmanship is stressed.

Health education is integrated with the physical education program to develop successful health attitudes and practices. Areas of emphasis include: alcohol, tobacco, drugs, nutrition, first aid/CPR, personal health, human sexuality, and total wellness. Students learn that health is an ongoing process involving physical, mental, and social well being, and that desirable health practices are necessary for a wholesome life.

### Library

Students learn the location of materials in the library and receive instruction in the use of various reference materials, on-line databases, the internet, and the online catalog. Research assistance is provided for whole classes, small groups, and individual students.

### Guidance Services

The guidance services are an important aspect of the Saint James Middle School. These services include individual and group counseling, academic counseling, career guidance, national testing programs, individual student scheduling, incentive programs and much more. Students, parents, and teachers are encouraged to seek assistance from their counselor whenever they see the need.

