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# Cascades Academy

Middle School  
Course Descriptions

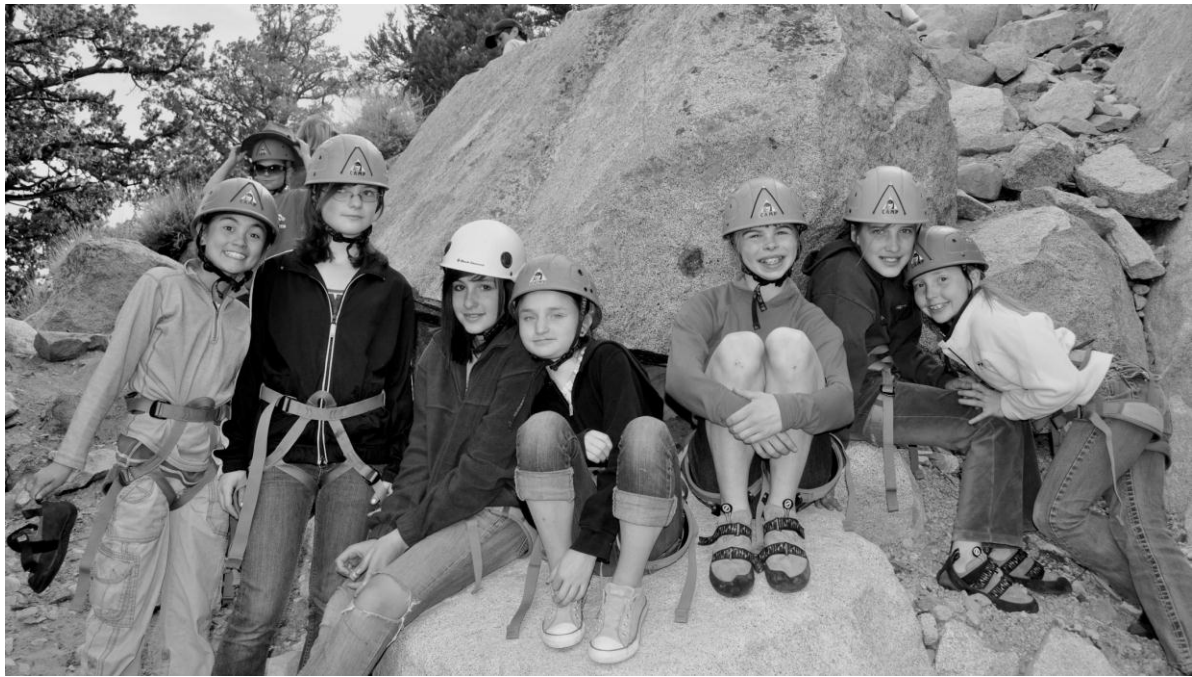


**CASCADES  
ACADEMY**  
OF CENTRAL OREGON

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## Program Description

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The Cascades Academy Middle School Program is designed to provide both the intellectual and emotional support adolescents need to help them navigate a successful transition from the self-contained classrooms of elementary school to the even more dynamic and demanding middle school environment. By providing an intimate and inspired learning environment that encourages participation, accountability and cooperation, the middle school course-of-study serves as a ladder-to-success that strives to prepare students for the challenges of high school and to develop life-long learners who are critical and independent thinkers who engage positively in their community.

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# Middle School Social Sciences

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Global Geography: The significance of geography lays not in the mere rote memorization of the place-names on a map of our nation or even the world. The significance is in the fact that it is nearly impossible to find any academic, real-world, or fantastical discipline that does not have a geographic context. From the critical geography of the molecule to the geographic variables of race-relations; from the geographic themes inherent in our democratic process, to the geographic themes so evident in many forms of literature - geography matters! Through the large scale themes of place, location, human-environmental interaction, migration and regions, an inquisitive mind can format some essential questions that illustrate strong connections between the curriculum and the real world; from how the geography of Greece may have affected the economic and social institutions of classical Greek life to why the Democratic party won the last presidential election here in the United States.

Text: *Geography Live* (TCI)

Instructor(s): Tim Green and Pete Covell

Ancient World History: This course begins with human origins, evolutionary theory, and contemporary developments in the science of human genetics, anthropology, and archeology - and what these disciplines tell us about human origins. Focus then shifts to the development of the great river valley civilizations in the Mediterranean, Indus River Valley, and East Asia as well as Greece, Rome, the rise of several Arab empires, Tokugawa Era Japanese feudalism and the early Middle Ages of Europe. Thematically, the course investigates: what civilization is and what are its costs and benefits to individual humans and humanity in general; how the environment and technological innovation shape the development of civilizations and cultures; and what aspects of contemporary culture were innovated by ancient civilizations.

Text: *Ancient World History – Patterns of Interaction* (McDougal Littell)

Instructor(s): Tim Green and Pete Covell

Modern World History: Students in the modern history course explore a historical chronology beginning with the Italian Renaissance and progressing through the Russian Revolution. Students are introduced to various historical themes, such as power and authority, revolution, exchange, cultural interaction, economics, and exploration to gain perspective on these modern historical periods and to identify how the events of this period helped shape the contemporary world. Students examine how historical patterns relate to the five themes of geography (location, place, movement, region and human-environmental interaction). Students are also introduced to a wide variety of historical thinking skills, from distinguishing between past, present and future time to comparing historical narratives to differentiating between historical fact and opinion. Student learning is assessed using a variety of methods including traditional testing yet also encompasses oral argument, multimedia presentation, dramatic performance, speech, and a variety of projects that designed to demonstrate an understanding of both the course content and skills.

Text: *Modern World History – Patterns of Interaction* (McDougal Littell)

Instructor(s): Tim Green and Pete Covell

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# Middle School Language Arts

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Middle School Literature and Composition: These courses, taught as two sections (6<sup>th</sup> grade and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade) cover a wide variety of world literature, including poetry, prose, drama, novels, short stories, essays and various other forms, while stressing an understanding and appreciation of the universality of the human experience and recognition of the relevance of literature in today's world. It will include representative works from classical through modern times and focus on analyzing structural features of various genres including elements of voice, character, conflict, tone and theme. Many works will parallel historical content in student's history course.

These courses also integrate an intensive writing program in which students write daily and in a variety of forms. Students will be engaged in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. Expository, analytical, and argumentative writing, that forms the basis of academic and professional communication as well as the personal and reflective writing that fosters the development of self-expression will be emphasized. Employing the "get it written, then get it right" approach, students engage in the writing process from brainstorming to final revision in an attempt to distill coherence and meaning from their work. Throughout this program middle school students employ style guidelines defined by the Modern Language Association (MLA). Students also strive to improve the scope of their active vocabulary, and refine their language usage and mechanics through both stand-alone instruction and, more importantly, integrated instruction in all academic disciplines.

Text(s): *Write on Course* (Houghton-Mifflin), *Junior Great Books*, Novels (Various)

Instructor: Tim Green

The **Eighth Grade Project** requires graduating middle school students, under the guidance of a mentor, to develop a project of their own design to be presented orally during graduation week to the greater Cascades Academy Community. This right-of-passage can take myriad forms and can draw from a host of inspirations, whether formally academic or otherwise. This culminating project serves as a celebration of the Cascades Academy student both as an individual and as a contributing member of our community. Significant portions of this project will be developed as part of the Language Arts program over the course of the year. Culminating projects often include efforts such as the production of a documentary film, development of a community service project, a dramatic performance, the presentation of an art show, delivery of a speech, composition of an original research project, the organization of a community event, to name a few.

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# Middle School Science

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Earth Science: This Earth Science class covers the sciences of geology, meteorology, and oceanography. In geology, we take advantage of the amazing geological history of Oregon and learn how rocks, rivers and mountains are formed by viewing our immediate surroundings. Earthquakes, volcanoes and mountain building will also be studied in the context of our spring traveling school activities. In the winter trimester, we will focus on weather and climate, and in the spring we will explore physical, chemical and biological limnology and oceanography, along with environmental science. The course will emphasize inquiry-based research and laboratory activities, independent projects and the use of a field journal.

Text:

Instructor(s): Dr. Anne-Marie Eklund

Life Science: This course is one of exploration and appreciation and understanding of life processes. We study ecology, evolution, plant biology, zoology, cell biology, genetics and human anatomy and health. The focus of study in the fall and spring includes many opportunities to incorporate field work and observations of nature. In the winter trimester, the focus is on cell biology and human health. Overall goals of the course are for the students to enhance their abilities to notice the life forms in their environment, to identify them as specific organisms and to understand their relationships with the other organisms in the ecosystem. In addition, students will be expected to solve problems using the scientific method, with a focus on inquiry-based research projects and outdoor observations.

Text: *Life Science* (Glencoe Science)

Instructor(s): Dr. Anne-Marie Eklund

Physical Science: This class includes a study of astronomy, physics, and chemistry and seeks to explain the properties of matter and energy and how they interact. We begin the year with astronomy and take advantage of our proximity to the Pine Mountain Observatory to really experience professional-level star viewing. Local astronomers share their expertise with us in the classroom and at the observatory. Much of the year is focused on energy: understanding the basic laws of physics and using that knowledge to understand and explore energy in our everyday lives. We discuss alternate energy sources, climate change and environmental chemistry. We are able to spend some time exploring each type of energy source, what it means, how it works and how it applies to current events. An overall goal for the year includes learning the basics of physics and astronomy in order to understand more about the natural laws governing our universe. Equally important goals include using the scientific method of inquiry and experimentation, and learning to enjoy scientific discovery. Classroom activities are augmented with field trips, laboratory investigations and the use of a laboratory/field notebook.

Text:

Instructor(s): Dr. Anne-Marie Eklund

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# Middle School Mathematics

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Mathematics 6 – Explorations in Mathematics: Students in mathematics are presented a **challenging and sequenced curriculum** paralleling the class text, *Passport to Mathematics* (Book 2), and yet incorporating numerous class projects that extend their application of skills learned in daily lessons. This model allows for a balance between rote practice and real-world applications in math. Students are required to speak often in class and are encouraged to ask questions, demonstrate understanding and extend the application of math to all academic disciplines as well as to their personal experiences. A wide variety of problem-solving strategies will be investigated through both real-world application and theoretical story problems. Homework will be an integral piece of the curriculum and a vital process in ensuring student success. Students are occasionally required and always strongly encouraged to make corrections on all homework assignments and quizzes. At various time throughout the year students will be involved in integrated projects exploring the mathematical elements of orienteering, aviation, economics, biology and engineering.

Many times throughout the academic year, students work on assignments and projects that are **coordinated with teachers from other disciplines**. Occasionally assignments are integrated; however, a majority of coordination is done using an interdisciplinary format. For instance the sixth grade will work through a unit called *Aviation Math* culminating with several field trips to an airstrip here in Central Oregon. Middle school math students will also participate in the **Stock Market Game**®, which effectively employs a wide range of real-world math skills that are presented concurrently with a study of market economics in their respective social studies courses. Students will employ **Google Sketch-Up**® to design their own passive solar building during our study of geometry. These curricular connections have proven time-and-again to maximize student achievement.

Text: *Passports to Mathematics –Book II* (McDougal Littell)

Instructor: Mary Bowker

Mathematics 7 – Pre-Algebra: Pre-algebra is intended to teach students the fundamentals of algebra while strengthening all of the arithmetic skills learned in past classes. The sense and operation of numbers, familiarity with different aspects of equations and inequalities, and the ability to recognize reasonable results and common patterns of algebra and geometry will all be reinforced within this class. Students will be intentionally taught and challenged to investigate, interpret, and evaluate many related mathematical concepts and ideas. Each individual student's abilities will be addressed as we take time to solidify and polish the arithmetic skills gained in previous math courses, in anticipation of the transition to the abstract world of variables in Algebra I.

Mathematics 8 – Algebra I: Algebra I is designed to immerse students in the world of algebra and help them become more comfortable in dealing with unknown values of numbers. This class marks a definite transition from the pre-algebra world of arithmetic to the abstract realm of variables and performing mathematical operations on unknown values. This is our dive into the deep end of the pool. We will explore variable expressions and equations, linear functions, non-linear functions, radicals, rational numbers, and even some data analysis. Students will be intentionally taught and challenged to investigate, interpret, and evaluate many related mathematical concepts and ideas.

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# Middle School Spanish

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Spanish 6: Students will be exposed to the Spanish language in this highly interactive class. Students build a solid foundation of basic listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as being exposed to the cultures of Spanish-speaking people. Besides providing instruction in use of the present tense in the Spanish language, students are also familiarized with common functional vocabulary and expressions. Games, short dialogues, plays, and short writing activities complement conversation and formal instruction. The students are encouraged to begin to use Spanish in a more formal way than the instruction they may have received as younger students. Sixth grade students are now more capable of grasping more complicated grammar and vocabulary and these concepts are introduced as the year progresses.

Text: *Realidades A*, by Boyles et al. (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004)

Instructor(s): Pete Covell

Spanish 7: In this course students begin a more structured study of the Spanish language as they continue to study the present tense. Building on the basic skills learned in sixth grade Spanish, students learn words and phrases useful in market, restaurant, and social situations. They also converse about traveling, chores, feelings, and health. Major projects include designing a travel guide for a Spanish-speaking nation and organizing a school-wide Spanish activity. In addition to the textbook, many audio-visual resources enhance the instruction in this class.

Text: *Realidades A and B*, by Boyles et al. (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004)

Instructor(s): Pete Covell

Spanish 8: In this course students continue the study of the Spanish language, especially more verbs in the present tense. Using skills learned in sixth and seventh grade Spanish, students practice shopping vocabulary and buying and selling vocabulary. The students begin the study of the past tense through the themes of vacations and modes of transportation. The curriculum continues to re-enforce the past tense and expands into ER and IR verbs while the themes of television, movies, computer and communication are presented.

Text: *Realidades 1*, by Boyles et al. (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004)

Instructor(s): Pete Covell

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## Middle School Health and Fitness

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Health and Fitness Program: The middle school Health and Fitness program is designed to provide a well-rounded physical education offering that includes physical conditioning and participation in a variety of sports and activities that exploit the resources available here in Central Oregon. Special emphasis is placed on participation and sportsmanship.

Student Health: A portion of this course is designed to help students understand the basic mental, emotional, and physical functions that help us deal effectively with our environment. Special emphasis is placed on student-to-student and adult-to-student communication. Other areas of study include nutrition, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, mental health, and sexuality.

Text: NA

Instructor(s): Pete Covell

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## Middle School Music

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Roots Music: For both the middle school and upper school, we see the first trimester course-work focusing on a cultural history of music, hand-drumming and the drum circle, singing, and working together in a musical group. Over 10 weeks we will trace the origins and history of music from the sacred to the secular; from African (tribal) and European (classical) roots to the birthplace of American Roots Music: New Orleans. From here we will follow modern music's progression and diverging genres to the present day: Jazz and Blues, British Rock, American Folk and Country, R&B, Soul, Rock and Hip-Hop. Looking at 10 weeks, we see three sessions of three classes each and then at the end (week 10) a day of performance/celebration and review.

In a perfect scenario, all three of us would be present for the first class of each session and then again all together for the performance day. For weeks 2 and 3, 5 and 6, and 8 and 9, we would like two of the three instructors to be staffed. It should be noted that this curriculum is designed first for the middle school group and will be adapted for upper school students.

Text: NA

Instructor(s): Mark Ransom, Shireen Amini, Patrick Pearsall

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## Middle School Art

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Drawing, Painting and Design: In this course students are introduced to the elements of art, principles of visual organization, and basic concepts of drawing, painting and design, with special emphasis on art as a means of creative expression. Students explore and apply these concepts using a wide range of media, including pencil, charcoal, colored pencil, pastels, acrylic painting, and wood working. They also study certain influential artists and artistic movements, and they develop a body of work for their portfolios.

Text: NA

Instructor: Marcy Monty

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## Middle School Drama

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Drama I: The intent of this class is to introduce fundamental principles of dramatic play. Students will become familiar with warm-up exercises, theatre games, and beginning improvisational techniques. The focus of the class is on creating fluid group interactions and developing an arena of acceptance and play within the social climate of middle school exchanges. Core emphasis is based on attention, appreciation, and allowance for students to explore both individual expression and group ensemble work.

Text: NA

Instructor(s): Hillary Hurst

Drama II – Elective: The goal of this elective is to further explore more extensive improvisational play and character development. Along with continuing ensemble work, students will have an opportunity to choose either solo or scene work with the intent to express various human emotions and conditions. All students will be playing with scenes from *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Students will also have an opportunity to choose personal interest scene work, utilizing poetry, individual writings, or contemporary scene selections.

Text: NA

Instructor(s): Hillary Hurst

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## Middle School Technology

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Tech Shop - Academic Applications and Beyond: The primary goal of the middle school technology program is to build a strong foundation for the student's future use of technology and to ensure that our students have the computer and multimedia skills that support their immediate academic goals, by surveying and employing a variety of technological applications that compliment their academic efforts. Additionally students will compose and maintain, over a three-year period, a comprehensive electronic academic and artistic portfolio. This class also serves as forum for discussion relating to ethical use of technology in the classroom.

Text: NA

Instructor: Tim Green

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