

# Mosaic Class Descriptions 2020 - 2021

Meeting Mondays, September - May  
Three 10-week Terms (Fall, Winter & Spring)

**A note on class placement:** Academic age groups (Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School) are recommendations with flexible boundaries. Placement is based on both age/ability and at the discretion of the Instructor and Program Director. Please contact [jayne.besjak@gmail.com](mailto:jayne.besjak@gmail.com) with any inquiries.

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## UPPER ELEMENTARY CLASSES

### **Philosophy for Children (ages 10 - 12)**

In this class, students will engage as philosophers through Socratic dialogue while building a community of inquiry where curiosity and questioning are encouraged, reasoning skills are honed, and respectful discussion and debate is modeled. Through guided discussions, we will grapple with age-old questions such as "What is friendship?", "What is justice?", "How can I be sure of what I know?" "What does it mean to be fair?" as we become acquainted with some of history's greatest thinkers. Students will learn how to create hypotheses, clarify their terms, ask for and give good reasons, question each other's assumptions, draw inferences, and follow an inquiry to where it leads.

**Instructor:** Jayne Besjak

### **Art Workshop I (ages 10+)**

Art class focused on bringing each student to the next level in their art journey. The course will lead the student from basic drawing skills through to advanced painting techniques using a wide range of mediums. Students will have the opportunity to express themselves in both figurative and abstract visual arts, as they work towards creating a portfolio. Class will include still life, portraiture, landscape, life drawing, cubism, impressionism, calligraphy and mixed media.

Mediums : Graphite Pencil, colored pencil, charcoal, watercolor, pastel, ink and acrylic.

**Instructor:** Lisa Young

### **Exploring Literature - Fall Semester (ages 10 - 11)**

The goal of this class is to foster a love of literature and an appreciation for the ability of a story to capture one's imagination. Students will read 4 novels during the course of the semester while exploring what makes great literature through hands-on activities associated to book themes, weekly guided small group discussions, and age-appropriate writing assignments. Basic literary elements of plot, character development, setting, theme, etc. will be identified and analyzed and vocabulary will be broadened as students develop the ability to thoughtfully critique literature and express their views in a group setting. Outside required work will consist of weekly reading, preparation for class discussions/projects, and written responses to short answer writing prompts. The book list will be finalized based on the preferences and ability levels of registered students. Please contact the Instructor for a list of books under consideration.

**Instructor:** Jayne Besjak

### **Creative & Critical Thinking Circle - Fall Semester (ages 10 - 11)**

This is a hands-on problem solving class where the focus will be on creative, critical, and divergent thinking. These are areas rarely covered in a typical school setting, but highly sought after in the real world settings of business, academia, and modern high-tech industry. Each week students will be encouraged to solve challenging and complex problems individually and collaboratively in small teams where they will learn to appreciate each other's input and value alternative approaches. We will discuss multi-step and open-ended problems, brain teasers, math puzzles, and logic problems as students learn to distinguish what is relevant for obtaining a solution. We will even make mistakes and enjoy them! For more information on the history of this approach (inspired by an ideology which employs more problem solving vs. computational or textbook math) please visit the web-site [Mathcircles](#). We are using curriculum from [Bright, Brave Open Minds: Engaging Young Children in Math Inquiry](#).

**Instructor:** Christine Coleman

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSES

### **Writers Workshop (ages 12+)**

This class will focus on improving formal, academic writing. Using engaging short stories, essays, and poetry, students will learn how to craft paragraph and essay responses with clear, evidence-based reasoning. Foundational skills in grammar, sentence diagramming, and summarizing will be covered. Our writer's "toolbox" will include how to effectively use quotes from literature and how to implement MLA citations and format. Technology will also be used to enhance the writing skills of the students through the use of concept mapping software (Inspiration). This software will assist in the pre-writing process, to assist students in organizing their brainstorming of topics and details for a piece of writing.

What makes the workshop come alive for students, aside from reading beloved and thought-provoking literature, is the ability for the students to share their writing within a supportive class community, and to receive and offer constructive feedback. This workshop is a wonderful supplement to Western Literature Analysis, or can be taken as a standalone class.

**Prerequisite:** Students must be at a 7th grade reading level. They should be able to independently write at least two paragraphs with a basic command of grammar. Students should possess basic competency with conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

**Instructor:** Tamara Hart

### **Western Literature Analysis (ages 12+)**

In this upper middle school level class, we will explore American and British literature, mostly set in the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. We will read and analyze books known for their universal themes, enduring characters, and rich complexity. By their nature the novels will require us to take a step back in history to study the time, place and context the author captured for the reader. Students will practice responding effectively to short answer writing prompts, as well as working in groups on presentations and debates. The class will cover figurative language devices and strengthen vocabulary, but will not be short of fun as we will celebrate each novel completion with lively discussion over a proper British tea. The book list will be flexible and will evolve based on students' preferences. A few possibilities are: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, Of Mice and Men, Our Town, Animal Farm, The Old Man & the Sea, Lord of the Flies, Moon Over Manifest, A Separate Peace, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Chosen, The Watsons Go to Birmingham

**Prerequisite:** Students must be at a 7th grade reading level. They should possess the ability to read, at times, 100 pages in a week. Books may contain sensitive media.

**Instructor:** Tamara Hart

### **Middle School Science (ages 12 - 13)**

In this year long class, we will spend 15 weeks (fall) covering Life Science followed by 15 weeks (spring) covering Middle School Chemistry. In the first half of the year, students will be introduced to the basics of cells, DNA, Medelian genetics, evolution, as well as the classification and study of plant and animal life cycles. Hands on learning exercises will be used every week for the students to become familiar, and confident with, these topics. In the second semester, we will use the American Chemical Society's Middle School Chemistry curriculum to learn the fundamentals of chemistry in a hands on manner. Through dynamic labs and hands on exercises students will learn about atoms, bonding, chemical and physical properties as well as chemical reactions.

**Instructor:** Cristen Pantano

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## HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

### **High School Biology (ages 14+)**

In this year long class we will delve into the biochemical pathways and forces that power life. We will start with atoms, build up to biomolecules, and continue through cells up to evolution and study of whole organisms. This will be a year long ninth and tenth grade level Biology class, including weekly labs.

**Instructor:** Cristen Pantano

### **American Civics: Historical Analysis & Debate (ages 14+)**

This class will help students understand the US system of government and what it means to be an American citizen by examining turning points and concepts in American history (as they occurred and still affect us today), including the idea of terra nullius in the Age of Discovery, the US Revolution, federalism, the fugitive slave laws, expansion of voting, the progressive era reforms, and the civil rights era. Students will learn about these issues through reading selections from books and relevant articles, as well as working on [icivics.org](http://icivics.org) and in concert with learning debate skills and the art of argument.

Students will be expected to read relevant background materials each week and prepare for regular in-class debates.

**Instructor:** Jayne Besjak

### **Art Workshop II (ages 12+)**

This class is aimed at middle school students that have completed Art Workshop I and high schoolers with some art experience. The course will focus on taking a student's art skills to a superior level. Students will be taught advanced drawing, painting, palette knife and sculpting techniques and will be introduced to a number of new mediums.

On completion of the course they should have several exceptional pieces for their personal portfolio. Mediums: Graphite Pencil, colored pencil, charcoal, acrylics, oil pastel, ink, oils and polymer clay.

**Instructor:** Lisa Young