

Mosaic Class Descriptions 2024 - 2025

A note on class placement: Academic age groups are recommendations with flexible boundaries. Placement is based on both age/ability and is at the discretion of the Instructor and Program Director. For inquiries, please contact jayne@mosaicfreeschool.com

- ❖ Classes are full-year courses. Registration for these classes requires a commitment to the fall and spring semesters (30 weeks).
 - * Classes are semester courses (15 weeks). Students may take these classes fall, spring, OR both semesters (content will continue, not duplicate).
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HIGH SCHOOL (ages 14+)

❖ American Literature

Using a variety of key texts, students will explore what makes literature uniquely American. Students will read genres ranging from plays, essays, poetry, and novels. In doing so, we will generate answers to the question, "What does it mean to be American?" Through exposure to, for example, the poetry of Emily Dickinson and the essays of Henry David Thoreau, students will become familiar with a variety of American experiences. This is a discussion-based class with a special emphasis on critical analysis through writing.

Instructor: Sachi Tripp

Tuition: \$720

❖ Environmental Science

Environmental science is an interdisciplinary course that studies the earth, how humans interact with the earth, and how we can positively and sustainably deal with environmental issues. It includes topics from biology, chemistry, and even economics. This course is one of connections in nature, specifically: How nature works and has survived and thrived, how humans interact with the environment, and how we can live more sustainably. The course will be divided into five units. We will start by learning how the earth works without human intervention, followed by human population science and how this population affects ecological principles. We will then closely study the earth's resources and land use by humans. This section will focus on how we can sustain resources and how human population growth and food production affect the environment. The fourth unit will focus on energy; nonrenewable energy as well as energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. We will finish with a unit on pollution, global change, and how we can sustainably use earth's resources without causing environmental harm. Each week will include a discussion of the weekly topic and hands-on labs or group data analysis. The opportunity for working at the AP level and taking the AP exam will be available for motivated students.

Instructor: Cristen Pantano

Tuition: \$800

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❖ Conceptual Chemistry

This full-year course is designed to give students a basic understanding of chemical principles that characterize the properties of matter and how it reacts. Major topics covered will include: the periodic table, atomic structure and bonding, chemical reactions, stoichiometry, gas laws, properties of liquids and solids, solutions, acids and bases. With an emphasis on both the theoretical and practical aspects of chemistry, students can expect hands-on laboratory exercises, practice problems, lectures, discussions, and projects.

Math Prerequisite: successful completion of Algebra I

Textbook: TBD

Instructor: TBD

Tuition: \$800

❖ American History

This class will explore the history of the United States from colonialism through the civil rights era. Students will acquire an understanding of the various political, social, intellectual, and economic trends that have characterized American history through the 20th century, with a special emphasis on the exploration of voting rights. The founding fathers declared our government was "of the people, by the people", yet many people had to fight for their suffrage. We will use primary and secondary sources, movies, songs, and art to tell the story of real people who overcame obstacles and did something extraordinary for their community.

Instructor: Allison Sabatini

Tuition: \$720

* Screenwriting & Filmmaking (High School & Middle School)

In this hands-on filmmaking workshop, students will learn the art of filmmaking from script to screen. Students will work together as a film crew to generate ideas, write short screenplays, direct actors, and learn camera, lighting, and sound techniques. Students will also learn the basics of editing in Adobe Premiere Pro. In each class, students will work both behind and in front of the camera, in both exterior and interior locations, so that they can gain as much experience as possible.

This class will build on skills learned from previous Screenwriting & Filmmaking classes offered at Mosaic and is appropriate for both returning and new students.

Instructor: Montclair Film

Tuition: \$440/semester (length of class will be 15 weeks for 12+ students enrolled or 10-12 weeks in length based on enrollment total)

Tuition fees include access to all filming equipment and supplies and computer editing software.

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* Art Workshop II (High School and Middle School)

This class is aimed at middle and high school students that have completed Art Workshop I. 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. Mediums: Graphite pencil, watercolor, colored pencil, charcoal, acrylics, oil pastel, ink, and polymer clay.

Please contact the instructor with questions about student placement.

Instructor: Lisa Young

Tuition: \$360/semester

* Digital Photography (High School & Middle School)

In this course we will look at photography as an art form, and at the same time we will learn practical applications. By the end of the course, students will improve their skills with photography, as well as digital photo manipulation via Adobe Photoshop or an alternative software of their choice.

Photo I (Fall Semester)

In Photo I the focus is on improving our photography skills and learning about the foundations of what makes a great photo. The students will learn to distinguish an art photo from a quick snapshot and learn about photography from an artistic standpoint. Rule of thirds, leading lines, natural framing, how to take a great portrait, focal point, use of color, what should a self portrait involve, and more, will be covered in this semester. We will look at the history of photography, as well as great photographers of the past and present.

Photo II (Spring Semester)

In Photo II class, the attention shifts to photojournalism. We will be working on being able to convey a compelling story through our images. Our assignments will include reportage through photography, a personal photo essay, improved portrait skills, product photography, and more. We will discuss possible careers in the field of photography and at photographers that are able to influence entire nations through their images.

Students will need:

-A laptop that has software that we can use to edit the photos, and one of the following software options:

- Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom (19.99 monthly subscription)

- PIXLR: <https://pixlr.com/> (free online editor)

- Photopea: <https://www.photopea.com/> (free online editor)

- GIMP 2: Open source software that works great for editing most photos: <https://www.gimp.org/downloads/> (free)

Instructor: Mariya Kovalyov

Tuition: \$360/semester

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* Personal Finance & Economics

Students will learn about economics & finance and how these concepts apply to their lives.

Fall semester: We will focus on understanding micro and macro economics and discuss market structures & how supply/demand interact. We will look at the global economy and globalization, as well as monetary history, market structures, government involvement in economies, and more.

Spring semester: We will turn our attention to more personal finance. We'll analyze productivity and standards of living, look at how the banking system functions, how inflation, taxes and other economic issues affect our day-to-day lives. We will also discuss management styles and managerial techniques. Throughout the class, we will explore things that apply personally to student's lives, and help them with future job readiness. Things like filing taxes, analyzing the stock market, writing a cover letter and a resume, going through an interview, and filling out job applications will all be done through hands-on and fun activities.

Textbook: TBD

Instructor: Mariya Kovalyov

Tuition: \$360/semester

* Creative Writing Sampler (High School & Middle School)

In this class, teen writers will experience a wide variety of genres over a full year or for a single semester. They'll have the opportunity to experiment with new formats, as well as go deeper into those they may already love. We'll explore memoir/personal essay, short story, poetry, creative nonfiction, flash fiction, and genre fiction of their choice (sci-fi/fantasy, mystery, thriller, etc.). Every module will include time for peer review, focused revision and improvement. The culmination of the class will be a final reading from their choice of an original work and a portfolio of completed work. Students will be required to read writing samples as well as work on their writing at home each week.

Instructor: TBD

Tuition: \$360/semester

* Drama (High School & Middle School)

Beginning with exercises designed to draw out creativity and beautiful vocal clarity, we will then move into specific activities to develop expression, improvisation, intentional movement, and ensemble skills. Each student will practice dissecting different scripts to identify objectives, choices, tactics and many other techniques for properly creating a character. We will work on monologues—both modern and Shakespearean—and we will culminate the class with one-act plays.

Instructor: Natasha Benkendorf

Tuition: \$360/semester

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MIDDLE SCHOOL (ages 12 - 13)

❖ Modern World History

Traveling together around the world, we will investigate the major achievements, tragedies, and conflicts from the beginning of the twentieth century through the present. Students will be individually and in groups to dive into choices that have been made throughout history and the implications of those decisions. During this course, students will be required to do research, make presentations, and present analysis papers.

Instructor: Natasha Benkendorf

Tuition: \$720

❖ Inquiry Life Science

This middle school class engages students in the practice of science not just the memorization of facts. Using an inquiry methodology, we will cover core areas in life science: cells, organisms, plants, animals, and ecosystems. Through labs and activities, students will actively engage in scientific practices as they design their investigations to answer a variety of thought-provoking research questions. There will be a strong focus on collaborative work in class and opportunities for students to develop scientific writing and presentation skills. Working in small groups, students respond to a guiding question, design their methodology, develop models, collect and analyze data, and construct an argument for presentation. Weekly homework will include chapter reading from an online textbook. Pre-requisites: Students must possess appropriate maturity for effective small group lab work and solid communication and writing skills.

Instructor: Jayne Besjak

Tuition: \$800

❖ Literary Genre

In this class, students will explore the major literary genres, discovering together what they have in common and how they differ. The year will be broken into units based on those genres, including fiction (both short story and novel), nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students will become familiar with each genre and be able to identify distinguishing characteristics of each. Within each of these units, we will study various literary devices, including the author's use of figurative language, theme, tone, and style of writing. Through small group projects and in-class discussions, students will get comfortable talking about literature with their peers.

Instructor: Sachi Tripp

Tuition: \$720

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* Grammar & Writing

This class will help students achieve two different but complementary goals. They will improve their understanding and use of English grammar mechanics and also explore methods to create beautiful writing. In each class, students will begin with games and activities to reinforce skills essential to using grammar properly. Together, we will focus on fully understanding advanced uses of the parts of speech and complex sentence construction. Then, we will jump into a richer understanding of the English language puzzle by taking sentences apart and diagramming them together. The foundation for the grammar portion of this class will come from The Well-Trained Mind curriculum. In the writing component of this course, we will use methods and resources from the Institute for Excellence in Writing to develop a compelling writing style. Throughout the term, each student will work to find their own voice while developing their own short story. At the end of the class, we will compile the stories into a book for our group.

Instructor: Natasha Benkendorf

Tuition: \$360/semester

UPPER ELEMENTARY (ages 10 - 11; 9 year olds with instructor approval)

❖ Middle Ages History

Knights, Vikings, castles, crusades! Through hands-on projects, class discussion, and historical fiction and nonfiction, students will fully immerse themselves in medieval history. We will cover the major historical events from the fall of Rome through the rise of the Renaissance, using Volume 2, Story of the World as our guide. Students will explore this period in history with group projects, presentations, and writing. Textbook chapter reading will be required homework each week.

Instructor: Renee Alejandro

Tuition: \$720

❖ Science Explorations

Hands-on activities and experiments are the perfect way for elementary students to have fun exploring science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). In this class, students will enjoy short (2-4 week) units focused on "doing science" to encourage active learning and exposure to core STEM concepts and scientific thinking. We will explore a variety of physical, earth/space, and life science topics.

Instructor: Mariya Kovalyov

Tuition: \$720

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* Readers Theater & Performance (Upper Elementary & Middle School)

We'll transform the classroom into a stage and merge students' love of play and performance with the important skill of oral reading. In this engaging and supportive class, students will perform skits together from works of literature and historical periods and collaborate to bring literary scenes to life. We'll focus on developing reading fluency, comprehension, voice expression, and character. As a culminating project, students will step into the shoes of medieval youth as they embark on a lively tour of a 13th century village using the extraordinary children's book *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* as the guide for our adventure. The book is set in 1255 England and contains over 20 fictional monologues and dialogues that provide a rich exploration of the daily life of different social classes from the perspective of children. As we explore the monologues together students will identify and discuss major themes associated with the era and gain an understanding of the characteristics of a medieval community. Each student will choose one or more character monologues for individual-focused study and will perform the monologue(s)/dialogue(s) in a final theatrical production.

Instructor: Jayne Besjak

Tuition: \$360/semester

* Art Workshop I

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 realistic and abstract visual arts, as they work towards developing good foundational art skills. Class will include still life, portraiture, landscape, life drawing, cubism, impressionism, surrealism and sculpture. Mediums: Graphite Pencil, colored pencil, charcoal, watercolor, pastel, clay and acrylic.

Instructor: Lisa Young

Tuition: \$360/semester

* Makerspace Projects

This class is designed to increase student interest in STEAM and to provide students the opportunity to design, build, invent, and create in a guided hands-on environment. Students will work on an assortment of projects, tailored to their interests, and will have access to a wide variety of everyday materials and our maker technology - sphero robots, littleBits electronics, makey-makey invention kits, hummingbird robotics kits, microbits, Strawbees, and more!

Instructor: Jayne Besjak

Tuition: \$360/semester

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* Critical & Creative Thinking Circle

In this hands-on problem-solving class 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, brainteasers, 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 that employs more problem solving vs. computational or textbook math) please visit the website [Mathcircles](#).

Instructor: Jayne Besjak

Tuition: \$360/semester

* Experimental Art

In this art class students will get to experiment with unusual, strange and downright bizarre art techniques. It is a process based, and project oriented class, suited for anyone that likes to explore and experiment. We will use materials like spray paint, ebru marbling, cyanotypes, plants, led lights, old cds, etc.. We will sculpt from found objects, clay, paper mache, felt, wool, books, and more. Projects will include things like automata, mosaics, altered books, gelli printing, stamp making, plus many others. We are going to bring science into the art classroom, and employ a number of techniques that often elude a standard art curriculum. I would love to explore together the art of ancient Ebru Marbling using carrageenan, and compare it to hydro dipping, exploring a more standard and highly detailed acrylic painting vs. acrylic pour paintings with silicone. Make our art light up. Create a number of sculptures throughout the year. Make our own watercolor paint using gum arabic and honey, and then practice plein air painting together. This kind of art making is not only meant for enjoyment of art. It employs the part of your brain that has to do with creative problem solving and pattern recognition, and often engaging in these kind of activities helps the students succeed not just creatively, but academically in other areas of learning.

Instructor: Mariya Kovalyov

Tuition: \$360/semester

* Literature Circle

The purpose 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 be reading three to four novels over the course of each semester, and exploring what makes great literature through hands-on activities, class discussion, and age-appropriate writing assignments. Basic literary elements (plot, character, setting, theme, etc.) will be identified and analyzed, as students develop the ability to thoughtfully critique a novel and express their views in a group setting. Outside work

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required for this class will consist of reading assigned chapters and preparation for class discussions and projects. The book list will be finalized based on the preferences and ability levels of registered students. Please contact Mosaic for a list of books under consideration.

Instructor: TBD

Tuition: \$360/semester