

# *Great River School 2009-2010 Course Guide ~ Semester 2*

## *A1 (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)*

### **\*\*\*CORE CLASSES\*\*\***

**(Students will be placed into core classes, as they are required)**

#### **Humanities and Field Studies:**

Humanities (Language Arts and Social Studies) and Field Studies (Math and Science) will be connected through a central theme for each unit of study. For example, the first theme of the year will be Utopia and Dystopia: Building a Healthy Community. This theme is drawn out of the study of the Industrial Revolution and our Odyssey East trip. During each unit of study students will be completing one large research project that will connect to most of the core subjects as well as including visual and musical arts as much as possible. Students will also have large and small group lessons and presentations focusing on key concepts and skills, which relate to the central theme. There will also be weekly seminars and labs as well as quizzes, tests, individual and group presentations.

#### **Seventh and Eighth Grade Core Studies:**

**Social Studies – Benedict Moudry** = US History, World History, and Geography

**Language Arts – Mary Gantenbein** = Literary Analysis, Grammar, Essays, Creative Writing, Public Speaking

**Science – Mike Sweet** = Life Science, Physical Science, Science and Engineering, Earth and Space

**Mathematics – Kira Donnelly** = Pre-Algebra, Algebra, and introduction to Geometry

**Musical (Caroline Miesle) and Visual Arts (Sam O'Brien)** will be integrated throughout the entire year with a focus on drama during the January Theater Production.

## *A1 (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade) Electives*

### **\*\*FULL YEAR ELECTIVES\*\***

**Treble Choir:** Is open to treble voices (girls, boys with unchanged voices) in grades 7-9 upon completion of an application. Anyone who enjoys singing and would like to learn or improve music skills in an ensemble setting is welcome, regardless of level or ability. The majority of class time will be spent learning a wide variety of music and preparing for concerts, but students will also have the opportunity to learn and perform a solo/small ensemble piece each semester. Guide: Caroline Miesle

### **\* \* SEMESTER 2 ELECTIVES \* \***

**Musicianship I:** Musicianship I class is designed to introduce students to ear training, arranging, practice techniques, effective rehearsal strategies, performance, and basic music theory (locating notes on the staff, scales, major and minor chords). Skills we will focus include reading and performing rhythmic exercises, playing as an ensemble, balancing instruments, playing by ear, developing musical vocabulary, and identifying formal structures. Students are welcome to play any of the available instruments (guitar, bass, keyboards, drums) or may bring their own as well. All students are encouraged to participate in performances throughout the semester (i.e. Coffee House, Spring Concert, Great Extravaganza). Guide: Zack Scott

**Mythology:** Mythology has been present in cultures throughout human history. Myth has inspired mankind, acting as a benchmark for what people aspire to, fear, as a guide to behavior and its consequences. Students

will read, discuss, and write about mythology. The class will examine mythology from different cultures, including European, Native American, African, and Asian. Students will also examine mythological analysis from writers such as Joseph Campbell. Guide: Mike Sweet

**Bike Shop:** In the GRS Bike Shop, students will learn the craft of bike maintenance and repair. The course work is centered on doing real work on student and staff bicycles. There will also be material presented on the history of bicycling, bicycle racing, and on some facets of how a small business is run. Work is done primarily in support of the A1 spring bike trip, but also extends to repair and maintenance of staff bicycles and equipment of student families. Because fees are charged for work, and because of the safety issues involved, students who apply for bike shop must be serious about the work, and should have a strong interest in cycling. Working on bicycles can be messy, and participants in the shop will get their hands dirty! Students must submit a written statement to Mike prior to acceptance into the class describing their cycling experience (or the desire for cycling experience) and stating why they want to be considered for the class. Guide: Mike Sweet

**Philosophy - Ethics:** This is an introductory course to philosophy. The course is centered on class discussions concerning issues and topics brought out through the reading of a text about young adults and their thoughts, feelings and experiences. Central ideas of the course include: ethics, values, inductive and deductive reasoning, fairness, rules, consequences, freedom, truth, and existence. It is a course where students practice and experience philosophy more than read about it. The objectives of the class are to: address topics that are meaningful to young people through philosophical inquiry; enjoy challenging concepts together; develop their inner voice as well as critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. It is an active and engaging course, which often has students continuing the conversations outside of class. Guide: Nelson Inz or Molly Keenan

**Seeing with the Mind:** "Seeing with the Mind" is a seminar format which uses discussion and writing to analyze, explicate, deconstruct and describe the world around us: art, architecture, artifacts and nature. Designed to open up your inquiring mind and give flight to your budding philosophical wings! Guide: Ms. G

**Idea Lab:** Idea Lab: bring your ideas to life. In the Idea Lab, you will work with your hands and your mind, learning to take a dream and build the reality. Part design, part engineering, part construction, part presentation, you'll work in a variety of mediums to explore design, engineering, and production. This will be a two-hour class from 1:00 – 3:00. Guide: Michael Flood

**News & Yearbook:** This course will focus on documenting the year at Great River through a newspaper or online journal and a yearbook. Emphasis will be on both design/layout and writing. Students will develop a vision of what they want in a newspaper and yearbook, work out a plan to accomplish that vision, and execute it. Guide: Kate Diehn

**Eco Education - Urban Garden:** This class will run in conjunction with *Environmental Art - Urban Garden*. The class will study issues in urban agriculture, and contribute to the Great River Garden. We will also learn the basics of seed starting, composting and garden care. *Eco-Education* will investigate environmental and food justice as a community, state or global issue. Students will learn about the many aspects of the issue, decide on solutions, and take action. The class is entirely student driven as the issues and solutions will be determined entirely by students. Students will also decide on and complete smaller hands on community projects. The class will spend two days a week working on these community based projects with *Environmental Art - Urban Garden* and two days a week working on the issue of their choosing. Students should be ready to delve into an environmental or food justice issues, investigate and evaluate complex real world problems, write a grant, and carry out a solution. Be prepared to be empowered! Guide: Tami Limberg

**Environmental Art - Urban Garden:** This class will run in conjunction with *Eco Education - Urban Garden*. The class will study issues in urban agriculture, and contribute to the Great River Garden. We will also learn the basics of seed starting, composting and garden care. *Environmental Art* will study the

ways in which art and the environment interact. Skills learned will include drawing, watercolor painting, and building techniques with wood and tile mosaic. We will study artists who focus on environmental issues, use materials from the environment, and use the environment as an essential element in their work. Such artists include Georgia O'Keefe, Herman de Vries, Andy Goldsworthy, Rosalie Gascoigne and Patrice Stellest. We will focus our work on drawing and painting the natural world, sculpture that uses materials from the environment, and installations that include the garden and the school. Guide: Sam O'Brien