

2023-2024

NETCONG SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MIDDLE SCHOOL PASSION  
PERIOD COURSE GUIDE

## Passion Period Courses

All middle school students are required to take “CORE” academic classes such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students also must take special area courses such as art, music, computers, STEM, Spanish, physical education and health, which encompasses social and emotional learning. In addition to core and special area courses, students must enroll in a passion period course each trimester.

The purpose of the passion period is to provide students with an innovative learning environment, where they have the choice to explore their personal passions for the betterment of themselves and engage students in non-traditional educational opportunities that have otherwise been unavailable until now. Furthermore, the passion period allows students to partake in a more personalized educational experience.

Students will be able to partake in elective classes based on seat availability. Eighth grade students receive priority placement.

Students may choose one of the passion courses listed in this guide.

## PASSION PERIOD COURSES

A Walk Down Wall Street  
 Advanced Art  
 Ballet  
 Basic Ceramics  
 Calligraphy  
 Chess for All – Beginners and Experienced Players  
 Environmental Awareness 1  
 Environmental Awareness 2  
 Hip-Hop/Swing Dancing  
 MakerSpace  
 Mathematical Art  
 Modern/Contemporary Dance  
 The Art of Macrame  
 Time Travel, Fact & Fiction  
 Tyranny: Lessons from Literature and History  
 YA Movies  
 YA Movies 2

| Trimester 1                 | Trimester 2               | Trimester 3                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Time Travel, Fact & Fiction | A Walk Down Wall Street   | Tyranny – Lessons from Literature and History     |
| YA Movies                   | YA Movies                 | YA Movies 2                                       |
| MakerSpace                  | MakerSpace                | Chess for All - Beginners and Experienced Players |
| Ballet                      | Modern/Contemporary Dance | Hip-Hop/Swing Dancing                             |
| Mathematical Art            | Mathematical Art          | Mathematical Art                                  |
| Environmental Awareness 1   | Environmental Awareness 1 | Environmental Awareness 2                         |
| The Art of Macrame          | Basic Ceramics            | Calligraphy                                       |

## PASSION PERIOD COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### **A Walk Down Wall Street**

'A Walk Down Wall Street' is designed to demystify the personal investment process and provide practical experience in establishing and monitoring an investment portfolio via an online simulation. This introductory survey course will explore topics including savings and checking accounts, simple and compound interest, investment products (such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and index funds), the general tools of investment, the basics of equities valuation, and portfolio diversification. As a result of this course, students will appreciate the importance of using data and analysis in the financial decision-making process.

### **Ballet**

Students will be guided through the basics of ballet technique and have the opportunity to come up with their own ballet combinations. Each week we will focus on a new move and build on our dance technique and musical expression.

## **Basic Ceramics**

In this course you will learn the 3 basic ceramic handbuilding techniques- coil, pinch and slab. We will create 3 small projects- each project will focus on one of the handbuilding techniques. You will also learn the 3's or how to attach 2 pieces of clay by score, slipping and sealing.

## **Calligraphy**

Calligraphy is a visual art related to writing and is the design and execution of lettering with a pen, ink brush, or other writing instrument. Calligraphy involves drawing out the letters using specific strokes. The purpose is to create beautiful writing.

## **Chess for All – Beginners and Experienced Players**

Chess class is a social, informational, instructional, and competitive meeting place where people come together through the game of chess. Chess will offer a wide variety of activities, including instruction, games, and recreational play. Chess develops perspective, improves memory, deepens focus, elevates creativity, and boosts planning skills.

## **Environmental Awareness 1**

Students will learn about and discuss current issues and topics in environmental science. The course aims to develop students' understanding of fundamental concepts and principles in environmental science, explore the interconnectedness of different components of the environment, investigate and analyze current environmental issues, promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to environmental science, and foster an appreciation for the natural world while encouraging sustainable practices.

## **Environmental Awareness 2**

After taking Environmental Awareness 1, students will continue to learn about and discuss current issues and topics in environmental science. The course aims to expand upon students' understanding of fundamental concepts and principles in environmental science, explore the growing amounts of green technologies available for a sustainable future, investigate and analyze current environmental issues, promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and form an understanding of the potential for improved global resource management.

## **Hip-Hop/Swing Dancing**

Students will be guided through the basics of Hip-Hop and Swing techniques and have the opportunity to come up with their own Hip-Hop/Swing combinations. Each week we will focus on a new move and build on our dance technique and musical expression.

## **MakerSpace**

During our MakerSpace class, we will be creating using a variety of materials, all of which will be of your own design. Be prepared to use your imagination, to take risks, and to be creative in solving problems. In MakerSpace, we think outside the box.

The MakerSpace is a place to explore your own ideas - not just on paper or in a virtual reality, but in the real world with physical materials. So, let's get our hands on some stuff, come up with an idea, and figure out how to make it happen!

## **Mathematical Art**

Do you love art and drawing? This course will blend artistic skills with mathematical concepts! We will explore symmetry, patterns, lines, curves, geometric shapes, measurement, and more to create unique works of art.

## **Modern/Contemporary Dance**

Students will be guided through the basics of modern/contemporary techniques and have the opportunity to come up with their own modern combinations. Each week we will focus on a new move and build on our dance technique and musical expression.

## **The Art of Macrame**

What is Macrame you ask? Macrame is a creative knotting technique that can be used to make a variety of items, including jewelry and other decorative items. It's a great way to relax and create beautiful art pieces.

Macramé's knot-tying origins can be traced back to 13th-century Arabic decorative weavers who used the knots to secure loose ends of woven textiles, like towels and shawls. Many believe the term "macramé" comes from the Arabic word *migramah* or "fringe."

## **Time Travel, Fact and Fiction**

The possibility of developing a method for traveling through time to visit the past or explore the future has captivated science fiction fans, philosophers, and physicists for generations. In *Time Travel, Fact and Fiction* students will explore the most iconic depictions of time travel from film, television, and literature, discuss and debate the philosophical issues of time, paradoxes, and the ethics of time travel, and will question whether the possibility of time travel aligns with our current understanding of physics, general relativity, and the universe. Students will also read and discuss H.G. Wells' groundbreaking novel [The Time Machine](#), which is generally credited with popularizing the concept of using a device to deliberately travel forward and backward through time.

## **Tyranny: Lessons from Literature and History**

The Ancient Greeks had a word for an absolute ruler who seized power and was completely unrestrained by the law: a Tyrant. However, the Greeks didn't necessarily think Tyrants were inherently bad, and even the Romans recognized the need for an occasional dictator with temporary unlimited power. However, when we think about tyrants and dictators today, we often think about leaders who are cruel, unjust, and exploit their power by repressing their people. In *Tyranny: Lessons from Literature and History*, students will debate and discuss which Shakespearean characters, historical figures, and contemporary world leaders do and do not deserve the title of Tyrant.

## **YA Movies 1**

In this course, students will be looking at films that focus on a young adult main character. Often in film, characters of this age either do not face truly challenging situations, or they do so without much change or growth. The films for this course will focus on young adult main characters facing real life challenges, how they faced those challenges, and what can we as viewers connect to and learn from these characters' journeys?

## **YA Movies 2**

In this course, students will extend their understanding of real-life issues young adult main characters face in movies, which they experienced in the first or second trimester course, to characters older than those in the first course. While characters will face similar issues, how they affect and handle them won't always be the same as these films will be focusing on older young adults.