



**Twin Cities Academy Middle School
Course Guide
2022-2023**

TCA COURSE GUIDE 2022-2023

Course Registration Process

Course Registration Presentations prepared by the school counselor will happen in Advisory classes during the month of March to explain course requirements and options. Students will fill out a course registration form and will turn it into the school counselor. Course registration forms will be online through Google Forms.

Definition of Course Terms

Grades: Grade level at which the course is being offered.

Semester: Semester in which the elective course is being offered.

Elective Schedule Change Procedure

Students will **NOT** be allowed to change their schedules once they are set unless there are extenuating circumstances. Registration should be taken extremely seriously for this reason. English, Math, Social Studies or Science classes are not electives and will not change.

TCA TYPICAL COURSE SCHEDULE BY GRADE

6th Grade

English 6

Minnesota History 6

Math 6, Pre-Algebra 6, or Algebra 6/7

Physical Science 6

World Language

Literacy Course or Elective

Elective

7th Grade

English 7

US History 7

Pre-Algebra, Algebra 6/7, or Intermediate Algebra

Life Science 7

World Language

Literacy Course or Elective

Elective

8th Grade

English 8

Global Studies 8

Algebra, Intermediate Algebra, or Geometry

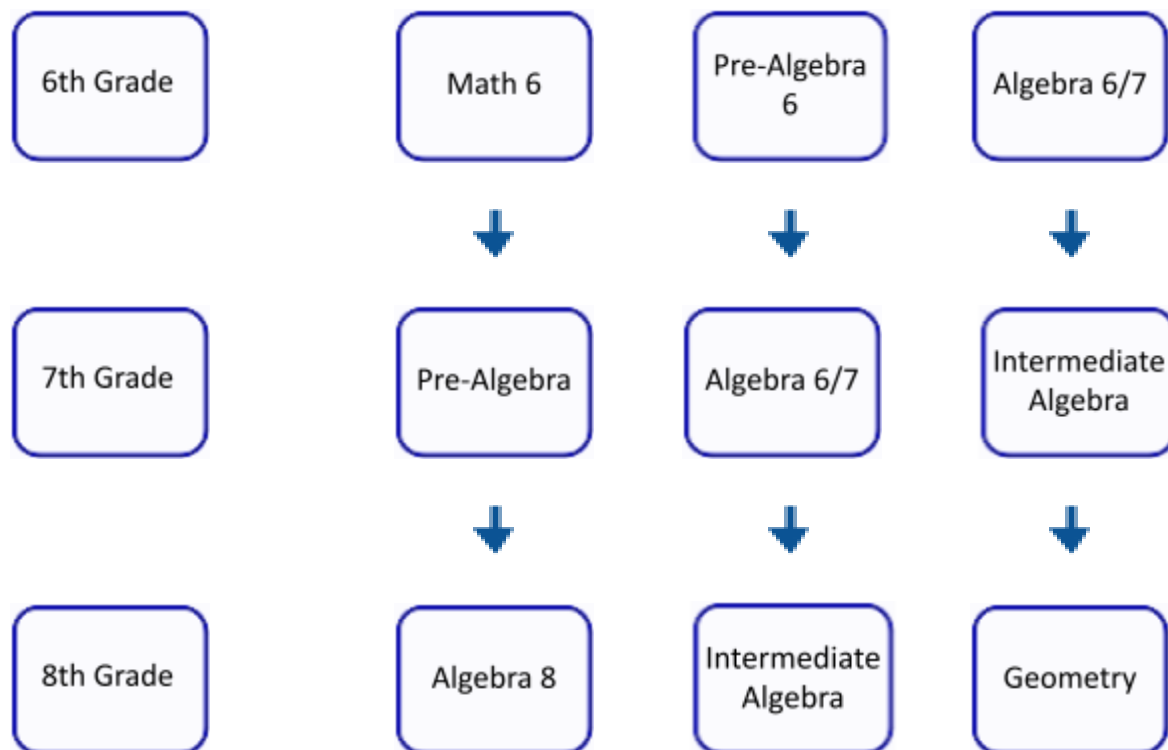
Earth Science 8

World Language

Literacy Course or Elective

Elective

TCA Math Scope and Sequence



TCA World Language Descriptions

Spanish

Spanish IA: is a fun and interactive beginning level course suitable for students with little to no Spanish experience. Students learn to understand basic written and spoken Spanish by focusing on frequently used structures and grammar patterns in the target language. Students build confidence and fluency through a variety of activities including storytelling, songs, and cultural readings.

Prerequisites: None

Spanish IB: is designed to build upon and reinforce vocabulary and grammar structures learned in 1A. Students continue to develop their proficiency in the target language through a variety of communicative activities. Students are expected to employ strategies learned in 1A in order to comprehend written and spoken Spanish with increasing independence.

Prerequisites: Spanish IA

Spanish II: is designed to build upon and reinforce vocabulary and grammar structures learned in Spanish 1A and 1B. Students continue to develop their proficiency in the target language through a variety of communicative activities – while the focus on the class is still comprehension of language, more output (speaking and writing) is introduced in Spanish II. Students should be comfortable communicating in present tense, and will become more comfortable understanding past tense language.

Prerequisites: Spanish IA & IB

Spanish III is designed to build upon the foundation of language built in the students' first 2+ years. Students continue to develop their proficiency in the target language through a variety of communicative activities – there is a greater expectation of speaking and writing in Spanish. Students read novels, tell stories, and work with various language tenses.

Prerequisites: Spanish II

French

MS French Language Exploratory: Students will experience the French language and discover the many French-speaking cultures around the world. Students will have the opportunity to learn common French words and phrases while having fun with stories, games and French music. They will also learn about the cultures of France and French-speaking countries and make comparisons with their own cultures. The object of this elective is to allow students to try a semester of French and to discover other communities and cultures, which will support success in further language study at the middle school level and lay the foundation for a future High School language requirement.

Prerequisites: None

Notes: Course is available for 6th and 7th graders, one semester only

French I: Students practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing in French, with the understanding that they are likely to be able to understand more than they are able to produce. By the end of the course, students are able to read/listen at or above the Intermediate Low level and speak/write at or above the Novice High level. Themes include introducing yourself, school, friends, family, weather and geography, daily routines, clothing, food, and stories.

Prerequisites: None

French II: is designed to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing in French, with the understanding that they are likely to be able to understand more than they are able to produce. By the end of the course, students will be able to read/listen at or above the Intermediate mid-level and speak/write at or above the Intermediate Low level. Themes include holidays, childhood, health and wellness, and the city.

Prerequisites: French I

French III: In French III, we continue to use language skills learned in French I and II to focus on reading, conversation, and writing skills. Advanced grammar is taught on a regular basis. Activities include group learning, role playing, discussions in French, and reading a short novel and short stories. Course material also includes the study of French history and literature.

Prerequisites: French II

French Immersion: is designed for students who have attended a French Immersion school. Students will work on the four components of learning a language: listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, as well as communicating effectively through speaking and writing, the students will build on their grammatical skills. Students will study diverse units and themes. Speaking in French will be an important component of these courses.

Prerequisites: French Immersion education at a French Immersion school.

Math Support Programming Information

Grades: 6-8

Grades 6-8 will offer a “double block” math class that incorporates supplemental resources into the math curriculum. This course will move at a bit slower pace and uses tools to assist students in their learning of math concepts and procedures. Some of the tools include math manipulatives, multiple learning strategies, and an online learning platform, IXL. IXL is designed to meet the students at their current ability level and to challenge them to work hard, offer encouragement, and to give immediate feedback to students and teachers. This platform will be used in the classroom and as a support for students to practice their math skills outside of the classroom.

The purpose of the double block math class is to build essential math skills for college and career readiness; bring students’ math proficiency up to grade level; develop mathematical practices and habits of mind; apply math to solve real-world problems; and to show students they can attain academic success in math.

TCA’s data team reviews all student data, including: national and statewide assessments, course grades and credits, attendance, behavior, and overall school-wide performance. This data team works closely with the teachers to identify students who are in need of more support; after careful consideration, students may be selected to participate in the program to support their instructional needs.

LITERACY COURSES

Grades: 6-8

Literacy courses are designed to help students build their literacy skills outside of their traditional English classes. These courses will cover a variety of topics involving reading and writing. Students must take one literacy course per year.

The purpose of literacy courses is to deliver literacy instruction, provide valuable skills practice, and motivate students to develop confidence and fluency in reading and writing. These courses will:

- Build essential literacy skills for college and career readiness.
- Develop literacy practices and habits of mind.
- Apply literacy to real-world problems.
- Show students that they can attain academic success in English and writing.

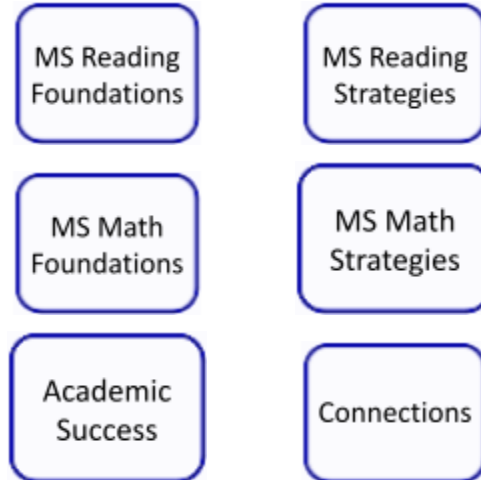
Available literacy courses are:

- Media Studies
- Exploring Personal Identities Through Nonfiction
- Graphic Novels: A Visual Exploration of History
- Science Fiction
- Global Mythology and Folklore

See course descriptions for more information.

Special Education Courses and Information

Middle School Special Education Courses



Course Area Descriptions

Foundations: Foundations is designed to create a solid foundation of basic skills in Reading or Math for students who are significantly behind grade level. Students receive individualized instruction based on learning needs outlined in their Individualized Education Plan. Foundations is a Pass/Fail course. Students receive credits toward English or Math when passing the course.

Strategies: Strategies is designed to develop, strengthen, and improve strategies used in the academic areas of Reading and Math. The course is designed for students who are slightly behind in grade level instruction and need support to be successful in current grade level Math and English. The class helps build on skills and provide strategies to strengthen knowledge in either Reading or Math. Strategies courses are graded courses and students receive credits if they pass this course.

Connections: Connections courses are for students with IEP goals in the areas of organization, behavior, and social/emotional skills. The classes focus on the ability to articulate and respond to emotions, set and meet goals, and form relationships with adults and peers in the school. Connections classes are graded classes, and students who pass receive elective credit.

Academic Success: Academic Success is designed to develop, strengthen, and improve skills for positive academic performance and achievement based on the learning needs of the student outlined in their Individualized Education Plan. Academic Success is a Pass/Fail course and students receive elective credits if they pass the course.

TCAMS Elective Course Options

BEGINNING BAND

Grades: 6-12 **Semester:** Full Year Commitment

If students have never played an instrument, or are looking to learn a new instrument, this band is for them! All HS and MS students are welcome to join. Students learn the fundamentals of music making and music reading through performance of diverse repertoire, composition, and improvisation. Small group pull out lessons occur about 2 times per month for all Beginning Band members. There are 3 required concerts throughout the year. Band is a yearlong class and students must commit to it for the entire year. Come experience the magic of music making!

SYMPHONIC BAND

Grades: 6-12 **Semester:** Full Year Commitment

This ensemble is for more advanced HS or MS players, or students with 2+ years of experience on their instrument. We begin to refine our individual skills and deepen our understanding of ensemble performance through challenging and diverse repertoire. Students continue to explore the fundamentals of music theory, improvisation, and composition. Small group pull out lessons will be required of middle school students only. There are 3 required concerts throughout the year. Symphonic Band Members also have the opportunity to participate in the TCA Pep Band at basketball and volleyball games throughout the season. Band is a yearlong class and students must commit to it for the entire year. Come flex your musical muscles!

CONCERT BAND

Grades: 6-12 **Semester:** Full Year Commitment

This is the top performing band at TCA, open to advanced HS or MS players with 2+ years of experience. Concert Band Members apply their skills to challenging and diverse repertoire. Students continue to explore the fundamentals of music theory, improvisation, and composition. Small group pull out lessons will be required of middle school students only. There are 3 required concerts throughout the year. Concert Band Members also have the opportunity to participate in the TCA Pep Band at basketball and volleyball games throughout the season. Band is a yearlong class and students must commit to it for the entire year. Come showcase your musical talent!

BEGINNER ORCHESTRA 1

Grades: 6-12 **Semester:** Full Year Commitment (semester one)

This level of Orchestra is for new musicians! If you are interested in learning a stringed instrument like Violin, Viola, Cello or Bass, this is the course for you. Advanced string players are also welcome to enroll in the class with the understanding that your role will be to support our beginners. Throughout this course, students will learn the basics of holding their instrument, using the bow, and fundamental rhythms and notes to be successful in the Intermediate level of Orchestra.

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA 2

Grades: 6-12 **Semester:** Full Year Commitment (semester two)

This level of Orchestra is for string players with 1+ years of experience! This will be a continuation of Orchestra 1, and will be offered in 2nd semester. We will continue our playing journey by taking on more challenging bowing styles, rhythms, and melodies!

ART 6

Grades: 6 **Semester:** Fall

Art 6 is designed to teach creative problem- solving, art appreciation, collaboration with peers, and art techniques using a variety of media. A combination of 2-D and 3-D art projects will be created. A sketchbook is required for this class. This is a semester-long class and is only offered in the fall semester.

ART 7

Grades: 7 **Semester:** Spring

Art 7 is designed to teach creative problem- solving, art appreciation, collaboration with peers, and art techniques using a variety of media. A combination of 2-D and 3-D art projects will be created. A sketchbook is required for this class. This is a semester-long class and is only offered in the spring semester.

ART 8

Grades: 8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

Art 8 is designed to teach creative problem- solving, art appreciation, collaboration with peers, and art techniques using a variety of media. A combination of 2-D and 3-D art projects will be created. A sketchbook is required for this class.

ACTING FOR THE STAGE

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall

This is an introductory course on acting theory and practice. Students learn how to use their bodies, voices, and imaginations to become a strong, multifaceted character. Students act individually, in pairs, and in groups.

THEATRE ARTS (MS PLAY)

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Spring

Students are cast in and act on stage in the MS annual spring play. Learn about production, design and bringing a character to life as you work as an ensemble to put up a show!

PE & HEALTH 6

Grades: 6 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

PE 6 is an introduction to PE classes at TCA. Students develop a daily routine for stretching and getting their bodies and minds ready to work and play. Due to space and safety constraints, we stick to classic indoor games, such as soccer, ultimate football, floor hockey, basketball, kickball, speedball and forms of dodgeball. One day per week students will be in a classroom learning about health. Students are expected to change into PE clothes every day they are in the gym.

PE & HEALTH 7/8

Grades: 7-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

Students continue to develop daily routines for stretching and getting their bodies and minds ready to work and play. Due to space and safety constraints, we stick to classic indoor games, such as soccer, ultimate football, floor hockey, basketball, kickball, speedball and forms of dodgeball. One day per week students will be in a classroom learning about health. Students are expected to change into PE clothes every day they are in the gym.

STEM FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGINEERING

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall

If students like to solve problems, be creative and build things, then they want to sign up for Fundamentals of Engineering! In this semester-long class, students are engineers and get the opportunity to design and build unique structures and solve interesting problems.

STEM BUILDING AND COMMUNICATION

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Spring

The building process takes careful thought, planning, measurements and more! Students will discover that everything built is designed with a purpose and some designs are advantageous over others for a wide variety of reasons. Students will also get an opportunity to learn and practice effective communication skills that are required throughout the building process.

STEM ENERGY

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Spring

Energy is a constant in our universe but is constantly being converted from one form to another. In this class students will experiment with the many forms energy can exist in and create their own devices that can harness the energy of the world around us. Projects include: energy debate, simple DC motors, headphones, wind turbines, solar ovens and more.

STEM WEB PROGRAMMING *NEW*

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

You'll learn how to create and share content on your own web pages. After deciding what content you want to share with the world, you'll learn how to structure and style your pages using HTML and CSS. You'll also practice valuable programming skills such as debugging, using resources, and teamwork.

STEM APP PROGRAMMING *NEW*

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

Starting from no coding experience, you will build up to programming animations, interactive art, and games in Game Lab. The unit starts off with simple shapes and builds up to more sophisticated sprite-based games, using the same programming concepts and the design process computer scientists use daily. In the final project, you'll develop a personalized, interactive program.

STEM MARINE BIOLOGY *NEW*

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

Learn about life in the ocean, human effects on the environment, evolution, biomes, and other life science concepts.

STEM HISTORY OF THE EARTH *NEW*

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

Humans have been around for a very small portion of Earth's History. What was Earth like before humans? What about before the Dinosaurs? How did we figure all of this out?

STEM FORENSICS

Grades: 8 **Semester:** Fall

In this course, students become a crime scene investigator and test your observation and inferencing skills. We focus on making evidence-based conclusions and explore what it takes to solve crimes. There are many small activities, several formal and informal papers and a final crime scene investigation.

STEM FORCES OF FLIGHT

Grades: 8 **Semester:** Spring

In STEM Forces of Flight students investigate how things fly both conceptually and mathematically. Major projects include paper airplanes, parachutes, catapults and water rockets.

INTRO TO TECHNOLOGY

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall

This course is designed to introduce students to basic tech skills. Students begin by gaining proficiency in keyboarding and word processing, learn about careers in the tech industry, create projects using google docs, sheets, forms, and slides, study internet ethics and safety, and learn some basic coding skills. Intro to Technology is project and presentation based and students often work in groups. If students want to take Technology and Design, they must complete this intro course first.

TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Spring **Prerequisites:** Intro to Tech

Students develop skills in typing, coding, following written direction and research. Students build on basic technology skills to design and develop projects. Technology skills will be developed and used in a variety of creative avenues. In order to register for this class students must have already completed Intro to Technology.

MS PSYCHOLOGY

Grades: 7-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

In this elective course be prepared to discover how the brain functions and why humans behave in different ways. We will cover a variety of topics such as different parts of the brain, human functioning such as sleeping, child development, feelings/emotions, motivational sciences, group behavior, and mental illness. In this course we will reflect on our own behavior, investigate case studies with examples of different behavior, and learn to better understand ourselves and those around us. Expect weekly journals reflecting about ourselves, short articles reading about the topic covered, and short projects to further advance our understanding of the topic. Topics in psychology will expand your knowledge on yourself and others, be prepared to think, and have an open mind.

CULTURAL STUDIES

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

In this class, we do a deep dive into what culture is and what contributes to a culture. At first, we focus on the broad overview and look at specific ancient cultures from the past. Then we look at some key concepts in American culture such as race, poverty, gender, and environment. As a class, we look at the history of each, focusing specifically on America, and how that has resulted in what culture we have today. The last part of this course is identity. Students put together all they have learned and try to navigate where they think their identity lies within American culture.

SCIENCE FICTION

Grades: 6-7 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

The genre of science fiction explores potential and exciting technological and scientific advancements through literature. Some science fiction has even predicted technology we have today. In this class students will engage in research, analysis, and debate about the possibilities, accuracy, and implications of these futuristic tales.

GRAPHIC NOVELS: A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF HISTORY

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall

This elective looks at important time periods in the U.S. through the lens of historical fiction. Graphic novels have become an engaging and popular genre of literature that combine written words with artwork. Graphic novels will be used in this class to analyze how major historical events are portrayed in fiction. Students will evaluate and interpret how these forms of storytelling enhance our understanding of history.

GLOBAL MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Spring

This course focuses on the many myths and legends woven into cultures around the world. Mythology and folklore have been used since the first people gathered around the fire as a way to make sense of humankind and our world. While following heroes on epic journeys to slay monsters, students will explore the social significance of myths and folklore, and see how they are still used to shape society today.

MEDIA STUDIES

Grades: 6-8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

This elective is designed to introduce and develop media literacy. Media literacy is the ability to question, understand, interpret, analyze, and evaluate the content, intent, strategies, and effects of the mass media. Being media literate means that you control the interpretation of the media instead of it controlling you. Students become aware of principles, myths, and techniques in advertising, social media, news sources, magazines, television, movies and video games.

EXPLORING PERSONAL IDENTITIES THROUGH NONFICTION

Grades: 8 **Semester:** Fall or Spring

This class explores the nonfiction writing people create in order to define who they are, express their perceptions, and record their presence in this world. We will be reading and writing in the genres of autobiography, memoir, diaries, letters, oral tradition, and social media. We will evaluate similarities and differences of these mediums and students will compose each of these specific structures. We will explore the many sides that comprise each person's individual identity. Through reading nonfiction personal narratives, we can end up empathizing with, realizing we have shared experiences, thoughts and feelings with, and feeling connected with, people from times and places we have never been.

AVID 6

Grades: 6 **Semester:** Required in the fall, option to continue in the spring

This is a required elective for 6th grade students during the first semester. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an academic elective course that prepares students for college readiness and success. Each week, students receive instruction utilizing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, tutor facilitated study groups, motivational activities and academic success skills. In AVID, students participate in activities that incorporate strategies focused on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading to support their academic growth. Students will need to fill out an AVID application to be considered to continue this course in the spring.

AVID 7

Grades: 7 **Semester:** Full Year Commitment

This is an optional elective for 7th grade students. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an academic elective course that prepares students for college readiness and success. Each week, students receive instruction utilizing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, tutor facilitated study groups, motivational activities and academic success skills. In AVID, students participate in activities that incorporate strategies focused on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading to support their academic growth. Students will need to fill out an AVID application to be considered for this course.

AVID 8

Grades: 8 **Semester:** Full Year Commitment

This is an optional elective for 8th grade students. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an academic elective course that prepares students for college readiness and success. Each week, students receive instruction utilizing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, tutor facilitated study groups, motivational activities and academic success skills. In AVID, students participate in activities that incorporate strategies focused on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading to support their academic growth. Students will need to fill out an AVID application to be considered for this course.