ELECTIVE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course	Description
Art (Semester)	Visual Arts is a great class to explore your creativity through learning the basics of design. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of artistic styles and the artists responsible for them. Students will research a variety of genres and create artworks which represent the differing styles. Students will have opportunities to showcase their work and give and receive critical, though respectful and helpful feedback, analyzing the elements of art used in peer works. A well-rounded understanding of the art world and of the theories and techniques involved in art is the goal. Taking Visual Arts will broaden your horizons!
Astronomy (Semester)	Introduction to Astronomy offers students the opportunity to study the solar system, stars, galaxies, and interstellar bodies. This course will introduce and use astronomical instruments and will explore theories regarding the origin and evolution of the universe, space, and time.
AVID (Year)	The AVID course is an elective class for students who are determined to go to college and willing to work hard. Students learn strategies to enhance success and critical thinking by note-taking, outlining, writing, speaking, reading, listening, and collaborating. In addition, the course includes college motivational activities to make their college dreams a reality.
Band (Year)	Band classes are open to students who have <u>one or more years of experience</u> playing a band instrument. Students who enroll in BAND go on to be members of their high school band(s), their college bands, their community bands, and in general, end up being lifelong supporters of the arts. These courses focus on the collaborative aspect of music making necessary for successful ensemble playing. Critical thinking is fostered through analysis, evaluation, and reflection on musical content and performance. There are opportunities for improvisation, composition, and individual expression, allowing students to develop their creative abilities as individual artists. Instruction is offered on: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone Horn, and Tuba, and Percussion.
Computer Applications (Semester)	Learn how to use a computer! In this class, you will create, collaborate, and solve problems using web-based and stand-alone applications. Be ready to explore 21st-century tools for success in school and beyond.
Computer Science (Semester)	Computer science is a hands-on class where students learn the basics of software engineering. Students will be introduced to coding and designing to develop web pages and apps. Careers and opportunities in computer applications will also be explored.
Creative Mindfulness (Semester)	**Creative Writing & Artistic Development** will encourage imaginable writers to write, refine, and share weekly writing assignments to include various poetry forms and music lyrics. Additionally, students will learn the lively art of storytelling, expressive journaling, and effective letter writing techniques. **Mind, Body, & Wellness** teach students how to release stress from your day, leading to a happier and more refreshed student. It will incorporate activities such as learning about the power of daily meditation, personal journal reflection assignments, and stretching. **Music Appreciation** will look at how musical artists have influenced the world we live in. Students will interpret and analyze various musical forms, include song lyrics, throughout various genres and decades (rock, pop, classical, theatrical, etc.).
Drama (Semester)	The drama class provides students with a variety of experiences in theater production, including creating sets, theater make-up, choreography, stage direction, blocking, acting and costumes. Students will participate in dramatic exercises including improvisation, tableau, and short plays . They will also learn theater and movie terminology and teamwork as they assist in the productions of middle school performances.

Infernal Contraptions (Year)	This elective is fashioned after the American cartoonist and inventor Rube Goldberg (1883-1970). Infernal Contraptions will make use of several types of simple machines and physical forces during their sequence of operation. Simple machines include lever, wheel, pulley, incline plane, screw and wedge. Physical forces include inertia, gravity, friction, stored energy, combustion, etc. Infernal Contraptions may consist of illustrations or complete build outs or a combination of both. Diagrams describe and label components of the machine in sequential order. This activity reinforces and integrates language use, problem solving, process skills, artistic elements collaboration, communication, creativity. Attention to detail and STEM applications. Culminating Events: Participation in Monterey County STEM expo and Rube Goldberg Machine Contest.
Journalism & Media (Semester)	Learn about journalism and the career of informing the public. This class will learn how to write informative articles, interview subjects and produce a news broadcast. Students in this class will produce a school newspaper as well as a school news show.
Leadership & Student Government (Year)	Our Leadership Class is designed to motivate students to take an active role in their school and community and to develop effective leadership skills. Students will work together on the planning and production of school activities that promote citizenship, scholarship, leadership and human relations. This class will be responsible for the planning and execution of the majority of the school's functions and activities.
MESA (Year)	This is a competitive engineering and design elective class. Students will compete with each other AND other students from the area. Each student will design, build, and test a mousetrap powered car, a popsicle stick bridge, and a balsa wood glider. The final project will be chosen by the student to complete and share with the school community. Other projects include: a prosthetic arm, video game design, robotic Lego tug-o-war, egg drop, and building a model. All students will travel to UC Santa Cruz in April to compete for medals. Take the challenge. Ask anyone: MESA rocks at NMCMS!
Photojournalism & Yearbook (Year)	Students will create graphic designs and written articles. Students will learn to visually and textually communicate stories important to NMCMS population, such as using photography as a means for storytelling and photojournalism while they document the school year. A student newspaper and yearbook will be projects completed in this class.
Robotics (Year)	Students will use Lego MINDSTORM kits and ALICE 2 to design, build, program, and test a robot to perform a specific task. Working in collaborative groups they will solve a problem using technology and physics. The end goal would culminate at the MESA Day competition held in April at UCSC, where we will compete against other middle school students from our area.
Speech & Debate (Semester)	Do you like to argue? Would you like to argue more effectively? Do you like to have your opinion heard? In this class, students will build confidence and leadership skills through the fine art of logical argumentation. An emphasis on research, critical thinking, organization, and teamwork will provide the foundation for students to debate or speak out on current issues that affect them. In addition, each semester, all students will be exposed to at least one professional documentary that we debate and discuss together.
Sports Passion (Semester)	The Sports Passion course is for students who are determined to achieve a healthy fitness level. The curriculum focuses on physical activities, games, sports and exercises along with proper nutrition which all contribute to a healthy lifestyle.
Web Design (Semester)	In this introductory course, students will create basic web pages using HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), and JavaScript. Throughout the course, students will plan and design effective web pages; implement web pages by writing HTML and CSS code; enhance web pages with the use of page layout techniques, text formatting, graphics, images, and multimedia; and producing a functional, multi-page website. The students will work collaboratively towards a final project as they design a middle school website for students to use as an online newspaper and portfolio space for writing and learning projects.