

SAMPLE - Quarter 3 Middle School X-Block Course Guide

1st X-Block

太鼓と文化 Japanese Taiko & Culture (.25 ART Credit) (8th grade and HS Only)	Do you enjoy Japanese culture and music? This class will explore Japanese Bunka (culture) through the performance of taiko drumming. Taiko drumming is a full-body synchronized drumming style developed to work out the body and mind while bringing performers together in harmony. We will learn traditional Japanese drum pieces, dances, and songs with Sensei Stover.
Guitar (combined with HS)	Learn guitar! All levels are welcome. Students will learn open chords and scales. Students will also play the guitar in a group setting and individually before a small audience. Instruction will be differentiated for multiple levels.
Yearbook (combined with HS)	Prerequisite: Yearbook during Quarter 2 Please sign up for Yearbook only if you have been on staff in Quarter 2. If you are interested in Yearbook for the next school year, please sign up for the 'Journalism 101' X-Block in Quarter 4. This will be a prerequisite to join the RSS Yearbook staff for the 2023-24 school year.
Psychology and the Good Life PART TWO (8th and up only) (combined with HS)	Prerequisite: Psychology and the Good Life Quarter 1 or Quarter 2. Join us for a continuation of this nationally acclaimed course! In this class, students will learn what the science of psychology says about how to make wiser choices to live a life that is happier and more fulfilling. We'll also discuss misconceptions about happiness, annoying features of the mind that lead us to think the way we do, and the research that can help us change.
Open Mic (combined with HS)	There is nothing more magical than puzzling together strands of words that speak truth. The world of slam poetry has the potential to liberate us from the confines of our cerebrums and the shackles of our situations. Putting pen to page in this class will set you free and perhaps entice you to grab the mic.
Monologues and Storytelling (MS Only)	Performance-based class that covers how to tell a good story, including performance skills such as projection, pronunciation, characterization, and

	good stage presence. If you want to be entertaining to an audience, gain more skills and get plenty of practice in this class.
Girls Climbing (MS Only)	Girls Rock!! Rock Climbing is officially an Olympic Sport! Learn why climbing is hailed as one of the fastest growing sports around (hint: it's super fun). This course will teach you the basics of bouldering including how to fall safely, and classic bouldering techniques to improve your skill level. Bouldering is widely acclaimed among professional climbers because it combines the most difficult moves in climbing, and puts them back to back - drastically improving your climbing skill level in a relatively short amount of time. This sport challenges the body, mind, and spirit - providing growth opportunities for students of all ages and abilities. Come see what all the hype is about! <i>This section is for only for girls, to encourage their participation in this lifelong sport.</i>
Ultimate Frisbee: Spirit of the Game (combined with HS)	Discover the reason Ultimate Frisbee is a way of life. "Spirit Of The Game" is unique to Ultimate and it governs the sport. Players will learn the mindset needed to play hard, push themselves, and be inclusive. We will learn basic throws, rules, and strategies. We will practice different offense and defense patterns. Participants should be able to run and cut (change direction). Most importantly, participants should join with an open mind and an attitude that supports being a "good sport". Cleats or turf shoes will be helpful but not necessary.
How To Think Like DaVinci (MS Only)	Genius is made, not born. ALL human beings are gifted with an almost unlimited potential for learning and creativity. In this course, you will uncover your own hidden abilities, sharpen your senses, and liberate your unique intelligence—by following the example of the greatest genius of all time, the maestro: Leonardo Da Vinci. Drawing on Da Vinci's notebooks, inventions, and legendary works of art, we will explore seven "Da Vincian Principles"—the essential elements of genius—to harness the power (and awesome wonder!) of your own genius!
Nutrition (MS and HS Combined)	We are each unique. How can one approach to nutrition fit our individual needs? In this X-Block, we will explore the science of nutrition and the art of nourishing ourselves. We will examine traditional science-based approaches, as well as alternative, trendy, and holistic approaches to our relationship with food to gain an individualized understanding of nutrition.
Hiking and Adventure (MS Only)	Do you enjoy being outdoors and going on voyages? Or, do you want to increase your skills and confidence in Adventure Education experiences? During this X-Block, students will participate in: hiking, navigation, team-building, and adventure education games. Students will hike outside and around the school, as well as engage in geocaching experiences.

2nd X-Block

Blast-off Into the Universe! (MS Only)	Explore the mysteries of the universe in the "Blast-off into the Universe" X-Block. We will take a science-based journey through our solar system and beyond. Astronomy physics, and exciting projects will help us understand how the universe works.
Girls Basketball (MS Only)	*First priority for this X-Block will be given to students who want to compete in the South Metro Conference League. There is a \$175 fee associated with League play for this X-Block, which covers the costs associated with league play, including registration fees, jersey/shirt, coaching, etc. <i>*If this fee presents a hardship, you'll be able to register and contact info@rensec.org for financial assistance information*</i> Students who want to participate in the Basketball X-Block but not in league play will be placed on a space available basis.
Concert Band (MS & HS)	Have you ever wanted to learn flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, or percussion (bells and snare drum)? RSS is beginning its first concert band. In this class students will learn the basics of their chosen instrument as well as how to play together as a large group. Students will learn a variety of music including pop, movie, and classical band literature. This is a semester long class and students should be prepared to take it for 2 quarters. IMPORTANT: Students will need to rent or purchase an instrument. CIOMIT will be at RSS on Tuesday, December 20 from 3:30-6pm for an instrument sampler and rental night. They will have instruments available to sample and also instruments that can be rented that night. Prices range from \$25 to \$60 per month. A limited number of financial aid awards are available for families who qualify. Email: info@rensec.org to make a request.
Climbing	Rock Climbing is officially an Olympic Sport! Learn why climbing is hailed as one of the fastest growing sports around (hint: it's super fun). This

(MS Only)	course will teach you the basics of bouldering including how to fall safely, and classic bouldering techniques to improve your skill level. Bouldering is widely acclaimed among professional climbers because it combines the most difficult moves in climbing, and puts them back to back - drastically improving your climbing skill level in a relatively short amount of time. This sport challenges the body, mind, and spirit - providing growth opportunities for students of all ages and abilities. Come see what all the hype is about!
Improv (MS Only)	Experience the power of play, and the fun of improvisational comedy! Play games and learn skills used in live theater in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment.
Introduction to Philosophy (Grades 7 - 9 Only)	Back by popular demand! New students only - <i>if you already took philosophy this year, you'll want to select something else!</i> In this course you will be introduced to topics within both ancient and modern philosophy. We'll begin by trying to understand what philosophy is – what are its characteristic aims and methods, and how does it differ from other subjects? Then we'll spend the rest of the course gaining an introductory overview of several different areas of philosophy. We will examine both classical and contemporary philosophical writings in order to dive into the topics of the nature of truth and knowledge, mind and body, freedom and free will, language, morality and ethics (right and wrong), art, and death and the meaning of life. Philosophers discussed will include Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Kant, Nietzsche, Descartes, and more! <i>Same material as Quarter 2, so it is not available to students who have previously taken it.</i>
Perspective Drawing (MS Only)	In the art world, perspective is about your point of view, only this time, it's more spatial. When you learn to draw perspective as a beginner, you learn it's importance. It's all about how you look at the world.
Stewardship and Student Aide (combined with HS) <i>Limited Availability, Teacher approval required</i>	This course offers an opportunity for a small crew of students to serve the Renaissance campus by maintaining the grounds, being responsible for stewardship in our spaces, and providing teachers with office support (copies, lamination, etc). Join this small crew!

Intro to Video Game Development (8th Grade ONLY - Combined with HS) <i>Limited availability: teacher approval required</i>	8th Grade Only ~Limited Availability: teacher approval required~ Do you enjoy video games? Have you ever wanted to learn how to create your own? If so, this is the X-Block for you! We will be learning the basics of coding as well as other software development processes that will give you a better understanding of what it could be like to do this sort of work as a profession. By the time you are done with this class, you will have the skills and knowledge to start creating your own web based 2D video games. As this class is only one quarter long, we will be packing as much information as we can into every class, so come prepared to learn a lot in a very short amount of time. Although you can use a Chromebook in this class, we will be installing software that may require you to add additional storage. If you have access to a PC or Mac, that would be preferred although it is not required. No prior coding experience is necessary, so come and join us and let's write some code together!
Theater Theory (Grades 6-9 Only)	If you want to perform and act, this is the X-Block for you! Learn and understand multiple theater theories. This class will cover the basics of major modern theater theories and how to incorporate them into performances and productions. There is nothing more magical than seeing your performances come to life, and that's what we will be focusing on during this class.

***Off-Campus X-Blocks**

With approval, students who are participating in a sport or activity at another school, which requires them to leave Renaissance before the end of the school day, may request a "non-Renaissance off-campus X-Block." Sports and activities are approved on a case-by-case basis. There must be an instructor or coach affiliated with the activity who can provide reliable grading and attendance information. Requests should be made using [this process](#).