

SAMPLE - Quarter 2 Middle School X-Block Course Guide

1st X-Block

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)	Calling all photographers, journalists, historians, publishers, editors, artists and any other creative individuals that want to help us capture the memories of the 2022-2023 School Year! Students will use various skills including photography, journalism, editing, organization, and collaboration. Yearbook requires students that truly are dedicated - that means that <u>you need to be willing to dedicate a minimum of TWO QUARTERS to this X-Block option</u>, in order to help us stay organized and to help us meet our big deadlines throughout the year.
Psychology and the Good Life (8th and up only) (combined with HS)	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.
Grey's Anatomy (MS Only)	This round of Gray's anatomy is open to newcomers and alumni alike! You will be given time to scheme many human body topics of your choice, reach out to experts, and do some basic dissections in order to better understand the bodies we live in.
Sketching (MS Only)	Want to bump up your sketching skills? Learn how to do shading, textures, realistic drawing, and more.
Climbing (MS Only)	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!

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.
Birds Aren't Real! Investigating Conspiracy Theories (MS Only)	Did the U.S. government cover up ALIENS landing in Roswell, New Mexico? Who are the ILLUMINATI? WAS THE MOON LANDING FAKED? In this X-Block, we will develop the habits of mind, research skills, and understandings of psychology necessary to investigate the myriad of conspiracy theories that have cropped up throughout history and into the modern era. The objectives of the course are to help you develop a healthy sense of skepticism as well as the research habits/skills necessary to find the truth of the matter when confronted with even the most plausible-sounding story!

2nd X-Block

Intro to Engineering (MS Only)	Love to build and tinker? Interested in crafting creative solutions to problems? Come explore problems and find creative ways to solve them.
Boys 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.
Choir (MS Only)	Choir is open to all students regardless of musical experience or ability. In this class, students will learn the basic skills of singing and reading music, developing listening skills, and experiencing the interrelated nature of music with other cultures and content areas. Students will study a variety of musical styles: including gospel, musical theater, pop, and classical. While learning rehearsal and performance techniques, students analyze compositional elements in cultural and historical contexts. The class will be taught as a performing ensemble with daily rehearsals and students will learn multiple part music as part of a team in preparation for a formal performance/concert.
Dance / Cheer (MS Only)	From Ballet (Technique) and Tap (Rhythms) onto Jazz (Musical Theater), this course will reassess our bodies, and refocus our minds into the dancers we ought and want to be. Dance is a Universal Language in

	riveting movements of emotions when spoken word and singing just is not enough. This class will be a refresher for those of us who dance at a studio. New to dance and/or have been wanting to learn about dance? This class is #readyforyou! The first half of class would be technique and combinations and then the second half of class could be starting choreography for cheer!
Introduction to Philosophy (Grades 7 - 9 Only)	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!
Printmaking (MS Only)	This is an introductory course offering students the opportunity to experience different printmaking techniques including but not limited to monoprinting, block printing and collagraph printing techniques.
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!
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***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](#).