



# **Pershing Middle School**

## **Electives Course Descriptions**

### **2024-2025 General Electives**

*Note: Electives may require additional supplies and/or fees. Band, orchestra, and guitar all require the purchase or rental of an instrument. Elective courses are subject to change.*

**Art (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** Students will have the opportunity to learn, recognize, and understand the elements and principles of art, improve their observational and creative skills, and experience a wide variety of art techniques from drawing, painting, and printmaking/sculpting.

**Band (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** For students interested in learning to play an instrument, including Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion. No experience necessary! Audition is recommended for experienced students.

**Choir (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** Students will learn sight reading skills and overall understanding of music theory. All Chorus members will take a sight-reading test at the end of each semester. Students will also participate in a variety of concerts and performances.

**Creative Writing (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** Students will explore writing by learning to create imaginatively constructed fiction and poetry. They will also read and critique fiction and poetry by published writers.

**Dance (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This class focuses on introductory/beginner level movement in each of various dance techniques. Basic dance vocabulary, performance skills, choreography, improvisation, dance history, and performance appreciation skills are introduced.

**French (7<sup>th</sup> grade)** This is the introductory course to the French language and culture. Primary emphasis is given to the development of basic skills in listening and speaking. Students are given reading, speaking, and writing practice. This course is required to take French 8 for high school credit.

**Guitar (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This course offers foundation instruction in classical guitar technique. Fundamentals include correct posture and playing position with attention to right-and left-hand technique. In addition, students will learn how to read standard music notation. No experience necessary for beginners. Students must have a nylon stringed guitar and accessories (footstool, electronic tuner, and music stand) at home. Instruments for use in the classroom are provided.

**Gymnastics (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This class is designed to build skills through progression. Activities include bars, tumbling, vault and balancebeam.

**Martial Arts (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This course is offered to any student interested in joining Kickstart Kids karate classes for the first time. In this course, students will begin their training in the martial arts. All students will be responsible for the annual equipment fee of \$50 which includes their uniform (financial assistance is available, so please do not let the fee cause you to not select this class). For more information about the class, please watch this short video: <https://youtu.be/SqQioG7YNxI>

**Odyssey of the Mind (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This course teaches students how to develop and use their natural creativity to become problem-solvers. Students are faced with a problem that requires an original solution and the use of skills that will be beneficial in future classes. Odyssey of the Mind emphasizes teamwork, budgeting, time management, public speaking, and so much more.

**Orchestra (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This course offers instruction on string instruments. Fundamentals include proper posture, playing position and training in music literacy.

**PALS (Leadership Team) (8<sup>th</sup> grade only)** Students in PALS can work as peer helpers at Pershing and at the elementary schools and are involved in creating and participating in service projects. To apply for the PALS class please contact Ms. Trinkle.

**Piano (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This is an entry level piano class made up of players with the equivalent of zero to one year of playing or music instruction experience.

**Spanish (7<sup>th</sup> grade)** This is an introductory course into the Spanish language and culture. Primary emphasis is given to development of basic skills in listening and speaking. Students are given reading, speaking, and writing practice. This course is required to take Spanish 8 for high school credit.

**STEAM Projects and Enrichment (6<sup>th</sup> grade only)** The goal of this class is to foster a learning environment in which students are challenged to produce original ideas, objects and structures using concepts and skills. This interdisciplinary (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) course is designed to engage and challenge students through hands-on collaborative Project Based Learning (PBL).

**Technology Applications/Graphic Design (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** This course is designed to teach students how to productively use software and the internet. Students learn fundamental concepts and key application skills for using Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, Publisher as well as related social and ethical issues. Students will also learn about proper Internet etiquette. Students learn to define digital art and design. They will learn to distinguish between digital art and design and other art forms while identifying the traits of digital arts. Students will also create examples of graphic art.

**Theatre (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** The student will learn theatre terminology and basic acting techniques of characterization and memorization. Other subjects covered are improvisation, play analysis and design. Students are required to perform monologues and duo scenes in front of the class. After completing a beginning class, the student is eligible to audition for an advanced class.

**Yearbook (7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** Students learn the basic principles of yearbook production and develop skills that include writing copy, captions, and headlines; digital photography; desktop publishing; and using appropriate technology tools for media production. To apply, students need to obtain a recommendation from their current ELA teacher and apply to the yearbook adviser via email.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ONLY High School Credit Courses

The list below are classes that will earn students a High School Credit. Some are open to any 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, and some have specific requirements or ways to qualify. Please read carefully and make sure the criteria are met to take the class you select. Traditionally these classes can carry a heavier workload than general middle school classes.

**Art 1A/1B (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)** Successful completion of two years of Art at Pershing are prerequisites for this class. Students will continue to develop and create art that demonstrates strong observational skills, reflection, problem solving using a variety of art media, expanding their understanding of the elements and principles of art, application of techniques and art processes, in depth understanding of art history, and analyzing and evaluating visual artworks. Artworks created in this class will produce a strong portfolio for future high school auditions.

**Broadcast Journalism (8<sup>th</sup> Grade – Spring Semester)** Discover the thrilling world of Broadcast Journalism in this dynamic, semester-long course designed for 8th-grade students. Learn to research, write, and present compelling news stories while operating cameras, microphones, and editing software. Engage in hands-on workshops, collaborate with peers, and hear from industry professionals. By the end of the course, you'll have a portfolio of work to showcase your skills, earn 0.5 high school credits, and be well-prepared for a future in media and journalism. Don't miss this chance to enter the spotlight and bring impactful stories to life! **This is a semester class paired with Speech. You may only select either Broadcast Journalism or Photojournalism, but not both.**

**French 1A/1B (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)** Successful completion of 7<sup>th</sup> grade French is a pre-requisite for this course. Students will learn grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure as it applies to the French language. Students will develop the four communicative skills in French: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.

**Photojournalism (8<sup>th</sup> Grade – Fall Semester)** Experience the captivating world of Photojournalism in this immersive, semester-long course tailored for 8th-grade students. Master the art of visual storytelling through a camera lens, learning composition, lighting, and editing techniques to create powerful images. Participate in practical workshops, collaborate with classmates, and receive guidance from industry experts. By the end of the course, you'll have a stunning portfolio showcasing your talents, earn 0.5 high school credits, and be well-equipped for a future in media and visual journalism. Seize this opportunity to capture the world around you and share stories that resonate! **This is a semester class paired with Speech. You may only select either Broadcast Journalism or Photojournalism, but not both.**

**Principles of Applied Engineering (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)** This course focuses on various forms of engineering and computer programming. Several of the projects that students will complete include balsawood bridges, mousetrap cars, water rockets, and online game creations. Students will also learn to write and debug computer code using JavaScript.

**Principles of Information Technology (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)** Learn computer literacy skills ranging from word processing to presentation software, and enhance reading, writing, computing, communication, and reasoning skills and apply them to the information technology environment.

**Spanish 1A/1B (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)** Successful completion of 7<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish is a pre-requisite for this course. Students will learn grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure as it applies to the Spanish language. Students will develop the four communicative skills: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.

**Speech (8<sup>th</sup> Grade - Semester Course)** Speech Communications will help students better interact with others. They will use different forms of communication, both verbal and nonverbal. Students will learn to speak effectively in front of an audience, or as part of a group, and listen effectively in both formal and informal situations. **This is a semester class paired with Journalism.**

# Advanced/Audition Based Electives

The list below includes areas in which advanced courses are offered. If you are interested, please contact the teacher directly for an audition. Experience is required and there may be an additional fee (uniform, supplies, etc.).

## **Advanced Art II (7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

Teacher: DeHoyos, Margo - [margo.dehoyos@houstonisd.org](mailto:margo.dehoyos@houstonisd.org)

Prerequisite: Art I and Audition/Teacher Approval

Students will build on the skills already learned from the previous year, including expanding their understanding of the Elements and Principles of Art, their draftsmanship, and study of art history. Students will have opportunities to create more advanced art projects based on their observation and imagination skills.

## **Advanced Gymnastics (7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Teacher: Henry, Leslie – [lhenry3@houstonisd.org](mailto:lhenry3@houstonisd.org)

Prerequisite: Prerequisite: Audition/Teacher Approval

Students are placed in this class based on their audition and average skill level on all apparatus. Advanced girls are required to have prior training on the balance beam, uneven bars, vault, and floor. Advanced boys are required to have prior training on the floor, vault, pommel horse, parallel bars, high bar, and still rings. Students in this class will participate in 2-3 campus performances each year.

## **Advanced Piano (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Teacher: Torres Chibras, Armando R - [ATORRE17@houstonisd.org](mailto:ATORRE17@houstonisd.org)

Prerequisite: Audition/Teacher Approval

This class is a performance class rather than a piano lab. Students in this class are advanced piano players, capable of playing works by Chopin, Debussy, and Beethoven. Students who are selected for this class perform at bi-annual recitals and are encouraged to participate in the annual UIL Solo Contest.

## **Chamber Orchestra**

Teacher: Sarre, Russell - [Russell.Sarre@houstonisd.org](mailto:Russell.Sarre@houstonisd.org)

Prerequisite: Audition/Teacher Approval

Chamber is our top orchestra and will perform at all UIL Concert and Sight-reading events. Students are expected to participate in Solo and Ensemble. Students will continue to grow as musicians as they perform more challenging music and develop their professionalism. There will be after-school rehearsals which all Chamber players are required to attend. Audition minimum requirements: 2 Major Scales and Arpeggios (2 octave) bowing as requested. Audition piece consistent with level 3 UIL Solo and Ensemble.

## **Dance Company (7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Teacher: Pollard, April L - [APOLLAR2@houstonisd.org](mailto:APOLLAR2@houstonisd.org)

Prerequisite: Audition/Teacher Approval

This class is for stage performers that represent Pershing at various venues, competitions, performances as well as school events. Dance Company consists of Dancers from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade who will audition in the Spring and will meet the following qualifications: 75 or above average for all classes with no failing grades, No Discipline Referrals, Leadership qualities, and Appropriate outside training. Advanced Dancers will be placed in the class based on their audition and/or daily class efforts, choreography, participation, technique, growth, and overall dance ability. Advanced dancers will participate in 2-3 campus performances throughout the year. It is recommended that Advanced Dancers attend any extra classes offered to them to help propel their dance ability.

### **Studio Guitar - ADV Guitar (7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Teacher: Sarre, Russell - [Russell.Sarre@houstonisd.org](mailto:Russell.Sarre@houstonisd.org)

Prerequisite: Guitar I and Audition/Teacher Approval

Students will audition with two octave scale and two audition pieces equivalent to UIL Solo and ensemble level 3 demonstrating correct Classical guitar technique.

Students in Studio guitar will learn advanced techniques of classical guitar including Full Bar, Extended Scale-patterns, Expressive techniques (Vibrato, Portamento, Glissando) Melody and Arpeggio technique, Ornamentation, Upper position playing (7th Position) Contrapuntal music, Harmonics, Introduction to tremolo.

### **Swim Gym (6th Grade)**

Teacher: Snook, Dave – [Dave.Snook@houstonisd.org](mailto:Dave.Snook@houstonisd.org)

Prerequisite: Try outs/Teacher Approval

Swim Gym takes the place of regular Physical Education class and teaches the four basic swim strokes, (Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Butterfly). Students will also learn flip turns and starts from the blocks. In addition to learning swimming techniques students play/learn Water Polo and Water Volleyball. Pershing is the only school in HISD that offers 6th grade swimming and one of two middle school with a touch pad timing system. We have a heated, indoor pool so students will swim all year.

