# BRANDON ACADEMY

# MIDDLE SCHOOL ELECTIVES 2016/2017

Greetings Parents and Students. This letter contains information for electives in the Middle School for the first semester. Please note that some elective choices will fill up. Therefore, it is important for students to indicate their second and third choices. Be sure to read over the course descriptions carefully before completing the Elective forms as some have changed.

Teachers will be presenting these electives to the students during the assembly on the first day of school.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL ELECTIVE DESCRIPTIONS**

***FIRST ELECTIVE PERIOD:***

*Spanish 1* – This FULL YEAR course is a prerequisite for Spanish 2 Honors. Students in the class will learn grammar and to converse in Spanish. The student will also learn about the wide variety of the Spanish culture. To help gain an understanding the students will host a Spanish Fiesta. This celebration allows them to understand Cinco de Mayo and the Spanish culture. This elective is for Grades 7-8.

*Yearbook –* In this FULL YEAR course, students will design BA’s yearbook.  Students will learn about the roles and responsibilities of a publisher including attractive campaigns, meeting deadlines, and working collaboratively.  Students will also gain knowledge in digital photography techniques, photo editing, and layout designs. The elective is for Grades 6-8

*Introduction to Engineering* - The purpose of the HALF-YEAR course is to expose students to learn how different engineering principles are applied to our living environment. Class activities are designed as individual or small group projects with an emphasis on hands on experience to spark interest in engineering education. This is a classroom where students engaged in authentic engineering practices and habits of minds that are vital to engineering profession. No previous knowledge assumed, however, students will continually sharpen their critical leaning skills and creative abilities learned in other courses to solve real world problems and present solutions. Learning through failure, no single “right” answer (one problem can have many solutions) and continuous improvement are three main pillars in engineering design and problem solving. This elective is for Grades 6-8.

*World Music* – In this HALF-YEAR course, students we’ll do just what the title says: explore the music from all over the world. From Africa to Latin America, Asia to Europe, we will examine at distinctive genres, both traditional and popular, from many different regions, discovering what makes them unique. We will listen to iconic artists; study the context the music is found in, and songs that stand out. We will also look at how music from different regions inspired and influenced other artists and styles across the globe and see if music is, as they say, truly a “universal language.” This elective is for Grades 6-8.

*TV Production* **-** For this HALF-YEAR course, students will learn all about the world of broadcasting and will become part of the Scorpion News Network team. Students will learn how to write a script, edit video, operate cameras, how to meet deadlines, and other challenges that are seen in a professional newsroom. Along with being a part of the SNN news team, students will also learn to create a documentary. NOTE: There are additional apps that are needed for the course. These will be downloaded in the first weeks of the class. This elective is for Grades 6-8.

*Leaders in Training* – Since the beginning of mankind, there was always someone who was the leader. In today’s society, we need leaders more than ever. Are **you** that leader? Whether you are a natural-born leader, or one yet to be realized, together we will examine leadership traits. Next we will compare these essential qualities that make a leader “good” or “bad”. We will also investigate how great leaders impact positive change. Once we understand what it means to be a leader, we will then assess your strengths as a leader, connect and interview leaders within our communities, and define your leadership style, mission, and values. This HALF-YEAR elective will give you the opportunities to demonstrate your leadership traits today and to make a positive impression of the world in your future endeavors. Your future! Hope to see you toss your hat into the “leadership circle.” This elective is for Grades 6-8.

*Show Chorus-*In this HALF-YEAR elective, the class will conduct, teach, train, and transform singers into a finely tuned, choreographed vocal ensemble. Genres to be performed in this choir will range from medleys of modern and "legit" Broadway musicals, to pop/rock, to pieces from the standard choral repertoire. This group performs in many capacities throughout the fall semester and will also include off-campus performances. There will be times during the semester when it may be necessary for the Show Chorus to rehearse outside of school hours. This elective is for Grades 6-8.

*Physical Education –* This is a HALF-YEAR course. Take one semester or two if you would like. Enjoy games, skills and fun in P.E. class. Note: you may only take P.E. once each semester. This elective is for Grades 6-8.

***SECOND ELECTIVE PERIOD:***

*Spanish 2 Honors* – This FULL YEAR course is the second year of Spanish. This course is open to 8th graders who have completed Spanish 1. Students taking this course will further enrich their understanding of Spanish language and the Latin Culture. This class will complete the credit for the first year Spanish class in High School. To help gain an understanding the students will host a Spanish Fiesta. This celebration allows them to understand Cinco de Mayo and taste the traditional Spanish food. This elective for Grade 8

*Robotics* – Ro·bot (noun) - a machine capable of carrying out a complex series of actions automatically, especially one programmable by a ~~computer~~ middle schooler. This is a FULL YEAR elective. Come join the rookie year of Scorpion Robotics! We will use LEGO EV3 robots and Mindstorm software to become robot engineers. To be successful in this class you must be creative, able to think outside the box, able to work with others, and be self-motivated. Students in this class will have the opportunity to compete in robotics competitions throughout the year. This elective is for Grades 6-8.

*Visual Art* – For this HALF-YEAR course, students will explore a variety of techniques and mediums, while studying artists from around the world and across time.  This course will combine both 2D arts (drawing, painting, printmaking) with 3D arts (weaving, ceramics, sculpture).  Students will have the opportunity to experiment in mediums of their choosing while creating artworks surrounding broad themes and topics.  The course will conclude with a formal art show representing student work. This elective is for Grades 6-7.

*Show Chorus-*In this HALF-YEAR elective, the class will conduct, teach, train, and transform singers into a finely tuned, choreographed vocal ensemble. Genres to be performed in this choir will range from medleys of modern and "legit" Broadway musicals, to pop/rock, to pieces from the standard choral repertoire. This group performs in many capacities throughout the fall semester and will also include off-campus performances. There will be times during the semester when it may be necessary for the Show Chorus to rehearse outside of school hours. This elective is for Grades 6-10.

*Lifetime Fitness* – In this HALF-YEAR elective, students will learn about ways to keep themselves healthy and active throughout their life. Students will also learn about creating a fitness plan and how to gage if what they are eating is matching their lifestyle and the importance of nutrition in today’s society. This will include a mix of traditional & non-traditional sports that support and active lifestyle. This elective is for Grades 8-10.

*Digital Design* - For this HALF-YEAR elective course, students will have an introduction into the world of digital design through working with computer illustration techniques, image manipulation, digital camera use and digital design literacy. Students will learn to produce logos, icons, advertising graphics, brochures, posters, presentation boards, photo enhancements and digital photography. This course will also focus on webpage design and provide an introduction to HTML coding. In addition, students will work with creating Apps for the iPad and utilize the Gimp program to create various creative designs. Students will create an ePorfolio of all their work throughout this course. NOTE: There are additional apps that are needed for this course. These will be downloaded in the first weeks of the class. This elective is for Grades 8-10.

*Drama* – In this HALF-YEAR course, we’ll be working with all aspects of performance, from projection and enunciation to staging and sets. We’ll work on getting into character, practice improvisation skills, and building performances from first reading to after-performance critique. We’ll examine different genres and the different ways we approach them, as well as non-performance aspects such as set-building and costuming. All of this will culminate in a performance at the end of the semester. This elective is for Grades 6-10.

*Animal Conservation Elective*

The goal of this elective is to explore the field of conservation with regard to both animals and the environment as a whole. We will explore various conservation efforts and identify some of the root causes of environmental degradation. We will then take time to brainstorm ways that we can help reverse the decline of biodiversity as both individuals and as a society. We will spend one day per week outside in nature identifying and observing native (and invasive) plant and animal species. We will also view episodes from Planet Earth/Blue planet as well as Disney Nature films. Students will complete two projects: 1) Students will research a particular endangered animal, habitat, or conservation organization and 2) Students will brainstorm an idea for a conservation effort at the individual, school, or community level and we will then attempt to implement at least one of the ideas the students come up with.

*Physical Education –* This is a HALF-YEAR course. Take one semester or two if you would like. Enjoy games, skills and fun in P.E. class. Note: you may only take P.E. once each semester. This elective is for Grades 6-8.

**VIRTUAL SCHOOL ELECTIVES FOR 2016-2017**

In addition to the electives by the faculty at Brandon Academy, the school offers electives through Florida Virtual School to middle school students. Six of these electives: *Critical Thinking & Study Skills*, *Social Media 1, French I, Latin I, Chinese I, and Psychology I*, will be offered to eighth grade students only. The other three choices: *Business Keyboarding, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Learning Strategies and Civics* may be taken by sixth, seventh or eighth graders.

A student may choose to take a Florida Virtual School elective during either the first or second elective period of the day. Also, for the half-year electives, a student may choose either 1st or 2nd semester. Please note that Civics, Reading 1, French I, Chinese 1 & Latin 1 are full year courses.

There are some things you should know before choosing a “virtual” elective. You will have access to a computer in the lab one period each day but you will also be responsible for your own computer, software and Internet service provider at home. Florida Virtual School will make class placement, teacher assignment and determine your grade and credit earned. Teachers work full time and are available to you 7 days a week, from 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. If you decide to “drop” a virtual class, you must do so before 28 days in order to avoid a failing grade.

Class assessments and participation requirements are the same for each course. Besides engaging students in challenging curriculum, FLVS guides students to reflect on their learning and to evaluate their progress through a variety of assessments. Assessments can be in the form of self-checks, practice lessons, multiple choice questions, writing assignments, projects, essays, oral assessments, and discussions. Instructors evaluate progress and provide interventions through the variety of assessments built into a course, as well as through contact with the student in other venues

Electives for Grades 6-8

* Business Keyboarding (Semester)
* Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Learning Strategies (Semester)
* Civics (Full Year)

Electives for Grade 8 only

* Chinese I (Full Year)
* French I (Full Year)
* Latin I (Full Year)
* Psychology I (Semester)
* Critical Thinking and Study Skills (Semester)
* Social Media 1 (Semester)