

Fine Arts

Fine Arts Curriculum Overview

Fine Arts at St. Francis take the form of studio art, photography, filmmaking, and music. The studio art course offers experience in the basics of achieving classical drawing skills in a range of media; experience in the collaborative creation of conceptual art; some work in 3-D art; and an introduction to art history. At easels and tables in an airy environment lit by skylights, students find their innate creative abilities. The classroom is informally structured to encourage students to work individually yet find encouragement and inspiration from classmates around them. The photography and filmmaking classes combine creativity and technique, with students learning to shoot and then editing their work into a finished piece. The music class focuses on theory, history, and performance. Students choose one of these courses in 10th grade and can continue taking fine arts courses on an elective basis thereafter.

Current work from the studio art course and the photography class is invariably on display in the hallways. Film pieces are shown to the school at Morning Meeting, and music students perform for the whole school several times throughout the year as well as at designated events.

Teachers in fine arts classes are designated as **artists-in-residence**. The goal of the artist-in-residence is to help students find that unique individual voice that presents itself in any given media and encourage its growth. All the artists-in-residence have active professional careers distinguished by years of dedication to their crafts and by reputations that extend beyond the city limits. Their career focus provides a window into the highly competitive world of art and music as professions.

Art and music students are asked to keep open minds and work thoughtfully. Their shared experiences with art- and music-making are discussed in critiques that emphasize each person's growth and unique vision. Perceptions are challenged in discussions that lead to a greater appreciation of the unlimited range of expressiveness.

Fine Arts Department Course Offerings

Studio Art (1 credit)

In this course, students will work and play with ideas almost as much as actual physical materials. Alongside learning advanced techniques in drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and installation, emphasis is placed on developing a sense of conceptual creativity and an advanced vocabulary for discussing art. Students will learn that in today's postmodern world, there are many ways of being a great artist and there are no definite rules for what art should look like--except that good and important work must be made with rigor, energy, meaning, and/or relevance to its context. Students that come to this class with an open mind and a commitment to improving their skills will leave with new knowledge about art processes, about themselves, and about what art can mean to society at large.

Advanced Studio Art (1 credit)

Prerequisite: Studio Art and permission of the instructor

This class aims to foster self-motivation, self-discipline, curiosity, and a strong spirit of independence in students wishing to expand their education in studio art. Students may explore in depth a particular area of interest throughout an entire school year, resulting in a final cohesive body of work. Time management is an essential skill to develop in this class in order to be successful, and an emphasis is placed on the importance of finding a balance between

experimentation and focus. Students are asked to do research outside of the classroom in the form of visits to local art collections to increase their awareness of relevant historical and contemporary contexts. Weekly group discussions among the Advanced Art students, along with twice-yearly formal group critiques, contribute to creating a dynamic and supportive community within which Advanced Art students may cultivate their work.

Introduction to Film/Video (1 credit)

This class emphasizes the art, tools, and commerce of film and video production. We begin with the written word. Each student brings a concept that is to be shaped into a workable film treatment and, finally, a shooting script. Once the script is honed and evaluated and with the participation of the class members, the production breakdown begins. By the end of the school year, students will have created a finished screenplay, a filmed scene from the original screenplay, and a completed short film. In addition, the class makes an ongoing documentary, with editing duties performed by each member of the class. Guest lecturers, professionals both local and national working within the television and film industries, help give our students perspective and practical career advice. Film criticism and film reviews are also read, discussed, and (often) debated.

**Students who have already taken this course may take an Advanced Film independent study course with the permission of the department.*

Introduction to Creative Photography (1 credit)

This class will provide basic background in and working knowledge of the art and craft of photography. Students will shoot, edit and critique their own images, spending time getting to know the tools of the craft while also exploring the artistic possibilities it affords. We will begin the year by starting to shoot pictures very early on (a process that will continue throughout the year), and class lectures and discussions will cover a variety of topics, from history of the medium, the technical details of how a camera operates and understanding exposure, to issues of image management and understanding digital files. We will visit galleries and studios to view photographs and meet with artists working in photography, and we will work to expand our understanding of the medium of photography through practice, observation, and study. Students will be required to have access to a digital camera with full manual control over exposure (meaning manually set ISO, aperture, and shutter speeds); cell phones, even those with the best cameras will not be acceptable for this class. However, this does not have to be an expensive or "professional" camera; any digital camera with manual control will be fine - the instructor is happy to help with any questions about equipment. Students will be strongly encouraged to have their cameras with them more or less at all times. We will work with digital and film equipment and images over the year, and we will use Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop software to edit and manage our digital files and output.

**Students who have already taken this course may take an Advanced Photography independent study course with the permission of the instructor.*

Music Performance (1 credit)

This course will build on the fundamentals of musicianship and creativity through performance. Unit topics and repertoire will include a wide variety of styles and musical eras ranging from, but not limited to, Baroque, Folk, Mountain, Jazz, Rock, Pop, and Hip Hop. Other styles and genres will be explored as well, but this will be based on the abilities and desire of the ensemble. Students in Music Performance are expected to perform at school functions where music is a desired element. One evening concert will be scheduled in the winter. The Spring concert will be part of the student art show. In addition to the above performances, students will also learn basic music theory, and will write and arrange music for the ensemble. Grades will be awarded based on attitude, participation, musical growth, weekly written assignments, and attendance at

performances. Requirements include arranging a piece of music to be read by the ensemble; regular practice at home; and auditioning for All State/All-District Band, Orchestra, Choir, Jazz Band, or other pre-approved outside ensemble. Students in this course will be fully graded.

**Students who have already taken this course may take an Advanced Music course with the permission of the instructor.*

Jazz Ensemble (*During Projects, 1/4 credit*)

Jazz Ensemble is open to interested vocal and instrumental students and will be held yearlong during the Projects period. The course will be centered on jazz history and appreciation, as well as learning and performing jazz repertoire. The jazz history/appreciation portion will be focused on jazz standards, famous albums, and artists. Students will learn style as well as try to transcribe recorded solos. The performance portion will be focused on jazz combo repertoire and ensemble performance. Please note, participation in outside concerts/performances and occasional rehearsals are required for credit in this course. These performances include, but are not limited to, the University of Louisville Jazz Festival, KMEA State Jazz Assessment, area colleges' jazz clinics, SFS winter and spring performances, and school open houses. In addition, all students will be highly encouraged to audition for the KMEA All-State Jazz ensembles in December. A strong knowledge of scales and chord structures will be helpful for all students, but is not a requirement for entering the ensemble.