**Curriculum**

**Middle School Journalism**

**Course Overview**

This course is designed as an introduction to the field of journalism and to the process of creating a school newspaper. Students in the class create the TASIS Middle School newspaper, The MID. While doing so, they obtain experience in scouting for stories, researching stories, creating interview questions, interviewing people, writing stories, editing stories, taking photographs, enhancing photographs, laying out the newspaper, and distributing the paper to their peers, faculty, and administration. The course uses a variety of instructional methodology, including hands-on learning, multi-media presentations, class discussions, small group work, and one-on-one conferencing. Because skill levels and interests of students in the middle school classroom typically vary widely, both the curriculum and the instructional methodology allow for differentiation based on individual interests, needs, and skills levels.

**Department Standards**

Students will:  
develop critical thinking skills that will encourage them to make connections between literature and both their own lives and other academic disciplines;  
develop an appreciation for literature through the comprehension and analysis of various genres;  
communicate their understanding and ideas effectively in a variety of written forms;  
articulate organized ideas through a variety of oral activities;  
expand and strengthen their vocabularies to enhance their ability to understand and communicate;  
and learn and apply the standard conventions of the English language in both speaking and writing.

**Benchmarks**:

Middle School Journalism is a two-quarter course. The major benchmarks for each quarter include the publication of the TASIS Middle School newspaper and the publication of the students' personal newspapers.

**Performance Indicators**

Introduction to the field of journalism: Students will understand the role of a middle school newspaper and the different types of articles and other content in a newspaper.

Research skills: Students will find information for their articles and learn how to distinguish good sources from unsatisfactory sources, and students will apply this knowledge when doing research for their own articles.

Interview skills: Students will prepare different types of interview questions, conduct effective interviews with news sources, and use interview answers in newspaper articles.

Writing skills: Students will learn and practice effective writing skills and apply these skills to their articles.

Production skills: Students will produce issues of the TASIS Middle School newspaper, The MID.

Newspaper layout and design skills: Student will layout and design a personal newspaper.

**Assessments**

Students are assessed on completion of the following: successful scouting for stories, drafting of at least two sets of interview questions, writing of at least four articles for The MID, taking of photographs for The MID, attendance, and punctuality. Additionally, students receive an effort mark based upon their engagement in the class. At the end of the semester, students are assessed on completion of the following: a personal newspaper consisting of all the student's contributions to The MID during the semester.

**Core Topics**

Core topics including learning about types of newspaper articles, preparing for interviews, conducting effective interviews, writing newspaper articles, editing newspaper articles, taking photographs, and producing The MID.

**Specific Content**

Specific content includes an examination of the different types of articles and other content in newspapers, and building of the following skills:

Research skills: Methods of scouting for news in our school community, methods of communicating with news sources, and methods of researching information to include in articles.

Interview skills: Conducting an effective interview; preparation before the interview; interaction with the interview subject; follow-up; and using interview data to write the article.

Writing skills: Writing effectively for a newspaper, including using active voice, vivid and descriptive language, presenting a balanced perspective, proper introduction and citation of sources, conciseness.

Production skills: The start-to-finish process of creating a middle school newspaper: brainstorming article ideas; choosing the most relevant, interesting, and timely articles to write; researching, writing, and editing those articles; designing and laying out the newspaper; and distributing the newspaper to the TASIS Middle School community.

**Resources**

The course textbook, Introduction to Journalism, as well as sources of journalism-related information available on the Internet, including instructional videos teaching the use of Adobe's InDesign software.