

# J TERM 2025



ST. MARY'S SPRINGS

Academy



## MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Springs Academy, rooted in Christ's teaching, academic excellence, and service to Church and community, prepares students to meet global challenges and become leaders for tomorrow.

## CORE VALUES



Faith



Learning



Respect



Responsibility



Leadership



Community

*the  
Ledger  
way*

Core values to learn, live  
and grow by.

## VISION OF J-TERM

J-Term at St. Mary's Springs Academy shall spark student interest in learning through a variety of non-traditional courses. Enhancing SMSA's regular curriculum through innovative styles of teaching and enrichment, J-Term courses will provide opportunities for project-based learning, interdisciplinary explorations, community connections, and service-learning, along with time to focus on social-emotional development and college and career planning. J-Term will highlight our school's distinctive vision of student growth that is aligned with discernment of personal interests and gifts.

*Dear SMSA Parents, Guardians and Students:*

Last year, the inaugural January Term 2024 made history on the Ledge! This unique program of experiential learning positively differentiates St. Mary's Springs Academy in the region. We remain the only high school in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Flyway Conference to offer a J-Term program and model!

Our dedicated and creative team of high school educators are very excited to continue this unique and engaging learning experience at SMSA. Planning has been interesting and inspirational, firmly focused on providing unique, hands-on, value added and mission-driven learning experiences for our Ledgers.

As we continue to strive for improvement and ways to advance learning at SMSA, we are confident that J-Term '25 will fulfill its vision of innovative experiential learning opportunities. Within this booklet, you will find J-Term FAQ's and academic policies as well as this year's course offerings.

SMSA is grateful to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for providing a G.I.F.T.S Grant and donations received through this year's Catholic Schools Walk to help launch and support the development of J-Term! We are grateful to Moraine Park Technical College for their partnership, creative collaboration, and enthusiastic embrace of this project. A hearty thank you to the Springs parent and student community for their positive support for this new model. Finally, many, many, many thanks to the exceptionally generous and talented faculty and staff of SMSA who eagerly plan the curriculum and engage so well with our Ledgers during J-Term!

Our Lady of the Ledge, pray for us.



**Eamonn O'Keeffe,**  
High School Principal



**Melissa Trepte**  
Director of Curriculum & Instruction





The following seven (7) course options will convene on the campus of Moraine Park Technical College and are taught by MPTC instructors. Students receive academic credit from both MPTC and SMS for successful completion of these courses. To enroll in any of the MPTC options listed here, students must be 16 years of age by January 2025. Please note the course schedule in each description. \*MPTC based courses will follow an independent calendar and daily schedule that is outlined in the following descriptions. Students are responsible for their own daily transportation to and from the MPTC campus. Finally, Dr. Biessman will serve as site supervisor and SMSA teacher of record for Skyward daily attendance and grade entry. He will be on-site at MPTC each day as a resource for Ledgers attending these courses.

### **Auto Service Fundamentals (602-107)**

**DATES:** January 6-13, 2025, from 8:00am-12:50pm and 1:20-3:20pm each weekday. Jan. 14 classes are online asynchronous. • Jan. 15-17 between the hours of 8:00am and 12:50 pm ONLY. Successful completion of Algebra required. Must be 16 years by January 2025.

Maximum enrollment of 18 students. This course prepares students to perform light maintenance repairs such as oil changes and tires. The course orients students to the college program, repair order writing, professionalism, service information systems, tools and equipment. CDX Licenses are provided. Automotive PPE (safety glasses, steel-toed shoes) are required for all students.

### **Coding/Programming: Introduction to Programming (152-108)**

**DATES:** January 6-13, 2025, from 8:00am-12:50pm and 1:20-3:20pm each weekday. January 14 classes are online asynchronous. • Jan. 15-17 classes meet from 8:00am to 12:50pm ONLY. Must be 16 years of age by January 2025.



Students will explore basic concepts of programming, including data types, variables, expressions, arrays, collections, strings, conditional statements, streams, functions, recursions, classes and objects. Students will learn to employ these fundamental building blocks of programming to create projects. MPTC classroom laptops and library laptops will be used (Chromebooks will not be acceptable). Students will need an 8GB or larger USB flash drive.

### **Culinary Principles (316-102)**



**DATES:** January 6-14, 2025, from 8:00am-12:50pm and 1:20-3:20pm each weekday. • Jan. 15-17 classes meet from 8:00am to 12:50pm ONLY. Must be 16 years by January 2025.

Students will be introduced to basic culinary standards including basic food preparation, sanitary practices, product identification and recipe calculations. Students will be able to perform a cooking demonstration, explain cooking methods, and examine culinary history and professionalism. Food sourcing and sustainability will also be examined. School will supply black long sleeve chef coat and white chef apron. Non flammable long pants, bakers cap or durag, will be supplied by students. Chef knife set is provided and will be shared.

## Design Fundamentals (201-112)



**DATES:** January 6-13, 2025, from 8:00am-12:50pm and 1:20-3:20pm each weekday. January 14 classes are online asynchronous. • Jan. 15-17 classes meet from 8:00am to 12:50pm ONLY. Must be 16 years of age by January 2025.

Students will be introduced to the basic formal elements and principles of two-dimensional design. Through hands-on exercises and practical projects, students will explore visual and creative thinking strategies and develop effective visual communication skills. Students will learn to integrate the graphic design process. Students should have basic computer skills and internet access once off campus as a requirement for this course. Students will need an 8GB or larger USB flash drive.

## Foundation of Early Childhood Education (307-148)



**DATES:** January 6-13, 2025, from 8:00am-12:50pm and 1:20-3:20pm each weekday. January 14 classes are online asynchronous. • Jan. 15-17 classes meet from 8:00am to 12:50pm ONLY. On Thursday, January 9, students will be engaged in field experience off campus and must be able to fulfill this obligation to pass the course. Must be 16 years of age by January 2025.

Students will receive an introduction to early childhood education through an historical overview of this career field. The course shall help students explore program trends, quality indicators, and developmentally appropriate practices for children ages birth to 8 years of age. Students will need their Chromebooks and the early childhood education textbook (will be supplied).

## Gas Metal Arc Welding (442-357)

**DATES:** January 6-13, 2025, from 8:00am-12:50pm and 1:20-3:20pm each weekday. January 14 classes are online asynchronous. • Jan. 15-17 classes meet from 8:00am to 12:50pm ONLY. Must be 16 years of age by January 2025.

This course introduces students to the necessary safety and set up of welding equipment and welding equipment maintenance. The course includes an introduction to welding terminology, demonstrates safe shop work practices, teaches the set up and shut down of GMAW equipment and the welding mild steel in the flat, horizontal, and vertical down positions. Students will use Welpers, welding PPE (safety glasses, leather or steel toed boots), and a TI 30XII Scientific calculator.

## Nail Care (502-309)



To be offered on the MPTC campus January 6-17, 2025, from 8:00am-12:50pm ONLY each weekday.

Students will apply techniques for giving basic manicures, pedicures and polish application. Hands-on activities will help students gain skill at manipulations and accuracy of techniques for professional, manicured results. Nail structures and nail disorder and disease are also examined. It is a requirement of the course for students to practice their skills on each other. Students will need a Manicure Kit and Milady Standard Cosmetology textbook (will be supplied).



# J TERM 2025

## COURSE OFFERINGS

The following Ten (10) course options, including the PREMIER OPTION (on Page 7) shall convene on the campus of SMSA and shall be taught by SMSA instructors:



### **Break a Leg: Performing and Presenting Without the Pressure of Perfection**

**Instructors:** Mrs. Besson & Mrs. Herbst

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

This is a course intended to provide students with a relaxed environment to explore the theatrical arts and become more comfortable with presenting and performing dramatic and creative pieces. Students will learn how to create, execute, and critique various types of speech and stage arts, both individually and collaboratively. Not only will students perform existing works, but they will also create and compile their own unique pieces. Students will have the opportunity to view and reflect upon both amateur and professional performances. Some off-campus excursion opportunities may further enlighten the art of performance and potential career applications.

### **Cooking with Confidence**

**Instructors:** Mrs. C. Anderson & Mrs. Arndt

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

Students will develop basic culinary skills, while learning concepts such as menu planning, food prep, and food/kitchen safety. Students will learn to cook confidently with and for others, gain a better understanding of cooking methods, kitchen tools and ingredients used. Opportunities to visit a demonstration kitchen and/or excursions relevant to course topics may further stimulate the imagination and skill set of Ledger cooks.

### **Crime Scene Chronicles: The Science Behind the Scene**



**Instructors:** Ms. Sweeney & Ms. Tesky

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

Explore the fascinating intersection of science and law through this course in Forensic Science. From fingerprint analysis to DNA profiling, delve into the methods used to solve crimes. Learn about ballistics, toxicology, and crime scene investigation techniques. Discover how forensic scientists piece together evidence to uncover the truth behind mysteries. Engage in hands-on experiments and simulations to understand real-world applications. Develop critical thinking skills as you analyze evidence and draw conclusions. Gain insights into the criminal justice system and the role of forensic science in it. This course combines biology, chemistry, and physics with investigative skills, preparing you for potential careers in law enforcement or forensic science.

## Food Science A-Z



**Instructors:** Mr. Allen & Mr. Zimmer

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

Students will experience the whole spectrum of food production, preparation, chemistry, and more as we work through the food that we enjoy every day. This course will feature two field trips, labs, lecture, experimental design and of course, preparing and eating a variety of foods.

## Intro to Taekwon-Do



**Instructor:** Mr. Mattias

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

Students will be introduced to the basic techniques, philosophy, and culture of Taekwon-Do. Taekwon-Do is a Korean martial art, which incorporates kicking, blocking, punching, and striking techniques. It also incorporates physical, mental, and spiritual elements of training, including the tenets of Taekwon-Do: Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self Control, and Indomitable Spirit. Students will also be introduced to basics of Korean language and culture as learned within a typical Taekwon-Do class, including proper protocol and etiquette for respect during training, counting in Korean, etc. Finally, your instructor, Señor Mattias, AKA Master Mattias, a 7th Degree Black Belt, will demonstrate some of his skills developed over 30 years of Taekwon-Do training experience.

## Life Skills

**Instructors:** Mrs. Brusky & Ms. Pannier

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

So what is a life skill? A skill that is necessary for full participation in everyday life. Can you earn all of your merit badges for life skills? Come find out. Students will learn how to fix what is broken instead of replacing it, a homeowner essential skill. In addition, students will dive into basic first aid, social etiquette, and how to follow a basic recipe, just to name a few. Life is full of challenges, whether it's starting college, moving to a new community, or planning a budget, we are here to help.

## Picture This: Creative Photography



**Instructor:** Ms. Haugen

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

Get exposure to the art of photography. Experiment with environmental lighting and camera settings. Actively photograph stills, action, and landscapes. Capture human expression while shooting portraits and candids. Research the talents of famous photographers. Compile images of foods for a cookbook. Discover your creativity through the camera lens.

## Take Me Out to the Ballgame

**Instructors:** Mr. Kieser & Mr. Krueger

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

Renowned baseball philosopher Yogi Berra once said, "It's fun." The same could be said of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," our J-Term course, which explores the rich history of baseball, the greatest game ever invented. Over 13 days, we'll look at legendary players and unforgettable moments, as we explore the cultural impact that has made baseball a part of our national identity. Who's on first? What's the infield fly rule? Why is there no joy in Mudville? You'll learn the answers to these questions and countless others through historical deep-dives and lively discussions if you step up to the plate and join us for "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

## Winter Sports Odyssey

**Instructors:** Mr. Kaiser & Mr. Knepfel

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025.**

The goal of this course is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and appreciation for a variety of winter sports and activities. These activities may include: skating, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, winter survival, dog sledding, and several Olympic sports. There is infinitely more to winter than cozy sweaters and fireplaces - join us as we explore ways to stay active and involved with Mother Nature during the traditionally "restful" seasons in Wisconsin. Off campus and outdoor excursions will be an important aspect of this course.

## PREMIER OPTION COURSE

To enroll in this J-Term course option, students will be charged an additional \$600. To receive full academic credit, students must participate in each designated overnight experience, in Milwaukee on January 14, returning late on January 15 and also Washington, D.C. on January 23 and returning late on January 24, 2025. The class will be expected to travel together by bus and airplane during this Premier Option course. For seniors enrolled, service accomplished through this course will fulfill the Beatitude Project 8-hour J-Term obligation.

## Have Mercy, Will Travel: Urban Immersion



**Instructors:** Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Braun, Mr. Gagnon

**Meets daily on school days from 8:05am - 12:45pm from January 6-24, 2025 with some days extending the entire school day.**

Students will learn the Corporal and Spiritual works of Mercy by actively performing them. The course will offer both classroom learning and hands-on service experiences at various local non-profit community service organizations. This year's service will include an immersion experience in Milwaukee with an overnight stay with a Catholic partnership. The end of the course will culminate in an overnight stay in Washington, D.C., where students will also collaborate with others to serve the urban poor as well as participate in the March for Life rally. Local service locations shall include Loaves and Fishes, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Father Carr's Place, Holy Family Church, Feeding America, and more. Fr. Durand will participate as a chaperone on the overnight excursions.



## YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP OPTION

**MSA Liaisons:** Mrs. Cauley & Mrs. McCarthy

Students currently enrolled in the CESA 6 Youth Apprenticeship Program (YA) have the option to use J-Term to enhance their work experiences at their existing YA work placements. A separate application form will need to be completed to apply for this option. If interested, YA students should inform their CESA 6 YA Coordinator (Julie Nass) that they are choosing this option. It allows us to work with YA employers to suggest activities that can expand the YA employment experience. If employers agree to supporting this option, students will then be required to log and certify a total of 60 hours of work at their YA placement site during the 15 days of J-Term. A summative reflection on their experience during this 15 day period will also be required. If all criteria is met successfully, students who choose this option will receive 0.5 academic credits.





### *What Parents and Students Should Know About J-Term '25*

#### **Q: When does J-Term occur?**

**A:** The first day of our J-Term is Monday, January 6, 2025. Students who are enrolled in J-Term courses on the campus of SMSA shall meet for classes every weekday through January 24th. Students who are using Youth Apprenticeship placements as their J-Term option conclude on January 24th. Ledgers who enroll in J-Term courses through MPTC will conclude their full-day classes on January 17 (see the individual MPTC course descriptions for further details). For all Ledgers, Semester II courses at SMSA begin on Monday, January 27, 2025.

#### **Q: Is J-Term required for all Ledgers?**

**A:** Yes. All high school Ledgers are required to earn 0.5 credits through J-Term courses each year they are enrolled at SMSA. J-Term is included in the total of 177 school days reported to Wisconsin DPI and the minimum required 1,137 instructional hours for SMSA to comply with State standards and Archdiocesan policy. From the SMSA Curriculum Guide: "As a graduation requirement, all Ledgers shall earn 0.5 credit annually during J-Term. All SMSA academic, attendance and co-curricular policies apply during J-Term. The Ledger Way Core Values are SMSA cultural guide posts during all academic terms."

#### **Q: Will J-Term courses cost extra?**

**A:** This year, we are offering one course as a "Premier Option" that will have an added cost for students who enroll. The course is "Have Mercy Will Travel: Urban Immersion." With that singular exception, all J-Term courses are included in the cost of SMSA annual tuition. We are fortunate to have some J-Term costs underwritten through the generosity of donor sponsorship.

#### **Q: What if a family has made plans out of town during J-Term?**

**A:** Academic administration has approved an SMSA Credit Recovery Plan for any student who may be unable to participate in J-Term. The 0.5 credit lost must be "credit recovered" immediately upon return to school in Quarter 3. Further details about the SMSA Credit Recovery Plan will be shared with families on an as-needed basis.

#### **Q: What if a student is absent during J-Term?**

**A:** The compulsory attendance policies of the State of Wisconsin, SMSA and the Archdiocese apply to J-Term. Parents/guardians are required to notify school attendance officials whenever a student will miss any part of a school day. Since J-Term is a compressed learning term (with a single J-Term class period equal to three classes of a typical semester course) missing one day of J-Term shall be significant and may hinder a student's academic progress and term grade. Per policy, Ledgers with an excused absence are responsible for all missing class work unless a formal medical exemption is approved by the principal. If a student misses more than three days of J-Term classes, they shall be withdrawn from J-Term and subsequently enrolled in the SMSA Credit Recovery Plan developed for J-Term and effective during Quarter 3.

### **Q: Will lunch be available to high school students during J-Term?**

**A:** Yes. When students are learning on-campus during J-Term, lunch will be scheduled at the usual time. When students are off-campus, teachers and chaperones will make sure to plan for lunch. Specific plans/needs will be communicated to parents and guardians through communication from the J-Term instructor(s). Students enrolled in J-Term courses through MPTC or the Youth Apprentice option shall need to provide for their own bag lunch daily. Students enrolled at MPTC are required to remain on campus during the lunch hour.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS ABOUT J-TERM on the LEDGE**

### **Student Registration/Scheduling:**

Students and parents will receive the official J-Term 2025 Booklet course guide prior to registration. Course selection/registration shall occur during homeroom period through the completion of electronic forms and beginning with seniors on October 28, juniors on October 29, sophomores on October 30 and freshmen on October 31, 2024. During registration, students shall indicate a 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice of J-Term classes.

Last year, 60% of students were able to enroll in their 1st choice option. While we hope to accommodate student's 1st choice as often as possible, many students will be enrolled in their alternate choice course. As a small Catholic high school, unlimited curricular options are not reasonable or possible. The same is true with J-Term options. We trust that our Ledger community understands this and will gracefully respect all final course placement decisions. Preferential choice is given to students in the following order: senior, junior, sophomore, and freshman. Each J-Term course has been designed to offer excellent value to students. Over time, SMSA educators believe that the cumulative J-Term experiences of this unique learning model will help students obtain valuable perspectives - whether through a first, second, or third choice course! Scheduling decisions of the principal are final.

### **Dress Code:**

Unless explicitly noted as part of a class excursion/ field trip activity, students enrolled in a J-Term course at SMSA are expected to be in uniform during J-Term. Some course activities off-campus may require alternative attire. Students and parents will be notified when alternate attire is expected or permitted. Students who enroll in J-Term options through MPTC or the Youth Apprentice program shall not be expected to follow the SMSA uniform dress code, but may, however, be expected to dress in particular attire to fulfill MPTC or YA safety expectations.

### **Grading:**

Each J-Term course shall use the unweighted grading scale (4.3 GPA for A+). Students will earn a letter grade for J-Term courses. Student cumulative GPA shall be calculated including J-Term grades. Both MPTC and YA program students will have their grades applied to their SMSA permanent record/transcript.

### **Field Trips, Excursions and Guest Speakers:**

J-Term is designed to encourage experiential learning. To accomplish this, sometimes learning will occur on-campus in a lab or classroom. Sometimes the primary learning activity will occur away from SMSA, and even away from Fond du Lac. Some day trips will require students to be off campus for 3-4 hours, some for 7-10 hours, and with our Premier Option course, overnight. Some classes plan to invite guest experts to join

with our students - either 'in the field' or in the classroom. Like normal practice, any learning that may take place off campus will require parental permission slips which will be facilitated through the J-Term teacher.

### **The Beatitudes Project:**

Independent of their chosen J-Term class, all senior Ledgers participate in The Beatitudes Project - the required senior service capstone. To help facilitate this, most seniors will be unscheduled after 1pm each day of J-Term. The Beatitudes Project senior service must be pre-approved through senior theology courses. During the 15 days of J-Term seniors are expected to perform 8 hours of service at their approved site. The J-Term Premier Option course "Have Mercy, Will Travel: Urban Immersion" features a variety of local and distant service experiences and is approved to fulfill the 8 hours of service required by The Beatitudes Project. Other J-Term courses may also include service as an aspect of the curriculum.

### **AP & Dual Credit Courses:**

To enable continuity in preparation for AP exams, each AP course shall be scheduled to meet six afternoons during J-Term. College Dual Credit courses will not meet during J-Term but shall resume in Semester II.

### **Jazz Ensembles during Zero Hour:**

Both the Vocal Jazz and Instrumental Jazz ensembles will meet during J-Term as usual M-Th during the Zero Hour slot. This shall enable our music students to maintain uninterrupted preparation for the State Solo and Ensemble competitions in February.

### **Athletics:**

The SMSA high school athletic calendar and programs shall be maintained during J-Term. Proactive planning has been taken to avoid conflicts with game days and athletic practices as much as possible. However, when a course excursion may conflict with co-curricular activities, practices or games, students shall be entitled to extra leniency from a coach or moderator.

### **Snow Days during J-Term:**

When SMSA chooses to close school due to inclement weather, students enrolled in SMSA based J-Term options will remain home as usual. When MPTC chooses to close due to inclement weather, students enrolled in MPTC based J-Term options will remain home. Should MPTC remain open while SMSA chooses to close, students enrolled in MPTC option courses are expected to report to MPTC. Students enrolled in the YA option for J-Term should abide by the norms of their YA program employer concerning inclement weather and attendance.

### **Afternoons on the Ledge:**

Students who are enrolled in SMSA option courses must remain on campus for the full school day (8:05am - 3:15pm). The afternoon hours are required to receive full credit for the morning courses. Because of the unique J-Term schedule and model, there will be dedicated time to manage important aspects of student life that always seem to run short of time, including AP course meeting time; social-emotional learning and support workshops; student safety, health and wellness workshops; college and career exploration and inventories; four year planning and course scheduling; ACT Prep boot camp.

## J-TERM DAILY SCHEDULE

### *The Daily Schedule for all SMSA Option Classes:*

7:15 - 8:00am

**ZERO HOUR**

Rotation of Jazz  
Ensembles ONLY

8:05am - 12:50pm

**J-Term Classes Meet**

12:55 - 1:35pm

**LUNCH**

1:40 - 3:15pm

**Rotation of Student Life Workshops,  
ACT Prep, Special Programs, & AP courses**

### *The Daily Schedule for all MPTC Option Classes:*

MPTC based courses will follow a calendar that is unique from the SMSA options. Details of the daily schedule for each MPTC course is detailed in each course description.

**J** TERM  
2025



For additional information, or for questions  
regarding J-Term, please contact:

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