

J TERM 2027



ST. MARY'S SPRINGS

Academy

J-TERM VISION

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.



MISSION

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

Core values to learn, live
and grow by.

*The
Ledger
way*

Dear SMSA Parents, Guardians and Students:

The original "January" Term (2024) made history on the Ledge! It ushered in a unique program of experiential learning that has made a positive difference in our learning community. Within this booklet, you will find J-Term '27 course offerings, program FAQ's, and academic policies.

For a fourth consecutive year, our dedicated and creative team of high school educators and higher education partners are very excited to continue this unique and engaging learning experience at the Springs. As we continue to strive for improvement and ways to advance learning at SMSA, we are confident that J-Term will continue to fulfill its vision of innovative experiential learning opportunities for our Ledgers.

SMSA is grateful to all our valued partners, including the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for providing the original G.I.F.T.S. Grant that helped launch and support the development of J-Term! We are so very grateful to Moraine Park Technical College and the Youth Apprentice Program for their creative collaboration, and enthusiastic embrace of this project from the very beginning. Last year, we were pleased to welcome Marian University and Wisconsin Lutheran College as J-Term course collaborators, and both are providing dual college credit options for J-Term '27 again!

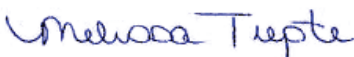
This year, we are pleased to announce a new and exciting collaboration that has emerged between SMSA, Winnebago Lutheran Academy, and MPTC. For the first time, this January WLA students will join Ledgers in MPTC classrooms during J-Term. Our school administrative teams have been working together during the past year to launch this exciting new dimension - designed to mutually benefit all parties.

Of course, J-Term cannot be successfully executed without the generous and talented SMSA faculty and staff who imagine possibilities and plan the curriculum year-round. They look forward to engaging their own passions with our Ledgers during J-Term! Finally, a hearty thank you to our parent and student community at the Springs for their positive support for this unique model of learning.

Our Lady of the Ledge, pray for us.



Eamonn O'Keeffe,
High School Principal



Melissa Trepte
Director of Curriculum & Instruction





Q: WHEN DOES J-TERM OCCUR?

A: The first day of J-Term is Tuesday, January 5, 2027, the final day is Thursday, January 21, 2027. Between these dates, there are different expectations for student attendance, depending on where students are taking classes, and what qualifies students for 0.5 academic credits.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Students who are enrolled in courses on the campus of SMSA, at Marian University, or with Wisconsin Lutheran College shall meet for all 12 weekdays of J-Term between Jan. 5-21. • Non Class Date: Jan. 18
- Students who are using Youth Apprenticeship employment placements as their J-Term option will conclude after they have accumulated 48 hours of work within the term.
- Ledgers who enroll in MPTC courses shall conclude their classes after 9 days, on Friday, January 15 (more details will be shared once class rosters are finalized in November).
- After J-Term concludes, Semester II courses begin on campus for all High School Ledgers on Monday, Jan. 25, 2027. There are no classes on Fri., January 22.

Q: IS J-TERM REQUIRED FOR ALL LEDGERS?

A: Yes. 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: It depends. Most courses do not cost anything extra and are included in your SMSA tuition. However, just like during Semester I & II, dual college credit offerings will have added tuition costs (which are heavily discounted by our partners). Courses designated as a "**PREMIER OPTION**" will have an added cost for students who enroll. Some MPTC courses may require additional supply costs (\$50-\$100).

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. By policy, the 0.5 credit that is lost must be "credit recovered" immediately upon return to school during Quarter 3 (Semester II). 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, the Archdiocese and SMSA 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 two days of J-Term classes (for any reason) they shall be automatically 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?

A: Yes. When students are learning on-campus at SMSA during J-Term, cafeteria 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/guardians through communication from the J-Term instructor(s). Students enrolled in J-Term courses through MPTC, Marian University or the Youth Apprentice option will need to provide for their own bag lunch daily. Students enrolled at MPTC and Marian University are required to remain on-campus at those sites during the lunch hour and are responsible for providing their own lunch.

OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS ABOUT J-TERM:



STUDENT REGISTRATION/SCHEDULING:

Prior to the week of registration, students will learn about all J-Term '27 options during a **J-Term Assembly** on October 15. At that time, students will receive this official J-Term 2027 Booklet/Course Guide. A digital brochure will also be available online at the SMSA website after October 15.

Course selection/registration shall occur online during homeroom on designated dates. Seniors register first on October 19, juniors next on October 21, sophomores on October 22 and freshmen on October 26. When registering, students shall indicate a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice of J-Term classes. Last year, 70% of students were able to enroll in their first choice option! While we hope to accommodate student's first 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 Springs community understands this and respect all final course placement decisions. Preferential choice is given to students in the following order: senior, junior, sophomore, and freshman. After that, the time when registration is received/recorded shall be a distinguishing factor in filling final roster spots.

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 J-Term courses at SMSA or Wisconsin Lutheran College are expected to be in uniform during J-Term. Some activities 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, Marian University, or the Youth Apprentice program shall not be expected to follow the SMSA uniform dress code but may, however, be required to dress in specified attire to fulfill organizational safety expectations. Students and parents will receive notice in advance.



GRADING: Students will earn a letter grade for J-Term courses. All college dual credit options (MU, WLC & MPTC) will use the weighted SMSA grading scale (5.3 GPA for A+). All other J-Term courses and YA placements shall use the unweighted SMSA grading scale (4.3 GPA for A+). Ledger cumulative GPA shall be calculated including J-Term grades which are official and applied to their SMSA permanent record/transcript for Quarter 3.



FIELD TRIPS, EXCURSIONS & 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 even some 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.



AP & DUAL CREDIT COURSES: To enable continuity in preparation for AP exams, each AP course shall be scheduled into a Zero Hour rotation (7:15am-8am). Three meetings per AP course shall occur during J-Term. AP class meeting dates shall be published to students once finalized.



JAZZ ENSEMBLES DURING ZERO HOUR: Both the Vocal Jazz & Instrumental Jazz ensembles will continue to meet during J-Term as usual M-Th during the Zero Hour slot (7:15am-8am). This shall enable our music students to maintain uninterrupted preparation for the State Solo and Ensemble competitions in February. If a Jazz Ensemble conflicts with an AP course, the student is expected to attend the AP course.



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. • **IMPORTANT:** If a student athlete anticipates the need for early dismissal on multiple days during J-Term, we recommend that they enroll in classes offered at SMSA or Marian University, not at MPTC.



SNOW DAYS DURING J-TERM:

- If SMSA chooses to cancel school due to inclement weather, all students whether enrolled in SMSA based J-Term courses, MPTC, MU or WLC shall remain home.
- If SMSA's campus remains open, but MPTC, MU or WLC cancels classes, students enrolled in SMSA courses on campus shall report to school, while students enrolled at MPTC, MU or WLC shall remain home.
- 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 J-Term courses that meet on campus at SMSA shall remain on campus for the full school day (8:05am - 3:15pm). 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 social-emotional learning and support workshops; student safety, health and wellness workshops; college and career exploration and inventories; special speakers, four year planning and course scheduling, as well as ACT Prep boot camp.

J-TERM DAILY SCHEDULES



7:15 AM - 8:00 AM
8:05 AM - 12:50 PM
12:55 PM - 1:35 PM
1:40 PM - 3:15 PM

ZERO HOUR Rotation of Jazz Ensembles & AP Classes
J-Term Classes Meet
LUNCH
Rotation of Student Life Workshops, ACT Prep, & Special Programs

The Daily Schedule for classes meeting off-campus (MPTC & Marian University): Courses that meet off-campus will follow a calendar that is unique from the courses meeting on-campus at SMSA. For students enrolled in MPTC courses, parents and students are required to attend a special evening orientation on campus at MPTC scheduled on December 2, from 5:30pm-7pm. Course instructors, student handbooks and key details will be shared at that time.

COURSE OFFERINGS

MPTC COURSES

The following seven 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 SMSA 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 2027. ***

This year, for the first time, WLA students will join Ledgers in the MPTC classrooms during J-Term. We are very excited about this new opportunity to collaborate with a Flyway Conference partner as we execute the J-Term experience. MPTC based courses will follow an independent calendar and daily schedule that will be shared after class rosters are finalized. Students are responsible for their own daily transportation to and from the MPTC campus. Finally, Mr. Krueger will serve as the site-supervisor and SMSA teacher of record for Skyward daily attendance and grade entry for these courses. He will be on-site at MPTC each day as a resource for Ledgers attending these courses.

MPTC Course	Course Description	(Courses meet on the MPTC Campus)
Auto Service Fundamentals MPTC 602-107	Students shall be prepared to perform light maintenance repairs such as oil changes and tire adjustments. The course orients students to the technical college program and common tools and equipment. Students will learn how to write repair orders, service information systems, and the standards of professionalism for an automotive job site.	
Basic Drawing and Animation MPTC 207-122	This course provides students with an overview of the drawing process and fundamentals of art and design through a variety of techniques and materials including pencil, paper and computer software. Students will focus on character development and perspective drawing pertaining to creating story boards and video storytelling.	
Beginning Electrical Concepts MPTC 413-350	This course provides an overview of the electrical industry with an emphasis on fundamental electrical theory. Basic electricity is explored through concepts of DC electricity. Focuses on the electronic theory, voltage, amperage, resistance, Ohm's law and series/parallel circuits.	
Early Childhood Education (ECE): Social Studies, Art, Music & Movement MPTC 307-110	This course focuses on a beginning-level curriculum developed in the specific integrated content areas of Social Studies, Art, Music, and Movement (SSAMM) for Early Childhood Education. The importance of play-based learning and developmentally appropriate environments as it relates to SSAMM will be emphasized. Students will plan learning experiences, and will compile these experiences into a complete unit of study.	

MPTC Course	Course Description (Courses meet on the MPTC Campus)
Manufacturing Processes MPTC 623-162	This course offers a great opportunity to gain practical skills and knowledge of machining, testing procedures, and the intricacies of engine cooling and lubrication systems. Students will develop skills to identify and understand internal combustion engine components and their operation. The course teaches students how to safely use common machine tools like lathes, milling machines, and surface grinders through hands-on projects. Students will learn to use measuring tools like micrometers and dial calipers. Students will learn to master basic machining skills such as calculating speeds and feeds, determining tap drill sizes, and selecting the right tools. Non-traditional machining, sheet metal, joining, and plastics processes will also be explored.
Nursing Assistant MPTC 543-300 	During this course, students will be required to demonstrate key skills under the direct supervision of a licensed nurse. These skills include: bedside communication, nursing assistant personal care skills, attention to patient rights, and care of patients with dementia. This course is part of the MPTC Nursing Assistant Program that is recognized by the WI Department of Health Services as a nurse-aide training program - and fulfills a prerequisite to be admitted to the Nursing Associate Degree program. Upon successful completion of the program, students are eligible to take the Wisconsin Nursing Assistant competency evaluation for inclusion on the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry and employment with nursing homes, home healthcare agencies, hospices, CBRF's, assisted living centers and homes for the developmentally disabled. Vaccinations will be required due to Clinical Standards.
Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) MPTC 442-356 	This is an introduction to the necessary safety set-up, operation, and maintenance of welding equipment. The class is designed to provide students with basic Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) skills as well as a theoretical understanding of the process. Learning activities will focus on set-up and adjustment, electrode identification, weld quality and safe techniques to improve welding skills. SMAW skills are developed by performing a variety of weld joints in flat, horizontal, and vertical positions on low carbon steel.

What we learn becomes part of who we are. • smsacademy.org



SMSA COURSE OPTIONS

The following course options shall convene on the campus of SMSA and are taught by SMSA instructors. These courses will meet each weekday of J-Term's 12 class days, January 5 through 21 (except January 18) from 8:05am - 3:15pm.

SMSA Course	Instructor(s)
Break A Leg: Presenting & Performing Without the Pressure of Perfection	Mrs. Besson & Mrs. Herbst
This is a course intended to allow students who are interested in the theatrical arts an opportunity to become more comfortable with presenting and performing dramatic and creative pieces in a relaxed environment. 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 pieces. Students will have the opportunity to view and reflect upon both amateur and professional performances.	
Food Science A-Z	Mr. Allen & Mr. Zimmer
Students will dive into the satisfying world of Food Science. Through a combination of laboratory experiments, real-world applications and visits to community food partners, students will develop a deep understanding of how food makes life not only possible, but interesting. Students will be moving between rooms, and between activities multiple times per day. You will NOT be bored!	
Picture This	Ms. Haugen
Get exposure to the art of photography. This course will use digital photography to help students learn and apply the principles of design. Experiment with camera settings, including ISO, aperture, and shutter speed. Actively photograph stills, action, portraits, and landscapes. Apply photography techniques to make a good photo Great! Discover your creativity through the camera lens.	
Take Me Out to the Ballgame	Mr. Kieser & Mr. Heyer
Renowned baseball philosopher Yogi Berra once said, "It's fun; baseball is fun." The same could be said of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," our J-term course which explores the rich history of baseball, the greatest game ever invented. Over the course of J-term, 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 Ball Game."	

SMSA Course	Instructor(s)
The 80's: What a Decade! A study of the cultural, social, technological milestones of an epic decade. Learn about a decade of people, decisions, and inventions that changed and influenced our times. This is not only nostalgia, but a study of the history of our modern world, our relationships and connectivity with each other. Learn about epic music, fashion, movies, pop culture, sports, and world events that changed the future!	Mrs. Arndt
Caught by the Pattern: Serial Crimes, Evidence, & Investigative Breakthroughs Why do some crimes remain unsolved for years while others are cracked by one overlooked clue? In Caught by the Pattern, students will study how investigators connect serial crimes using patterns, timelines, geography, victimology, behavioral analysis, media coverage, and modern technology. Rather than focusing on graphic crime details, students will examine how real cases were solved, where investigations went wrong, and how science and critical thinking can support justice. Students will build case boards, analyze evidence summaries, evaluate media bias, explore cold case breakthroughs, and complete a final investigative case file project.	Ms. Sweeney
Drivers Ed PREMIER OPTION \$480 cost/student The drivers education classroom portion is a 30-hour theoretical course designed to teach traffic laws, safe driving practices, hazard recognition, and vehicle controls. It can be taken in-person (12 sessions of 2.5 hours) or online (30 one-hour lessons) and is required to obtain a learner's permit and begin behind-the-wheel training. This class fulfills the classroom portion of earning their drivers education certificate. Students will also engage in the community with the Holiday Automotive field trip, we will bring in guest speakers: police officer (road safety), financial advisor (insurance, how to save for a car), and real world responsibilities of owning a vehicle. *Students who already have their license are not eligible for this J-Term course.	Mrs. Brusky & Ms. Pannier
God is Here Students will experience God's presence through engagement with local non-profit community service, experiences with creation/the environment, and through church worship. The course will offer both classroom learning and hands-on experiences off campus as well as community service at various non-profit organizations. Some experiences will extend beyond the school day and occur in the Fox Valley area.	Mrs. Adsit & Dr. Biessman

SMSA Course	Instructor(s)
NEW Gold Medal Mindset	Mrs. Schermacher & Mr. González Ruiz

This dynamic 3-week course introduces students to the exciting world of Olympic sports, combining physical activity, history, and global culture. Students will explore a variety of Olympic events, from swimming and diving, to downhill skiing, to rock climbing and team sports—while learning about the origins and evolution of the Olympic Games.

NEW Mystics, Myths, and Movies	Mr. Braun & Mrs. Sales
---------------------------------------	---------------------------

In this course, Ledgers will learn to appreciate a few of the Mystics of the Catholic Church, local myths and Roman cultural elements (art, literature, architecture, etc.). Through field trips to key local shrines, churches/holy sites, students will explore the influences and stories of mystics. They also will be able to experience myths of Wisconsin in local trips to Lambeau field and local myths like Sasquatch. Students will study film and movies to visualize the unexplainable both in our faith tradition and outside of it. Students will experience different forms of prayer, study religious art forms, and hear from local experts. All of this will culminate in creating their own personal myth, story or epic tale based upon what was experienced.

NEW ¡Viva España!	Mrs. Theel & Mrs. Anderson
--------------------------	-------------------------------

This J-term course invites students to explore the rich culture, history and contemporary life of Spain through a dynamic inter-disciplinary lens. Moving beyond traditional classroom instruction, students will engage in hands-on project-based learning experiences that bring Spain to life. We will explore culture including traditions, festivals, cuisine, and daily life. As well as the historical significance of monarchy in Spain and its impact on their citizens.

YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP OPTION

SMSA 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 48 hours of work at their YA placement site during the 12 days of J-Term. A summative reflection on their experience during this 12 day period will also be required. If all criteria is met successfully, students who choose this option will receive 0.5 academic credits.



PREMIER OPTION COURSES

These courses require additional charge/payment (indicated) for enrollment.

University Dual College Credit Course		Instructor(s)
RAD to the Bone [3 MU Credits]	PREMIER COURSE \$525 cost/student	Dr. Kieper (MU) (Classes will meet at Marian University)

Where is radiation found, and is it always harmful? Radiation is often viewed as dangerous, yet it plays a vital role in science, medicine, and society. This course explores the applications of radiation across multiple fields and examines the historical significance of major nuclear events, including Chernobyl, Fukushima, Three Mile Island, and the atomic bomb.

Intro to Sports Management [3 WLC Credits]	PREMIER COURSE \$225 cost/student	Mr. Kaiser (SMSA) Mr. Martens (WLC) (Classes will meet at SMSA)
--	--	---

This course provides students with an introduction to concepts, theories and principles within sports management. Students develop their organizing, management, & leadership skills while identifying today's important issues, future trends, and potential career opportunities. Especially for students interested in sports management careers, this unique college course will offer students excursions to visit interesting sports venues and meet working professionals in this hot and growing industry.

JTERM
2027



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

Eamonn O'Keeffe, Principal
eokeeffe@smsacademy.org
920.322.8061