Miami Country Day School

Impact Studio 2026-2027

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IMPACT STUDIO WAY

At Impact Studio, we believe learning is most meaningful when it is driven by curiosity, reflection, interdisciplinary inquiry, and authentic creation. We prepare students to engage thoughtfully with an increasingly complex and interconnected world by fostering agency, creativity, and purposeful communication.

We believe impact is not limited to traditional models of service or external achievement. In today's world, students create meaningful influence through ideas, storytelling, design, research, innovation, and digital expression. Learners must be equipped not only to consume knowledge, but also to create, synthesize, and share it with authentic audiences.

Our program is grounded in the belief that students develop deeper understanding when they pursue personally meaningful questions and connect their learning across disciplines. Through reflective practice, collaborative inquiry, and project-based experiences, students learn to think critically, communicate effectively, and apply their knowledge in relevant and innovative ways.

IMPACT STUDIO WAY

At the core of Impact Studio, we believe learners should be:

Curious

Learners engage in reflective learning that cultivates purpose, intellectual curiosity, and personal agency. Students develop the capacity to ask meaningful questions, pursue sustained inquiry, and find relevance in their academic experiences.

Connected

Learners explore interdisciplinary connections and collaborate with others to deepen their understanding of complex ideas. Through authentic engagement with experts in the field, real-world contexts, and public audiences, students recognize the relationship between their learning and the broader world.

Creators

Learners design, produce, and share original work that reflects their unique perspectives and interests. Through creative and technical processes, students develop the skills necessary to communicate ideas effectively across a range of modern media and platforms.

Impact Studio values rigorous, relevant, and authentic learning. By engaging students in meaningful creation and sustained exploration, we empower them to develop resilience, intrinsic motivation, and the ability to contribute thoughtfully and creatively to the world around them.

ELECTIVES

Fashion Design I: Crafting Your Personal Style

Ever wonder what your clothes say about you? This course explores the intersection between fashion, identity, and self-expression. Students analyze the cultural and historical influences that shape their fashion choices and how these choices in turn shape personal and collective identities. Through hands-on fashion sketching, styling, and sewing projects along with critical discussions, students gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between fashion and self-expression.

The Impact of Design on Visual Culture

What hidden meanings become visible when you move from consuming the graphics around you to actively creating them? In this course, students take on the role of designers as they explore branding identity through logo creation, deconstruct advertising tactics to understand their psychological impact, and develop large-scale graphic proposals that use visual storytelling to enhance the visual environment at Impact Studio or capture its essence. Together, these projects encourage students to analyze how symbols, messages, and design strategies influence communities and subcultural identities within contemporary visual culture.

ELECTIVES

Fashion Design II: Beyond the Basics

Take your fashion skills further by diving into specialized areas like illustration, garment construction, accessories, print, editorial, marketing, or styling and photography. In this course, you will think imaginatively and creatively while cultivating the skills to develop a clear artistic vision. Success is achieved through rigorous making, constantly pushing the boundaries of personal expression through sustained practice and hands-on material engagement. Throughout the course, students will gain invaluable insights and networking opportunities by connecting with industry professionals.

Notes: This course is for juniors and seniors who have successfully completed Fashion Design I: Crafting Your Personal Style.

Advanced Fashion Design Honors

Building on the foundation of Fashion Design 2, this honors level studio challenges students to deepen their practice through sustained, self-directed exploration in their chosen fashion pathways. Students push beyond technical proficiency to develop a distinct creative identity, engaging in rigorous making, iterative experimentation, and long-term project development. Through extended studio time, individualized mentorship, and critiques that mirror professional design environments, students refine their artistic voice and strengthen their conceptual and technical fluency. Industry engagement continues to play a central role, offering opportunities for feedback, collaboration, and real world insight from working designers and creative professionals.

Notes: Open to juniors and seniors who have successfully completed Fashion Design 2: Beyond the Basics. This honors course may be taken multiple times for credit.

ELECTIVES

Food, Culture, and Storytelling

How does food connect us to memory, identity, and culture through storytelling? In this course, students will write, taste, cook, and create narratives around food. Through personal reflection, cultural research, field experiences, and creative projects, students will learn how food acts as a medium for both individual expression and collective identity.

Happiness Unveiled: Exploring the Science of Well-Being

Have you ever wondered what makes humans truly happy? In this course, students delve into the science behind the mind/body connection to understand the direct impact this connection has on overall well-being. Using Miami Country Day School as a social lab, students will discover the assumptions and misconceptions of their own happiness. They will explore a variety of daily mental and physical practices from experts, test those practices, and analyze the impact on their own lives and that of their peers. With their newfound knowledge, they'll design pieces of media to educate their community. This course incorporates elements of Yale's most popular course ever taught, The Science of Well-Being.

ELECTIVES

Impact Studio Mentorship Program

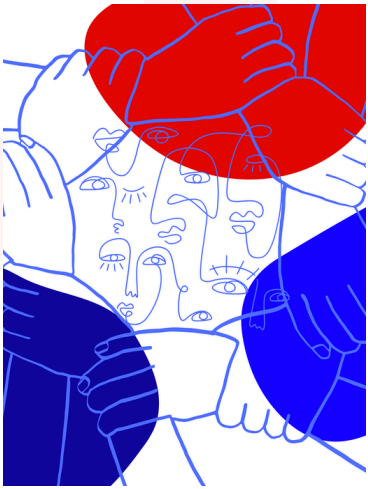
Sample Mentorships:

- Extension of Capstone project
- Extension of topic covered in an Impact Studio elective
- Areas of interest for future careers

The Impact Studio Mentorship Program offers students the opportunity to delve into their interests in a meaningful, independent, field-based learning experience. Students will explore a potential field of study firsthand in the real world while working on relevant projects, making industry connections, and developing hard and soft skills. Under the supervision of an Impact Studio Teacher, students will be provided guidance, feedback, and encouragement as they design and document their experience, culminating in a project that positively impacts their community.

Note: Approval for this course requires an application process.

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



Zohara Duffey '25

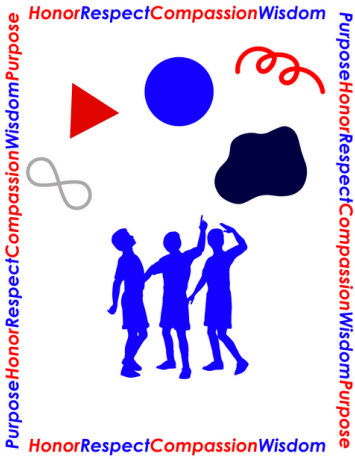
"At Impact Studio, we have a chance to discuss subjects as a class. We all get to engage as a group and put our unique perspective into the lesson."

-Alana Stuart '27
Happiness Unveiled: The Science of Well-Being

Rafaela Londoño '28

"In an Impact Studio class, I feel a sense of calm while also having the opportunity to express my opinions and apply my creativity in each assignment."

-Zoe Carlini Toto '28
The Impact of Design on Visual Culture



Sofia Almeida Kuhl Nogueira '28

"I feel very stress-free and creative. Being in a class like this puts me in a flow state in which I do the work because I want to and not because I have to."

-Alyssa White '26
Impact of Fashion Design I: Crafting Your Personal Style

DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT

All students in the Upper School have the opportunity to earn an Impact Studio Diploma Endorsement, facilitated by Impact Studio faculty. To do this, students must demonstrate that they have met all MCDS graduation requirements and exceeded these requirements by completing all endorsement components.

The Impact Studio Endorsement consists of four components. Every component of the endorsement is designed to empower students to explore what they love, what they are good at, and what the world needs.

DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT

Component 1: Curriculum	You will take and successfully pass at least two Impact Studio Elective Courses. Examples: • Happiness Unveiled: Exploring the Science of Well-Being • The Impact of Design on Visual Culture • Fashion Design I: Crafting Your Personal Style • Fashion Design II: Beyond the Basics
Component 2: Creative Immersive Experience	You'll take part in an immersive, real-world experience connected to your creative interests. This might be a pre-college program, summer study, internship, or an Impact Studio–led trip or project. Over at least three days, you'll step into the field to explore how your curiosity connects to creative and professional pathways. The goal is to transform interest into insight — to see what it feels like to work, learn, and create within spaces that inspire you. What you discover here will become the foundation for your portfolio, helping you translate inspiration into evidence of learning, growth, and creative direction. • Impact Studio teachers can guide you in finding relevant experiences
Component 3: Impact Studio Mentorship	The Impact Studio Mentorship offers you the opportunity to experience a potential field of study firsthand in the real world while working on relevant projects, making industry connections, and developing hard and soft skills. Under the supervision of an Impact Studio teacher, you will be provided guidance, feedback, and encouragement as you design and document your experience. • An application is required to enroll • This is a one semester elective, showing up in your schedule as Track 9 • This course can be taken multiple times
Component 4: Portfolio and Presentation Scan or click above for more information	A portfolio is a curated collection of work that shows what you can do, what you're interested in, and how you think. It can include media projects, designs, research, writing, performances, community initiatives — any work that represents your creative identity and growth. You choose your strongest work and decide the format What matters most is: • Your Voice: What do you want to share with others? • Your Creation: How do you turn your idea into something real? • Your Impact: Why does this work matter to you?

To start on your path to complete an Impact Studio Diploma Endorsement or simply want to know more about the electives, reach out to:

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Mr. John Gatti
gattij@miamicountryday.org

READY TO MAKE AN IMPACT?

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