

**Michael Jansa**

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BLOG- [www.ses211.blogspot.com](http://www.ses211.blogspot.com)

# ***The Year of the Mountain***

## **2019-2020**

### **Michael's Class**

*Please read,  
complete, and  
return permission  
forms by Friday,  
8/30 (ASAP)*

Welcome to the *Year of the Mountain*! I look forward to getting to know you as we work together with your child to make this an enriching year of learning and growth.

The Year of the Mountain at SES focuses on community, identity, culture, and geology. Our studies throughout the year will take us on journeys to explore how our earth works, narratives of identity and self, the role water plays in our lives, ancient cultures, marine biology, and many other engaging topics.

Our comprehensive integrated units are supported throughout the year by writer's workshop, daily reading, morning meetings, weekly field studies, service learning opportunities, gardening, science, library, art, P.E., cooking from our garden, and so much more. Within all that we do there will be an emphasis on our essential skills of curiosity, self-control, empathy/solidarity, perseverance, gratitude, optimism, and critical consciousness.

The first weeks of school are primarily for building community, strong habits, and figuring out the rhythm of the school. Please know that I will do whatever possible to help ease the transition for you and your child into this school year. With that in mind, I value communication, structure, and flexibility. You can reach me through email ([mjansa@pps.net](mailto:mjansa@pps.net)) or if urgent, by phone (503.901.9775). I also keep a daily class blog ([ses211.blogspot.com](http://ses211.blogspot.com)) for general communication, daily expectations, homework reminders, and transparency. Above all else, please know that I am always open to communication and that together we play a critical role in your child's education and growth!

Weekly field studies are essential to our place-based education curriculum at Sunnyside Environmental School. We will travel out in the field most Thursdays throughout the year where the community, city, parks, and wilderness areas become our classroom. On the back of this letter is a schedule of many of our fall field studies. We are required to have at least one other adult present on these trips, but ideally we should have three. It is only with your help that these learning experiences can happen. Please look at the schedule to see if you can help out on any of our trips. I

This year I will work to create a strong sense of community, while building a challenging and rewarding year full of meaningful subjects to grapple with, opportunities for academic and personal growth, and many moments to find power in learning.

I am thrilled to be entering my 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at Sunnyside! I LOVE being a part of the incredible SES community as a middle school core teacher. This is a special school and I am excited to work with all of you and your children during the 2019-2020 school year!

Regards,

Michael Jansa



## Here are some beginning of the year details:

- **Back to School Parent Night will be happening Thursday, September 26th at 6:00. This is a valuable opportunity for us to connect. I would LOVE to see you all there!!!**
- I will send monthly emails sharing what is happening in the class, upcoming events and field studies, important classroom news, and discussing anything else that will inevitably arise.
- Your child will have a school planner in which they will use a calendar and record daily assignments and announcements. In addition, I will update the class blog ([www.ses211.blogspot.com](http://www.ses211.blogspot.com)) daily with homework, service learning opportunities, and important dates/events.
- In accordance with the district, students will be graded on a quarter system this year. The first term goes through October 31st.
- We will always be reading books, either all class, small group, or individual choice. Students are expected to read at least 20-30 minutes every day.
- We will go on weekly field studies (mainly on Thursdays) throughout the year. We depend on adult chaperones to make these trips possible. Check out our fall field study sign-up website and please help out if you can: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f44afa82fa0fd0-michaels5>
- Some field studies will have small costs associated with them for transportation or admittance. You can pay through our SchoolPay website <https://www.schoolpay.com/pay/for/Year-of-the-Mountain--Michael-and-Robin/SbjKwI2> or directly to the office.
- We are buddies with Corbin's 1st/2nd grade class that we will meet with all year.
- I appreciate your input, communication, and support. Never hesitate to connect with me if you have questions, concerns, comments, thoughts, or anything else.
- I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR!!! Thank you in advance for your commitment, support, and communication!!!

## Fall Field Studies and Events

| Date                                                           | Time                                         | Field Study Location                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday, September 5th                                        | 9:30 – 2:00                                  | Moda Center Fountain<br><i>(field study safety/community building)</i>                                  |
| Thursday, September 12 <sup>th</sup>                           | 9:00 – 2:45                                  | Mudbone Grown Unity Farm<br><i>(urban farming + food justice)</i>                                       |
| Thursday, September 19 <sup>th</sup>                           | 10:00 – 2:30                                 | Mt. Tabor<br><i>(intro to geology)</i>                                                                  |
| Thursday, September 26 <sup>th</sup>                           | 10:00 - 2:15                                 | Zoo Tunnel<br><i>(geologic time)</i>                                                                    |
| Thursday, October 10th                                         | 9:15 – 2:45                                  | Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals <i>(rock cycle)</i><br>\$5 - transportation + admittance    |
| Sun, Oct 13 <sup>th</sup> through Friday, Oct 18 <sup>th</sup> | Week Long<br>6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Overnight | OUTDOOR SCHOOL<br><b>(6<sup>th</sup> grade only!!!)</b><br><i>(more info to come)</i>                   |
| Thursday, Oct 24 <sup>th</sup>                                 | 9:00 - 3:15                                  | Columbia River Gorge - Beacon Rock<br><i>(Oregon Geology + Missoula Floods)</i><br>\$5 - transportation |
| Thursday, Nov 7 <sup>th</sup>                                  | 10:00 - 1:30                                 | Portland Art Museum                                                                                     |
| Thursday, Nov 14 <sup>th</sup>                                 | 9:15 - 1:30                                  | OMSI <i>(earthquakes lab)</i><br>\$5 - admittance                                                       |
| Thursday, December 5th                                         | 9:00 - 1:30                                  | Reed College Cooley Art Gallery<br><i>(Visual Thinking Strategies)</i>                                  |
| Friday, Dec 13 <sup>th</sup>                                   | 5:00 - 8:00 PM                               | Riparian Festival<br><i>(evening curriculum festival)</i>                                               |

