



Academic Handbook

Academic Year: 2025-2026

Audience: Students, Parents and Guardians, Faculty and Volunteers

Last Updated: August 20, 2025

Non-Discrimination Statement: *Olney Friends School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.*

NOTE: This handbook, which is not a contract and not intended to be a contract, is considered a living document. Changes may be made throughout the school year without prior notice and at the discretion of the leadership of Olney Friends School.

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Welcome to Learning at Olney Friends School

At Olney Friends School*, learning stretches beyond academics to engage the whole human being. We know each student as an individual with talents, questions, and potential that extend far beyond a transcript or list of courses. Learning at Olney permeates all our endeavors in classrooms, residential life, service, athletics, the arts, and spiritual reflection. You join a community that challenges you to think deeply, act responsibly, and live with care for yourself and others. We invite you to bring your full self to this learning journey, ready to discover what you can achieve intellectually and who you can become.

Our transdisciplinary (TD) curriculum grows from the same Quaker principles that guide all of Olney life: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship (SPICES). These values call us to integrate academic, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical growth to learn more about ourselves, our community, environment, and the world. We expect you to engage your mind across disciplines, take appropriate risks in your learning, and meet high standards with persistence and humility. Learning in one area strengthens understanding in another. Throughout your time at Olney, you will have opportunities to sharpen your critical thinking, strengthen your writing and public speaking, and practice listening to diverse perspectives.

As the only boarding school in the United States with a USDA-certified organic farm, we integrate sustainability, stewardship, and the cycles of the land into our studies. We draw on our location in the Appalachian region, engaging in the opportunities and the challenges that surround us.

Every member of the faculty, whether in the classroom, on the farm, in the kitchen, or in the dorm, contributes to your learning. We expect you to meet this commitment with your own, bringing curiosity, discipline, and respect to every part of school life. The curriculum outlined in this guide provides the structure for your academic journey. Within that structure, you have the freedom to discover, explore, and make connections that will shape your thinking and your character.

We aim for every Olney graduate to leave with the skills, habits, and moral grounding to navigate a complex world with decency, wisdom, integrity, and courage. You will take with you an understanding that learning is a lifelong privilege, a source of joy, and a responsibility.

In friendship and shared purpose,

Dr. Christian N. Acemah ('01)
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Anne Marie Taber ('79), MLIS
**DEAN OF LEARNING AND
INSTITUTIONAL STEWARDSHIP**

* Sometimes referred to as Olney or the school.

Graduation Requirements

Earning a high school diploma from Olney Friends School requires successful completion of all academic, community, and residential responsibilities. Students must gain admission into an accredited four-year college or university and earn a minimum of 28 credits, distributed as follows:

Table One: Graduation Requirements and Credits by Discipline

Discipline	Description	Credits
Humanities	Integrated English and History: 2.0 credits per year: Ancient Cultures, European, North American, and Modern concentrations	8.00
Metanoia	Logic, College Prep, Life after Olney, Rhetoric, Academic Writing, Junior Research Paper, and Senior Research Paper	4.00
Mathematics	Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 (required to graduate), Precalculus, Calculus BC, Post Calculus, Coding, and Statistics	4.00
Lab Science	Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics, and Agricultural Science	4.00
Language	Spanish and Independent Study (two years in a single language required)	3.00
Art	Studio Art, Film, Theater, Music, and Woodworking	1.50
Questions of Conscience	Religion (Quakerism required), Philosophy, Psychology, and Peace and Social Justice Concerns	1.00
Health and Sexuality	Students can take this semester-long course in any year.	0.50
Financial Literacy	Students can take this semester-long course in any year.	0.50
Additional credits	Outside the minimum departmental requirements, students are required to take an additional 1.5 credits in optional elective classes.	1.50
Total		28.00

Academic Expectations

Students must attend class on time, participate in discussions, complete assignments promptly, avoid plagiarism, and respect teachers and other students, as well as their ideas and learning styles, to ensure academic success. Students and teachers often develop mutual ground rules for classroom protocol at the beginning of a course. Olney Friends School expects that students will desire to learn and will maintain a safe and respectful environment for each other's free exchange of ideas. Students address teachers and staff members at Olney by first names, mirroring the adult world and reflecting the Quaker belief that there is that of God in everyone. This practice is based on our experience that when adolescents are treated with respect, they learn to act respectfully in return, and feel challenged to carry themselves as young adults inside the classroom and out.

Course Registration

The school prepares an Earned Credit Report for students and their advisors at the beginning of the school year and at any other time they need the reports. These act as a kind of map to show how far students have come and what they yet need to accomplish before graduating. During their first few days on campus, students will meet with the Registrar, their advisors, and their parents or guardians (if available) to choose core classes for the year. Students may Add/Drop classes within the first five (5) school days (Monday - Friday) of a new quarter. If a student drops a class after that time, a "W" will appear on their transcript, indicating that the student has "Withdrawn." The student is responsible for completing the Add/Drop Form and obtaining teachers' signatures within that first week. Otherwise, the student will remain enrolled in the class and receive grades. Students must continue to attend until they have officially dropped the class. This also applies to Sports (see *Community Life Handbook* about Sports).

Class Attendance

Teachers may "slip" a student (see *Community Life Handbook* about Slips) who arrives late or unprepared for class, at their discretion. If a student fails to show up for a class, teachers must consult with the main office but may write that student a "cut" (double) slip. Classes at Olney are typically so small that the absence of a single voice can impact participation generally and diminish the quality of instruction.

Absences fall into two categories: excused or unexcused. The Ohio Revised Code specifies only eight valid reasons to excuse an absence: Personal illness, Illness in the family requiring the child's presence, Home quarantine, Death of a relative, Medical or dental appointment, Observance of a religious holiday, Emergency circumstances, or College visit. Students are encouraged to make up academic work for excused absences. If the student does not make up missed work by the first weekend they are back, they may be restricted to campus until the work is turned in. Students planning to miss a class should arrange with their teacher(s) to work ahead.

The policy considers absences for any other reason to be unexcused. In these cases, students may only make up tests, papers, and major projects, but cannot earn credit for missed Harkness and participation grades, minor quizzes, or homework. Repeated absences accumulate, and students cannot receive class credit without a minimum of 90% attendance.

Mental Health Days

With advance notice from a parent or guardian, students may request one mental health day per term. The student must remain on campus and away from group activities for the day. A mental health day is treated as an excused absence, but students are expected to complete missed work.

Academic Honesty

At Olney Friends School, collaboration is part of daily life. Teachers and peers are close at hand and willing to help, and many courses require group work. Students must learn the difference between seeking help and getting answers, and between working together and taking another's work. Students should know when to honor individual originality, how to cite sources, and how to paraphrase appropriately. Academic honesty means completing your own work and giving proper credit to others' ideas. Cheating on a test, plagiarizing, or submitting work you did not create violates this standard. When in doubt about academic honesty, ask your Advisor or another trusted faculty member for guidance **before** submitting your work for grading.

First offenses are treated as teachable moments, recognizing that expectations can differ across cultures. In such cases, a faculty member informs the Dean of Learning and Institutional Stewardship (Dean), and the student must redo the work or retake the test, with a maximum score of 50 percent. Parents, guardians, and caregivers of the student concerned will receive written notice of the offence from the Dean.

Second offenses are reported to both the Dean of Learning and the Head of School. Students in this category receive no credit. Parents, guardians, and caregivers of the student concerned will receive written notice of the offence from the Dean.

A **third offense** results in suspension or expulsion. The Head of School will notify the parents, guardians, and caregivers of the student concerned.

Academic Probation Policy

Olney Friends School expects strong academic effort and achievement. When a student struggles, faculty will provide support to help them improve. Students with low end-of-quarter grades are placed on academic probation and must raise their grades in the following quarter to remain in good standing. While on probation, students must attend structured evening and weekend study halls (see Study Hall section below).

Ninth and tenth graders will go on probation if they earn two or more grades below D+ or one F in one term. **Eleventh and twelfth graders** go on probation if they earn one or more grades below C-. The Dean of Learning and the Head of School review the progress of all students on probation each term. **NOTE:** Integrated Humanities classes count as two separate grades.

If a student is placed on academic probation twice within any four-term period, including two terms within four consecutive terms, regardless of academic year, the faculty will review their enrollment status. This review will determine whether the student should be dismissed or not invited to return. The Head of School makes all final decisions on academic dismissals.

Study Hall

Study Hall provides a consistent, structured time for students to focus on homework and academic tasks each evening, Sunday through Thursday, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. During this time, students may work only on school-related assignments. For the first three full weeks of the academic year, students remain in pre-assigned study hall locations. After that, they may request to work in a different approved location (e.g., the library, a classroom, a dorm parlor, or, in some cases, their dorm room) with permission from their Advisor and the Dean of Learning. All students begin the evening in their designated study location. If they need to meet with classmates, use the library, or access technology or other resources, they may seek explicit permission from the faculty on duty to make one move to another approved location. Four evenings of an hour and a half Study Hall rarely meets all homework needs, so students should plan to study between classes during the school day, and at other unscheduled times throughout the week, to stay current with their work.

Weekend Study Hall

Students who fall behind in their classwork, drop to bottom slip level, or need more time to complete academic work will attend study hall over the weekend on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.-Noon (or another three-hour block of time if scheduled by the weekend crew leader, Dean of Learning, and/or Head of School). All students are welcome to opt into any weekend study hall.

Grades and Reporting

Because a student's progress in a class cannot be boiled down to a single number or letter, the principal form of descriptive evaluation at Olney is through narrative comments. Comments go to students, family, and advisors shortly after each quarter term ends. In addition, teachers write midterm progress reports for any student in their first term at the school, and whenever there is reason for concern (defined when the student is earning a C- or lower) or particular celebration. Most classes at Olney receive grades of A+ through Failing. Where appropriate, some classes and electives receive grades of pass / no credit. In situations where students have work pending at the end of the quarter, their teachers may give them an Incomplete, meaning they can earn back credit in a subsequent term.

Olney does not track students. All courses are college preparatory and weighted equally for GPA purposes. The school does not offer any Honors or AP courses. Students may sit for AP exams, but our classes focus on content rather than test preparation. Due to Friends' traditions and our emphasis on collaborative learning, Olney does not compute comparative statistics or class rankings.

Table Two: Number and Letter Grades on a 4.0 Scale

Number Grade	Letter Grade	4.00 Scale
98-100	A+	4.00
93-97	A	4.00
90-92	A-	3.70
87-91	B+	3.30
83-86	B	3.00
80-82	B-	2.70
77-79	C+	2.30
73-76	C	2.00
70-72	C-	1.70
67-69	D+	1.30
63-66	D	1.00
60-62	D-	0.70
Below 60	F	0.00
Pass / No credit	Not computed	
Incomplete		

NOTE: Teachers may adjust class grading at their discretion, including grading on a curve, but the default scheme and the 4.00 scale conversion are as listed above.

Academic Support Services

The Library

The Olney Friends School Library, located in the Main Building, offers more than 9,000 books and 28 current magazines and newspapers. Our online catalog includes a portal to online databases that provide full-text access to thousands of periodicals through the INFOhio school library consortium. Olney's professional librarian helps students find and access information. Students may also join the Barnesville public library, where privileges include access to materials at 150 other Ohio libraries, as well as inter-library loans through the OhioLINK library consortium of eighty-four Ohio colleges and universities and the State Library of Ohio.

Computing Services

Every member of the Olney community receives an email address. These addresses, and groups of addresses, facilitate communications in multiple ways, so it is important that everyone checks their email frequently. Accessing emails is usually easy through an email client or directly on the internet through Gmail. The accounts provide access to all G Suite for Education tools, which facilitates collaboration between students and paperless homework submission. Olney encourages students to use their own tablets or laptops. Students may use the school’s public computers in the library. The school uses computing in many ways to enhance learning at Olney, but it is not a universal good. Different classes will have different technology policies; teachers will make these policies clear at the beginning of each course.

AI Policy[†]

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in computers that are programmed to think and to learn. In an educational context, AI can support some learning and automate some tasks, but it requires supervised and ethical use to avoid risks of over-reliance, misinformation, and plagiarism.

This policy outlines the principles and rules governing the use of AI tools at Olney Friends School. The policy applies to all AI technologies and platforms accessed or used by students within school premises, for school-related tasks, or through the school’s devices or networks. The goal is that any students engaging with AI will do so responsibly and ethically in order to enhance their learning, to safeguard their privacy and well-being, and to never replace their independent thought or effort with AI products.

Students may not use AI tools for any academic work unless all the following conditions are met: the responsible teacher has clearly outlined whether, when, and how AI tools may be used, has shown how to critically evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy and appropriateness, and has instructed on how to properly cite any AI sources used.

Students must use AI tools solely for educational purposes as directed by teachers or school authorities. Using AI for non-educational activities or submitting AI work as original student work within the school context is prohibited.

Students must use caution if interacting with AI tools that require personal information. Sharing sensitive or personal data without proper authorization or oversight is prohibited. Students should learn the risks and implications of data sharing and seek guidance from teachers.

Any communication with or through AI tools, including chatbots or virtual assistants, must adhere to the same standards of respect and appropriateness expected in personal interactions. Abusive, harmful, or disrespectful conduct through AI platforms is unacceptable. Olney Friends School technology policies apply (see *Community Life Handbook*, Computer Use and Language).

[†] Adapted from “AI Policy.” Taliaferro County Schools, Taliaferro County School District, 2025, www.taliaferro.k12.ga.us/AIPOLICY.

Course Descriptions

Metanoia

Metanoia, from the Ancient Greek *μετάνοια*, means the process of shedding the false self to see the true self. Unique to Olney, this seminar-style course strengthens critical thinking, reading, and writing skills while deepening reflection and connecting learning across disciplines. Students read, write, and engage in discussions with faculty and peers, linking ideas to lived experience. Metanoia serves as a companion to every other class, reflecting our belief that the deepest learning happens when curiosity, reflection, and integrity inform and infuse each other with meaning. Ninth and tenth-grade students build a foundation for the more focused and complex work of the eleventh and twelfth grades. Classes take the form of seminar discussions, with a faculty member guiding conversation and inquiry. Students and faculty learn alongside one another, testing ideas, refining arguments, and listening with care. Each Metanoia course is worth 1 credit per academic year (0.25 credit per term).

Regardless of when or at what level a student joins Olney, the Metanoia sequence aims to develop humble, confident, compelling, and critical thinkers. Students leave with a credible intellectual foundation for post-secondary study, an ability to discern connections between disciplines, and the habits of reflection and stewardship that will serve them for life.

Metanoia 9

This class begins with an exploration of what it takes to thrive in a college-preparatory high school. Students address time management, study skills, textual analysis, and academic writing, then apply these skills in projects that challenge both discipline and creativity.

Metanoia 10

The sophomore year builds on the foundation of Metanoia 9. Students learn principles of logic and philosophical argumentation, applying them to a range of texts and questions. When possible, the course connects directly to other disciplines, allowing for transdisciplinary study in the first and second terms of the eleventh grade.

Metanoia 11

At this point in their learning journeys, this class sharpens critical thinking, collaborative work, and prepares students for the Junior Research Paper (JRP). In the third and fourth terms, students carry out their research and begin structured planning for life after Olney, including college searches, standardized test preparation, and exploration of gap year opportunities.

Metanoia 12

This final Metanoia class brings together the full range of students' Olney experience. Seniors examine world cultures, globalization, and possible paths for future intersocietal and international relationships. By this stage, students should be able to articulate ideas from a range of times, places, and traditions, and to carry out the Senior Research Paper ("Graddy Essay") with intellectual depth and independence.

Humanities

Humanities courses form the foundation of an Olney education. The program weaves English, History, Rhetoric, Geography, Philosophy, Art History, Linguistics, and the Social Sciences into courses that focus on essential questions and unifying themes about humans and their place in the universe. Students learn to think critically, write with clarity, speak effectively, and listen with care and respect. They read books, films, paintings, buildings, and other cultural texts. They develop the habit of finding meaning in many forms and contexts. Each course begins with a central question that guides inquiry. Faculty provide structure while allowing space for student-driven exploration and engagement with emerging issues. This balance reflects our belief that curiosity and discipline strengthen one another. Humanities courses also build core academic skills. Students expand vocabulary, practice research methods, and present ideas in speech and writing. Harkness discussions teach them to argue persuasively, support ideas with evidence, and respond thoughtfully to differing perspectives. Each year includes a significant research project. All students must earn two credits in Humanities each year. The sequence includes:

Humanities 9

Students survey the ancient world from Mesopotamia to the Yellow River Valley to Central America. They explore the elements that shape a culture, including art, architecture, writing, and mythology. They examine historical narratives with attention to bias and perspective. Projects include researching antiquities in online museum collections and creating timelines for major civilizations. Instruction includes note-taking strategies, thesis development, and academic writing in multiple forms.

Humanities 10

Students study the history, art, and literature of Western Europe from 1200 to 1800 CE, covering the late Middle Ages, Renaissance, Reformation, Age of Exploration, Baroque, and Enlightenment periods. Units may explore the epic, kinship and culture, the relationship between magic and science, and the role of representation in art and literature.

Humanities 11

This course fulfills both English Language Arts and U.S. History requirements while pursuing broader goals. Students build community, foster dialogue, and deepen historical and cultural understanding. They study U.S. history with emphasis on the African American experience, Native American agency, women's and minority rights, and environmental history. They write frequently, participate in Harkness discussions, and read both fiction and nonfiction each week. The capstone is the fifteen-page Junior Research Paper (JRP). Creativity and reflection form an essential part of the course through poetry, art, and other projects.

Humanities 12

Students examine the period from approximately 1800 to the present, focusing on the systems that shape the contemporary world, including economic, political, climatic, and linguistic systems. Themes may include game theory, collaborative narrative construction, and the concept of the Anthropocene. Alongside this study, students research, draft, and present the Senior Research Paper ("Graddy Essay"), a 20-30-page research paper.

Mathematics

All mathematics courses at Olney integrate numerical and graphical approaches, and all require students to articulate what the math represents verbally and/or in writing. Many students complete five courses in four years, doubling up on Geometry and Algebra 2 during their sophomore year and finishing with BC level Calculus. Nevertheless, students who prefer to proceed at a gentler pace receive the support they need. The earlier years develop the grammar of algebra and deductive logic, stressing the algorithmic tools that enable greater freedom in the advanced courses. At a certain point, students move on from computation to creatively producing their own math. They must earn four high school math credits to graduate and must complete the program through at least Algebra 2.

Algebra 1

Students learn basic algebra skills in preparation for higher-level math courses. From real numbers and radicals to proportions and polynomials, the skills students learn in this class will serve them in all future math and many science courses. Furthermore, a solid grasp of Algebra will prove helpful in many calculations students will need to make in everyday life. Specific topics include Properties of Real Numbers, Graphing Linear Equations, Writing Linear Equations, Solving and Graphing Linear Inequalities, Systems of Equations, Exponents, Quadratic Equations, Polynomials and Factoring, and Radicals.

Geometry

Geometry develops the student's deductive reasoning skills through the study of spatial relationships. The course places an emphasis on proof. Topics include introductory terminology, segments and angles, triangle congruency, parallelism, similarity, circles, and area and volume. Occasionally, students will take advantage of Olney's campus for "geometry in real life" activities.

Algebra 2

The purpose of Algebra 2 is to increase students' level of sophistication in topics covered in Algebra 1. Material covered includes complex fractions, trigonometry, quadratic equations, imaginary numbers, direct and inverse variation, and systems of nonlinear equations. Students will practice word problems throughout the course.

Precalculus

The purpose of Precalculus is to prepare students for Calculus. Since Calculus demands familiarity with some pretty involved math, students will work to deepen algebraic skills in every topic covered. Students will spend the first semester exploring how to analyze and manipulate functions as a whole, rather than focusing on specific values. The thrust of the second is almost entirely advanced trigonometry and its applications, skills that are also crucial for Calculus. Even if the student never plans to go on to higher math, math develops logic and intuition, so students can line up their variables on one side of a question and get a well-reasoned response on the other.

Statistics

Statistics represents the most practical math conventionally offered at the high school level. Students directly and immediately use and benefit from math every day, whether reading an ad, buying a lottery ticket, understanding a survey, or just taking a chance. Numbers can be very convincing, and a solid basis in Statistics is necessary to distinguish whether they're being used for good or for deception. This course will cover data collection, descriptive and summary statistics, probability, distributions of one or more variables, regression, sampling and inference, and various methods of testing for good fit. Readings will include *Freakonomics* by Levitt and Dubner, *Moneyball* by Michael Lewis, and *The Signal and the Noise* by Nate Silver.

Calculus BC

Students slog through a lot of increasingly arcane math in high school. Calculus BC, typically the apex of the trajectory, is supposed to be the payoff, where it all finally starts to make sense. In the first semester, students explore limits and instantaneous rates of change (differentiation). In the second, the focus shifts to adding up infinite numbers of infinitesimally small quantities and the accumulation of change (integration). Throughout the year, students will marvel at the mysterious connection between these two unlikely pursuits. The course covers the entire AP Calculus BC curriculum in depth, including differential equations, series convergence, and function approximation. It does not include test preparation, opting to pursue other more advanced topics instead; students wishing to sit for the AP can request additional support outside of class.

Post Calculus

In the United States, high school math is often presented as a linear progression from basic algebra to advanced Calculus, with a possible brief detour into Statistics. Convention notwithstanding, math is a wide field of study with an arbitrarily large number of possible branches any interested student might choose to pursue. In Post Calculus, students will explore four of these areas: the logic peculiar to computer coding; the empirical math that is Statistics; a seminar on *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, by Douglas Hofstadter, that develops an investigation of applied formal and symbolic logic; and finally, Lobachevsky and other non-Euclidean geometries. The ambition of the course is not so much to extend mathematical knowledge, but to broaden and deepen it.

Lab Sciences

Olney's location, nestled between developed rolling farmlands and densely wooded Appalachian foothills, provides an opportune place to study contrasts. The campus is a source of Captina Creek, one of the last remaining clean, wild waterways in Ohio, surrounded by traditional coal mining and fracking. The Environmental Science course has long taken advantage of this setting to investigate watershed ecosystems and the impact of extractive industries on water quality and biodiversity. In the same way, the lab science program emphasizes practical lab work and hands-on, place-based learning.

Olney students must take four years of lab science. First-year students typically begin with Biology and progress to Chemistry as Sophomores. In the 2025–2026 school year, Physics will require advanced mathematics knowledge and will be open to all Juniors and Seniors.

Biology (9th Grade)

The study of life is a study of how millions of different types of living things survive on this planet. In many ways, the strategies are the same for all organisms, so students will study what unifies all life forms – the workings of cells and the mechanics of heredity. But because different species have very different approaches to survival, students will have units on evolution and ecology, to study how such diversity of life has arisen and how it interacts. The principles students study in the classroom will be illustrated in the fields, streams, woods, and farmland surrounding Olney.

Chemistry (10th Grade)

Chemistry is the branch of science concerned with the substances of which matter is composed, the investigation of their properties and reactions, and the use of such reactions to form new substances. Concepts covered in this class include properties of matter, the periodic table, chemical bonding, chemical reactions, and organic chemistry. This will be a lab-heavy course with a focus on learning concepts through application. Some examples of labs include studying mixtures by growing crystals and studying cross-linking by making slime.

Physics (11th or 12th Grade)

Physics is the branch of science concerned with the nature and properties of matter and energy. The subject matter of physics includes mechanics; heat, light and other radiation; sound, electricity, magnetism, and the structure of atoms. This will be a conceptual physics course with its mathematical concepts being conveyed through the language of Algebra and Geometry. Students will focus on applications, doing projects such as building wind turbines to study electromagnetic induction and building a trebuchet to study center of gravity and rotational mechanics.

Agricultural Science (11th Grade)

Agriculture is the science or practice of farming. This class will focus on sustainable agriculture and will use the school farm, greenhouse, and vegetable garden as laboratories. The class will be organized by seasons of the year and will focus on field and garden crops, greenhouse management, aquaculture, animal husbandry, and mycology. Agricultural Science will be required of all Juniors.

Environmental Science (12th Grade)

Environmental Science is a culminating science course at Olney. Following Conceptual Physics, Chemistry, and Biology, it draws on and expands the students' knowledge in these disciplines. Yet, the study of the environment is even more interdisciplinary than that. Students will learn of the interplay among economics, politics, ethics, and the sciences. They learn that solutions to environmental problems are simple and straightforward – until the human element is taken into consideration. A chief goal of this course is that the student gains greater awareness of how fragile the “human niche” in the web of life is, and of how their daily actions affect the environment. Students will be involved in “citizen science,” helping to establish a baseline for stream quality in our local watershed as gas and oil development becomes more prominent. In early May, selected students will have the opportunity to compete in Ohio's Envirothon.

Language

Olney requires any student who is not already bilingual to take at least three years of language classes, preferably Spanish; two of which must be in the same language.

Spanish I-IV

Spanish classes use the Comprehensible Input approach. This means students acquire language through extensive listening and reading in Spanish, rather than consciously memorizing lists of nouns and verb conjugations. Each week, they are introduced to between three and six new high-frequency linguistic constructions. These structures are made up of the most common words in the Spanish language. Students learn many additional words in class but are only tested on the target structures. Class discussions, creative story-making, readings, videos, and other activities are used to learn and practice the structures themselves. Because of the inclusive nature of this strategy, different levels of Spanish aren't distinguished in the conventional way: students don't learn the present tense in the first year and then the past in the second, etc. Nevertheless, each successive year is more advanced than the last. Classes offered range from Spanish 1-5.

Independent Studies

In recent years, Olney has offered closely monitored independent studies in Ancient Greek, French, Tagalog, and Swahili, and classes in Japanese and Chinese.

The Arts

Creativity is one of our unique human attributes. Art education at Olney helps students identify and develop their individual creativity, build confidence in their ability to express their ideas, and develop creative problem-solving skills. Creating art boosts critical thinking, teaching students to be more observant of their surroundings. Art education builds cultural awareness and sensitivity. The connection between art and academic achievement is well established.

Studio Art refers to electives like Drawing (observational to creative expressions in pencil, pen and ink, marker), Painting (working in oils, acrylics and watercolors), Photography (dark room development and experimentation with alternative printing techniques), Mixed media (block printing, book making, or paper mâché), Ceramics, or Sculpture. But the term "Arts" is applied more broadly at Olney and includes Filmmaking, Theater, Music, Welding, and Woodworking. Students are expected to take at least one or two quarter-credit arts courses every year, and are encouraged to take many more. A student must earn a total of 1.50 Arts credits to graduate from Olney Friends School. Some recent offerings follow:

Sketchbook

This course aims to help students who wish to develop their personal artistic practice through rigorous discipline. At the end of the course students should be able to look back through their sketchbook and measure their growth both in artistic expression and skill. Throughout the course, students will refer to their daily assignments as a launchpad for larger, more time-consuming projects. Examples of daily assignments are 10-minute portraits in ballpoint pens of a classmate, architectural drawings in charcoal, still life compositions, among others. Homework is usually a drawing from reference, and longer assignments are up to each student to develop.

Digital Film

In Digital Filmmaking, students make movies. Students learn about all aspects of film production, with an emphasis on scripting, storyboarding, visual storytelling, camera operation, film editing, and performance. Students will create a number of short, theme-based films. The final project will be a 10-minute-long narrative film, produced, written, directed, edited, and performed by students around a theme connected to a Quaker value.

Questions of Conscience, Practical Skills, and Electives

These courses explore a range of disciplines. The school requires students to take one Questions of Conscience (QoC, 0.25 credit) class each year, with Quakerism required for graduation. Practical Skills courses in Health and Financial Literacy (each 0.5 credit) are required by the state. Faculty and/or student initiatives dictate the balance of elective courses offered, so the following list of offerings in recent years may change.

Questions of Conscience

Quakerism at Olney

Required for graduation: While the leadership, faculty, and student body of Olney Friends School come from wonderfully diverse backgrounds, many of the school's unique traditions and practices have developed over the course of the long history of affiliation with Ohio Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). This one-quarter course explores connections between Olney today and the historical Faith and Practice of Ohio Friends. Through a variety of readings and class discussions, often shaped by interests and needs of the class, we grow in our understanding of Olney, Quakerism, and our individual personal journeys.

Business Ethics in a Global Context

How do companies with business units in various parts of the world make decisions? How do they navigate disparate legal, philosophical, and cultural forces to maintain their competitive advantage(s)? More importantly, what ethical and values-informed considerations should inform global business decision-making? This course will introduce students to some of the ethical challenges companies face in the normal course of business. Students will learn how to apply ethical lenses to real-world cases. A mix of peer-reviewed journal articles, pieces from the financial press, and chapters from John Kline's *Ethics for International Business* will guide our class discussions and presentations.

Restorative Justice in Post-Apartheid South Africa

A disturbing, flawed, and perfectly human process, in 1996 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission nevertheless gave voice to the voiceless—both victims and perpetrators—after the terrible and sustained violence of apartheid in South Africa. In some measure, it resulted in a kind of national forgiveness and has become the standard by which Transitional Justice in every part of the world is judged. This course will be a seminar based on *Country of my Skull*, by Antjie Krog, a poet and radio reporter who covered and lived the process from beginning to end. The book is a mix of straight reporting, philosophical and political reflection, and self-analysis. It is a difficult subject and a challenging text, but the rewards will be commensurate with effort.

Black Lives Matter

BLM is a movement begun in 2012 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, who had killed a seventeen-year-old African American named Trayvon Martin. It has since expanded to focus on all violence against African Americans, incarceration, the particular burden of black gay and trans folks, and justice for undocumented people of color. In this course we will discuss the police killing of Black men, the historical roots of racism and how it manifests itself throughout the United States and in our daily lives today, how the Black Lives Matter movement has responded, and the backlash against it. In a word, we will explore what it means to be Black in America. Classes will be based on student presentation and discussion; texts will include *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Race, Privilege, and Power

Where do individuals, organizations, and societies derive their power and influence? What accounts for inequities and inequalities in our societies? By taking a close look at one construction--race--we will spend the first quarter understanding these questions. By the end of this course, students will gain an appreciation for ways to challenge covert and overt systems of oppression. Required: Completion of bi-weekly reading assignments, participation in class discussions, and the ability to undertake challenging academic work. Deliverables: Two papers (mid-quarter and end of quarter) and one presentation.

Practical Skills

The school's farm, campus, and surrounding areas serve as natural laboratories where students learn about life and about themselves. Olney offers many courses that change the way we perceive the physical world and our role in it. From discovering the chemistry of ice cream to preparing for the zombie apocalypse, we believe in the importance of so-called real skills. Imparting both outdoor and life skills, our practical skills curriculum offers courses in farm culture, food literacy, and nature studies, all suffused by an approach to life that embodies simplicity. Two Practical Skills courses, Health & Sexuality and Financial Literacy, are required for graduation and are taught over two terms. Most others last for one term. Examples recently offered include:

Health and Sexuality

Required for graduation, 0.5 credit: Students learn the principles of physical, emotional, and social health, and how those three aspects overlap and interact in this one-semester course. They explore how everyday choices can affect their health, and evaluate sources of information that inform and influence those choices.

Financial Literacy

Required for graduation, 0.5 credit: Financial Literacy helps students engage with existing financial institutions and expectations and develop their individualized ideals and goals for their future financial selves. The class provides a foundation for real-life financial management and decision-making, including loans and monthly budgets. To encourage a healthy relationship with their future finances, students explore different ideas and examples of ways to engage with money.

U.S. Food Science

U.S. Food Science focuses on evaluating the U.S. food system from a variety of perspectives. Students will consider the biological, production, health, social, and environmental implications of food consumption. Students will also investigate the supply chains of corn, soybeans, wheat, chicken, pork, and beef in comparison to how Olney’s farm raises these products. The class will read sections from two main texts, *A Framework for Assessing Effects of the Food System* and *Introduction to the US Food System: Public Health, Environment, and Equity*. This class involves multiple projects, such as interviewing someone of another generation to see how food systems have changed over time, as well as a final project in which students compare heritage roosters to the industrial standard meat breed by observing and recording their growth and weight, butchering, and preparing them for a school meal.

Business Strategy in Context

What does it take for companies to succeed in rapidly changing business environments? Examining the components of a company's strategy and how they interact with multiple contexts (within and beyond its control) will give us some plausible answers to this question. This course will use one textbook, *Exploring Strategy* by Johnson et al., and articles from the financial press. Students will learn how to identify the drivers of sustained competitive advantage, assess organizational effectiveness, examine opposing views on strategy, uncover cultures within businesses, and gain an understanding of leadership styles that promote business success.

Your Voice

This elective will introduce students to some of the basics of public speaking, with an emphasis on how to tell their stories. Students will learn how to prepare effective presentations and manage their jitters. Required: Light reading, in-class activities, student creativity, and one presentation at the end of the quarter. No tests, exams, or papers.

Creative Writing

This course seeks to facilitate the students’ own creative writing endeavors. The subject matter of the class is driven by what the students seek from it. While this class is tailored towards building a story, that is certainly not the only type of creative writing, and they can pursue the form that fulfills them. This is a heavily student-guided class. Topics covered in this course will include, but are not limited to, worldbuilding, character development, scene writing, application of literary devices, pacing, and narrative structure.

Other Recent Electives

Film Studies

Film Studies is an elective devoted to film criticism. Students attend film screenings, participate in Harkness discussions, and produce a final paper (8-10 pages). Every year, this course centers around a different theme: recent classes have concentrated on women directors, French New Wave cinema, movie musicals, and the films of Studio Ghibli.

Women’s Stories: Walker, Kingston, and Miller

What is feminist literature? *Circe*, by Madeline Miller, seeks to answer a couple of questions that

apparently never occurred to Homer: Why did Circe, a woman and a mother as well as a goddess and a witch, change all those poor sailors into pigs? Doesn't she deserve a story of her own, where Odysseus might show up as a minor character? Maxine Hong Kingston explores the expectations of her Chinese immigrant mother in *The Woman Warrior*; if she cannot give her long-lost aunt's name back, she can at least give her immortality. And in *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, Celie, with support from Shug, reclaims everything in her life, including her oppressors themselves, and makes something out of less than nothing. This elective will be about reading books, discussing them, and drawing what inspiration we can from their example.

Introduction to Sociology

In this class, students will discuss the development of sociology and the theories of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Cooley, Mead, and Freud. Students will discuss the concept of culture and the dimensions of human development, as well as the concept of evolutionary psychology. The class will discuss the different types and elements of social interactions. Students will explore the nature of religion and the basic elements of American Religion, the different types of societies, such as Hunting and Food Gathering, horticultural, industrial, and postindustrial societies.

African Self-Perceptions

Explorers, novelists, and journalists have traditionally reinforced preconceptions and false narratives about Africa. This course will examine Africa through the works of African authors and artists. *African voices offer a different perspective.* Fiction, music, art, poetry, and movies composed by Africans who have experienced Africa and the West provide a more nuanced understanding of the continent. This course will explore the rich diversity of African perspectives and challenge the preconceptions that shape Western views of Africa. *Authentic African identity is complex and contested.* Throughout the course, students will engage in debates about the meaning of Africa and African identity. This exploration will challenge students to think critically about the diverse experiences and perspectives that shape African self-perceptions.

Design for Learning

Since the 2019-2020 academic year, Olney Friends School has experimented with a transdisciplinary (TD) curriculum. This elective will examine the design of such a curriculum and the factors that promote effective learning at our school. Students will learn design principles and their application to Olney's curriculum. The course will introduce students to design principles and focus on how Olney Friends School can best implement a TD curriculum. Students will create a transdisciplinary course unit. Students will complete reading assignments, individual projects, and group projects. The final deliverable will be the foundation of one TD course unit for the first quarter of the 2025-2026 academic year.

School Calendar

See next page.



Calendar for the 2025-2026 Academic Year

DATE	EVENT
3-4 Sep	Faculty Workdays
5 Sep	All Students Arrive
6-7 Sep	Student Orientation
8 Sep	First Term Begins
13 Sep	Almost Anything Goes
19-20 Sep	Student Bonding
18 Oct	Homecoming
24 Oct	End of First Term
27 Oct	Second Term Begins
7 Nov	Story Slam
14 Nov	Thanksgiving Meal
22 Nov	Student Travel Day
22-29 Nov	Thanksgiving Break
30 Nov	Student Travel Day
14 Dec	Holiday Dinner
19 Dec	End of Second Term
20 Dec	Student Travel Day
21 Dec-3 Jan	Winter Break
4 Jan	Student Travel Day
5 Jan	Third Term Begins
6/12/20/27 Feb	February Fridays
13 Mar	Gym-Ex/End of Third Term
14 Mar	Student Travel Day
14-21 Mar	Spring Break
22 Mar	Student Travel Day
23 Mar	Fourth Term Begins
17 Apr	Celebration of the Arts
25 Apr	Poetry Slam
29 Apr	Junior Social
16 May	Student Weekend
17 May	Graddy Fair
28-29 May	Senior Final Exams
30 May	Senior Trip
1-2 Jun	Final Exams
2 Jun	End of Fourth Term
3 Jun	Campus Cleanup
4 Jun	Awards Ceremony
5 Jun	Alumni Gathering
6 Jun	Commencement
7 Jun	Student Travel Day
8-9 Jun	Faculty Workdays

September 2025							February 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30											

October 2025							March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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26	27	28	29	30	31		29	30	31				

November 2025							April 2026						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	26	27	28	29	30		
30													

December 2025							May 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
28	29	30	31				24	25	26	27	28	29	30
							31						

January 2026							June 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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