

## **Our Mission**

Packer educates students to:

- think deeply
- listen actively
- · speak courageously
- · act with purpose and heart

## Our Vision for Educational Excellence

Packer is a diverse community of learners in which each person is valued and challenged. We strive to be knowledgeable, empathetic, and engaged members of an interconnected and dynamic world.

## **How We Do This**

We inspire joy and purpose through transformative learning experiences that foster both intellectual development and social-emotional growth. We prioritize collaboration, reflection, and continuous improvement in service of student learning.

## How We Know We're Successful

We recognize our success in the varied contributions of our students, graduates, and school professionals — within and beyond our school community.

## **Our Values**

**Scholarship:** Promoting rigorous inquiry leading to deep understanding.

**Creativity:** Fostering discovery, imagination, and innovation.

**Equity:** Embracing diversity, expanding access, and nurturing belonging.

**Integrity:** Cultivating decency, honesty, grace, and personal responsibility.

**Joy:** Creating a community of positive energy and lively engagement.

**Respect:** Caring for oneself, for one another, and for the world around us.

## **Upper School Overview**

Packer's Upper School faculty, over 87% of whom hold advanced degrees, are dedicated to helping students to develop strengths and interests in academic, artistic, and athletic pursuits, as well as to grow through leadership and service. Our program offers interdisciplinary and project-based learning, the integration of technology, the opportunity for study beyond the walls of the school, and a balance between core academic requirements and student-selected areas of study. Packer's Upper School provides a learning environment that supports students in developing as individuals as well as members of a community. This approach fosters their development as critical thinkers, compassionate citizens, and engaged learners who understand the connection between what is learned in the classroom and lived in the world.

## Community

Our commitment to the diversity of the people in our community encompasses every social identifier, and regarding race specifically, our student body consists of 40% students of color. Upper School students commute from all parts of Brooklyn and Manhattan, and smaller numbers come from as far away as the Bronx, Long Island, and New Jersey. In 2022-23, 27% of our students received financial aid. Our community is strengthened by the inclusion of students from Prep for Prep, Oliver Scholars, A Better Chance, and other educational-access programs.

# THE **PACKER** COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

School Profile 2023-24

**Dr. Jennifer Weyburn** Head of School

Maria Nunes Head of Upper School

Nila Fortune College Counselor

Claudia Mendez College Counselor

Lisa Shambaugh College Counselor

### CEEB: 330790

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## **Upper School Curriculum**

Packer's highest level courses are designated as Advanced Topics (AT) classes, faculty-authored courses with academic rigor equal to or greater than AP courses.

For a full list of AT courses and their description, see the last two pages of the profile.

A schedule of five academic subjects is required for most students. Given the rigor of our overall program and our students' dedication to significant co-curricular endeavors, special permission is required for juniors to take more than two AT classes or for seniors to take more than three.

In evaluating Packer transcripts, it is important to understand that while there are multiple options for underclassmen to enroll in accelerated courses in math and science, prior to eleventh grade, there are no such opportunities in English and history.

## **Graduation Requirements**

Students typically complete courses of study that exceed the minimum requirements noted below. They also complete a community engagement requirement.

English: **4** Mathematics: **3** World Language: **3** Science: **3** History/Social Science: **3**  Computer Science: **.5** Arts (Visual Arts, Dance, Music, & Theater): **2** Electives: **2** Health: **1** Physical Education: **4** 

## Grading System

- Semester calendar
- Letter grades A through F, including pluses and minuses (*see grade distribution below*)
- Final grades for all courses excluding health and physical education are factored into an unweighted grade point average (GPA).
- Packer does not report class rank.

## Disciplinary Records

We believe students should respond with integrity to disciplinary questions from schools to which they apply, taking the time to reflect on the ways in which they have grown as individuals and as members of the community. Matters of discipline are not recorded on student transcripts. However, depending on the nature and gravity of the incident(s), Packer may choose to proactively report a student's disciplinary infraction to colleges.

## Enrollment

Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade: 1,070 students Upper School: 398 students Class of 2024: 100 students

## Accreditation

New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS)

### Grade Distribution 2022-23

Semester grade distribution for courses in which current juniors and seniors were enrolled during academic year 2022-23.

	Α	A-	B+	В	B-	C+	С	C-	D+	D	D-	F
English	225	103	60	24	5	4	1	1	1	3	0	2
World Language	203	52	31	11	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0
History	163	110	50	17	4	3	4	1	2	0	1	0
Math	206	95	57	46	15	5	7	3	0	1	2	0
Science	265	77	37	30	5	5	4	4	0	0	0	0
Computer Science	17	6	15	3	7	1	0	5	0	0	0	0
Arts	204	19	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

## The Packer Symposium

For two weeks, regular classes are supplanted by an array of intensive educational experiences that extend beyond the regular classroom. The Packer Symposium is defined by creative research, study, discussion, and action that engage Packer students and faculty in meaningful collaboration and intensive learning.

**Travel Program:** As juniors, the Class of 2024 traveled to Greece and Costa Rica. In Greece, one group explored the complexities of refugees, migration and diversity in modern Europe, while the other examined climate change, entrepreneurship, and sustainability on the island of Crete. In Costa Rica, students learned about and worked with community-based development efforts in rural areas, with one group traveling to the highlands north of San José and the other group traveling to the lowlands to the south. Our International Symposium is designed to ensure that every Packer graduate has the experience of using their collaborative and problem-solving skills to generate ideas in unfamiliar contexts, alongside people with whom they may not have a common language.

**Individual Explorations:** Freshmen, sophomores, and seniors select from course offerings shaped by the interests and passions of both students and teachers. Through in-depth study, discussions with scholars and experts, and field trips around the region, students explore a variety of topics, including scientific innovation, game design, the philosophy of happiness, and the intersection of physics and music.

## Independent Science Research Program

Packer offers a three-year sequence of study in the physical and life sciences, leading to two school years and two summers of laboratory research with professional scientists. Students in this program have received national recognition as well as credited publication in prominent scientific journals. Some may also receive college credit through the SUNY system.

## **Journalism Program**

There is a competitive selection process for students to participate in Packer's three-year Journalism program. It is a rigorous academic course with an emphasis on writing and research, in which students participate in Columbia's Scholastic Press Association annual conference, engage with award-winning journalists (both in and outside of the classroom), and mentor other developing journalists at Packer.

## **Student Leadership**

Peer Leadership and Peer Support programs offer students the opportunity to serve as mentors to younger students. Peer Leaders/Peer Supporters are selected by faculty and receive leadership training so they may provide a range of services, including tutoring and mediation, to younger students as they socialize and acclimate to Middle and Upper School life.

## **Independent Study and Senior Thesis**

These two programs allow students to personalize and deepen their individual interests while working one-on-one with a selected faculty mentor. All students present their research publicly and seniors are awarded academic credit for participating in the semester-long Senior Thesis program.

## **Global Opportunities**

Packer's Global Travel Programs offer students the opportunity to use the world as a classroom. These programs are mission-driven and are inspired by our commitment to expanding our curricular and co-curricular goals. We believe that stepping outside the walls of Packer gives us the unique opportunity to create bonds, deepen learning, and spark a global perspective. Through



the examinations of issues and subjects, passions, or connections with others, our Global Travel Programs develop awareness of important issues impacting our world, cultural competency and global literacy, engagement in another language, and empathy and responsibility.

## **Packer in Action Program**

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has long recognized Packer for its inclusive programming and its integration of diversity learning into every aspect of community life. A committee of students and adults collaborates in preparing an annual exploration in which the entire school participates in critical conversations about race, gender, equity, and diversity. The program includes seminars, presentations, and workshops developed and facilitated by Packer faculty and students, as well as by nationally recognized speakers, activists, and organizations.



Packer's Class of 2023

# **College Enrollment**

Listed below are the colleges and universities to which Packer graduates have matriculated in the past five years. Colleges in bold have enrolled one or more members of the class of 2023.

American University (2) Amherst College (4) Arizona State University (1) Babson College (1) Bard College (3) Barnard College (6) Bates College (10) Boston College (2) Boston University (3) Bowdoin College (9) Brandeis University (5) Brown University (12) Bryn Mawr College (3) Bucknell University (1) Carleton College (4) Carnegie Mellon University (3) **Case Western Reserve University (3)** Claremont McKenna College (4) Clark Atlanta University (1) Colby College (1) Colgate University (8) **Colorado College (8)** Columbia University (3) Connecticut College (1) **Cornell University (19)** Dartmouth College (4) Davidson College (3) Duke University (5) Emory University (14) ESSEC Business School (1) Falmouth University (1) Florida State University (1) Fordham University (2) Franklin & Marshall College (1) George Washington University (3) Georgetown University (3) Goucher College (1) Grinnell College (1) Hamilton College (7) Harvard University (4) Haverford College (1)

Ithaca College (1) Johns Hopkins University (2) Kenyon College (4) King's College London (1) Lafayette College (4) Lehigh University (2) Lewis & Clark College (1) Macalester College (1) Marist College (2) Maryland Institute College of Art (2) McGill University (1) Middlebury College (7) MIT (1) Morehouse College (1) Morgan State University (1) Mount Holyoke College (1) New York University (7) Northeastern University (12) Northwestern University (9) Oberlin College (9) Occidental College (4) Otis College of Art and Design (1) Pennsylvania State University - University Park (2) Pitzer College (5) Point Park University (1) Pomona College (6) Princeton University (6) Purdue University (1) Queen's University (1) Reed College (2) Rhode Island School of Design (2) Rice University (3) Richard Bland College (1) Rochester Institute of Technology (1) Royal Holloway University of London (1) Santa Clara University (2) Santa Monica College (1) School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1) Skidmore College (12) Smith College (3)

Stanford University (4) State University of New York - Binghamton (2) Swarthmore College (1) Syracuse University (1) Trinity College (2) Trinity Western University (1) Tufts University (19) Tulane University (17) Union College (2) Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona) (1) University of California - Berkeley (4) University of California - Los Angeles (1) University of California - Santa Barbara (1) University of California - Santa Cruz (1) University of Chicago (4) University of Colorado - Boulder (3) University of Connecticut - Storrs (1) University of Edinburgh (1) University of Maryland - College Park (1) University of Massachusetts - Amherst (0) University of Miami (3) University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (7) University of Notre Dame (2) University of Oregon (1) University of Oxford (1) University of Pennsylvania (4) University of Richmond (4) University of Rochester (4) University of Southern California (6) University of St Andrews (3) University of Texas - Austin (3) University of Virginia (5) University of Wisconsin - Madison (7) Vanderbilt University (6) Vassar College (3) Wake Forest University (4) Warren Wilson College (1) Washington University in St. Louis (10) Wesleyan University (20) Williams College (2) Yale University (7)

# **Packer's Advanced Topics Curriculum**

The Advanced Topics (AT) Program is defined by the following characteristics: intellectual rigor; authentic real world work; demonstrations of mastery; performance-based learning featuring student-driven design; analysis and synthesis of varied texts; active scholarship; and original research. In accordance with Packer's mission, AT courses require students to *think deeply, listen actively, speak confidently, and act with purpose and heart.* 

Advanced Topics in American Government, AT American Government This course asks students to explore the philosophical and constitutional underpinnings of the United States political system and examine how they have evolved today. Ongoing attention to current issues helps students to make connections between theory and the real world. The course is designed to equip students to become informed citizens, practiced and poised to engage with their surroundings. The course concludes with a local government project in which every student selects a current issue facing New Yorkers. Then, they conduct scholarly research, engage with local political action organizations and policy experts, and consider different outcomes for a better future.

#### Advanced Topics in Archival Research, AT Archival Research

In this course, students will conduct original research to gain insight into history by using materials held in The Packer Collegiate Institute's archives, located at the Brooklyn Historical Society. Students will present their research in two forms: first, in the composition of a scholarly essay suitable for submission to The Concord Review or comparable journals that publish high-quality work by high school students; and, second, in a public presentation at a research seminar held at the end of the year.

#### Advanced Topics in Biology, AT Biology

In this year-long course, students will develop their understanding of biology by using the framework of Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) in a collaborative classroom environment. Students will construct and communicate evidence-based models they develop either by examining historical data or by generating their own evidence. The sequence of units will parallel historical scientific thinking to provide students with an opportunity to understand how scientific to know and build models. Grounded in evolutionary thinking, students will explore experimental methods and statistical analyses common in biology and answer questions such as: how do cells communicate on a molecular basis, how can we use our understanding of cellular communication and gene expression to engineer genes using biotechnology, and how does life use and transfer energy?

#### Advanced Topics in Chinese Conversation and Culture, AT Chinese

Chinese Conversation and Culture is a full-year course intended for qualified students who are interested in completing Chinese language studies equivalent to a level 200 college course. The objectives are to refine and further develop students' abilities to conduct semi-formal or formal discussions about social-cultural issues, to increase vocabulary by making context-based guesses about the meaning of a new word, to write and present fully developed narratives and structured arguments, and to learn to appreciate Chinese literature. This course is conducted entirely in Chinese.

#### Advanced Topics in Choreography, AT Choreography

This course provides the opportunity for the in-depth study of choreography, improvisation, performance skills, and personal creative process through advanced compositional assignments and performances. A major focus of the class is the required participation as a choreographer in the Dance Concert and other showcases, which includes a good deal of time in mandatory after-school rehearsals. While learning the craft of composition or "dance-making" is the most obvious element of this course, students also learn about costume design, lighting, leadership, and collaborative concert production. Attendance at one performance of a professional dance company and individual conferences with the teacher are also required.

# Advanced Topics in Computer Science, AT Computer Science: Data Science; AT Computer Science: Web Technologies

Packer offers two advanced Computer Science Courses for students. These courses emphasize student independence, the importance of reading and generating documentation, and growing strong debugging skills. In the Data Science course, students explore the main ideas of data science through project-based explorations. Students develop an understanding of data analysis, sampling, correlation/causation, bias and uncertainty, probability, modeling with data, making and evaluating data-based arguments, and the power of data in society. The course explores this topic through Python coding and specifically the pandas and matplotlib packages. Students engage in algorithm design and object oriented approaches by developing a portfolio of complex student-driven projects. In the Web Technologies course, students learn how to develop a Full Stack Website. They begin with front end development utilizing HTML, CSS and JavaScript to create user friendly, well structured websites. They progress to back end development learning to use databases, web frameworks and REST API approaches to create more complex functional websites. Students engage in an in- depth investigation and a final project website design challenge to showcase their advanced understanding.

#### Advanced Topics in Calculus I and I/II, AT Calculus I and AT Calculus I/II

AT Calculus I and AT Calculus I/II explore much of the content typically covered in the first semester and first year of college, respectively. Learning will be discovery-based and will emphasize a multi-representational approach to calculus, in which students learn to express concepts graphically, numerically, analytically, and verbally. Abstract thinking, mathematical modeling, and original research will be key components of the class. The accelerated pace of AT Calculus I/II allows students to explore polar and parametric functions, sequences and series, integration by parts, partial fractions, and Euler's Method, in addition to the topics covered in AT Calculus I.

#### Advanced Topics in English, AT English: Conflict and Culture in Dramatic Literature; AT English: Unconventional Narratives; AT English: Time and Memory in Literature

While all English classes at Packer are taught at a high level, AT English engages students who wish to delve into complex, nuanced, and sophisticated texts in a fullyear course that encourages advanced scholarly research and the contextualization of works of literature. Conflict and Culture in Dramatic Literature focuses on antagonisms big and small between countries, between religions, and between individuals, as well as their immediate and long-term social and personal consequences. Unconventional Narratives focuses on literature that departs from the conventional with a particular attention to works that break new ground, experiment with structure and storytelling, and offer multiple perspectives. Time and Memory in Literature focuses on the ways in which concepts of time and memory shape the structure, content, and experience of exploring a text. Also, the class looks at ways in which notions of time are culturally encoded.

#### Advanced Topics in European History, AT European History

Advanced Topics in European History is a discussion-based course that tracks the evolution of Western society from the 16th century to the 21st century. In the first semester, we use primary sources— journals, letters, arts, literature, and physical remains— alongside scholarly secondary works to trace the intellectual and cultural roots of modern Europe from the Renaissance to the era of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. In the second semester, students will explore the relationship of industrialism, nationalism, and imperialism to the cataclysmic events of the 20th century: World War I, the Russian Revolution, and World War II. As the culminating project of the course, second-semester students will undertake a long-term archive-based research paper. Advanced Topics in European History provides instruction in how to write analytical essays; interpret maps; evaluate statistical data; analyze architecture, sculpture, and painting; and assess the accuracy of literary and cinematic portrayals of historic events.

# Advanced Topics in French I/II, AT Francophone Caribbean and AT Francophone Cinema

These classes are designed to help students build upon the foundational skills they have gained by adding more accuracy and precision to their use of the language, and to help them deepen their understanding of the Francophone world. With a focus on the Caribbean, namely Haiti, la Martinique, and la Guadeloupe, the goal of the Caribbean class is to provide a better understanding of a decolonial history of the region through films, texts, podcasts, interviews, and discussions. The Francophone Cinema course builds upon the students' cultural knowledge, and guides them through deepened cultural understanding and plot analysis of films from all over the Francophone world. These classes are taught exclusively in French, and designed to be highly interactive and student-centered.

## Advanced Topics in the History and Literature of Slavery, AT History and Literature of Slavery

This course takes as its central topic the rise of Atlantic African capitalist slavery, its life in narratives, and its continuing life in our contemporary memory. By examining the links between the enslaved past and present, students investigate the ways in which the "memory" of slavery still weighs upon the present to shape our lives. Students will read historical sources from the time of slavery narrating the lived experience of the enslaved and the slaver, contemporary historical scholarship uncovering themes and patterns in the slave past, and contemporary novels fictionalizing the lives of those bound to the institution of slavery. By Investigating how free and enslaved peoples narrated and lived slavery in the past, as well as how white and Black Americans remember and live slavery today, students must grapple with complex and undying claims the past has on the present.

#### Advanced Topics in History: The Middle East, AT Middle East

This Advanced Topics course explores the history of the Middle East, beginning with an investigation of the term "Middle East" and a discussion of socio-cultural, economic, and political diversity within the region. This historical study will include investigations of imperialism and its lasting effects on the region; the rise of nationalism; understandings of modernity, and social, cultural, and political movements, among other topics. Students will engage with scholarly debates and intellectual frameworks that have informed the study of the region, reading texts that include theory, history, anthropology, and memoir. They will interrogate primary and secondary sources throughout the course, developing their critical reading, writing, and research skills.

#### Advanced Topics in Inorganic Chemistry, AT Chemistry

AT Inorganic Chemistry is the equivalent of a college-level survey of advanced inorganic chemistry incorporating intensive lab work. Topics will include, among others, kinetics, thermodynamics, and electrochemistry. The course will feature multi-stage labs that culminate in formal reports. Topics will be approached in a way that facilitates a complex array of engagement strategies, involving higher-level mathematics, theoretical modeling, and synthesizing existing knowledge to solve new problems.

#### Advanced Topics in Latin, AT Latin: Literature of the Roman Empire; AT Latin: Virgil

In AT Latin: Literature of the Roman Empire, students explore selections from the works of Ovid, Tacitus, Seneca, and others. They investigate the conventions, literary styles, and characteristics associated with these authors and discover the historical, cultural, and political context of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods. The course focuses on the various ways that historians, poets, and philosophers questioned the social, economic, and political systems of imperial Rome. In AT Latin: Virgil, students experience the epic Roman poetry of Virgil's Aeneid and discover the conventions, literary styles and characteristics associated with the genre of epic poetry. They explore the cultural and social context within which the literature was created, with an emphasis on the political perspectives and the historical events that accompanied the transition from the end of the Roman Republic to the advent of the Empire. The course is designed to provide students with the guidance, confidence, and skills necessary to read, discuss, and analyze this seminal work of Latin literature.

# Advanced Topics in Mathematics: Proof and Structure, AT Math: Proof and Structure

Advanced Topics in Mathematics: Proof and Structure is a college-level seminar in abstract mathematical reasoning and its applications to the field of discrete mathematics. Students in this course will be challenged not only to find and explain interesting connections in mathematics, but also to subject them to the rigorous standards of mathematical proof. To that end, we will study the prose, structure, and technique of proof, subsequently applying these strategies of mathematical argumentations to problems in set theory, number theory, and combinatorics.

#### Advanced Topics in Mathematics: Mathematical Symmetry and Transformations, AT Math: Mathematical Symmetry and Transformations

Students will explore topics in college-level mathematics through problem-solving and proof writing. The class will begin with an overview of proof techniques and mathematical habits of mind before launching into an inquiry-based study of graph theory. Students will also investigate topics in linear algebra, including the theory of matrices, linear transformations, and vector spaces. The course will culminate in a survey of abstract algebra, including groups, rings, and fields. Applications of group theory will be emphasized.

#### Advanced Topics in Organic Chemistry, AT Organic Chemistry

In this course, students will develop an understanding of the relationship between chemical structure and function in order to predict and explain patterns of reactivity for organic compounds. The curriculum addresses a range of topics typically found in a college-level organic chemistry course, such as systematic naming, molecular orbital theory, stereochemistry, various reaction mechanisms, and retrosynthetic analysis. Students will come to a better understanding of the chemistry behind physiological processes discussed in biology, learn to apply the fundamental principles of interactions between organic substances to novel situations, and gain fluency with the basic reactions that allow chemists to build new complex molecules in the laboratory. They will also explore the nexus of organic chemistry, industry, economics, politics, and public opinion.

#### Advanced Topics in Photography, AT Photography

Through their creative efforts and their ability to "read" and analyze photographs orally and in writing, students in AT Photography are encouraged to push the limits of their creativity and conceptual understanding. Portfolios will be reviewed by a panel of professional photographers who will give formative feedback during the year as well as a summative evaluation at the end. Students will learn to read images with a more critical mind and eye by increasing their ability to observe with great care and to follow intuitive leads suggested by the content. The students' approach to photography will be multifaceted, a melding of the cognitive, visual, and emotional.

#### Advanced Topics in Physics, AT Physics

This course focuses on the development of quantitative and inductive reasoning skills through the study of physics. Working in small groups, students will conduct hands-on activities, often designing their own investigations. These investigations serve as the foundation from which students develop conceptual and mathematical models to explain a wide range of physical phenomena, from dynamics and wave mechanics to optics and electricity and magnetism. Students will also learn basic coding to generate their own computer models that simulate physical phenomena. An overarching goal for students throughout the curriculum is learning to effectively communicate scientific principles to their peers.

## Advanced Topics in Spanish, AT Spanish I: Human Rights; AT Spanish II: Literature and Culture

AT Spanish Language and Culture (replaced by the Human Rights course moving forward) is a course in which students work to expand, refine, and put to use their advanced Spanish language skills through the study of a series of thematic units exploring the issues, ideas, and attitudes most compelling to contemporary Spanish speakers in today's world. Working with an array of authentic texts, audio, and other materials, students will focus on reading critically, investigating and questioning historical context, author bias, influences, and tone when tackling readings of various types. AT Spanish Literature and Culture introduces students to texts such as short stories, novels, poetry, and essays from across the Spanish-speaking world, with a special emphasis on Latin America. Literature is examined within the context of its time and place, as students reflect on the many voices and cultures present in the readings. The course includes a strong focus on cultural connections and comparisons, including exploration of various media such as art, film, articles, and literary criticism. Both courses are conducted entirely in Spanish.

#### Advanced Topics in Statistics, AT Statistics

Students will learn how to understand the data and statistics that are pervasive in the world today and to draw their own conclusions. By examining how data and statistics are gathered, how they are analyzed, and what conclusions can and should be made, students will become statistically literate. Students will dissect headlines touting recommendations based on research and dig deeper with careful readings of scientific studies. Students will also study the designs of classic experiments from the field of psychology and behavioral economics, and will design and implement their own statistical studies and experiments.

#### Advanced Topics in Studio Art, AT Studio Art

With an emphasis on painting, printmaking, mixed media, and drawing, this course encourages students to discover, develop, and push their creativity. Students will create a portfolio that will place a strong focus on the development of personal voice and encourage creative thinking and problem solving. Using New York City galleries and museums to inspire their own work, students will learn to be self-reflective and make connections with larger audiences.