



PROGRAM INFO & COURSE CATALOG

What is J-Term?

Taking place January 13-30, 2025 in the three weeks following Winter Break, J-Term is Walnut Hill's annual three-week student-centered January term, during which time our entire student and faculty communities engage in classes and activities that encourage all to:

- **Explore** unfamiliar subjects, concepts or art forms
- **Experiment** within a space where it is safe to fail and make mistakes
- **Innovate** by applying new ideas or methods to learning or artistic practices
- **Nurture our community** through personal self-care, collaborative creation, and community service.

For our faculty, J-Term is a time to pilot new courses, teach courses outside their main area of focus at Walnut Hill, partner directly with students to develop educational offerings, collaborate with fellow faculty members, and lead travel programs to local and international locations.

For students, J-Term is a time to enjoy no academic homework and a more relaxed class schedule and grading expectations, see and hear guest artists and speakers, go on field trips, work collaboratively with your friends, and take on a more active role in the development of your educational program through opportunities to share your ideas, propose courses, co-teach classes, and support faculty as a Teaching Assistant.

J-Term concludes with the J-Term Showcase, a day of student performances and presentations, a fun campus-wide sharing of J-Term experiences.

There will be no classes on Friday, January 31 so students and faculty may prepare for the start of the spring semester on Monday, February 3.

How does J-Term work?

The J-Term schedule consists of four main sections:

Project (*Mandatory for students Grades 9-12*): Taking place from 9:00-10:45 am Tuesday-Friday, Project courses are guided by faculty, sometimes in partnership with student co-teachers or Teaching Assistants, and with plenty of room for student creativity, input and agency. Each project creates space for students to collectively explore and respond to interesting topics, to react to needs within the community, or to challenge themselves by creating collaborative works of art within certain set criteria. Classes are taught by faculty and staff. Some classes have been proposed and will be co-taught by your classmates.

Students will be taking 1 (one) Project course during J-Term. You will be given the option to indicate your top four choices of course on your registration form.

Flex (*Optional for most students*): Flex periods take place from 10:45-11:30 am Tuesday-Friday, and provide time for students to receive extra help, brush up on skills before the spring semester, or to keep yourselves in academic practice. Flex periods are optional, though some students may be required to attend specific sections of Math. You will be notified by the Math department if this is the case. Flex periods will be offered in the following subjects:

- ELL
- French
- Spanish
- Math (some students may be required to attend)
- Community Meditation
- Senior Meetings with College Counseling

Explore (*Mandatory for Grades 9-11; Optional for grades 12-PG*): Taking place opposite lunch from either 11:30am-12:40 pm or 12:20-1:30 pm, Explore classes are required for grades 9-11, and optional for grades 12-PG. They are an opportunity for you to - you guessed it - explore! Try something new! Test out arts skills outside of your major, or learn skills that will help you establish healthy lifestyles and good citizenship. Classes are taught by faculty and staff. Some classes have been proposed and will be co-taught by your classmates.

Students may take 1 (one) Explore class during J-Term. You will be given the option to indicate your top three choices of class on your registration form.

Arts Classes (*Mandatory for all students*): Afternoon arts class activities are determined by each department head, and vary from department to department. Below is a brief description of what each department has planned:

- **Dance:** Regular dance training will continue with classes taking place between 2pm and 6:30 pm each day. The annual Student Choreographic project will also begin during this time, allowing students to step into the role of choreographer and cast and direct their peers in their works. Dance rehearsals will take place during e-list hours.

This year, each choreographer will be required to partner with one or more students from a different department to foster true collaboration between art majors. This is a time for students to explore their creativity and test out their ideas. All students participating in the Student Choreographic project will have time during the Explore Block to work with their collaborators from other departments. Facilitated by Mica Romulo, this Explore period will count as each participating student's Explore class.

- **Music:** One of the primary goals of the Music Department's annual January Project is to bring all of our Music Majors together as a full department for group performances. This year, the department will prepare three pieces for performance as part of our J-Term Showcase:
 - Francesca Geminiani - La Folli Variations (arr. Michi Wiancko)
 - Parker Quartet playing in ensemble/coaching ensemble
 - All string majors participate
 - Michi Wiancko (Boston Conservatory faculty) will be a visiting artist/coach
 - Mark Tipton - Peace Invocation
 - All jazz majors participate
 - Additional classical instruments TBA
 - Mark Tipton as composer
 - Choral/Orchestral Piece
 - Will Cooper to conduct
 - All Music Majors will sing unless in the ensemble
- **Theater:** Theater students will continue their weekly training with slight modifications to the class schedule. Additionally, the Theater winter season will be in full swing, with students rehearsing for the Children's Show, Student-Directed Plays, and Winter Play.
- **Visual Art:** Visual Art students will be creating and critiquing works in student led collaborative groups, inspired by visits to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. This will be followed by a J-Term student exhibit in the Pooke Gallery.

The department will also be welcoming and learning from 3 amazing VA alumni guest artists who have worked professionally in very different art world spheres:

- Jeane Cohen, a successful teacher and exhibiting artist who had her first solo

- museum exhibit last year.
 - Christine Waggoner is one of the original animators for Pixar and is still involved in many major productions.
 - Emanuela DeMuis is a visiting lecturer at Mass College of Art and Design, and is a profoundly talented painter in her own right who was an early leading member of the Academy of Realist Art Boston.
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- Writing, Film & Media Arts: WFMA students will engage in collaborative group work and learn from and work with professional filmmaker Harley Chamandy. Harley will lead workshops with the students and screen his award-winning film, *Allen Sunshine*. Students will use the workshops to springboard into a collaborative storytelling intensive.

Course Selection Process

Students will select their top four Project course choices, and top three Explore class options via the [J-Term 2025 Student Registration form](#). (Seniors & PG students have the option to opt out of Explore.) The Associate Director of Educational Programs will place each student, to the best of their abilities, according to each student's preferences. The deadline for registration is Thursday, November 21.

All students will be placed in one of the classes they have selected; they will not be placed in a course they did not select as an option unless they do not submit their J-Term registration form. Every effort will be made to place students in one of their top course selections. Some courses are extremely popular, meaning only a percentage of students who selected those courses will be placed in their top choice.

Students who proposed and are co-teaching a class, or have been assigned to a class as a Teaching Assistant - either Project or Explore - will be automatically registered for the corresponding course.

The Expectations

In alignment with Walnut Hill's institutional expectations and core values, students and faculty are expected to set and follow community norms, to be present, on-time, and well-prepared for their J-Term classes.

The Academic Weight

Students will receive a *Pass* or *Fail* grade for their J-Term classes at the end of the semester. These grades will be included on the student's transcript. Course goals and expectations will

be shared by each faculty member at the start of each course to ensure student understanding. Arts classes will be graded based on the rubric specific to each department.

Student co-teachers and Teaching Assistants will receive a note on their transcript indicating their leadership role within their corresponding classes.

Drop/Add Period

Students may not drop or add a Project course once they have been placed. Students in grades 9-11 will have until the end of day Wednesday, January 15 to switch their Explore class if availability allows. Seniors and PG students will have until the end of day Wednesday, January 15 to drop, switch or add an Explore class. After January 15, students will not be able to drop or switch classes and they will receive a *Pass/Fail* grade for the classes in which they have been placed.

Attendance

All students registered in a J-Term class are expected to attend each class unless excused. Students are responsible for communicating with their teachers when they are absent. Parents of day students are expected to communicate any student absences to Attendance@walnuthillarts.org.

The following attendance guidelines will apply to J-Term:

- Students that acquire 4 or more unexcused or excused absences in either a Project course or Explore class will earn a *Fail*. To have absences excused, students must go through the standard channels (Health Center, College Counseling, etc.).
- Students who acquire more than 3 excused absences in a Project or Explore class due to illness or other-related reasons only will be graded on the class periods they were able to attend throughout J-Term.

Senior Friendly Classes 😊

Senior students planning to be traveling for college or company auditions, interviews or visits at some time during J-Term who know in advance that they will be missing some of their J-Term classes, are encouraged to look for classes marked with the smiley emoji above. Classes with this marking are Senior Friendly classes, or non-sequential classes for which their occasional absence will not have a negative impact on their ability to engage in the learning when they are present, or the ability of the class to move towards a collaborative goal in their absence.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the 2025 J-Term program, please reach out to Erin Young, Associate Director of Educational Program at eyoung@walnuthillarts.org.

J-TERM COURSE CATALOG

Registration is due Thursday, 11/21. If you have not submitted your [J-Term 2025 Registration Form](#) by the end of the day on this date, you will be placed according to class availability. To ensure you have a choice in your class assignments, you must submit your registration form on time!

Students will learn of their course placements on Monday, December 16.

PROJECTS 9:00-10:45 am TWRF

Project courses are **mandatory for students in grades 9-12**. Each student is required to participate in 1 (one) Project class during J-Term. Please select your top four course options on the J-Term Registration Form.

♥ = *Student Co-Teacher* 😊 = *Senior Friendly Class*

A Clockwork Dream: Storytelling with Lightbox Puppetry 😊

[Watch a video about this class!](#) Work together to create new characters, new settings, and new stories around the theme “A Clockwork Dream.” Explore and master the unique medium of flat lightbox puppetry - a dynamic form of live movie animation. Come to create and play together, solve weird storytelling problems, and make live movie magic! The workshop will be motivated and framed by a final live performance of our original stories.

A Séance on the Hill: (Re)Making Art at the Walnut Hill Archive 😊

Bring lost art back from the dead! Students will explore the Walnut Hill archives to find hidden treasures that they will then use to inspire new works of their own. They will research some contextual cultural history while creating a new, original work of art, in any medium that is a recreation, response to, or otherwise inspired by the materials they discovered in the archive.

A Séance on the Hill: (Re)Making Art at the Walnut Hill Archive (continued)

Students will present their work alongside a short statement about their piece and their process of creating it.

Art in Stride: 10 Winter Walks 😊

Artists, philosophers, and even Stanford researchers have suggested a positive correlation between daily walking and creativity, but what do we at Walnut Hill find to be true? In this class, we will embark on ten guided daily walks, always leaving from and returning to campus, no matter the weather, with the goal of deepening our understanding about the connection between daily movement and creativity. Our project will also be practical: formulating guidelines for fellow Walnuts on how to safely embark on long cold-weather walks as well as a map of realistic walking routes near campus.

Arts & Community 💜

[Watch a video about this class!](#) Arts & Community gives students the opportunity to share their art with people outside the Walnut Hill bubble. Performing artists can prepare a short concert, skit or dance, while visual artists can help people learn drawing, painting or sculpting. Last year, the Arts & Community class brought art to people of all ages and abilities from special needs preschoolers to elderly people with dementia. Join Arts & Community and bring your art out into the world where it belongs!

Creative Collaboration Through Dungeons & Dragons 💜

In this class, we will develop collaboration, visual thinking, and creative writing skills by creating and playing Dungeons & Dragons. The first week will center on building and designing a world from scratch while studying the worldbuilding/writing techniques of artists and organizations like J.R.R Tolkien, Suzanne Collins, and Bethesda Game Studios. During the second and third weeks, we will split off into smaller groups and use a simplified system of Dungeons & Dragons to play, explore, and further develop our worlds with the goal of developing personal connections through our collaboration.

D'oh! A Class You Knead 💜 😊

[Watch a video about this class!](#) During the first half of this course, the organizers will share some of their dough-based family recipes for participants to make. There may be the opportunity for some of the participants to share one of their own family recipes to make with the class during the second week. In week three we will split into smaller groups and choose one recipe per group (either a new recipe or one we made previously). The goal is to then film an educational (cooking show style) video, teaching others how to make the food. Possible recipes include bagels, challah, pasta, pizza, focaccia, pastries, and/or cookies.

Engineering Maquettes: 3D Polymer Clay & Wire Modeling

This will be an exciting journey for creative minds! In this hands-on Project course, participants will explore the enchanting world of modeling, acquiring the art of transforming polymer clay and other materials into a three-dimensional creation: a human or human-like character. The course strengthens a mix of inspiration, physics engineering and imagination, allowing each artist to develop their own style.



Engineered maquettes

Herstory in Heels: Drag Heritage & Persona Development 💜

[Watch a video about this class!](#) This course will explore the rich history of drag as an art form, following its cultural impact and evolution as a poignant form of artistic expression and source of queer joy. The study of the history and intersectionality of drag, as well as the lives of past and present drag icons will aid students on a journey of self-discovery as they work to create their own drag persona.

Les arts dans le monde francophone (Art Throughout the Francophone World)

Students will be exposed to and will discuss, compare, and contrast art pieces and artists from countries of the Francophone world. We will cover visual arts, music, and film of the 20th and 21st centuries. Students will learn about the artists behind the artworks and the historical and social contexts they lived and worked in.

Massachusetts in the Movies 😁

In this class, we will explore settings and themes in a range of films that take place in - and in some way comment on - our home: Massachusetts. Drama, biopic, comedy, horror, action... man, this state has it all. So let's watch some movies and piece together a few ideas about how our state is portrayed and portrays itself, the interplay between stereotypes and identity, who does get representation, what that looks like, and who doesn't appear on screen.

Math SAT Preparation

Open to Grade 10 & 11 students only; priority will be given to Grade 11 students

Unlock your full potential with our intensive Math SAT Preparation course! Through targeted diagnostic tests, tailored practice problems, and pacing strategies, we will equip you with the tools to maximize your score. Join us to build confidence and master the content and strategies needed to get as many points as possible. Our collaborative project will be the creation of a study guide that summarizes the strategies that we developed in this course.

Movement for Wellness

[Watch a video about this class!](#) The mission of the Movement for Wellness program is to create an opportunity for students to develop an understanding of how to engage in physical activity to benefit their wellness and learn skills to continue with their wellness after the program has ended. The project will have various levels of active programming, off-campus trips, as well as an independent research component to promote a holistic understanding of physical wellness. The end product of this program is for students to have built a resource collection of exercise and wellness skills, knowledge in fitness, basic anatomy, gym equipment, exercise programming, and the confidence and ability to continue their physical wellness journey.

Sneaker Design

In the Sneaker Design class for J-Term, students will explore the intersection of art, fashion, and function by creating their own unique sneaker designs. The theme for the class will be "Innovation in Motion," focusing on how creativity and technology can be blended to push the boundaries of traditional footwear design. Students will learn about the history of sneaker culture, analyze iconic designs, and understand how modern trends influence aesthetics and performance. Through hands-on activities, including sketching, prototyping, and using digital tools, they'll gain insight into materials, sustainability, and the production process. This class will emphasize innovation, allowing students to merge their personal style with practical design elements to create shoes that are both fashionable and functional. If time permits, students may also have the opportunity to decorate a sample pair of shoes and even a pair of their own from home, adding a personal touch to their overall learning experience.

Songwriting

[Watch a video about this class!](#) Few things are as magical as writing a song. Songwriting lets us return to familiar territory or explore unknown lands. We can bare our souls or try on someone else's clothes. We can play with words, channel musical influences, and surprise ourselves with what we've made. In this project, we'll explore the DNA of songs we love, experiment with techniques that help us use language in new ways, we'll Zoom with special guest songwriters, and share our songs with one another as well as with the Walnut Hill

Songwriting (continued)

community. Our primary focus will be lyric writing but we'll also put our words to music. Any prior music-making experience will be a plus.

Thrift & Flip 💜 😊

Do you enjoy thrifting and giving new life to unique items? This class teaches techniques for transforming secondhand finds into stylish, one-of-a-kind pieces. Do you have AUDITIONS? It's senior-friendly, so missing a few days is not a problem. Explore creativity through fashion and design in a welcoming, supportive, and fun environment. If you're passionate about sustainable style, consider signing up for "Thrift & Flip".

Walnut Hill Read-a-thon 2025 😊

Do you love to read or *want* to read...but never have the time? Maybe you devoured books when you were younger, but haven't finished a book outside of school in months (or even years). Join the Walnut Hill Read-a-thon to rediscover and awaken the joy of reading! Our project will include immersing yourself in books of your choice and creating a literary magazine of art and writing inspired by what you read.

What Matters? Experiments in Happiness & Wellbeing 😊

We're always hearing about things that are supposed to make us happier and more fulfilled: getting outside, helping others, mindfulness, exercise, play... But do these things really matter for our happiness? What works? In this class, we will try a new activity each day that might make us happier, like volunteering in the community, exercising, playing games, or gratitude journaling. After each day's "experiment", we will reflect on the experience. Maybe your life will change, and maybe not. The goal will be for each student to leave with some positive memories and a better understanding of yourself.

Yoga & Mindfulness for Artists 😊

In this class, we'll explore yoga and meditation to see how these practices impact our artistic work and overall health. We'll engage in daily mindfulness-related exercises, such as yoga (perhaps at a local studio), meditation, tai chi, walking in nature, playing games, journaling, or making art. At the end of the class, students will have the tools they need to practice mindfulness on their own, and will learn skills to lead a basic yoga or meditation session.



Yoga & Mindfulness class

FLEX PERIODS 10:45-11:30am TWRF

Flex classes provide time for you to receive extra help in a particular subject, brush up on your skills before the Spring semester, or just keep yourself in practice! These sessions are optional, but encouraged. Some students may be notified that they are required to attend Flex periods in math. The College Counseling Office will also be providing Senior Meetings during this period.

Below are the Flex sessions that will be offered this J-Term. A detailed schedule of these sessions will be shared prior to the start of J-Term.

ELL for Everyday Use with Kelly Geduldig

Students will practice their English using fun and practical techniques, from watching and discussing movies, to playing games, to walking downtown and ordering food and drinks. This class is strongly recommended for anyone in ELL Intermediate but open to anyone in ELL Intermediate or ELL Advanced. Not graded.

Drop-in French Help with Mme ZC

Stop by for open support in any level of French! Brush up on vocabulary, get a refresher after a long break in language study, conduct a grammar review through Francophone songs, or play French-language games.

Drop-in Spanish Help with Profe Bernal-López

Stop by for help with any level of Spanish, or to keep in practice with your language skills!

Math Help with Math faculty

Flex periods in all Math classes will be offered throughout J-Term by members of our Math faculty. Some students will be invited to attend these sessions regularly in support of their ongoing learning. Email notification will be provided to these students in advance of the Winter Break. All students wanting extra Math help are welcome to drop in!

Community Meditation with Kate Westhaver

Daily space will be provided for students and faculty to participate in focused mindfulness and meditation practice.

Senior College Meetings with the College Counseling Office

College Counseling will send out calendly invites to seniors for college meetings throughout J-Term.

EXPLORE CLASSES 11:30am-12:40 pm or 12:20-1:30 pm TWRF

Explore classes are **mandatory for grades 9-11**, and **optional for grades 12-PG**. Classes take place opposite lunch. Each student may participate in 1 (one) Explore class during J-Term. Please select your top 3 (three) project options on the J-Term Registration Form.

♥ = *Student Co-Teacher* 😁 = *Senior Friendly Class*

10 Poems in 10 Days 😁

This class will teach you how to create a poem in 45 minutes or less. Each session will start with a prompt designed to help you generate a poem by the end of class. We will explore Dada and Surrealist practices of automatic writing, as well as other techniques based on collage and chance. At the end of J-Term you'll leave with a chapbook of your work.

20th Century Popular Music ♥ 😁

This course will focus on the history of popular music in the United States from 1900-1999. Students will learn about and discuss the influence of music on popular culture, the ways in which music helps to define generations, and the impact it can have both in the present and for years to come.

Athletic Conditioning: TRX & HIIT 😁

In this course, we will be completing group workouts, like TRX and HIIT workouts, ideal for anyone looking to develop or maintain their physical fitness and support their mental health through movement. By working in a class environment, we will support and encourage each other as we challenge ourselves and build our physical and mental strength. This class is perfect for anyone who wants a good workout or who used to engage more in physical activities, like sports practices, before coming to Walnut Hill. We will be using Studio 1 in the Dance Barn as our home base, so make sure to bring a pair of clean shoes to class!

Community Building Through Nintendo Games 💜 😁

[Watch a video about this class!](#) Community Building Through Nintendo Games is centered around playing Nintendo games like Just Dance, Mario Kart, Mario Party, Overcooked, etc. The goal of the class is to create a fun and relaxed atmosphere where people can come together to build a sense of community and just have fun while playing games.

CPR & First Aid Certification Training

CPR (CardioPulmonary Resuscitation) and First Aid is a class where we learn how to provide life saving care to people having heart attacks, strokes and other life threatening conditions. Students who successfully complete this class will earn American Red Cross certification in CPR and First Aid--a nationally recognized certification that is valid for two years.

Empty Bowls Challenge, Part 2 💜 😁

Open to VA students with ceramics experience only

Empty Bowls Challenge, Part 2 is a creative community engagement project where participants craft handmade ceramic bowls to raise awareness and funds to combat hunger in our community. Participants not only develop artistic skills but also contribute to a meaningful cause, with proceeds from bowl sales supporting The Natick Service Council and raising awareness for food insecurity in our community. Join us in shaping art that supports our neighbors, and be a part of meaningful change through the power of pottery.

Experiencing Dream Interpretation Through Therapeutic Art 💜

[Watch a video about this class!](#) Discover more about yourself through the investigation of your subconscious. Experience the use of art as a therapeutic tool to reflect your internal world and possibly release unsurfaced details. This class offers a playful and safe space where students work together to complete individual and group art reflecting the thoughts and emotions perceived from dreams. Join and enjoy!

Exploring Japan: Language, Culture & Traditions 💜 😊

Discover the beauty of Japan through its language, art, and food! In this class, you'll learn basic Japanese phrases, practice calligraphy, fold traditional origami designs, and even cook popular Japanese dishes/sweets. Join us for an immersive experience into one of the world's most fascinating cultures!

Fiber Arts Studio 😊

Bring a project you're already working on, bring a garment to embellish, or start something completely new. All levels of experience, including total beginners, are more than welcome! Materials and help are available for knitting, crochet, sashiko-style embroidery, other styles of embroidery, small-scale quilting, and hand sewing.

Film History & Analysis 💜

Ever wonder how the film industry came to be what it is today? We will see both contemporary and historical films in class, then discuss their significance to the art. We'll also go into the fundamentals of filmmaking and discover how motion pictures evolved from being silent and black and white to being in technicolor and digital. We'll watch old and new movies and have discussions and debates if necessary!

Mindful Technology: Exploring the Technology in Our Lives

Are there elements of your screen time or phone use that leave you... unsatisfied? Unfulfilled? Wanting more? Come to this class if you're interested in exploring your relationship to screens in a friendly, supportive environment. We'll learn about the design behind some of our most-used apps and try some experiments related to our own technology use. The goal will be to enter the new year with a happier, healthier, more intentional relationship to our screens. Participants will have the opportunity to lead class activities and discussions if they like.

Tarot 101 & the Art of Divination 💜 😊

In this class, we will explore the Tarot cards, what they mean, and their histories as divinatory devices spanning back nearly 600 years. Each session will be split into two portions, the first of which will inform how specific cards were created to be interpreted, how they are interpreted now, and how we can adapt the artwork and meanings to our day to day lives. Half of every class will also include a hands on learning approach on reading the actual cards, where each student will get to use a tarot deck of their own that they can then take if they'd like to when the course is over.



Tarot cards

The Art of Discussion 💜 😊

The Art of Discussion is a course grounded in the idea of understanding each other better through improving upon our discussion skills. We will be engaging with short form writing and other medias, and we will explore the broader concepts and contexts related to them. We will follow these daily media interactions with discussions that may range from responding directly to the media we have interacted with to meta conversations regarding meaning, existing, knowledge itself, and much more. Join in order to understand each other and yourself better!

The Art of the Feed: Content Creation for TikTok & Instagram 💜 😊

Do you spend hours mindlessly scrolling social media? Do you feel more influenced than influential? Is there a TikTok dance you are learning or want to teach others? Have you always wanted to create a GRWM video? Now's your chance! Try your hand on the other side of the screen as a content curator for Walnut Hill! Over the course of J-term, we will plan, shoot, and edit an array of content that could be posted on the Walnut Hill TikTok and Instagram. Together, we will be able to show the world what Walnut Hill means to us and appeal to potential students and families.

Register for J-Term courses here! [J-Term 2025 Registration Form](#)