

AFS

Departmental Overviews

AFS

Upper School English

Sample Course Offerings

Themes in World Literature

This course explores fiction, drama and poetry from around the world. Emphasis is placed on the further development of writing skills through increasingly complex essays. Readings have included *Persepolis*, *Things Fall Apart*, and *Othello*, as well as poetry and short stories.

Film Studies

Film Studies focuses on digesting and analyzing film. In the course, students examine films featuring a diverse range of voices, time periods, and perspectives. They also learn to analyze the formal elements of filmmaking, like editing, sound, mise en scène, and lighting.

Utopian & Dystopian Visions in Literature

The class uses novels to provoke thought and discussion about how to define society. Readings have included works like *Utopia* and *Cat's Cradle*. Each student crafts their own utopia or dystopia, formulated over the course of the semester in response to written works and class discussion.

Magical Realism

In this course, students read a number of texts from different cultural contexts, including selected works of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid. Students study narrative form and techniques employed in this genre.

Program Highlights

★ Students have the opportunity to join a field trip to the Quintessence Theater to see Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part I and Part II* abridged.

★ 10th Grade Honors English features the Book Buddy Project, where Upper School students are paired with Fourth Graders with whom they collaborate to co-write a short book. This culminates in an end-of-the-year publication party.

Experiential Learning Opportunity

The Blue & White Newspaper

This student-run paper aims to create space for Upper School students to be fully expressive in transforming thoughts to actions, in order to build an innovative and collaborative community across all lines at Abington Friends School. Their mission is to accurately tell the story of Abington Friends School, while prioritizing respect in an effort to achieve journalistic integrity.



Explore More Online:



Upper School History

Sample Course Offerings

Industrialization & the Modern World

A series of thematic inquiry units asks students to consider historical case studies based on a single probing question, such as: How should our belief systems influence our lives and society? How can we balance the rights and responsibilities of governments and citizens?

Global Perspectives of Gender & Sexuality

This course looks at gender & sexuality diversity from a global perspective. The course begins with an introduction to the complexities of gender & sexuality history and moves through to modern understandings and issues.

History II: The 20th Century - Global Acceleration

This course focuses on 20th-century world history, with particular emphasis on the United States from World War I through 9/11. Students examine the New Deal, the US Civil Rights movement, and the Cold War.

Echoes of Black Culture

Students will explore African-American life and culture anchored by a framework that lifts up the long view of the Black struggle for Civil Rights. They develop a deeper understanding of Black resilience, resistance and community.

Program Highlights

- ★ Students in various elective courses have taken trips to the Museum of the American Indian, a performance of *FIRE!!* at the Quintessence Theater, and a trip to the archives at the American Philosophical Society.
- ★ Classes regularly host speakers across disciplines, including Christina Cauterucci, a Slate Senior writer and podcast host; Dr. Sameera Jahagirdar, a specialty doctor of Critical Care Medicine at Middlesex University Hospital; and Mark Gevisser, award winning author and editor.

Experiential Learning Opportunity

Archival Research Project

Students in Honors History II work in small groups with guidance from librarian and archivist Toni Vahlsing to explore underexamined moments, stories, and figures from a chosen era. Students utilize primary sources from the AFS archives and correspond with experts to reconstruct a picture of the past and create dynamic displays featured in the Faulkner Library entryway.



Explore More Online:



Upper School Math

Sample Course Offerings

Algebra 1

This course builds skills in mathematical modeling and algebraic manipulation. Topics include linear functions, fractions, exponents, and quadratic functions. Additional topics include alternate counting systems, mathematical magic tricks, imaginary numbers, probability, and basic statistics.

Multivariable Calculus

The course uses a problem-based curriculum, exploring the calculus of vector functions, partial derivatives, multiple integrals, and the many applications of each.

AP Computer Science

Students develop computational skills vital across all disciplines, such as working with large data sets to analyze, visualize, and draw conclusions from trends. Creativity, abstraction, programming, and problem solving are core themes. No prior programming experience is necessary.

Trigonometry & Advanced Functions

The course includes an overview of trigonometry concepts such as simplest radical form before continuing to advanced topics in algebra, including circular angle trigonometry, and polynomial, rational, exponential and logarithmic functions.

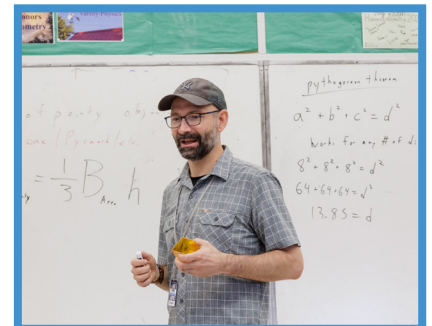
Program Highlights



- ★ The math department sponsors a math club open to all Upper School Students regardless of math level. The club facilitates participation in a variety of engaging math competitions, such as the Temple 'Olympiad', the 14-Hour Math Modeling Competition, and Philly Math League virtual and in-person competitions.

Experiential Learning Opportunity

In the math department, we do experiential learning everyday by practicing the principles of Building Thinking Classrooms also known as BTC. At its core, BTC provides a framework for us to think deeply about challenging concepts and to collaborate with one another. Collaboration, a tool that is at the core of every modern workplace, is centered in each of our math classrooms.



Explore More Online:



Upper School Science

Sample Course Offerings

AP Physics

Both Physics 1 & 2 are offered, covering topics such as force, torque & rotational dynamics, fluids, electromagnetism and more.

Human Anatomy

Human Anatomy explores the inner workings of the human body and focuses on anatomical and medical terminology. Students begin with basic levels like cells and tissues, then explore the major body systems.

AP Biology

Through inquiry-based investigations, students gain understanding of topics such as evolution, cellular processes, and genetics.

Astronomy

An introduction to astronomy concepts of the Earth, the solar system, and the universe. Topics include gravity & light, star formation and more.

AP Chemistry

Students cultivate their understanding of concepts such as atomic structure, kinetics, acids & basics, and thermodynamics.

Chemistry of Food

Scientific principles are applied to food systems, focusing on reaction conditions and processes that affect color, flavor, texture, nutrition, and safety of food.

Program Highlights

- ★ Chemistry of Food students learn knife skills from our cafeteria chefs and have been taken on personal tours of Reading Terminal Market by an AFS alum.
- ★ Human Anatomy students receive professional CPR training.
- ★ Students taking Physics participate in an Accident Reconstruction unit, where they receive a set of 'primary source' documents and are tasked with determining who was at fault in a traffic accident, using concepts discussed in class.

Experiential Learning Opportunity

10th and 11th Grade Creek Exploration

This multi-disciplinary project begins in Honors Chemistry where students choose an ion or molecule present in the creek and design an experiment to measure how the levels of that ion or molecule change with other factors such as precipitation, temperature, location, etc. The following year, in Honors Biology, students study that same ion or molecule and measure its effects on organisms in the creek such as plant life, bacteria, or animals.



Explore More Online:



Upper School World Languages

Sample Course Offerings

French I

This course is designed for students taking French for the first time or from an outside program. Students develop the ability to speak, read, write and understand both spoken and written French, as they become aware of the cultures of French-speaking countries.

AP French

While there is some review of grammar, students who enroll in this course should already have a good command of French grammar and vocabulary. Typical assignments include describing stories, making oral presentations on a variety of topics and participating in interviews.

Honors Spanish II

Students continue to develop proficiency in listening, speaking, understanding, reading, writing and cultural awareness. Students acquire more complex vocabulary, grammar and reading skills as they develop greater proficiency.

Spanish Conversation & Culture

This course offers advanced language training, with particular emphasis on refining oral and writing skills. Independent review of grammar is expected as it is not a focus of the course. Students explore important cultural and historical themes through film, short stories, art and current events.

Program Highlights

- ★ Students explore crucial societal issues, such as analyzing the challenge of introducing renewable energies in French, or studying the process of creating new communities in Spanish.
- ★ Learning happens best by doing. That's why our immersive classrooms are conducted almost entirely in the target language; it's the quickest and most effective way to build genuine fluency and confidence.

Experiential Learning Opportunity

Global Travel Opportunities

In the past, students have traveled to Antigua, Guatemala, on a service trip to connect with local artisans and leaders, gain insight into development efforts, and fully immerse themselves in Maya culture. Alternatively, French students have journeyed to Montreal, Quebec, to explore the unique Francophone lifestyle, practice our French, and see firsthand how the community grapples with questions of identity.



Explore More Online:



Upper School Music

Sample Course Offerings

Concert Chior

Concert Choir is open to students in all grades. This ensemble sings a variety of compositions, ranging from contemporary to classical, and sacred to secular. Elements of singing technique taught in the course include proper breathing, vocal production, vowel formation and more.

Jazz Ensemble

Musicians enrolled in any of the major ensembles are welcome to join the Jazz Ensemble. Students are expected to have played their instrument for at least two years. This ensemble prepares and performs both standards and contemporary music in a variety of genres.

String Ensemble

The string ensemble is comprised of string instruments, and rehearses and performs music written specifically for strings. The group meets separately from Concert Band, but joins with that ensemble to perform music written for a full orchestra.

Music Theory

Students solidify their knowledge of basic musical elements such as staff notation, note values, meter, major/minor key signatures, triads, seventh chords and their inversions as well as other fundamental music theory skills. Students also compose original music in order to learn and apply these skills.

Program Highlights

- ★ Our Jazz Ensemble performed at this year's Jenkintown Festival of the Arts.
- ★ Additional opportunities to perform for the school and the local community.
- ★ The department hosts two major performances each year that showcase unique repertoires and give students solo and feature performance opportunities.



Explore More Online:



Upper School Theatre

Sample Course Offerings

Introduction to Acting

This course begins with improvisation, ensemble building and observation. Students then explore text analysis focusing on motivation, tactics, behavior and relationships. The actors apply these techniques in scene-work and solo performance.

Improvisation & Devising

Students in this course explore the techniques and skills that allow actors to take risks, trust their instincts, and create from their imaginations. We examine the many ways improv is employed in contemporary performance before turning our focus to textual, vocal and physical approaches.

Technical Theater Design

Students explore the design, creation and implementation of various processes involved in theater production, including Scenic, Lighting, Sound, and Projections. Students learn how to use the lighting system and the computerized light board as well as the sound system in the Muller Auditorium.

Writing for Stage & Screen

Using contemporary plays and screenplays such as *Get Out* by Jordan Peele and *Jojo Rabbit* by Taika Waititi, students study the principles of dialogue, character development and structure. They create their own scripts for performance through a workshop process, completing a one-act play and screenplay treatment.

Program Highlights

★ During Summer 2025, AFS took a student designed, written and devised adaptation of Euripides' *Iphigenia* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival where students garnered a Four Star review from *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh's flagship newspaper.

★ Students take part in two main-stage productions each year. These productions offer an opportunity for students to explore a wide range of theatrical styles and genres. AFS takes part in both the Independence Awards and the Cappies program, with multiple nominations each year.



Explore More Online:



Upper School Visual Art

Sample Course Offerings

Photography I

This introductory course acquaints beginning photographers with the basic tools and technologies of digital photography. Students develop competency with these tools and technologies through in-class assignments and demonstrate their abilities through the creation of images.

Ceramics

Students learn the basic techniques of hand-building in clay: pinch pots, coil pots and slab construction. We explore the possibilities of a variety of surface decoration, such as textural relief, paint and glazing. Some art historical discussion and analysis is involved.

Painting & Printmaking

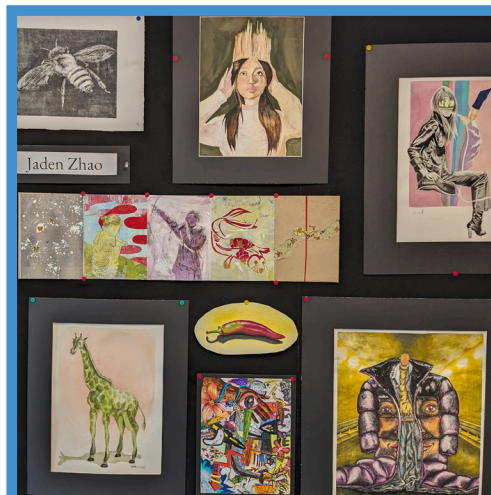
Students begin to work in wet media, learning about handling brushes and paint. They create images using watercolors, tempera and acrylics before being introduced to printing via both monotypes and screen-printing. Students also engage in historical and critical art discussions.

Advanced Studio Art (w/AP option)

Students work on developing their own voices, making art that is both more personal and increasingly global. Each student conceives a thesis concept which will direct their work throughout the year. Students use materials and techniques drawn from their repertoire of previous art experiences.

Program Highlights

- ★ Students have the opportunity to exhibit their work to the general public at the Jenkintown Arts Fest, and at the Woodmere Art Museum, among other venues.
- ★ Students in Advanced Art take a trip to the Philadelphia Art Museum, or to NYC museums like the MoMA or Metropolitan Museum of Art.



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Upper School

- ★ All 9th–12th grade students have the opportunity to participate in the global travel program which consist of multi-day domestic and international trips to locations such as Edinburgh, Scotland or Yellowstone National Park.
- ★ 9th grade students can participate in the Quaker Exchange Program with Hobart Friends School in Tasmania, Australia. 10th and 11th grade students have the chance to participate in exchange with the Ackworth School in West Yorkshire, England.
- ★ 10th and 11th graders can opt into Career Exploration Programs, learning alongside industry professionals. Based on student interest, we've run programs in business, lab sciences, visual and performing arts, culinary arts, medicine and law.



- ★ All 9th–11th grade students finish each school year by participating in Experiential Term. These several-day long courses are led by two teachers, usually who work in different disciplines. The courses are hands-on and often include off-site opportunities.
- ★ All 12th grade students complete an individual Senior Capstone project, working with mentors and presenting their accomplishments to the community.

In addition to work that takes place within each division, many opportunities exist for whole school engagement. These include working with our living laboratory (creek, arboretum, apiary, and farm), commitment to service projects, and partnership between older and younger students across campus initiatives.

If you have any questions about or ideas for Experiential Learning at AFS, please feel free to email Adena Dershowitz, Director of Experiential Learning: adershowitz@abingtonfriends.net.

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Student Life:

Clubs & Affinity Groups

Clubs and affinity groups present rich opportunities for students to encounter a larger world of learning beyond the classroom and to forge friendships. Most clubs are student-led with a faculty advisor. Dedicated club periods in the weekly schedule help students fit clubs and activities into their academic, arts and athletics schedules.

A.W.A.R.E.	Marketing Club
AFS Student Section/Fans Club	Marvel+ Club
Aquarist Club	MENA/Muslim Affinity Group
Asian Coalition	Morgan's Message
Black Student Union	Multicultural Club
Book Club	Multiracial Affinity Group
Bridge The Gap	Music Society
Chemistry Club	Peer Tutoring
Clue Crew	Public Speaking Club
Community Design Club	Psychology Club
Creative Visionaries Club	Queer People of Color Affinity Group
Culture Heritage Crafting Club	Robotics Club
Debate Club	SAT Prep/Study Group
Environmental Action & Justice (EAJ)	Student Quaker Action Committee -
Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)	(SQuAC)
Genesis: Christian Affinity	Students Demand Action
Global Hearts	Tabletop Games Club
HOLA	Truth Trek Tribe
Interact – Community Service Club	Volleyball Club
Jewish Affinity Group	Women's Empowerment

Explore More Online:

