Middle School Course of Study
2014-2015
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FRIENDS ACADEMY
MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY

PHILOSOPHY

Friends Academy was founded in 1876 by Gideon Frost, a leading member of the Matinecock Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, for the education of "the children of Friends and those similarly sentimented." The philosophy of the school is to adhere to those elements basic to Quaker practice that have proven their worth in three centuries of experience. Simplicity, moderation, patience, sincerity, insistence upon quality, a continuing search for truth, a knowledge of the world's values and the courage to establish one's own all form part of this practice. Underlying these concepts is the conviction of the unique worth and the individuality of each of us, an individuality that we must learn to recognize and to respect in each other.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Young people experiencing the rapid physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth of early adolescence need an educational environment sensitive to their specific needs. The Middle School program for 195 students in grades six, seven, and eight has been carefully constructed to provide a curriculum that is challenging in a school community built on trust and mutual respect. Each grade level in the Middle School is guided by a team of teachers, who work together to provide a stable and supportive atmosphere. These groups meet regularly to discuss the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student and to develop strategies to help students deal with the many challenges of this stage of development. Each student is assigned an advisor who communicates regularly with parents through written comments and parent conferences as well as through more informal channels.

In keeping with the Quaker mission of the school, Middle School students attend Meeting for Worship in the Matinecock Meeting House once each week, take a semester course in Quakerism, and participate in numerous community service activities.

The academic program emphasizes the development of good organizational and study skills, a respect for diverse learning styles, experience in cooperative learning, and the acquisition of interdisciplinary skills. The core curriculum includes the study of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. In the sixth grade, students begin the study of French or Spanish. Exploratory courses in computer, research skills, health, Quakerism, theater, ethics, band, strings, chorus, and art complement the program. Sixth, seventh and eighth graders also separately participate in an outdoor education trip in the fall and winter. These activities provide students with the opportunity to build leadership skills and to strengthen self-esteem.

All students are required to take physical education. Sixth graders participate in a daily physical education program while seventh and eighth graders have the opportunity to play on interscholastic teams, which are members of the Nassau County Athletic Association. Sports offered include soccer, field hockey, football, cross country, volleyball, wrestling, basketball, softball, baseball, lacrosse, and track.
Special events in the Middle School include the all-school Fall Fair and Homecoming, a Middle School theater production, dances, sports nights, ski trips, the Winter and Spring Concerts, Diversity Evening, Career Day, community service activities, and the eighth graders' final Meeting for Worship as they "move up" to the Upper School.
MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

ENGLISH

ENGLISH 6

Overview
The sixth grade English curriculum is comprised of four interconnected components: reading, writing, grammar, and word study. While specific skills in each component are taught throughout the year, the major emphasis is placed on reading and writing. Literature selections and writing assignments are closely connected and designed to mirror the social development and emotional understanding of sixth grade students. Most of the literary themes focus on the student as an individual with connections to family and friends, the importance of place in our lives, the transition from childhood to adolescence, and finally our connection to the natural world.

Reading
The reading component includes two class novels *Pictures of Hollis Woods* and *Where the Red Fern Grows*, as well as short stories, poems, picture books, non-fiction, biographical, memoir, and non-fiction selections. Through guided reading students are taught and encouraged to use strategies that lead to a deeper connection with the text and improved comprehension of the material. Ample time is provided for students to practice these strategies and to have meaningful literary discussions with their peers. Lessons are designed to introduce and develop an appreciation of the craft techniques used by writers. Additionally, students are expected to read independently for 30 minutes five nights each week in their independent reading books and submit a weekly independent reading record with a parent’s signature. Independent reading projects and book reviews will be assigned several times during the year.

Writing
Students learn about the qualities that are inherent in all good writing — ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation — as well as how to incorporate these qualities into their own writing. Writing is taught using a modified version of the workshop method based on the research and recommendations of the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project (TCRWP) at Columbia University and outlined in the Common Core Standards. Students write frequently in their writing journals, and often these entries become the inspiration for longer pieces that are taken through the writing process. Narrative writing is the focus in English. This includes memoir, personal narrative, and imaginative storytelling, as well as literary response. Persuasive/argument writing and information/research writing will be the focus in science, social studies, and math. Picture books will be used frequently as models for writing because they provide a highly visual way to engage students in reading and writing and can easily demonstrate a particular craft technique that is being targeted. Every student will also write a hard cover picture book in the spring, which will be shared with our Lower School students. 6th graders are also given many opportunities to develop their oral expression through frequent class discussions, literary conversations, oral reports, and project presentations.
Grammar
Grammar study is centered on the sentence. A careful examination of the sentence parts, structure, and function will aid in the writing of clear meaningful sentences. By using examples of sentences taken from young adult literature as models, students will begin to learn techniques for varying, expanding, and manipulating sentence structure. A formal study of the parts of speech, punctuation, and paragraph development will also help to facilitate growth in written expression. Although students receive direct instruction in grammar, emphasis is placed on the application and mastery of these skills in order to strengthen their own writing. A diagnostic assessment will be given at the beginning and end of 6th grade and at the end of the 7th and 8th grades to track individual progress with grammar skills during the three years spent in the Middle School. This is not tied to the student’s grade in English and is simply a diagnostic tool to track progress over time.

Word Study
Word study, vocabulary development, and spelling will take place frequently in a variety of ways. Vocabulary instruction will occur within the context of our readings, a study of frequently misused words, word attack strategies, and word games. Precise word choice is also stressed during writing instruction.

Homework
Consistent homework completion is crucial to success and should be taken very seriously. If a student fails to hand in three homework assignments, the student will receive a missing homework notice via e-mail with copies going to the parent and the advisor. Most late homework will receive partial credit depending on the degree of lateness; however, some assignments will not be accepted late. When students receive graded tests, quizzes, writing assignments, and projects, they are usually required to get these signed by a parent and promptly return the signed paper to school. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure the papers are transported back and forth within a reasonable amount of time. Parents should expect to see these kinds of assessments brought home frequently and ask the child if this is not happening. This is considered a homework assignment, and papers that are not returned to school by the deadline will be recorded as a zero in the grade book.

iPads
iPads will be used regularly in class. A variety of apps and PDF documents will be used to reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and study skills. The iPad will also be used for reading, writing, and project presentations. Therefore, it is crucial that students bring their iPads to class everyday fully charged.

Grades
Academic progress is evaluated through a variety of means. Writing assessments, projects, oral presentations, tests and quizzes, as well as homework and class participation will be used to calculate grades. While grades are important and reflect the student’s performance in the classroom at any given time, they should not become the driving force in the learning process. Each student needs to develop a realistic view of his or her academic strengths and set goals to work toward in order to improve areas of weakness. Achieving one’s own personal best is encouraged at all times. The following components are used to calculate grades in English:

- Homework, daily preparation, class participation & behavior 20%
● Reading assessments; independent reading projects; vocabulary quizzes 40%
● Writing assignments; writing notebook; grammar assessments; participation in Writing Workshop 40%

Required Readings for English: (all except the grammar book are in iBooks)
- Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff
- Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls
- Live Writing by Ralph Fletcher
- Holt Handbook (grammar)

ENGLISH 7

The seventh grade English curriculum seeks to foster an understanding of the material covered in world cultures. As such, students will be introduced to the people of the world via memoir, non-fiction, poetry, news articles, short stories, and novels. With culture study serving as the backdrop, four interconnected components will serve as the primary areas of learning: reading, writing, grammar and word study.

Students are encouraged to read actively, to form their own opinions about what they read, and to articulate their view in discussions and writing assignments. Guided reading of novels, a play, and short stories will take place in class. Additionally, students will explore short stories, news articles, personal letters, and excerpts of larger pieces of fiction and non-fiction independently. All students also have to read one additional book per month as part of their independent reading requirement. The nine steps of reading comprehension will be modeled and emphasized with each reading.

As a continuation of the foundation established in 6th grade, The 6+1 Traits of Writing model is used for instruction and assessment purposes. Students have learned about the qualities that are inherent in all “good” writing—ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation—and they will continue to incorporate these qualities into their own writing. Rubrics are used extensively by the students so that they can learn to evaluate their own writing and by the teacher as a tool for evaluating writing. If students are able to recognize the qualities which attribute to well-written work, they will be better equipped to evaluate and improve their own writing. All stages in the writing process will be stressed, which will often necessitate several revisions of a single piece of writing. Research will be encouraged in many writing assignments in addition to standard research reports. The various modes of writing will be taught—narrative, expository, descriptive, persuasive, and creative, as well as literary response.

In addition to written expression, oral expression is developed through class discussion, literary conversations, oral reports, presentations, and book talks.

Grammar will be introduced as a separate unit of study as well as investigated as an integral part of individual written expression. Students will review general grammar skills (such as identifying parts of speech) in addition learning more sophisticated concepts such as clauses and phrases.
Similarly, vocabulary will be an extension of understanding what is read and strengthening student written expression. There are bi-weekly vocabulary lessons with follow up quizzes. Each lesson contains three different kinds of exercises: paraphrasing, context clues, and synonyms and antonyms. Word study is further enhanced through the study of roots, prefixes and suffixes, as well as various activities and games.

**Required Readings for English:**

*Who do you think you are? Stories of Friends and Enemies* by Hazel Rochman and Darlene McCampbell

*Within My Reach: My Everest Story* by Mark Pfetzer and Jack Galvin

*Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare

*Scholastic Guides: Checking Your Grammar*

*Grammar for Middle School: A Sentence-Composing Approach*

**Several other student chosen books are read throughout the year**

**ENGLISH 8**

English Eight is a discussion-oriented class with two over-arching objectives — to improve students’ ability to communicate in language—both verbally and in writing and to extend their appreciation and understanding of literature.

Grammar is taught and emphasized and proceeds from the point where we left off with last year’s curriculum. Beginning with a diagnostic, the results will help determine which particular areas will require more emphasis or review before moving forward. A brief review of the parts of speech will be followed by the study of phrases, clauses, subordination, and types of sentences. Sentence combining and variety, structure, mechanics, punctuation, and usage are also a part of the grammar component. The focus, however, will be on enhancing existing writing and speaking skills and preparation for standardized exams.

The writing component begins with the paragraph and will include descriptive, expository, narrative and persuasive formats; students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to write well-organized, cohesive, and meaningful examples of each type before moving to longer pieces of writing. Story telling in the form of personal narratives will also be attempted throughout the course of the year. Special attention will be paid to argumentative writing, the written format likely to become the most utilized in the forthcoming years. Review and reinforcement of research skills—documentation, attribution and avoidance of plagiarism are covered as well.

The literature component of the course will include selected short stories, a modern fable, a Shakespearean play, a Greek tragedy, and a novel. The short stories will allow students to explore different themes, sets of characters, and conflicts. The drama selection, modern fable, and novels will examine such themes as loyalty, trust and betrayal, tolerance, perseverance, coming of age, dealing with adversity, making and living with choices, peer and parental pressure, and coping with societal expectations. The course will also include a brief examination of the origin and evolution of theater.
The in-class readings will be the primary source of vocabulary which will be developed throughout the school year. Students will be accountable for spellings, definitions, any alternate forms of the words given, and most importantly—how to use them properly.

In addition to what is read in class, students have an additional independent reading requirement, which will average out to about one book per month with a different genre or set of authors assigned each month. The independent reading component follows the guidelines and selections of Real Literature—Real Lives, a program designed by three Chicago Middle School teachers, attempting to turn reluctant readers on to reading by selecting authors whose stories deal with a number of young adult, contemporary themes and conflicts. Follow-up reporting will include a variety of options—oral book talks, critiques, reviews, creative projects, or power point presentations.

Eighth-grade students will have the use of I-pads to assist in their instruction. Protocol regarding their use will be carefully administered and monitored over the course of the school year.

Students will be expected to:
● Enhance their ability to communicate in language and to effectively write interesting and thoughtful pieces of writing.
● Embrace and value literature with active, open and analytical minds by reading works of different styles, themes, and structures.
● Contribute insightful ideas about literature to class discussions and articulate ideas and responses to interpretive questions.
● Learn to listen to and respect the ideas of their peers and take pride in their own ideas.
● Expand their vocabulary skills which will strengthen their usage, articulation of ideas, and prep students for upcoming standardized tests.

Required Readings for English:
- *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho
- *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
- *Stealing Freedom* by Elsa Carbone
- *Antigone* by Sophocles
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *Holt Handbook (Grammar Text)* Warriner

**Additional short stories will be photocopied as needed.**

Assessment:
Student progress is measured by class participation, consistency and quality of homework, oral presentations, papers, quizzes, unit exams, and occasional projects. Extra help periods are built into each student’s schedule.
SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIAL STUDIES 6: EARLY CIVILIZATIONS

The main purposes of the program in the sixth grade are to gain an understanding of the beginning of western civilization and to develop the interest and skills necessary to study any society. The year begins with an introduction to study skills (note taking, test prep and test taking), physical geography, mapping, and archeology. The students then study the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Greece, Egypt, and they end the year with a unit on Ancient Rome.

Sixth graders are introduced to many of the social sciences through which a culture may be studied. These include geography, history, economics, religion, and the arts. They are exposed to a variety of learning methods that include textbook readings, independent research, simulations, hands-on projects, and computer based projects. Writing skills and use of technological resources are emphasized throughout the year.

SOCIAL STUDIES 7: WORLD CULTURES

The seventh grade course develops from the sixth grade study of ancient civilizations and physical geography, focusing on the cultures and political geography of the modern world. Journeying across the globe, we use a set of themes to study the people and cultures, which exist in regions, and develop an understanding of how these cultures have emerged from their interactions with physical surroundings and other peoples. The themes we focus on in each regional unit include: energy and resources, water population, urbanization, health, human rights, religions, conflict, and the global economy.

Students develop their map making, oral presentation, and study skills (for example, note taking) throughout the year, in addition to developing their writing through projects such as “travel guides” and keeping a journal of current events from around the world. Students complete group and individual projects, developing their ability to work independently as well as cooperatively. For example, we engage in debates and forums on the issues we research and think critically about, and classes form their own mock United Nations and European Union organizations to discuss topics facing the international community. The course places an emphasis on global interdependence, cultural diffusion, and diversity. By examining the day-to-day life of real people around the world, especially young people, students develop their understanding, tolerance, and celebration of the diversity of our world’s cultures.

SOCIAL STUDIES 8: AMERICAN HISTORY

The eighth grade American history course builds upon the essential skills learned from seventh grade World Cultures, and expands them into a focused study of American history. The course begins by reviewing U.S. geography through the use of interactive iPad apps, and follows with an overview of important people and events leading up to the American Revolution. The class
closely examines the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution in the hopes to better understand the specific directions and goals our forefathers set for our nation. As we study our nation’s history, we reflect on how well our country has and has not achieved those high expectations. Other units of study include: Launching the Republic & Our Early Years, Road to the Civil War, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the Turn of the Century, World War One, Between the Wars, World War Two, The Cold War & Vietnam & Civil Rights, and Modern America. The overriding goal of this program is for the students to gain an understanding and appreciation for their heritage and its influence on the world in which they live. We want students to look critically at both historical and current issues and demonstrate an ability to communicate their understanding of America’s history in a variety of ways. It is our goal that students gain a sense that they will become the history makers of the future.

Students explore a variety of resources to gather information including: texts, maps, time lines, encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, personal interviews, primary sources, YouTube videos, Podcasts, Edmodo, and various iPad apps. Through discussions, debates, written assignments, projects, independent study in the library, and individual and group presentations, students have the opportunity to share their understanding with their classmates.
MATHEMATICS

MATHEMATICS 6

The highest priority of the sixth grade mathematics program is to ensure that the students have mastered the basic computational skills necessary to be prepared for the pre-algebra course, which is taught in the seventh grade. The course is designed to be both interactive and reflective. Interactive aspects engage students in problem solving in pairs or in small groups. Students spend a great deal of time practicing different types of problem solving; they are also taught the theories behind concepts and are expected to understand why certain processes work the way they do; reflective aspects of the course engage students in discussion, analysis of processes, and writing about mathematics.

The focus for the remainder of the year is on decimals, fractions, percents, geometry, pre-algebra, and integers. Throughout the year problem-solving strategies are consistently practiced and reviewed. Manipulative materials are an integral part of the program and are used to help all students as well as those who might be having trouble.

MATHEMATICS 7

The seventh grade mathematics program builds on the structure and methods developed in the previous year. The content of the course, both in the selection of the topics and in the style and language in which they are presented, closely parallels and extends the sixth grade program. Thus, fundamental concepts and processes are reinforced. The significant changes in the seventh grade program center around the level of presentation and material and the level of testing. In seventh grade more emphasis is put on higher level thinking skills and the process that goes into solving a problem. Included in this, is a vision that students will learn to value and become confident in their mathematical ability. The chief thrust of the seventh grade program is to have students master all basic computation skills, and to lead them into the direction of mathematical reasoning and processing. This is emphasized with real life problems and technology. The main topics of the course are operations and integers, rational numbers, decimals, basic number theory, statistics, and pre-algebra and algebra topics. The degree of success achieved at this level determines, in a large measure, whether a student continues in a regular or accelerated section in eighth grade.

MATHEMATICS 8 or MATH ALGEBRA I

We offer two distinct courses, Math 8 or Algebra I in the eighth grade. Students are placed according to teacher recommendation, performance in Math 7, and results of standardized testing. Math 8, considered to be the foundation for learning all math, builds on the pre-algebra work begun in Math 7. The topics studied include more difficult types of equations and inequalities along with word problems. The fundamental operations with polynomials and factoring introduce the middle level student to the foundations of math used in Algebra I. The Math Algebra I course, which is accelerated, includes the topics of the introduction course as well as the study of the basic concepts of geometry, congruent triangles, ratio, and similarity; the year continues with work in quadratic equations, and systems of linear equations. Students who successfully complete this course receive one academic credit toward the math graduation requirement.
A MATH COUNTS club for grades 7 and 8, which explores the areas of Algebra, Trigonometry, Functions, Graphing, Inequalities, Probability, Geometry, and Number Theory, meets during the winter activities block. It is open to capable math students in grades seven and eight. A select group of 8 to 10 students enters a year-end competition with other schools in Nassau County.
SCIENCE

SCIENCE 6

Students are formally introduced to and explore the topics of geology, the nature of science, chemistry, and ecology. Frequent laboratory experiences emphasize skills of observation, organization, and recording as well as developing students' understanding of scientific ideas, methods, and safety procedures. Cooperative learning is emphasized as a means of encouraging students to learn from and teach each other. Class discussions and activities teach scientific skills as well as mastering a body of basic factual knowledge. The annual Science Share puts students in the role of expert scientists as they report to parents and faculty on the results of their product-testing projects. Throughout the year the students engage in lessons and activities on environmental sustainability. This work integrates what the students are learning and helps them to learn about human impacts on the environment and solutions. The year ends with a series of trips to local preserves that enhance the student’s ecological literacy of the place in which they live.

SCIENCE 7

The seventh grade science course builds directly on the skills presented in the sixth grade, while increasing the amount and depth of information covered. Beginning with a study of the organization of living things, the course expands into an exploration of the relationship between the structure and function of cells, tissues, organs, and organ systems. An in-depth study of genetics, and the controversial technologies developed in this area of science, takes the course from the cellular level into the more complex human body. Eight body systems are examined to view their component parts and how they interact with one another to form a system, in addition to the effects of both proper and improper system function. As a result, students not only gain a greater understanding of how their own bodies function, but how the personal choices they make can affect their health. During the course of the year, students have many opportunities to complete hands-on science and problem solving activities, laboratory investigations, and creative projects, both individually and in cooperative groups. Classes are largely discussion based, allowing for frequent communication between students, however, a strong emphasis is placed on writing. In addition, students are encouraged to become scientifically literate by making quarterly oral presentations on current science/health articles from approved sources. A close working relationship with the Dolan DNA Learning Center in Cold Spring Harbor provides much enrichment to the curriculum as well.

SCIENCE 8

Eighth grade science focuses on the physical sciences, taking the time for a detailed look at some of the big ideas, rather than trying to superficially cover a lot of content. Students are encouraged to look for connections within the material, to consider a variety of possible answers to a problem, to evaluate the precision of their data and methods, and to pay close attention to the wording of their responses in order to communicate ideas clearly. Formal scientific principles are taught through discussion of everyday experiences and observations made during classroom activities. Concepts are investigated through laboratory experiences that develop confidence and initiative in manipulating apparatus, organizing procedures, and recording data. In the spring,
the day-long “Sludge” lab is a unique experience in which students work as research groups to plan and execute a multi-faceted chemical investigation.
HEALTH

6TH GRADE:
This class will focus on the importance of overall wellness within the student’s life. The curriculum is based on the Great Body Shop, which is a comprehensive health program utilized grades one through six. Over the course of the year, we will examine and discuss resolving conflicts, friendships, staying safe, drug use and abuse, discovering oneself, puberty, nutrition, exercise and stress, and life management skills. In addition to the curriculum, there is a strong parent component where the kids will come home ready to share and discuss ideas and thoughts from our class discussions. During the year, note taking, study skills and time management will also be taught.

7TH GRADE:
Seventh grade Health is in the process of integrating the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education along with the ”Amazing Alternatives” section of the Project Northland program for alcohol and drug education. Throughout the curriculum, the students will be developing cooperative skills, realizing risk-taking behaviors, and applying positive decision-making abilities. The fundamental wellness concepts of Social, Mental and Physical Health that were introduced the previous year will be built upon. Students will practice note taking and test-taking skills while exploring and understanding topics of self-esteem, nutrition, reproductive systems, stress management and substance abuse. Seventh grade students will be assessed via class participation, quizzes, group and individual projects, and creative writing assignments.

8TH GRADE:
The eighth grade health curriculum focuses on assuming responsibility for one's own health, a charge which middle school students increasingly assume. Safety, stress management, nutrition and the responsible use of medication are some of the topics addressed with this maturing self-reliance in mind. A lot of our classroom time is spent talking about how and why people make the decisions they do. Good decision-making depends on having the right information, attitudes and skills, and these points are emphasized throughout the lessons on tobacco, marijuana and alcohol, which form the second part of the course. The role of peer pressure and strategies to stand by one's own decisions are discussed. Role-playing and brainstorming responses to various scenarios further challenge students to find words to deal with uncomfortable situations. Students are encouraged to discover reasons for non-use that really apply to them, so that they can decline involvement with conviction.
WORLD LANGUAGE

The language program stresses the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through mastery of these skills, students are required to cope, to question, to organize and, to communicate in the foreign language, both individually and in a group. The study of a language requires patience, discipline, and organizational skills. Factual knowledge and memorization are essential in this study. The application of this knowledge to their oral and written work encourages students to understand, appreciate, and sympathize with human beings of other cultures and thereby see their own lives and culture in perspective.

The foreign language program in the middle school stresses increasing proficiency in speaking, writing, reading and listening skills. Vocabulary building and basic grammatical concepts are core to the student instruction and expected outcomes. As the student progresses, further emphasis is put on encouraging them to communicate freely, both orally and in writing. More difficult grammar concepts are introduced and vocabulary acquisition is stressed.

8th GRADE TRIP:
Since 2004, the 8th graders have culminated their Middle School experience with an optional trip abroad. While this experience is presented as a foreign language trip, there are numerous curricular objectives that include connections to areas such as history, mathematics, art and science. There is also an effort to connect Quaker principles such as community service to each trip. Activities that are planned for this experience work to balance the more traditional tourist attractions counted with the authentic, hand-on type work that Middle School students thrive on. In the past, students have gone hiking, visited the world’s most famous museums, engaged in cooking classes and attended various arts workshops. To date, trips have been made to Italy, Spain, Greece, England, France and Costa Rica.
EXPLORATORY COURSES

EXPLORATORY COURSES: AN OVERVIEW

Students are enrolled in exploratory courses for approximately eight weeks each. Since each course runs for approximately one-quarter of the school year, exploratory courses are often referred to as “quarter courses.”

RELIGION

QUAKERISM - Grade 7

This course introduces the student to the history and beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Quaker approaches to biblical stories are examined; stories introduce students to the important concerns and perspective of Friends. Considerable time is also spent in examining the Quaker testimonies and how they are applicable to the students’ everyday experience within their community.

DIVERSITY & MULTICULTURALISM - Grade 8

Students will learn from each other's experiences, examine relevant issues (e.g., intergroup communication, gender and the media, ethics, immigration, racism, bullying, etc.), and explore different perspectives and conflicting issues using constructive approaches to dialogue and the bridging of differences. Students will expand their learning through weekly activities, readings, journaling and a final project.

The learning objectives for this course are:

1. Learn and practice intergroup dialogue skills.
2. Develop an increased awareness of themselves as individuals and as members of social groups.
3. Learn more about their own, and others’ cultures, histories, and experiences.
4. Explore commonalities and differences.

TECHNOLOGY

The Friends Academy Middle School is committed to providing a dynamic curriculum that utilizes technology to enhance the curriculum as well as foster the skills necessary for success in the twenty first century. As part of this effort, all students are issued iPads for school use, and have incorporated this technology into their everyday life within the school. In addition to iPads, our classes our outfitted with Smartboards, and have access to the Internet for their school assignments.
COMPUTER 6

This course is offered once a week for the entire year. It is designed to acquaint 6th graders with the use of the computer as a viable tool. By providing them with weekly hands-on computer lessons, related to their academic classes, students will become familiar with technology related vocabulary. They will gain a working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Macromedia Flash, and Adobe Photoshop. Keyboarding skills will be developed and sustained mainly by practicing at home. The ultimate goal is for students to reach the typing proficiency level of thirty words per minute for a sustaining period of five minutes with eighty-five percent accuracy by the end of the eighth grade year.

COMPUTER I AND COMPUTER II

This course is offered for two quarters of the year. It is designed to develop a deeper level of use of the computer as a viable tool in their career as middle school students. Students will learn basic programming using PowerPoint to create an interactive presentation. They will also learn how to create functions using Microsoft Excel. Students will edit audio and images found on the Internet and learn about copyright issues.

LEGO ROBOTICS

This course is offered for one quarter in the seventh grade. It is designed to develop an understanding of programming and building a Lego robot. Working in pairs, students are given information for their robots to perform given tasks. They work together to program, run, and troubleshoot their robotic tasks. Each challenge becomes increasingly more difficult. A video journal is kept to discuss problems faced and how they dealt with the problems.

COMPUTER MASTERY

This course is offered for one quarter in the eighth grade. It is designed to develop a digital portfolio that includes eighth grade milestones in their academic classes. The portfolio is web-based, and the students use notepad to write their script (html) and a browser (internet explorer) to see the results. It is also used as a snapshot in the life of a 14 year old. Programs used throughout their middle school career are used; Adobe Photoshop is used to edit images found on the Internet, Macromedia Flash is used to create custom animation, Windows Movie is used to create videos, MonkeyJam to create custom stop-frame animation, and Audacity to edit audio found on the Internet.
Friends Academy Middle School is a rich and diverse environment. Middle School is a powerful time for students to attain new knowledge and begin to blend that knowledge with a greater understanding of oneself and how to function in the larger world. Middle School is a time when students begin to connect current and historical events and develop an understanding of the larger themes that weave through our world. This intense growth and development is supported and enhanced by a strong education in the arts. At Friends Academy, we have made a serious commitment to arts education as a core piece of our Middle School curriculum. Students receive ongoing education in Music, Visual Arts, Theater, and Dance. This arts education curriculum is designed to support the cognitive, physical and character development of our students, as well as teach knowledge and techniques in each artistic discipline.

**CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES**

There are four music concerts during the year and several art shows, all of which share the student's growth and progress with the larger community. Our extensive arts curriculum culminates in Arts Week - a break from the traditional routine when the Middle School comes together as a whole community to celebrate the arts. Students have the opportunity to choose between participating in the Middle School Play and engaging in a series of Art Workshops presented by guest artists and Friends Academy Arts Faculty. Typically, about 60 students become involved in the production, and the rest elect to participate in workshops.

The Middle School Production has a long and rich history. The play is often an original piece created by our faculty. In the past seven years, the themes have ranged from an exploration of growing up in The Dragon, to delving into the darker side of fairy tales in “Grim,” to studying Shakespeare in A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Students, who chose to participate in the workshops during Arts Week, experience such diverse artistic opportunities as African dance, Hip Hop, stand-up comedy, poetry, and filmmaking. At numerous points during the week, the entire Middle School gathers so all of the students can share their experiences with each other.

Another way students can get involved in the arts outside of the classroom is the Middle School Jazz Band. The Jazz Band meets two days a week and offers students an opportunity to learn the basic of Jazz performance, as well as an accelerated opportunity to play in an ensemble. Students perform in concerts and festivals throughout the year. For more information about this see Mr. Tennyson.

**VISUAL ART, THEATER AND DANCE**

6TH GRADE ARTS BLOCK: A yearlong interdisciplinary study of the arts, which includes Theater, Visual Art and Dance. While specific skills, concepts and experiences are explored individually within the context of each discipline; an additional focus is placed on the commonalities, intersections and the interaction between the disciplines.
The overarching goal of Sixth Grade Arts Block is to develop within each student a deep and abiding appreciation of the role the arts play in their lives, whether they are the creator or the perceiver. The students are asked to stretch their imaginations and become divergent thinkers. This stimulation in creativity will not only affect the students’ learning in arts classes, but will extend to other curricular and extra-curricular endeavors as well, as they learn to think outside of the box, develop critical examining skills, and explore ways to describe, analyze and interpret art and the world around them. Part of the 6th grade curriculum includes participating in a unit of study with the Lincoln Center Institute. Students work with a guest artist to explore a work of art through the lens of aesthetic education.

7TH AND 8TH GRADE ARTS: In seventh grade students are divided into quarter courses for Theater and Visual Arts. Dance is an elective during the Winter I and II sports seasons. In eighth grade, students come back together for a semester-long exploration of the theme of abstraction through visual arts and theater. As part of the Eighth grade experience students are prepared for the rigors of the Upper School Arts Curriculum and get to make choices about areas they would like to study intensely.

7TH AND 8TH GRADE THEATER: Students explore how to effectively communicate a story to an audience through their physical, vocal and imaginative choices. Seventh Grade Theater focuses primarily on storytelling, with each student conceiving of and writing his or her own original play. In Eighth Grade, students are asked to focus on aspects that make theater unique as an art form. Taught in conjunction with the Visual Arts curriculum, classes focus on each student’s individuality as an artist, with part of the semester spent creating and performing autobiographical monologues.

7TH AND 8TH GRADE DANCE: An elective class that meets every day of the second and third quarters during PE. This class is open to any seventh and eighth grade student as a PE Elective. The curriculum focuses on developing skills as a mover and understanding a variety of movement styles, including yoga and aerial silks.

7TH AND 8TH GRADE VISUAL ARTS: Students are introduced to a broad range of media. They study the elements and principals of design through a variety of two and three-dimensional units, with drawing and painting as the main emphases at each grade level. The Seventh Grade program includes a ceramics and printmaking unit and the Eighth Grade investigates abstraction as an art form through charcoal, painting and sculpture. All grades make extensive use of sketchbooks as a visual journal and skill-building tool.
VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Friends Academy Vocal, Instrumental and General Music Education are taught through an examination of five distinct categories.

- Music Making
- Music Literacy
- Music Connections
- Music Legacy
- Character Development

Each of these categories scaffolds from our earliest adventures in Music Education in Early Childhood and weaves together as five strong strands throughout a student's time at Friends. In the middle school there is a particular emphasis placed on understanding the voice as an instrument and skill building on a band or orchestral instrument. This dual approach allows students to understand themselves as music makers in a variety of ways. It also supports their growing understanding of their own physical and cognitive abilities, and supports character development.

**Music Making:** By exploring, creating, replicating, and observing music, students build their technical and expressive skill, develop their artistry and a unique personal voice in music, and experience the power of music to communicate. They understand music as a universal language and a legacy of expression in every culture.

**Music Literacy:** Students develop a working knowledge of music language and aesthetics, and apply it to analyzing, evaluating, documenting, creating, and performing music. They recognize their roles as articulate, literate musicians when communicating with their families, schools, and communities through music.

**Making Connections:** By investigating historical, social, and cultural contexts, and by exploring common themes and principles connecting music with other disciplines, students enrich their creative work and understand the significance of music in the evolution of human thought and expression.

**Music Legacy:** Students discover their place in the future of music as musicians, teachers, parents, philanthropists, and stewards of music.

**Character Development:** Students develop integrity, respect, kindness, teamwork, patience, self-management, focus, critical thinking, leadership, discernment, perseverance, service, and stewardship. Students learn the intrinsic value in creating an aesthetic.

**Our Standards of Excellence outline our expectations for class behavior. They are as follows:**

**Presence:** Be here, on time, every time.

**Preparedness:** Have your instrument, music and a pencil ready at the start of class.
**Professionalism:** Focus, no food, drink, gum or candy in class, use the bathroom before class starts, no side conversations during class, treat instruments and other equipment appropriately, treat your fellow musicians with consideration

**Posture:** Sit or stand up straight while performing in rehearsals and concerts.

**Performing:** Perform with energy, precision and enthusiasm. Give good evidence of practice and growing skills

**Grading criteria in all classes is as follows:**

In class demonstration of the Standards of Excellence - 25%

Performance tests, papers, quizzes and other formal assessments - 25%

Conservatory Lessons and small group work - 20%

Concert Attendance and Behavior - 20%

Consistent application of skills, practice and striving for excellence - 10%

**Policies:**

1: Every student in 6th, 7th and 8th grade will play a band or orchestral instrument and participate in instrumental ensembles, and will sing and participate in vocal ensembles. In rare instances a student may be exempted from one or the other of the ensembles due to academic considerations. These exemptions will only occur with the approval of the Music Department, Director of Arts and the Middle School Principal.

2: New students entering 6th grade who cannot demonstrate grade level proficiency on a strings, brass or woodwind instrument, must work outside of class time to gain proficiency so they can participate in the appropriate ensemble. New Students entering 7th or 8th grade who cannot demonstrate grade level proficiency on a strings, brass or woodwind instrument will work with the music faculty to determine the best placement for success in the music program.

3: Students wishing to switch an instrument must first find out whether there is room in the ensemble to switch to the instrument they are interested in, and then must demonstrate proficiency at the appropriate grade level. Once proficiency is demonstrated, and teacher has approved, they may switch.

Friends Academy's music curriculum is aligned with the state and national standards for music education. We are members of the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA). Each year, students have the opportunity to attend a solo festival to have their level of playing constructively evaluated on prescribed NYSSMA standards by an
independent adjudicator. Students prepare a solo, memorize a defined number of scales, and perform a sight-reading selection before the adjudicator. Students who have played for two years should be able to be evaluated on a Level One. More advanced students can move on to higher levels, the most advanced being a Level Six. Evaluation in NYSSMA solo festival can lead to nomination for all-county, all-state and all-eastern participation. Participation in NYSSMA is not mandatory.

*Graduates of the Friends Academy Music Department will be knowledgeable, literate, open-minded, passionate, life-long supporters of music.*
PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS: AN OVERVIEW

Middle School athletics enrich each student’s school experience by helping to balance his or her academic, physical, and social lives. Through physical education and athletics, early adolescents gain and use talents and skills. Our goal is for them to feel increasing personal satisfaction and understand the values of team, school and community.

Athletics should foster values such as; cooperation, a strong work ethic, fair play, grace in victory and defeat, and respect for teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials. Athletics develop individual skills, provide opportunity for personal enjoyment, and give a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS – Grade 6

In the sixth grade, Friends Academy provides a physical education program that meets daily for one hour. Students are taught a variety of movement concepts, motor skills, athletic team skills, and strategies. Physical education teachers provide experiences that enhance both cognitive and affective development.

Topics Covered - Grade 6

Floor Hockey (Coed)          Volleyball (B&G)          Baseball (B)
Softball (G)                Flag Football (B&G)           Tennis (B&G)
Team Handball (Coed)         Dance (G)                    Track/Field (B&G)
Soccer (B&G)                Wrestling (B)                  Speed Ball (B)
Football (B)                Physical Fitness (B&G)         Lacrosse (B&G)
Field Hockey (G)            Badminton (Coed)              Cooperative Games (B&G)
Cross Country (Coed)         Orienteering (Coed)           Basketball (B&G)
Yoga (B&G)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS – Grade 7

In the seventh and eighth grades, the intent is for each student to participate in interscholastic competition during the fall and spring seasons. An attempt is made to have all athletes who dress for a game, play at least half a game. Occasionally, due to the large number of participants, all athletes will not dress for each contest. In some sports the rules permit an extra period so that more athletes can compete. We take advantage of this whenever possible.

Topics Covered – Grade 7 (See below.)
During the winter season, not all of the students who choose to play interscholastic basketball or volleyball are able to do so since the interest is very high, far exceeding available space. The selection is made according to ability, potential, attitude, and effort. Those students not selected, take part in a physical education program that entails a rotating curriculum for each winter season:

- Cardio-fitness
- Weight training
- Yoga
- Sport education
- Adventure activities

### Sports Covered - Grades 7 & 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soccer (B&amp;G)</th>
<th>Wrestling (B)</th>
<th>Softball (G)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football (B)</td>
<td>Basketball (B&amp;G)</td>
<td>Tennis (B&amp;G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Hockey (G)</td>
<td>Volleyball (B&amp;G)</td>
<td>Track/Field (B&amp;G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country (B&amp;G)</td>
<td>Ice Hockey (B&amp;G)</td>
<td>Lacrosse (B&amp;G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baseball (B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY SERVICE

In addition to participating in projects with the rest of the Friends community, middle school students have opportunities to be involved in a variety of middle school and class activities. Some of these annual events, but many arise as a response to a specific need or situation.

In the fall, the entire middle school community participates in Hunger Awareness day. In addition to learning more about hunger issues on Long Island, the community shares a simple meal to raise funds for a designated organization working in this field. Each class follows up by putting together a food basket for a family in need, and some of our students help out at the local sorting center. A Christmas toy drive collects gifts for local children, especially teenagers. In the spring, the middle school designates a single community service day where many of our students volunteer their physical labor and boundless energy to support local organizations and to raise money for more distant ones.

In addition to these all school events, each grade level also engages in their own service projects. The sixth grade read-a-thon takes a skill all the children have and transforms it, and them, into a tool for change. The annual walkathon draws entirely on the skills of seventh graders. Within a few weeks in the spring, the seventh grade students research possible local recipients for the proceeds of the annual walkathon, select an organization with which to work, produce an informative newsletter for the rest of the community, collect and collate sponsor forms, set up the course, run the stations during in the activity and calculate the money owed by each participant at the end of the afternoon. The whole event is an exercise in empowerment and a source of great pride when the proceeds are presented.

The middle school experience closes with the eighth grade volunteering for a day at the Empire State Games for the Physically Challenged. Although initially assigned to a task, as the day unfolds, the students are more loosely structured and each finds his or her own way to contribute, drawing on their own strengths and interests. One will work all day with preschoolers, another with students their own age with cerebral palsy. One will teach a single deaf child to play golf, yet another will spend the day as a statistics runner, conveying performance results from the field to the office. Almost all will at some point step unbidden into an activity where they see they are needed, and many will at some point sit in the stands and cheer as the kids give their all in the races. This single day is exhausting, fulfilling and for some a pivotal experience, but for many the transforming experience is more subtle; a quietly developing expectation of service involvement which leaves them ready for the plethora of opportunities in the Upper School.
**STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS**  
*(sampling)*

**TASQUE:** Teachers and Students for Quaker Education. A year-long club that works to foster Quaker faith and practice within the school community. Students from grades 6, 7 & 8 participate.

**STEERING COMMITTEE:** Interested students are involved in elections to identify student leadership. Each advisory group has an elected representative and the Middle School community elects leadership council.

**YEARBOOK/NEWSPAPER WEB PAGE:** Students work closely with faculty sponsors to produce documents, which reflect student life and creative efforts.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB:** Students help the community stay focused on environmental issues, become involved in campus beautification, and are challenged by many science projects.

**DIVERSITY CLUB:** Students initiate and explore opportunities for diversity awareness and training throughout the school.

**MOVIE MAKING/QUIZ SHOW MANIA:** A chance for students to work cooperatively and become involved in friendly challenges.

**MATH OLYMPIAD (6)/MATH COUNTS (7,8):** Students interested in further challenging their problem solving skills in math can join in on the fun.

**ROCKETRY/MODEL AIRPLANE BUILDING:** An opportunity for students to build and try out their creations.

**VOICE TRAINING:** The choral director works with students who request additional assistance.

**JAZZ BAND:** The band director invites students to participate and further develop their musicianship.

**MODEL CONGRESS:** Motivated, well-informed students work together to present legislation to a "Model Congress" comprised of Friends Academy and other independent school representatives.

**SKI CLUB:** On selected Saturdays, students of all abilities head off to nearby slopes for a fun day.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL THEATER PRODUCTION:** The annual play attracts more than half the student body. Students may elect to be actors/actresses or work on sets or lighting.

**ANNUAL TALENT SHOW:** Students interested in displaying their unique talents may join in on the fun and participate in the Talent Show held just prior to the end of school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Foreign Language</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Performing Arts</th>
<th>Visual Arts</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>English 6 Reading and Writing Workshop (additional 6/10 days)</td>
<td>Math 6</td>
<td>Science 6: Gen’l Sci</td>
<td>French Spanish Chinese</td>
<td>Soc Studies 6: Early Civilizations</td>
<td>Arts Block (5/10) full year Chorus 6 Strings 6 (opt) ♪ or Band 6 (opt) ♪</td>
<td>Arts Block full year</td>
<td>Computer 6 (2/10) full year</td>
<td>Health 6 (4/10) full year</td>
<td>Comm Svc (activity and advisory blocks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>English 7</td>
<td>Math 7</td>
<td>Science 7: Gen’l Sci</td>
<td>French Spanish Chinese</td>
<td>Soc Studies 7: World Cultures</td>
<td>Theater 7(4/10) Chorus 7 Strings 7 (opt) ♪ or Band 7 (opt) ♪</td>
<td>Art 7</td>
<td>Computer I &amp; II Lego Robotics</td>
<td>Health 7</td>
<td>Quakerism Comm Svc (activity and advisory blocks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In addition to meeting 6/10 pds/wk (8/10 in grades 7 & 8) for group instruction, students receive individual instruction once, every 5 days

PE Grade 6
Boys and Girls: floor hockey, team handball, soccer, run for fun, volleyball, tumbling, physical fitness, flag football, tennis, track/field, lacrosse, new games, basketball, Ice Hockey
Girls: softball, field hockey, dance, creative movement
Boys: football, run for fun, wrestling, speed ball

Grades 7 & 8
Boys and Girls: soccer, cross country, basketball, winter jogging, physical fitness, lacrosse, tennis, track/field, weightlifting, volleyball, Ice Hockey
Girls: field hockey, softball
Boys: football, baseball, wrestling
Strong Minds.
Kind Hearts.

A Quaker, coeducational independent school for ages 3 through 12th grade
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