

City Semester Addendum 2023–2024

What is City Semester?

City Semester is a selective, interdisciplinary, experiential semester program focused on fostering a sense of civic leadership through the immersive study of New York City. Students are not attending regular classes: the work is project-based, organized around both individual and group assignments that draw from multiple subjects and from the world beyond the classroom. The interdisciplinary approach and the skills-based learning methods are a complement to the curriculum and mission of the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. We are proud of the current City Semester undergraduates (and alumni) at your institutions; many have credited their success in college from the skills acquired from the program. Students apply for admission into City Semester and the program, now in its twelfth year, is offered during both fall and spring semesters.

Why move to narrative assessments in lieu of letter grades?

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the program, the City Semester faculty opted to provide skill-based assessment rather than traditional letter grades. The group experience promotes growth in areas that cannot be reduced to single number/letter grades. City Semester faculty wish to encourage the development of lifelong learning skills, character traits, and other competencies that are crucial for success in college, career, and life. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the program, narrative assessments provide a better, holistic, grading system for City Semester students.

What are the goals of the City Semester narrative assessment?

City Semester values and helps develop the higher order skills necessary for success in college. The goal of the narrative assessment is to communicate a holistic vision of the student that is the joint product of many faculty perspectives. The core faculty create the report jointly to convey a deeper, more authentic story about each student: who they are, what they have learned, how they have grown, what they love, and who they want to be. The transcript measures a student primarily against themselves as opposed to other students – both their own goals as lifelong learners and our goals for them in the program.

How are students graded?

All participants will receive a transcript that reflects the interdisciplinary, skills-based nature of the program. Students are evaluated in five distinct categories measuring fundamental Apple Core Skills of: Social Justice and Awareness, The Self in the City, Collaboration, Engagement/Resilience, and Systems thinking/Critical thinking. Using a comprehensive and holistic evaluation process, achievement is assessed in categories of Discovering (Approaching Expectations), Practicing (Meeting Expectations) and Doing (Exceeding Expectations).

For core academic course calculations as well as NCAA Clearinghouse requirements, **City Semester students receive standard graduation credits for each discipline (English, History, Math, Science, World Language, Ethics, Arts, and PE).**

Please do not hesitate to contact Roy Blumenfeld, Director of City Semester, with any questions about the City Semester program at rblumenfeld@ecfs.org or **718-329-3562**.