



**2022-2023**

**Experience-Centered Seminars**

**Course Information**

# Placement Criteria and Seminar Descriptions

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# Placement Criteria

As you consider which seminar your student is interested in, it's important to remember that ECSs are academic classes. They are experiential learning opportunities with an educational foundation. With that in mind, Upper School students will select three ECSs that they would enjoy participating in. This is not a rank order selection process. It is our hope that students will submit their three options based on the alignment between their personal passion(s), intrigue, or value system, and the topic that each ECS will explore. Upper School faculty and administration will place students in one of their three Seminar choices, weighing a variety of factors including (in no particular order):

- Grade Level
- Academics
- Extracurricular interests
- Past ECS experiences
- Behavior at school
- Group dynamics of each trip
- Size limitations of each trip (transportation, sleeping arrangements)
- Demands of the ECS (e.g. physical demands, time commitments)
- Student input

Our goal is to create the best educational opportunity for every student, on every Seminar.

Before submitting the ECS Preference Form, which will be sent out on Friday, September 30, and due back on Monday, October 3, please note the following points.

1. Graduation from CSS is contingent upon each student completing and passing an ECS for each year of attendance in the Upper School division. An ECS is equivalent to one (1) Carnegie unit of instruction (defined as 120 hours of contact time with an instructor). As such, each ECS is recorded on a student's transcript and counts towards the calculation of Grade Point Average.
2. Attendance is a critical component of the ECS experience. Missing just one half-day of an ECS is roughly equivalent to missing an entire week of a traditional class. Per the CSS Parent-Student Handbook, "excused absences that cause a student to miss significant portions of an ECS will be managed in a variety of ways but often involve supplementary, independent work and the design of alternative, relevant experiences by the students. The family will be expected to cover non-refundable course costs incurred by CSS on behalf of the student even if the student is unable to reap the benefits of the experience due to conditions beyond their control." In most cases, reservations for transportation and housing

are difficult and costly to change, and penalty charges may become the responsibility of the family that has requested the change. Consider ECS preference rankings carefully and thoughtfully with regard to potential personal conflicts to avoid making changes later.

3. Students are encouraged to choose three Seminars based on individual interests and/or career ambitions, NOT according to social influences. It is our hope that students will submit their three options based on the alignment between their personal passion(s), intrigue, or value system, and the topic that each ECS will explore.
4. At CSS, we use technology very intentionally to meet our educational objectives. School policies limit the use of personal tech devices in divisionally specific ways. In the Upper School, we generally emphasize responsible use. However, students cannot use phones during class other than use authorized by a teacher. ECSs represent a significant reduction or a complete break from personal tech use for our students. We have observed (and research supports) that there are substantial benefits for personal social skills and group dynamics when students take a break from technology. Individual ECS instructors will review the specifics of their Seminar cell phone policy during the parent meeting in November.
5. Costs are close approximations and could change slightly, particularly given the price fluctuations for commodities post-pandemic. Families, please look closely at the cost of the trip, as you are committing to pay the cost, within the given range, once your student is assigned to a Seminar. Also, students tend to value ECS experiences more when they help pay for them. We encourage students to apply themselves to earn part of the cost of their eventual ECS. An [ECS scholarship program](#) does exist to support students in pursuing a topic area of passion or interest. [Applications](#) are due with your trip preference form, on **Monday, October 3** by no later than 10 p.m. Late submissions will not be accepted.
6. Students who have demonstrated behavioral problems or social-emotional concerns at school may be restricted from attending a national or international Seminar. It may not be possible to reimburse families for costs incurred if a change in Seminars must be made due to a disciplinary issue or a social-emotional concern. **CSS reserves the right to change or revoke an ECS placement up until the day of departure.**
7. All CSS Experiential Learning programs go through a rigorous risk management process. You may request to view our risk management plan by reaching out to Bronwyn Holman, [bholman@css.org](mailto:bholman@css.org).
8. **This year's ECSs are designed to be flexible in nature, given lingering COVID ripple effects. Therefore, travel may or may not be modified.**

# Aviation Science and Engineering

**Instructors:** Peter Wade, John Paul Takacs

**Expected Cost:** \$500 - \$600

**Travel:** Local locations, students can keep existing plans to get to/from school. We will have a short overnight in Denver during the course of the ECS.

**Essential question:**

- How do aircraft achieve lift and flight?
- How does the engineering of these machines affect their operation, and how do we incrementally make things better based on success and failure?
- What factors and variables such as temperature, humidity, and altitude influence pre-flight planning and aircraft performance?

**Course Description:**

Aviation Science and Engineering is about all things aviation. In this ECS, we will dive into the technical aspects of aviation by understanding aerodynamics, propulsion systems, the forces of flight, physics, and aviation laws in the United States. Students will experience the topic firsthand through hands-on explorations and construction projects, including the construction of a wind tunnel, the creation and testing of aviation models in both virtual reality and modeling, live discussions with local aerospace legends, and participation in live testing such as indoor skydiving and other projects. Students will also come to understand some basic meteorology and why the weather impacts aviation so greatly. Over the course of our three weeks, students will grow to understand the complexity of aviation standards and the true miracle that is modern powered flight.

**Student interests that match this ECS:** Aerospace, engineering, careers in aviation, physics.

**Cell Phone Policy:** On Campus: same as school policy. Off-Campus: allowed to have, so long as use does not detract from learning.

# Devised Theater

**Instructors:** Jonathan Andujar, John Longo, Guest Artists

**Expected Cost:** \$325-\$450

**Travel:** Possible day trips, potential evening outing

**Essential question:**

- What does it take to make “theatre”?
- How is theatre useful in creating culture in your community?
- What is my goal as a theatre artist?

**Course Description:**

Are you a creative person who wants to perform, make things, or express yourself? Would you like a platform to showcase those talents? Would you like to express your concerns and opinions about topics in the world today? If so, then this local ECS is for you! Devised Theatre is a creative process in which a group of artists collaborates to create a new and unique performance product. This ECS will emulate a professional acting workshop similar in process to theatre professionals around the world. As part of the process, students will explore performance techniques of various styles such as physical theatre, storytelling, singing, acrobatics, and ensemble work. Together, students create a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The Seminar will culminate in a performance.

**Student interests that match this ECS:** Acting, performance, Theatre Tech, Making Things, Self-expression

**Cell Phone Policy:** Cell phones are off and out of sight during instruction/workshop times. Cell phones can be used before class, during lunch, and after class.

# Flyfishing and Water Rights in the San Juan and Platte River Basins

**Instructors:** Jim Moulton, Josh Gillon

**Expected Cost:** \$1,900 - \$2,300

**Travel:** We'll be traveling to Durango and surrounding areas from March 6 to March 13. We will also be taking two day trips: one to Denver and Bailey, and the other to the Platte River.

## **Essential question:**

- What is flyfishing?
- What equipment and skills are necessary for flyfishing enjoyably, safely, responsibly, sustainably, and successfully?
- What are the local, state, federal, tribal, and treaty-based legal bases for understanding and protecting water rights in the San Juan watershed?
- What competing interests lead to water use and water rights conflicts and disputes in the San Juan watershed?
- What are the historical and cultural bases of those interests?

## **Course Description:**

This ECS will have two major components: flyfishing and water rights. For the flyfishing component of the ECS, we will be spending three guided days on the San Juan River in northwestern New Mexico (one of the best tailwater fisheries in North America) and will also spend one day flyfishing more locally. For the water rights component of the ECS, we will be speaking with experts on legal, social, cultural, and economic experts on issues related to the conservation and use of water in the American southwest.

**Student interests that match this ECS:** Outdoor recreation, environment and ecology, travel, indigenous culture, and water rights, public policy and economics

**Cell Phone Policy:** Cell phones may be used only for emergencies, for photography, or with the consent of Drs. Gillon and Moulton. When we are flyfishing, students should plan on leaving cell phones behind.

# Wilderness Emergency Medicine

## On Santa Cruz Island, CA

**Instructors:** Greg Johnson, Twyla Surritte

**Expected Cost:** \$3,100 - \$3,600 (\*price could change due to airfare fluctuations)

**Travel:** Depart Colorado Thursday, March 2, and return to Colorado Tuesday, March 14.

### **Essential question:**

- How does one persevere through the physical and mental challenges of participating in a Wilderness First Responder program?
- Why are these skills a vital part of being a responsible outdoors person?

### **Course Description:**

Wilderness First Responders are individuals trained to respond to emergency situations in remote locations. If you're serious about the outdoors, then this is the class for you. The Wilderness First Responder is considered the 'gold standard' in wilderness medicine. This course is 80 hours of skill sessions, hands-on training, and practical scenarios. Designed specifically to prepare you to provide advanced emergency care, this is perfect for those leading groups in a wilderness setting. CSS partners with 4Points Expeditions, an innovator and leader in wilderness medical training. The WFR course is a challenging, in-depth course that will require a level of maturity and competence far above the WFA (Wilderness First Aid) requirements. Each participant will complete not only the physical aspects of the WFR (carrying gear over rough terrain; hiking and performing rescues in both day and night conditions; being able to perform tasks in potentially adverse weather conditions; carrying patients over rough terrain, and more); participants must also accept the mental challenges of this program including working in stressful situations; performing at various times as a participant AND a leader--being able to step up and lead a rescue is an essential part of the WFR course; all while maintaining a positive attitude, being a solid team player and completing the curriculum requirements. The WFR is valid for three years and shows competency as a provider of wilderness emergency medicine.

Santa Cruz Island is an incredible location for adventure, challenge, learning, and exploration. Santa Cruz is a huge island, about twice the size of Manhattan; its history is rich and diverse, from Native American Chumash who lived on the island for thousands of years, to ranchers and now conservationists and educators who are working to preserve the island's history while restoring Santa Cruz to its native habitat. The island itself is separated into two parts: The smaller National Park side (24 percent of the island area--Scorpion Anchorage is the landing site here) and the larger (76 percent of the island area) is owned by The Nature Conservancy and is accessed via Prisoners Harbor. We are fortunate enough to be able to travel to BOTH sides of this amazing island and explore the varied landscapes as we move from one side to the other; from South to North, and West to East.

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Our accommodations on The Nature Conservancy property will be The University of California Reserve Field Station. This site has bunk rooms, bathrooms, showers, a kitchen facility, fire ring, and is the launchpad for our explorations of secluded beaches, high peaks, and hidden waterfalls. We will spend time here studying our WFR materials, practicing our skills, and hiking, kayaking, and snorkeling the shoreline.

Once we hike East along the high ridges of the interior, we will eventually set up camp at Scorpion Campground on the National Park Service (NPS) property. This more rustic setting includes NPS campsites with running water, pit toilets, amazing hiking trails, and the beautiful waters of Scorpion Anchorage. This will be the location for our final coursework and skills examination during our night rescue scenario. We will have time to hike and explore the coastline, mountains, and beaches of the Eastern side of the island before returning to the mainland. On the mainland, we will “practice” our newly acquired skills through planned scenarios, while we backpack, canoe, climb, and hike. During this time, our base camp will be Wheeler Gorge in the Los Padres National Forest.

**Pertinent information related to the WFR ECS:**

- The recommended minimum age for WFR course is 16; however, exceptions can be made with a demonstrated maturity necessary for the course.
- Students must be physically able to participate in the activities related to the WFR course.
- This program includes hiking with packs. Our average length of hike will be 3-5 miles with packs ranging between 15-20 lbs maximum.
- Our cross-island hike will by far be the longest trek; this will cover 13 miles, on mostly undulating plateaus, with some short steep sections.
- Students will be asked to carry what they bring.
- Students should be comfortable with being in the ocean swimming, snorkeling, or in a kayak or canoe. (Previous experience is not required.)
- Students should be comfortable with climbing in an outdoor, top-rope system. (Previous experience is not required.)
- Students should be comfortable in a camping setting for an extended time.

**Students who select this ECS should possess the following:**

- Positive attitude.
- Willingness to work on the WFR course material individually and with the group.
- Willingness to participate in and lead the WFR scenarios.

**Student interests that match this ECS:**

- Challenging outdoor physical activity
- Being on and in the ocean
- CPR and First Aid, human anatomy and physiology, wilderness medicine
- Camping
- Leadership, group dynamic awareness

**Cell Phone Policy:** There is virtually no cell service on Santa Cruz Island, so students will leave cell phones in Colorado Springs. Our partner company, 4Points Expeditions, will have landline access when available and a Satellite phone. Communication will be handled through CSS and 4Points Expeditions' instructors. Cell phone use will also be limited during the local portion of this ECS.

# Biodiversity in Hawaii - Balancing Flora, Fauna, Culture, and Tourism in Maui

**Instructors:** Natalie Hanson, Joseph LePage

**Expected Cost:** \$4,100-\$4,600

**Travel:** To Maui, Hawaii 3/4/2023 - 3/13/2023

**Essential question:**

- How do human activities impact the unique ecology of a tropical island?

**Course Description:**

The Hawaiian archipelago has been shaped over millennia by the action of waves, volcanoes, and the living organisms that landed upon it. Today, the activities of humans on the islands, as well as humans thousands of miles away are leaving their mark on this remote ecosystem. While the isolation of the Hawaiian islands provides a unique opportunity to study adaptive radiation and endemism, today it is an exemplary place to study invasive species and extinction. We will depart for a nine-day field course with Ecology Project International to learn firsthand about the interrelationship between traditional Hawaiian culture and the natural environment. For a contemporary view on human impacts, we will engage in hands-on research to collect and interpret scientific information that will inform ecological conservation and restoration strategies. During our stay on the island of Maui, we will be camping with limited access to showers.

**Student interests that match this ECS:** Island ecology, sustainability, nature, camping, history, outdoor recreation

**Cell Phone Policy:** No cell phones or other digital device use will be allowed.

# Classic France: Cultural Immersion

**Instructors:** Max Fruge, Amy Miller

**Expected Cost:** \$4,390-\$4,999

**Travel:** March 1-10, Travel to Paris via DIA

**Essential question:**

- What can we learn from a culture much older than our own country's?
- What stories about humanity can we learn to appreciate and share with others?

**Course Description:**

“Classic France: The Stories of French Culture from Antiquity to Today”

Napoleon, the Louvre, strolling along the Seine, the Eiffel Tower, ancient cathedrals and medieval chateaux, gardens and monarchs and artists, two World Wars in the last century, the Lost Generation, delicious food, and enchanting music – sound appealing? These places and events and more will be found on this ECS exploring French culture through the ages. Flying from Denver to Paris and then traveling to various locales via public transportation and coach bus, our goal will be to discover the richness afforded by French culture. What stories will we hear? What will those tales tell us about the French people and our shared humanity? Answers to these questions and more will be found on this ECS.

**Student interests that match this ECS:** Those who love to learn about other cultures, Francophiles

**Cell Phone Policy:** Cell phones are allowed up until departure, then teachers will keep them until our return to Denver.

# Arts in Italy Through the Back Door

**Instructors:** Hans Wolfe, Marta Kunze

**Expected Cost:** \$6,500-\$7,200

**Travel:** Travel to Italy March 2-March 15

**Vaccination Policy:** TBD

## **Essential question:**

- How do we begin to understand the interweaving of art and history and cultural influences on people around Florence over the past 2,000 years?
- What are the different viewpoints of citizens regarding development, modernization, and historical preservation?
- In what ways can we develop and recognize our own sense of art, history, and culture, and maintain this for future generations?

## **Course Description:**

The Italy ECS is an immersion into cultural heritage with hands-on activities, group home stays, and learning about art, history, local traditions, and cultures firsthand. Students engage with citizens to learn how art, history, cities, and agriculture have been woven together in the people and culture around Tuscany and Florence. There is far more to Italy than the iconic tourist sees, a profound depth hidden below the enticing surface, and students will be pushed to peel back the layers of a developed country to explore raw topics related to immigration and emigration, the pressures of cultural and historical preservation versus modernization and the impacts of modern development, with special importance placed on the role of the family and traditions. This ECS requires students to explore the unknown with tolerance, openness, curiosity, and compassion.

In Tuscany, we will stay on a fully functioning organic farm that focuses on responsible ways of working the land and raising heritage breeds native to the region. Students work together with locals to learn a variety of ancient artistic traditions, exploring Etruscan, Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance influences through the lens of art making, food, and farming while gaining important skills in cross-cultural communication. We study survival Italian language, experience daily chores such as harvesting vegetables and feeding livestock, indulge in delicious local cuisine, and notice the juxtaposition of our modern mass-market food systems with the labor-intensive realities of sustainable farming. We meet with immigrants who have come to Italy to work the land and hear what it is like to make a life in a different country. We also emphasize learning about context and history by exploring the vast spectrum of civilizations that have lived in the area. Though the centuries have erased many traces of the societies who have

inhabited the Italian peninsula, their influences linger on and help us build a historical context in which to understand and process the past and present realities.

Transitioning into the more urban environment of Florence, where Machiavelli established the roots for modern political science, and the Medici family created the base for modern banking (and funded some of the most influential art and ideas of any age), we learn that culture and belief in contemporary Italian society are far more complex than first meets the eye.

We then head to a centuries-old monastery-turned-guesthouse outside of the city of Lucca. This small city, encircled by some of the most well-preserved medieval walls in Italy, provides an acute look at the waves of immigration and emigration that Italy has experienced. We visit the *History of Italian Emigration Museum*, from which we explore the fascinating backstory and current movement of emigration from Italy, as well as engage in crucial discussions about the impacts of immigration to the peninsula. In Lucca, we visit with local inhabitants who work to house undocumented migrants and continue our look at critical issues in modern Europe. We then wrap up our seminar with a brief visit to Rome, meeting with Italian NGOs, professors, and government officials to help process our experience and lead students towards the development of their final presentations.

**Student interests that match this ECS:** Cultural and historic preservation; Immigration, emigration, and the importance of family and traditions; Hands-on exploration of art, cooking, and farming; Interest in meeting and engaging local people with openness, curiosity, and compassion.

**Cell Phone Policy:** No phones allowed in the classroom or while traveling.