



2023-2024

Experience-Centered Seminars

Course Information

March 4-22, 2024

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 Tuesday, May 9th and due back on Monday, May 22nd, 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. Students receive a letter grade for ECSs. They are NOT pass / fail.
3. 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. Multiple unexcused absences will result in a lower letter grade.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Families, please look closely at the cost of the ECS, as you are committing to pay the cost, 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.
7. For the 2023-2024 academic year, we are rolling out the ECS options and building rosters prior to the start of the new fiscal year on July 1, 2023, so that we can spread the cost of Seminars out over 10 months. You will see an Ex Ed fee on your annual billing statement, which will be the fees for the CSS portion of your ECS. If you are on a non-local ECS, billing for the travel portion of your ECS will go through a third party, who is EF this year.
8. 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.**

9. 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.

The Great Iron Pour

Teachers: Mr. Wolfe and Ms. Reynolds

Cost: \$750

Travel - possible field trips:

- EVRAZ Steel Mill: Pueblo, CO - day trip (8am-3pm)
- Commercial Foundries, artist studios/galleries/sculpture park and Maker Space - Loveland, CO; day trip (8am-6pm)
- Uhrich Locomotive - Strassburg, CO - day trip (8am-5pm)
- Bliss Studio & Gallery: Monument, CO - 1/2 day trip (9am-12pm)

Essential question:

Through hands-on immersion into historic techniques and processes, study of metallurgy, chemistry, materials science and industry, as well as working with professional sculptors, can we come to a clear understanding of the enormous significance of the age of metals while developing a personal aesthetic relationship with cast iron as an artistic medium?

Course description: The Iron Pour ECS is a hands-on immersion into the world of making and pouring molten metal to create art. The course involves a historic study of the discovery and use of metals, the industry of iron and steel making, the chemistry of metals and refractory materials, and sculpting in wax, clay, and other materials. Student art is informed by exposure to galleries, museums, and by visiting artists. Iron casting is physically demanding and teamwork is important as the whole class moves together toward the goal of melting iron and pouring it into molds to make art. This course also includes the pouring of aluminum and bronze, and students learn basic steel forging.

Student interest that match this ECS:

- Art - sculpture, art appreciation, studio processes.
- Science - metallurgy, chemistry, materials science.
- History - civilization, culture, technology.
- Community - collaboration, design thinking, artistic expression.

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CSSI - Crime Scene Investigators

Instructors: Ms. Miller and Mr. Takacs

Expected Cost: \$400

Travel: Possible day trips, potential evening outing

Essential questions:

1. Why is it important to determine Fact from Fiction?
2. What interdisciplinary skills go into crime scene investigation?
 - a. How can we apply such skills to our daily lives and academics?

Course Description:

Do you know any good detective stories? Do you like to play CLUE? How about Murder Mystery meals with friends (or to make it more interesting, with enemies)? Do you watch crime shows on TV and gravitate towards mysteries in films? Have you ever wondered what really goes on during a crime scene investigation? Have you heard of the CSI Effect? Well, now it's time for what we call "The CSSI Effect: Fact or Fiction."

These questions and more will be the focus of The CSSI Effect: FACT OR FICTION? ECS. Through our own studies of detective literature, TV, and film coupled with science labs and inventive writing where we will become CSS CIs ourselves, we will seek to find the answers to our questions. We plan to visit law enforcement agencies, prisons, mental institutions, laboratories, and coroners' offices, and we'll hear from professional experts in the field of detection such as detective writers, law enforcement, criminologists, and real life CSIs.

If you're into who-dun-its and how'd-dey-do-it and discovering what's FACT and what's FICTION about the crime scene world, this ECS is for you!

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Broadway and Arts in New York

Instructors: Mr. Andujar and Dr. Wells

Expected Cost: \$4,835 EF / \$300 CSS

Travel: 3/7-3/13/2023

Essential question:

- Why is New York City considered a cultural capital of the world?
- How did the different art scenes contribute to what New York City is today?
- How are different levels of professional theater presented?
- What makes New York a world class arts destination?
- How did music shape the cultural landscape of New York City?
- What is it like to be a Broadway theater professional?
- What is the difference between Broadway and Off-Broadway?
- What is Colorado Springs doing to bring quality theater to the region?

Course Description:

New York City is THE destination for many professional artists of all mediums. What about “the city that never sleeps” attracts them to such a metropolis? In the Broadway and Arts in New York ECS, students will research and experience first hand the history and splendor that is New York City. All of the arts will be represented in this ECS. From guided tours of the Museum of Modern Art, Apollo theater, Radio City Music Hall, and the Lincoln Center students will experience an intimate look at what makes New York a world class destination.

What would a trip to New York City be without a deep dive into Broadway theater? On this ECS we will be exploring Times Square, and rounding off one of our evenings at Ellen’s Stardust Diner. Not only will we be watching 3 professional productions of varying styles and levels, but we will also be spending a day with Broadway professionals! We will be taking a workshop with a theater professional and listening to what it is like to perform on some of the world’s largest stages.

Before we take off to the “Big Apple” students will research New York and its many destinations. When we get back, we will research local theater companies and arts institutions. We will be talking with arts professionals from the Pikes Peak region to get an intimate understanding of what Colorado Springs is doing to create a unique cultural landscape.

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Civil War and Civil Rights

Instructors: Dr. Moulton, Mr. Hillman JD, and Mrs. Malone

Expected Cost: \$4,925 EF / \$400 CSS

Travel: 3/7/-3/15/2023

Essential question:

- What specific historical events contributed to the outbreak of the United States Civil War between 1820-to-1861?
- What was the initial single most influential factor that ignited the Civil War?
- How did the military conflict between the Union and the Confederacy develop between 1861 and 1863?
- What advantages in industrial production and technological innovation production emerged during the Civil War.
- How did the outcome of the Civil War influence political events and Reconstruction in the United States?
- What was the impact of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments on the post-Civil War United States?
- How do the Civil Rights Bills of 1866 and 1875 compare to the Civil Rights legislation of President Johnson's Great Society programs?
- Who were the most influential figures during the Civil Rights struggle in the 1960s?

Course Description:

The Civil War and Civil Rights ESC will concentrate on two complex and related developments in the history of the United States; the United States Civil War, and the major events and individuals in the Civil Rights movement. Students will visit historic Civil War battle fields and museums to learn about the important events that lead to the Civil War. Coverage will conclude with an examination of Reconstruction and its legacy. Important subjects of the Civil Rights movement will overlap crucial events from the Civil War and Reconstruction, e.g. the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875, and move to Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas, efforts to desegregate the nation's schools and public institutions, and President B. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society legislation. Students will have a firm understanding of the causes of the Civil War and its consequences, as well as the major events and individuals in the United States Civil Rights movement.

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Panama Canal and Embera Indigenous People

Instructors: Ms. Kunze and TBD

Expected Cost: \$4,494 EF / \$400 CSS

Travel: 3/7/-3/16/2023

Essential question:

- Why is the Panama canal considered the Biggest Mega Project in history?
- What is its importance and future of the Panama Canal?
- How the construction of the Panama Canal influenced the Panamanian culture?
- How do the indigenous tribes of Panama benefit from it?
- Is there a possibility of building another Canal in the future?
- Did the construction of the Panama cause any ecological problems ?
- What are the wetlands and what is their importance?

Course Description:

Panama is a country on the isthmus linking Central and South America, but how did it happen? A famous feat of human engineering cuts through its center, linking the Atlantic and Pacific ocean to create an essential shipping route, but do we know what was the purpose of building the Panama canal? What are the uses? How many people were involved in its construction? And what is its future? Talking to locals, experts and specialists in the topic and engineers and learning about the history of the Canal students will be able to understand and answer these questions. We will also look at the cultural aspect of this beautiful country. By immersing, helping and talking to locals, students will be able to find out if the Panama Canal has been beneficial to indigenous communities. We will spend a few days with the Embera tribe to learn more about their daily lives. We will wrap up our Seminar by returning to Panama city to process our experience and lead students towards development of their final presentations.

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Sustainable Development in Cambodia

Instructors: Ms. Hanson and Dr. Gillon

Expected Cost: \$5,000-\$6,000 Dragons / \$400 CSS

Travel: March 6-March 20th (approx), 11-14 days in total

Essential question:

- What are the ecological, economic, and societal impacts of development in Cambodia, and can it be done sustainably?

Course Description:

As a UN “least developed” country, Cambodia faces significant barriers to sustainable development. True sustainable development meets current needs without compromising the needs of future generations, and it can be examined through three lenses: economy, environment, and equity. During this ECS, students will explore the various economic drivers of Cambodia, such as textiles and agriculture. They will experience urban lifestyles in the capital city, Phnom Penh, and learn about its history and political structures. A long drive to the city of Siem Reap, home of the famous buddhist temple Angkor Wat, will give students exposure to the impacts of tourism. Continuing on to the floating villages of Tonle Sap lake will reveal a more rural way of life, as well as highlighting the environmental impacts of deforestation, infrastructure development, and climate change. The area around Tonle Sap is one of the most productive ecosystems in the world, but it is rapidly declining due to these pressures. To further explore the environmental impacts, we will plan to visit other important conservation sites and/or sanctuaries. The journey of this ECS is likely to be a little uncomfortable, long, unpredictable, and totally unique. It’s a great match for someone with a hardy constitution, a compassionate heart, and a curious mind.

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