Creative Exchange & Life Skills Programs

Office of Community Educational Engagement
Generously sponsored by the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

Other sponsors include the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

View program calendar and register online at csi.cuny.edu/creative
Creative Exchange & Life Skills Programs

Established in 1975 exclusively at the College of Staten Island/CUNY (CSI), Creative Exchange is one of the first post-secondary programs of its kind nationally, serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities age 21 and over in a non-degree lifelong learning program.

Creative Exchange also offers a more demanding non-degree lifelong program for adults 21 and over with intellectual and developmental disabilities called Life Skills. Established at CSI in 1998, Life Skills serves a cohort of adults with the goal of building independent living competencies.

Through educational and social initiatives, we foster a unique, safe, and collaborative environment for personal growth and community-building, regardless of ability, as part of CSI’s legacy of place initiative.

Creative Exchange and Life Skills use person-centered approaches to inform programming. We will engage students for their feedback, ideas, and opinions throughout the academic year.

Eligibility Requirements:
- Must be 21 years old, or older
- Recognized by NYSOPWDD as having a Developmental Disability
- Motivated to participate independently

Tuition:
- Free

Contact:
- Michael.Green@csi.cuny.edu
  718.982.2723

For distance learning participation, students will need:
- A computer or tablet
- Internet access
- A familiarity or willingness to learn how to use the Zoom platform
- An email address where they can receive Zoom links & course materials from instructors

Visit csi.cuny.edu/creative for program calendar and to register!
Math Appreciation

Mondays  P1  6:30–7:30pm

Description: Students will learn adding and subtracting single and multi-digit numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages, to problem solving skills used in everyday activity.

Objectives:
- Identifying the difference between a decimal and percentage
- Adding and subtracting multi-column numbers

Course Topics:
- Fractions
- Using number-lines to identify missing numbers
- Using decimals when counting money
- Learning shapes and angles

Instructor: Evan Fersko

Theatre Arts

Mondays  P1  6:30–7:30pm

Description: Students will learn about the history of live theater with an emphasis on American theater and Broadway Shows. This class will observe recordings of live shows, discuss production, and themes. Students will perform their choice of a short scene or musical number from a performance they learned during class.

Objectives:
- Learn about the production of live shows
- Further develop reading skills, focus, public speaking ability, self-, advocacy, and other performance skills
Theater Arts, continued

Course Topics:
- Theater genres and shows that are part of American Theater
- Behind-the-scenes aspects of show performances

Materials:
- Pen/pencil and notebook

Instructor: Amy Lenza

Health and the Human Body

Mondays 7:30–8:30pm

Description: Students will learn about the organ systems of the human body, healthy lifestyle choices, diseases, conditions, and medications.

Objectives:
- Improve students' knowledge of health and human body systems
- Improve students' ability to advocate for themselves in regard to health decisions by increasing their knowledge of basic health, human biology, and medical tests, treatments and medications.

Course Topics:
- Overall review of the human body
- Cardiovascular system
- Digestive system
- Respiratory system
- Nervous system
- Renal system
- The senses
- Exercise and physical activities
- How to ask questions during a doctor's appointment
- Making healthy lifestyle choices

Materials:
- Pen/pencil and notebook

Instructor: Amy Lenza
Virtual Arts: History of Cartooning

Mondays 7:30–8:30pm

Description: This course will explore virtual arts through the history of cartooning. We will learn how cartooning started and how it was used across multiple eras, ending with the modern era. As students are exposed to cartoons from different time periods, the instructor will facilitate discussion on why the cartoon is relevant for its time.

Objectives:
- Exploring social and political messaging in cartoons
- Use of technology to help students draw
- Children’s cartoons and messaging
- Marketing and use of cartoons

Course Topics:
- Satire
- Learning lines and sketching
- Animation

Instructor: Evan Fersko

Music Production

Mondays 6:30–8:30pm

Description: Students will learn the basics of music production. Using different music platforms, students will explore how songs are created and produced.

Objectives:
- Socialization
- Exploring technology for music production
- Song creation
- Exploring music production platforms
- Exploring music production platforms

Course Topics:
- Song creation
- Exploring instruments

Instructor: Branden Andrade
All About Animals

**M W** Mondays and Wednesdays  **P1** 6:30–7:30pm

Description: Students will learn about the different categories of animals and their characteristics, homes, and habitats.

Objectives:
- Identify animals and where they live
- How animals survive
- Animal socialization

Course Topics:
- Species
- What do they eat (carnivores, herbivores, omnivores)
- Geographic homes
- Specific names for males, females and babies
- Specific names for groups

Instructor: Sharon Bottaro

Disney

**M W** Mondays and Wednesdays  **P2** 7:30–8:30pm

Description: This course will be an overview of Walt Disney and his empire.

Objectives:
- Learn about Walt Disney's personal and business life
- Learn how animation evolved from hand-drawn to computer animation
- Lessons learned from Disney villains and Disney princesses
- Secrets of Disneyland and Disneyworld

Course Topics:
- History of Disneyland and Disney World
- History of animation

Instructor: Sharon Bottaro
Games and Social Skills

Wednesdays 6:30–7:30pm

Description: Students will participate in various types of games to enhance social skills. Students will be encouraged to take turns, interact respectfully with others, and learn games skills needed to participate in activities.

Objectives:
- Teach students social skills in a group setting.
- Teach students various game rules and skills to participate in activities.
- Provide students with recreation activities they enjoy.

Course Topics:
- Game participation skills
- Socialization skills
- Self-regulatory skills (i.e., taking turns)
- Learning to play the following games: Bingo, Hangman, Family Feud, trivia games, Pictionary, etc.

Instructor: Amy Lenza

Art History and Technique

Wednesdays 7:30–8:30pm

Description: Students will learn about the history of art, famous artists, and how to complete basic art tasks.

Objectives:
- Improve student’s awareness of various art forms and artists
- Teach students how to analyze works of art and improve their art appreciation
- Offer students the opportunity to complete art activities based on the artists and art forms studied

Course Topics:
- American Art
- French Art
- English Art
- Japanese Art
- Indian Art
- Ancient Egyptian Art
- Ancient Greek and Roman Art
- Paintings
- Sculptures
- Drawings
- Various art styles (Impressionism, Pointillism, Abstract Art, Expressionism, Cubism, etc.)
- Materials: pencils, pens, markers, colored pencils, crayons, paper

Instructor: Amy Lenza

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Music Appreciation

| W | Wednesdays | 6:30–8:30pm |

Description: Using different music platforms, students will explore songs, artists, genres, or eras of music of their choosing, identify artists, the feelings songs elicit, and getting a sense of meaning from music. This class will also use video lyrics for the students to follow the music with words. Students will also be exposed to genres or songs they would not normally listen to.

Objectives:
- Socialization
- Song and genre recognition
- Exploring nostalgia - matching songs to memories

Course Topics:
- 50s Doo Wop
- 60s New Age Rock
- 70s Rock and Disco Era
- 80s Hair Bands
- 90s Hip Hop
- Heavy Metal Rock
- Big Band
- Jazz
- Songs from Broadway Musicals

Instructor: Evan Fersko

American History

| T | Tuesdays | 6:30–7:30pm |

Description: Students will learn about the occurrences and history that shaped present-day life in the United States of America. This class also teaches students how to use maps and the Internet in identifying different locations on Earth that have shaped the formation of the U.S.A.

Objectives:
- Identify world events that caused the need for exploration throughout the world, and the countries that promoted exploration
- After settlements were made in the New World, what issues did the inhabitants face in everyday life on the continent of North America?
American History, continued

Course Topics:
- Understanding how and why the exploration of new lands caused the formation of the United States of America
- Understanding the occurrences and incidents that shaped the new nation into becoming the present day United States of America
- Writings of different explorers, inhabitants, leaders, and poets, pre-Revolutionary War and during the American Revolution
- Maps and GPS to pinpoint colonial territories
- Early American History
- Civil War History
- Participating in group discussions on topics covered in class, including events and reasons why occurrences took place

Instructor: Robert Yurman

Everyday Writing for Future Authors

T
tuesdays

6:30–7:30pm

Description: A hands-on approach to building literacy skills, simple sentences, and notes for the purpose of creating a children's book over the course of the year.

Objectives:
- Develop an understanding of sentence structure
- Identification of everyday commonly used words
- Composing notes, postings on social media, greeting cards for birthdays, holidays, etc.
- Compile a glossary of commonly used everyday words
- Practice good printing and penmanship
- Develop as everyday writers with renewed confidence and self-esteem toward the completion of a children's book.

Course Topics:
- Sentences
- Periods
- Commas
- Verbs
- Subjects of sentences
- Commas vs. Periods
- Glossary
- Building ideas

Instructor: Lenore Marchese
Poetry

Tuesdays 7:30–8:30pm

Description: Students will understand and practice rhyming, types of poetry, such as haiku, couplet, nursery rhymes, and inspirational poetry.

Objectives:
- Recognition of rhyming words
- Developing an appreciation of poetry across the genres
- Composing couplets and haikus
- Participation in a poetry celebration
- Public speaking opportunities for everyday life

Course Topics:
- Acrostic poems
- Rhyming
- Stanzas
- Nursery rhymes
- Humorous poems
- Inspirational and seasonal poems
- Poet’s purpose
- Student’s choice
- Poetry sharing

Instructor: Lenore Marchese

World History and Geography

Tuesdays 7:30–8:30pm

Description: This class will encourage students to learn about major events that have occurred in the past, shaping the world as it exists today. This class will also review maps and world globes, identifying different locations on Earth.

Objectives:
- Learn about the seven continents and four major oceans
- Explore the great ancient civilizations, their cultures, and accomplishments
**World History and Geography, continued**

- Identify explorers, their accomplishments and explorations.

**Course Topics:**

- Maps, globes, and GPS systems
- Writings on essential historic figures
- Artwork and inventions, and their impact on societies
- Use of visual aids and websites to gather information on all subject matters, describe land masses, oceans, seas, mountains, etc.

Using oral language to describe or write about the achievements of essential figures covered in class

- Contributing to group discussions on topics covered in class
- Understanding how and why the world got to be the way it is today
- Focusing on nations and civilizations, identifying differences and similarities

Instructor: Robert Yurman

**Food Around the World: Safe Preparation**

**T** Tuesdays  *P1 P2 6:30–8:30pm*

Description: This course will explore various cooking methods and techniques, as well as sanitary food practices.

**Objectives:**

- This course will maintain a log of its lessons learned and recipes, including grocery lists, techniques, cooking utensils, and sanitary practices

Students are encouraged to present on their favorite recipe(s) at the end of year

- Recipes include: meatballs, various pasta dishes, goulash, chicken casserole, garden salad, 'Dump' Cake

Relevant topics requested by students

Course Topics:

- Kitchen utensils including measuring tools, as well as pots and pans for different sizes and uses
- Safe kitchen and food handling practices
- Budgeting and meal prep

Instructor: Brenda J. Stanton

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Taking Care of the Environment: Sustainable Living

**Th** Thursdays  **6:30–8:30pm**

Description: This course will teach students life skills that are good for the environment, also known as “sustainable living”. Students will also participate in three on-campus environmental volunteer activities during the day alongside other CSI students.

Objectives:

- Learning environment-friendly life skills like recycling, composting, and gardening
- Developing transportation skills
- Socialization during the program and on-campus sustainability events
- Instructor will collect student feedback to further develop course topics
- Class capstone project is to create a sustainability plan for CSI

Course Topics:

- Environmental impacts of littering
- Campus clean-up
- How trash and recycling work
- How composting works
- Garlic planting
- Viewing movies and documentaries with environmental topics
- Local and global current events and environmental issues

Instructor: Nora Santiago

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Famous Movies and Musicals

**T** Tuesdays and Thursdays  **6:30–7:30pm**

Description: Students will watch clips from movies and musicals and have a discussion to understand the concepts.

Objectives:

- Compare movies and musicals to each other
- Discuss main ideas and characters
Course Topics:
- Identify the movie or musical
- When possible, compare old and new version of the movie or musical

Instructor: Sharon Bottaro

Traveling the 50 States of the USA

Tuesdays and Thursdays  7:30–8:30pm

Description: Students will learn a variety topics associated with all 50 states in the United States of America (USA).

Objectives:

- Students will further develop their interpersonal and social skills through dialog with their classmates and the instructor
- Similar to a Social Studies class, students will be exposed to historical, fun and interesting topics by state, sparking their curiosity on places to see while traveling

Course Topics:
- History of each State
- Capital Cities
- State Symbols
- Botany, including State Flowers
- Zoology, including State Animals
- State Resources
- Popular attractions

Instructor: Sharon Bottaro
Life Skills

T Th Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30–8:30pm

Description: Life Skills is a course designed to sharpen competencies and interpersonal skills to help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically, empathize, and manage their lives in a healthy holistic way.

Objectives:

- Identify basic life skills such as financial planning, health and wellness, time management, social emotional well-being, and building positive relationships
- Teach students computer competencies
- Foster student autonomy, allowing students to have ownership of ideas, build communication skills, and build community

Course Topics:

- Getting to know you. What are your goals in life?
- What are life skills and how do we use them to be successful?
- How and why do we promote health and wellness?
- What are some ways you are using health and wellness in your life, and with your family and friends?
- What is empathy? Why is it important for us have it and spread it around our social circle?
- Financial planning/making a budget
- What are the requirements needed to open a bank account?

Instructor: Tamasia Wright
Creative Writing

Thursdays  6:30–7:30pm

Description: This class will encourage students to use their senses to talk and write about the world around them. They will share their thoughts and feelings in individual and group poems/stories that will be included in a book at the course conclusion.

Objectives:

- Identify how your senses impact your feelings
- Explore the ways people interpret the world around them
- Describe feelings and observations using language, first through speech, and then through writing
- Explore the meanings of words like imagination. Example: One day I was out for a walk and when I turned the corner I saw the scariest sight. It looked like __________.

Course Topics:

- Stories and poems
- Understanding words to explore and write about emotions, places, people, or objects
- Writing about friends, famous places, dreams, and our thoughts
- Writing about the future or the past
- Using oral language to describe student work, first through speech, and then through writing, or having their thoughts transcribed
- Completing story starters to create a new scenario
- Contributing to group writings by adding appropriate lines
- Reading what was written, hearing what poets had written by listening to selected poems, i.e., Emily Dickinson, Ogden Nash, and other short works
- Students will engage in discussion

Instructor: Robert Yurman
Greek and Roman Mythology

**Ths** Thursdays  **6:30–7:30pm**

Description: Students will explore Greek and Roman Mythology, beginning with their belief systems and its impact on civilization, past and present.

Objectives:

- Meaning making from the lessons of Greek and Roman mythology
- Further develop critical thinking skills and focus

Course Topics:

- Lives and activities of Greek and Roman Gods
- Stories of Demi-Gods
- Mt. Olympus
- Stories of mythical creatures

Instructor: Evan Fersko

Let’s Talk Sports

**Ths** Thursdays  **7:30–8:30pm**

Description: This course will explore professional and college sports; including team standings in their leagues, team statistics, and player statistics.

Objectives:

- Learn about the impact of sports on society, media, and fans
- Further develop critical thinking skills and focus

Course Topics:

- The importance of teamwork in multiple sports leagues
- Popular players on teams, and the impact on teamwork
- Competitive offensive and defensive strategies

Instructor: Evan Fersko
Famous People and Civilizations: Past and Present

Thursdays  7:30–8:30pm

Description: This class will encourage students to learn about people of the past and present. Students will teach one another how to use maps and globes to identify locations on Earth, and to learn about different parts of the world and various cultures including ancient civilizations.

Objectives:
- Identify the leaders of each civilization and culture, and their accomplishments
- Learn how each civilization or culture affected life in ancient times and in modern times

Course Topics:
- Ancient accomplishments, inventions, and policy making
- Participating in group discussion or writing to describe the achievements of individuals or groups covered in class
- Understanding how people and civilizations have changed over periods of time
- Identifying common needs for all civilizations, people, and cultures
- Focusing on nations and civilizations; identifying differences and similarities

Instructor: Robert Yurman

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Office of Community Educational Engagement Overview

The Office of Community Educational Engagement (OCEE) is a central resource and bridge connecting the College and community. OCEE’s programs draw upon the College’s legacy and commitment to civic prosperity, as well as CUNY’s public purpose for educational access and excellence.

Our purpose is to prepare students to more fully participate and thrive in the 21st Century through academic programs, supportive learning communities, and collaborations across campus and within the community. The OCEE serves as a gateway into CSI for:

- Incoming English Language Learners by providing comprehensive advisement and academic preparation,
- Cross-campus and community engagement,
- Adults 21 and over seeking their high school equivalency diploma,
- Adults 55 and over seeking non-credit-bearing programs for enrichment and lifelong learning, and
- Staten Island residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including Creative Exchange, Life Skills, and the Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program.

Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program (MRHEP)

In 2008, AHRC NYC’s Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program (MRHEP) launched one of its first, fully inclusive college experiences for non-matriculated students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at CSI. Mirroring the baccalaureate degree track, this program has persisted as a successful model, enabling participants to immerse themselves in college classes, co-curricular programs, civic engagement, and carefully designed learning experiences to support self-sufficiency.

For more information on MRHEP, please visit csi.cuny.edu/melissariggio or contact 718.982.2109 or Jessica.Giorgio@csi.cuny.edu.