Official High School Transcript – BFS Student, Class of 2017

Transcript Time Period: September 2013- June 2017
High School Attendance: September 2013-Present
Brooklyn Free School Attendance: September 2004-Present
Graduation Date: June 10, 2017

Transcript Contents:
I. Democracy and Community Participation
II. Student Leadership and Committees
III. Academic Studies and Activities
IV. Internships and Independent Studies
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Brooklyn Free School (BFS) is a pre-K-12th grade independent day school with 70+ students from diverse backgrounds who design their own education and participate in a direct democracy system where students and staff have an equal vote.

Student transcripts offer a full picture of learning experiences undertaken during High School. Evaluations are provided in narrative form, and grades are not given under any circumstances by BFS.

All transcript listings are self-evaluated by the student, and teacher evaluations are included where applicable. Volunteer teachers are not expected to provide written evaluations.

Activities are listed in reverse chronological order within each section in order to demonstrate the student’s current skill levels.

Noleca Radway, Executive Director
Date of Report: June 13, 2017
I. DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

A. Democratic Process

Description:
All students and staff attend a weekly democratic meeting governed by Robert’s Rules of Order and the Iroquois Method. The democratic meeting is responsible for making all the day-to-day decisions necessary for building and maintaining this unique school community. Every student and staff member has one vote in the process, and anyone can place an item on the agenda. Students always chair these meetings. The meeting makes decisions about such matters as attendance, admissions, fundraising, and any other area of the school that is of concern to a member of the community, with the exception of safety and health-related issues.

Student Self-Evaluation:
Being a part of a democratic school and participating in these weekly meetings for most of my life has made it clear to me that I have an important voice. I have learned my opinions are valid and that I matter when making important decisions that affect my life and other lives around me. Because I am female, our society tells me that my voice is less important than other more dominant voices: however, BFS has taught me that that is untrue. Comparing the democratic process at BFS to our national democracy has shown me many inequalities and injustices in America’s policies and decision-making. I think growing up in this community has allowed me to develop as someone who values and demands that everyone is listened to and respected.

B. Advisory

Description:
Students are divided into peer groups that are led by a teacher. These peer groups meet weekly to discuss a variety of topics including school events, the weekly calendar, and personal goals and achievements. Advisors also meet individually with advisees on an as-needed basis, and twice a year before family conference reviews.

Student Self-Evaluation:
Advisory has evolved over the years. Before Social Justice block started, we would use Advisory time to discuss race, sexual identity, drug use, and other topics pertinent to our lives. I enjoy learning about issues that affect me and my peers in a safe space. I attend all advisories, optional and mandatory, and participate fully in all advisory activities. I also meet with my advisor weekly to discuss how my schoolwork is going, how I am doing socially, and if I need help with anything. Advisory time has always been something that I look forward to, a time to be together and check in with each other.

C. Community Responsibilities

Description:
Students carry out assigned responsibilities to help maintain the school premises. They work together in teams to set up and clean up for school lunches and to clean, tidy, organize, restock, and close up the school at the end of each school day.
Student Self-Evaluation:
End-of-day clean-up is something I am very used to; I've been doing it most of my life. Over the years I have struggled with my peers’ resistance to clean-up, but have learned that most of the defiance comes from some unrelated personal issue. At a young age I learned that the reality of people’s lives can interfere with community responsibilities, which is always an important thing to keep in mind.

D. Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Description:
Students participate in small group meetings and discussions to solve problems and conflicts that arise and to develop and implement solutions. Mediation meetings are run on the same basis as the weekly democratic meeting and emphasize listening to each other and building consensus.

Student Self-Evaluation:
I really appreciate the mediation process; it is useful and effective to have smaller, supportive, more direct meetings to zero in on specific problems. Sometimes in conflicts people don’t listen to each other, so mediations are helpful because they create time and space for respectful listening. I have served as a facilitator for informal and formal mediations. Students ask me to mediate because I am a good listener and my peers know that I believe in everyone’s point of view being heard.

Teacher Evaluation - Kathy McCullagh, Education Director

This student is a deeply respected leader in the school community. Her calm, reasoned perspective and profound integration of both social justice and democratic free school practices combine to make her thoughts sought after by peers and adults alike. This student’s profound sense of integrity and responsibility provides an unspoken standard for all who join with her in meetings or discussions. According to her teacher, Jonathan Ho, she arrives to advisory meetings on time, takes part in discussions and activities, and helps to guide the group when dealing with any knotty issues that arise. Her presence and ethic continues into the larger high school community. Her voice and opinion carries weight in democratic meetings and in mediation. She contributes positively to the running of the high school, leading by example with her commitment to her student responsibilities and her fair-mindedness.
II. STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND COMMITTEES

A. Committees

Student Representative to the Brooklyn Free School Board of Trustees
Fall 2016-present

Student Self-evaluation:
I have been apart of the Brooklyn Free School for over a decade and I know a lot about this community and how it works. I joined the Board of Trustees as the Student Representative because I wanted to know more about the financial side of things, something I knew nothing about. I also believe that I am very equipped to hold this position because of how long I’ve been in the community and of the connections I have with people through many age groups. This position also helped me build new relationships with younger students and learn more about what they’ve been spending their time doing. Being on the Board gave me something new to do with BFS and learn about this community in ways that gave me a better understanding of why some things are the way they are. In addition, I got to push myself to work with adults as the only student in the room, and learn how to navigate speaking up in situations where it was challenging and I was intimidated.

Hiring Committee 2015-2016
Spring 2016
Committee Advisor: Hope Seery

Description:
The hiring committee, comprised of volunteer staff, students, and parents, helps to inform the school’s hiring process. Student participants on the hiring committee meet with and interview prospective candidates, solicit feedback from other students in the school, and share their perspectives and recommendations with the school cabinet.

Student Self-Evaluation:
Being a part of this committee was a great experience. Together with my peers, we worked to remove our biases from the hiring committee and to think critically about each candidate. This process began to teach me how to evaluate things objectively and collaborate with other students, staff, and parents on a vital administrative project. I participated fully and happily; I was present and mentally engaged in all of the interviews. I attended meetings that were outside of my regular school schedule, and I really tried to make sure that I was thinking about the school as a whole, and considering carefully the ways the candidates would benefit our community.

Hiring Committee 2014-2015
2014-2015
Committee Advisor: Hope Seery

Student Self-Evaluation:
I decided to join the Hiring Committee this year because this community is important to me and I want to have a say in who’s a part of our community. I gained critical thinking and interviewing skills. I participated actively throughout the whole process, and was engaged and attentive. Because of this experience I’m interested in participating in this process throughout my high school career.
Description:
This committee plans, organizes, designs, and creates the yearbook. Students on this committee take student portraits, photograph school events, collect quotes, and plan pages and layouts of the yearbook.

Student Self-Evaluation:
I joined the yearbook committee because I had done it before and enjoyed it. I was the point person for school quotes, baby photos, and signatures for the back of yearbook. In order to make sure that everyone in the school was represented I had to be organized and patient. It was a good way for me to get to know the lower school and for them to get to know me.
B. Social Justice

Brooklyn Youth Voice Awards
Winter 2016-ongoing
Project Advisor: Anyanwu Glanville

Description:
Brooklyn Community Foundation is committed to supporting the leadership and agency of youth in creating community change. YOUTH VOICE AWARDS is a youth-led grantmaking program that sees youth as central players in making decisions around supporting youth-centered and youth-led projects. The 2016 Youth Voice Awards were designed and selected by the Foundation’s Brooklyn Youth Fellows. Brooklyn Free School - "Let's Talk About It! Housing Justice" is aimed at educating and creating a documentary on housing justice and gentrification. The project will engage youth by arranging visits to town hall meetings, reading articles and watching interviews addressing housing, gentrification and justice, as well as opportunities to engage with the Mayor’s office and participate in local shelter events. As part of the project, the youth team will create a documentary and facilitate a workshop for youth on housing rights.

Student Self-Evaluation:
I joined this project because addressing issues of injustice matters to me, and gentrification is one particular form of injustice that is prevalent in my life. I am interested in making sure all people are heard, because in general we tend to hear only from the privileged people. In this movie I want the story to look different: to showcase the people being hurt by gentrification and give them a chance to share their stories. We also want to learn and share about why gentrification happens.

It was an honor to be awarded this grant to make a film about something that is really important to me, and I am looking forward to starting to film and seeing where the project takes us. For the documentary we are making, I have taken on the role as lead editor. I am learning from two documentary filmmakers how to create a polished piece of work. I decided to take this on because I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to learn a new skill. Through doing this I have discovered that editing comes naturally to me and is something that I could see myself doing in the future. Although I am the lead editor, a big part of this process is the collaboration of all of our ideas and working together to create something that we are all proud of.

Social Justice Seminar
2015-2017
Facilitator: Anyanwu Gladville

Description:
Students engage in participatory inquiry into the social, cultural, and institutional responses to inequality and oppression. Participants examine the institutional structures, cultural practices, and social behaviors that inform the concept of equality and the recognition of human rights. In pursuit of understanding historical and contemporary representations of social justice, the themes and topics of education, gender, race, class, and sexuality are covered to explore facets of oppression and actions for justice.

Student Self-Evaluation:
Over the past few years I have become increasingly interested in learning and talking about social injustices. I see everything through the lens of my white privilege, and I am constantly challenging myself to acknowledge and work through my privilege in every situation and interaction. Social
Justice Seminar has challenged me personally to reflect on so many of the less obvious ways that I am privileged, like ableism, class, two-parent home and family history of higher education. It is also a place for me to talk to, and hear from, my peers about their experiences with systemic oppression. The teacher-led lectures give me a deep understanding of history, social justice movements, and key terms used to discuss issues.

Talking and learning about people’s lives and the systemic ways that we fail each other is what I am most passionate about, and I always want to learn more about people’s personal experiences. My goal is to feel fully confident enough in myself and my knowledge to have hard conversations about a range of different social issues with people whose opinions differ from mine.

Before taking Social Justice Seminar, I regularly studied social justice issues independently - spending my time reading, thinking, and talking about prejudice, ignorance, and inequality. When I hear about an issue, I look it up and explore its history and meaning. I talk with my family about a range of issues including politics, microaggressions, current events, and what I am learning in SJ Seminar. I read mainstream media to see what kinds of things they are NOT talking about.

I am grateful to have a deeper knowledge of my peers’ thoughts and experiences around how they have experienced personal injustice, and to have looked more deeply at my own identity. What I have learned this year has solidified my interest, passion, and commitment to this work.

**Teen Group**

*Fall 2013-Spring 2014; Winter & Spring 2016*

*Instructor: Katherine Chew*

**Description:**
Teen group met once a week and worked to create a space for personal discussion and attentive listening. We explored topics relevant to being teenagers today, and students chose to speak or not. The purpose of the group was for students to have a safe place to share and explore personal opinions and feelings, listen to their peers, build stronger relationships with one another, and explore some of the richer and more confusing aspects of life.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
When I’m thinking about things happening in my life I’m very interested in knowing if other people my age are having similar experiences. This group provides a space for my peers and me to be honest and open about prevalent issues in our lives and make us feel less alone. It was at times challenging to be in that space because what we were discussing wasn’t easy, but all worth it in the end. We got to discuss sexism teen girls face, abuse, drug use, mental health issues and more. My biggest takeaway from this group was that everyone has more in common than meets the eye.

**Affinity Groups**

*2013-2014*

*Facilitators: Noleca Radway and Lily Mercogliano*

**Description:**
Students meet weekly in identity affinity groups based on race and gender to deepen their understanding of how racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression impact the school community and to take action toward being an inclusive and anti-racist school. Activities include reading articles, watching videos, and sharing stories and experiences. Student participants have the opportunity to share the work they’ve done in national education and student leadership conferences.
Student Self-Evaluation:
Many of the affinity groups we did this year were about race, and discussions about personal identity and race are very difficult to have. Although these conversations were challenging, they were also really rewarding. Because I am white, I have the privilege of ignoring racism everyday, and these groups really helped me start to have an idea of what most people’s lives look like. I think that I participated in the best ways that I could and because of that, I was asked to partake in a keynote panel at the AERO conference to discuss how we addressed the topic of race at our school through affinity work. I decided not to do it because I didn’t feel ready or comfortable yet to discuss such a heavy topic in front of such a large group. I would really like to continue this work and help others start to talk about these tough topics.

Advisor Evaluation-Jonathan Ho, Head Teacher
This student quietly and thoughtfully leads by example. She brings her highly developed skills in collaborative group work to any committee or project that she joins, and her contributions consistently move discussions and decision making to more productive conclusions. She has participated in several seminal school committees, including serving for two years on the Student Interviewing Committee, in which she interviews prospective teachers for the school. This student takes her work in any committee very seriously, thoroughly preparing and following up on tasks and also pushing the group in directions she values. For example, on the interviewing committee she brings in the broader perspective of the student body, deeply considering the needs of students of all ages, not just her own peer group, and also holds candidates to the mission of the school as she frames her questions for them. This student has also been a consistent attendee and passionate participant in the school’s social justice-themed groups and activities and has consistently advocated for deeper engagement in this material within the high school program.

Social Justice Seminar Evaluation - Anyanwu Glanville
This student’s capacity to be culturally and socially conscious in dialogue, writing and community engagement is both developed and nurtured. Although we are very active in using a critical lens at Brooklyn Free School it’s clear she’s used the democratic structure of learning we provide to independently learn about the intersection of history, culture and social challenges among people. In both the classroom and one-on-one conversations she applies critical thought to what she understands, believes and desires from her environments. As a student leader, her responses in discussions, writing and during student led projects are balanced and disarming yet clear and insightful. I specifically think of this year’s electoral race as an example. As students would debate issues that came up concerning class, gender and race she would remind students of being conscious of multiple perspectives that bring about differences among people.

Due to her calm and focused demeanor she allows an ease in difficult and layered topics yet challenges both her learning and teaching moments to have an openess and inclusiveness. Without imposing ideas, political strategy or an attachment to any particular group she shares her truth and critical perspectives to be considered. What has been impressive is that while being expressve she is also accountable for her own privileges while considering the ways others do not have the same access or opportunities.
III. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND ACTIVITIES

A. Humanities

Feminist Critical Theory
Spring 2017
Teacher: Jade Sanchez-Ventura

Course Description:
This course aims to introduce participants to critical theory, and to cover a sample of foundational texts of feminist theory. Students were assigned college level readings, and asked to come to class prepared to engage in in-depth discussion. Each discussion began with a summary of the writer’s ideas, was followed by an analysis of those ideas, and finally students were asked to critique and engage the text, with a focus paid to intersectionality, and the persistent absence of it in much of the so-called canon of feminist theoretical writing.

Student Self-Evaluation:
As a feminist, this subject matter is very important to me. I’ve appreciated the challenge of learning about first, second and third wave feminism through long readings and discussions. I was able to make connections from my personal experiences and opinions to the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, Audre Lorde, Betty Friedan, and others. The discussions about intersectionality were what I was most passionate about - I was able to illustrate all the ways in which the feminism we were reading and talking about wasn’t intersectional. I found myself unable to have conversations about what we had been reading without acknowledging how exclusive the writing was; written for one class of women - as if white, upper/middle class women’s experiences are representative of every woman. Because this class was so small, I got to learn about some of the history of feminism in a space that I was very comfortable in. I will be taking a gender studies class my first semester of college, in hopes of going deeper into this topic.

War on Drugs
Winter 2016-17
Instructor: Jonathan Ho

Course Description:
In this course, students research, explore, and unpack the current War on Drugs and its role and impact in American culture and public policy. Class activities include discussions, debates, and student presentations. Topics covered include drug use throughout human history; different types of drugs and their physical and psychological effects; the current opioid crisis; the Prohibition; the contributions of various Presidential administrations over the past half century to the War on Drugs; and the War on Drugs today. Students worked independently or in small groups to write an expository essay.

Student Self-Evaluation:
This class was spurred by a class in American Prisons and many of us wanting to know more about why our prisons are filled with so many men of color. We started by learning what classifies something as a drug, and went right into learning how to put together a presentation and present it in a short amount of time. I’ve known about the war on drugs for a long time and have had a pretty good idea of why it started and how/why it continues. This class for me was an opportunity to get to talk to my peers about a topic that I am passionate about and to see others get educated on the subject. I also learned how to write an explanatory essay—it was a new area for me as I have only really written analytical and personal essays. It was challenging and exciting to learn a new way to
research something and present what you have learned. I realized that not only do I like to do specific research for an essay that is not me imposing my point of view, but I am also good at it. I put together a concise essay showing facts and research about Cannabis that not only taught me things, but was clear enough for others to learn from. I am always going to want to learn from and with my peers about something that I care about and this class was just another opportunity to do so—I will forever be grateful for these experiences.

English Literature: Their Eyes Were Watching God & Slaughterhouse Five
Fall 2016
Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura

Course Description:
In this class, students will read these two classic canons of the American canon. Students will practice critical reading and discussions skills, with a focus on classroom and study skills; specifically note taking, presenting, and supporting arguments with textual evidence. The class will conclude with a compare and contrast analytical essay.

Student Self-Evaluation:
I’ve always loved to read - both people reading to me and on my own. When exploring books on my own I have pretty much avoided classic American novels, thinking that they were all outdated stories written by archaic white men. Regardless, I have always been interested in why we consider some books classics and others not, so I wanted a class where we could read, discuss, and write about books perceived as classics. I was pleasantly surprised by what Jade chose as the books for this class. They were considered classics, but one was written by a black woman about black culture and one by, yes a white man, a former prisoner of World War II about his time as a soldier and prisoner - not what I would’ve thought was classified as a classic. I enjoyed both books and was glad to have the opportunity to experience reading that my peers at other schools were, probably, required to read. When working on my final project for this class I chose to write a compare and contrast essay comparing how violence was depicted in each book, exploring both physical and emotional violence and trauma, discussing the blatant, obvious, widely condemned violence that occurs in a war versus the low key, convoluted violence that can occur in a marriage.

American Prisons
Fall 2016
Instructor: Jonathan Ho

Course Description:
In this course, students research, explore, and unpack the current realities of the American prison system and tie them to systems of power and control in American history. Class activities include discussions, debates, guest speakers, trips, student presentations, and political actions. Topics covered include prison strikes, current and historic; the history of the American prison system; the experience of youth in the criminal justice system; private, for-profit prisons; among others. Students work independently or in small groups to conduct in-depth research exploring a question of their choosing and present their findings in a format of their choice.

Student Self-Evaluation:
Learning about systemic oppression and how it affects people’s daily lives is something that I believe is crucial when educating ourselves. This was a meaningful class for me as a young, white woman growing up in this country, because I have my own fears being a woman but I have never worried about ending up in jail or prison. I have known that my experiences in life are very different from
those who are people of color, but learning about actual tactics that are used to imprison specifically black men has opened my eyes in a new way. Learning about the logistics of modern day slavery, the school to prison pipeline, bail bonds, and more was an important step in furthering my activism. Not only did we learn logistics, but also about how the disproportionate incarceration of black men affects people’s mental health, self worth, and how our country’s whole history plays a much bigger role than I could ever have imagined. This class has only fueled the fire of my activism, education, and acknowledgement of my own white privilege. My final project for this class was a presentation on what life is like for transgender people in prison. I researched this topic through reading articles and reaching out to people involved in LGBTQ+ activism, and then presented a google slide presentation to the class. I chose this particular subject because there are a lot of misconceptions about transgender people in our society, and my school, and I wanted to bring awareness to how our prison system oppresses transgender people. I was nervous about presenting about something so controversial, but I ended up having a really clear and well thought out presentation that I think really did educate my classmates.

**Controversies**

*Spring 2016*

_Instructors: William Schmidt (volunteer), Danielle Levine (volunteer), Amalia Schwarzschild (student volunteer)_

**Description:**
In this class, we explored important concepts related to understanding controversies such as logic, reasoning and debate. Students parsed short texts ("quotes") to determine the exact meaning, and then debated in favor of and opposed to the text. Students also worked with making counter-arguments against their preferred position and learned to identify some common logical fallacies.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I learned that we communicate in different ways based on who we are communicating with, what we are discussing, and how we are feeling. We acted out different scenarios to learn how to identify logical fallacies, practice counter-arguments, and communicate effectively even when emotions are running high. Because we explored those topics through games and theater, the class was engaging and something to look forward to.

**History of Vietnam War**

*Spring 2016*

_Instructor: Jonathan Ho_

**Description:**
Students in this class studied how dynamics resulting from European imperialism, the end of World War II, and the Cold War led to the Vietnam War. Students looked at the major players in the conflict; the role that the United States played in the war along with the reaction to the war back in the United States; various atrocities committed during the war, including the usage of napalm and Agent Orange, and the My Lai massacre, as well as the outcome of the war. Additionally, students looked at the role photojournalism played in the media portrayal of the Vietnam War and its influence on the role of the media in the United States’ subsequent military involvements, as well as various cinematic depictions of the Vietnam War.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
Until this class I knew virtually nothing about Vietnam. I learned about atrocities I had no idea
occurred, like the use of napalm and agent orange, and the violence at protests in the US. Something that really stands out is learning about how people are still affected in horrible ways by the war even forty years later. This class was a great introduction to the Vietnam War. I would appreciate more time to study the war and the events leading up to it.

**Poetry Analysis**  
*Spring 2016*  
*Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura*

**Description:**  
In this class, we will study, discuss, dissect, examine, and write about poetry, building eventually to the writing of a 3-5 page analytical essay. In order to create a shared cultural context, we will focus primarily on American poetry of the 1950s and ’60s. Towards the end of the cycle, depending on the direction our studies take, we may also bring in contemporary poetry that specifically engages with the relationship between individuals and the society they live in. We will examine each poem’s themes, literary devices, and cultural context. As we progress, students will learn and practice the structures of analytical writing, with a strong focus on the thesis statement, topic sentences, and providing relevant evidence. Students will be asked to share their work in the end-of-cycle work fair.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
This class was engaging, informative and challenging. I have always really liked poetry, both writing and reading, and analyzing poetry was a new challenge for me to take on in a class setting. I learned a lot about poetry formatting and structure and worked to improve my writing: incorporating quotes from poems, strengthening my topic sentences, and building my confidence around structuring paragraphs. Talking about poems and what they mean was really enjoyable and taught me to think more critically about what I’m reading, no matter what it is.

My final project for this class was to write an essay analyzing one aspect of the poems we’d been discussing, which I found somewhat challenging. I chose to compare how empowerment was portrayed in *Lady Lazarus* by Sylvia Plath and *Phenomenal Woman* by Maya Angelou. I like poetry because I like how free it is; there are no set-in-stone guidelines. This kind of writing seems very authentic because poets can write how they are feeling, and can convey their beliefs in ways that are personal.

**History of World War II**  
*Winter 2016- Spring 2016*  
*Instructor: Jonathan Ho*

**Description:**  
Students in this intensive studied the events of World War II, particularly emphasizing topics of interest generated by class participants. Students studied the events leading up to World War II; the war’s timeline and major events; and the individual histories of each of the major countries from both the Axis Powers and the Allied Forces, looking at how colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, and the conflicts between capitalist and communist philosophies shaped national identities and international relations leading up to the war. Additionally, students discussed the role of codes in the war, from the Enigma Machine to the Navajo Code Talkers; internment camps and racism in the United States; the Holocaust; the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and the aftermath of the war. Archival images, footage, and radio broadcasts were brought into the class as primary sources, and students took a trip to the New York Historical Society to see the “Anti-Semitism 1919-1939” exhibit.
**Student Self-Evaluation:**
This class was great for me and really gave me a fuller picture of the war and the events leading up to it. I identify as Jewish and have always been very interested in learning about WWII because of my ancestral connection to European Jews, but until this class had only really learned about The Holocaust. This class really expanded my knowledge about other people affected by the war and helped me to understand the thinking behind some of those tragedies and why they occurred. This class was occasionally somewhat difficult to attend, but only because of how dark and heavy the topics were. History of WWII changed the way I think about the war and made me more sensitive to the other people who were affected it.

**Current Events**  
*Fall 2015-Winter 2016*  
*Teacher: Jonathan Ho*

**Description:**  
This course examines local, national and international events through various sources. Students are encouraged to think critically about social, political, and economic forces that shape the society and world in which we live, as well as the role that the individual plays in creating change. Media literacy is encouraged through examination of multiple sources of information, both mainstream and alternative. Students learn to be active and informed citizens and participants in society and the world.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
I was really invested in this class because we covered topics that are relevant to my life and discussed issues that I suggested: the upcoming presidential election and the controversies surrounding Planned Parenthood.

When we discussed the election, I learned about how our government and electoral system works and what to look at in a presidential candidate. Learning about this upcoming election in depth has helped me become a passionate participant in discussions about the candidates and government as a whole. This was a starting point for me to independently study the election, further explore issues that affect our country, and critically analyze the role played by mainstream media. Through what I learned in this class and studying independently, I have become a passionate Bernie Sanders supporter because of how much his beliefs align with my own.

When we discussed Planned Parenthood I learned what my peers think about birth control and women’s reproductive health and rights. I’m always interested in and challenged by knowing what my peers think about something that I care about, like a woman’s right to choose. Although it can be difficult to hear what people have to say when it’s contradictory to my beliefs, I listened respectfully and spoke up when I thought something needed clarifying.

**Literary Analysis: Drown by Junot Diaz**  
*Fall 2015*  
*Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura*

**Description:**  
In this class we read Junot Diaz’s *Drown* together; this text has become a modern classic, and introduced one of our most exciting living writers to the world. We work together to read, discuss and analyze these texts, becoming familiar with the tools and vocabulary of literary analysis. We also
learned the methods of writing an analytical paper. By the end of the cycle, every student completed an outline, rough draft, and final draft of a 3-5 page paper.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I really like learning about people's lives and reading is one of the most accessible ways for me to view different perspectives and experiences. In this class, I learned how to create an outline for an analytical essay, find evidence in text, cite sources, and write an introduction and conclusion. I appreciated the way the class was taught through discussion and mini-lessons about how to approach a topic.

**Literary Analysis of a Graphic Memoir: My Friend Dahmer by Derf Backderf**

*Fall 2015*

*Instructor: Jonathan Ho*

**Description:**
In Literary Analysis, student participants collectively decide on a novel to read and meet weekly to discuss it. When appropriate, outside resources like additional texts or film are brought in to inform the primary texts. For Fall 2015, students elected to read an award-winning graphic memoir written and illustrated by a high school acquaintance of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer. Classroom conversations ranged from analyzing the composition of pages from aesthetic and narrative perspectives, discussing bullying and other social challenges and realities of the high school experience, and looking at mental health awareness and access over the past decades.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
We read a graphic memoir that led to discussions about nurture vs. nature, how minds work, if we’re responsible for our thoughts, and other topics related to sociology and psychology. These conversations were thought-provoking and completely new to me. I participated fully, and it has changed the way I think about people’s thoughts and actions.

**Neighborhoods of New York City**

*Fall 2015*

*Instructor: Jonathan Ho*

**Description:**
In this interdisciplinary course, students studied neighborhoods of New York City and how they changed throughout history from a variety of perspectives. Students engaged with a variety of topics, including the Great Migration, redlining, white flight, and gentrification. Additionally, students looked at the role of New York City as a cultural center and how it has been a hub for literature, visual arts, and music, focusing on the folk, punk, and hip hop movements. Supplementary activities outside of class included neighborhood exploration trips, a film screening of Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing*, and a follow up study looking specifically at immigration patterns in New York City’s various Chinatowns. Student participants conducted in-depth studies of the various neighborhoods in which they reside and presented their research to their peers.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
In this class I learned a lot about gentrification: how it affected and affects New York City, arguments for and against it, and about hidden gentrification tactics such as redlining and suburbanization. I learned about the history of my neighborhood, how it’s increasingly gentrifying, and considered the role my family has played in that cycle. This class really helped me become more aware of my position as a gentrifier, and learning about that privilege has made me more aware and sensitive
about living in a gentrifying city.

From talking about gentrification we transitioned to talking about art in New York City. I learned which artists had and have a connection to NYC, what art forms originated from here, and about movements like the Harlem Renaissance. This portion of the class was less challenging on a personal level, but still resonates with me because it exposed me to art and music that for the most part I was unfamiliar with.

My final project was a photographic and biographical presentation on Patti Smith and her connection to New York City. I had never done a project like this before, and it was successful because the finished presentation was visually appealing and addressed a lot of different parts of her life.

**The Art of the Personal Essay**  
*Fall 2015*  
*Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura*

**Description:**  
This class is all about writing, to help students become more familiar with the form of the personal essay, and to experiment with voice as they tackle writing on their own. We read a wide variety of essays and used our discussions of those essays to inspire our own work. In the second half of the cycle, we shifted to focusing on developing and expanding on writing pieces to create a polished essay and take it through the revision process.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
This class made me realize that I really like to write when I’m passionate about what I’m writing. In the early classes we were doing a lot of free writing, and I wasn’t happy at the time with any of my pieces, so I wasn’t confident that I would be able to write a successful essay. Retrospectively I realize that those failed free writes helped me become confident about trying and failing. It was challenging for me to move past my doubt, but I’m glad I did. I ended this class with a four-page personal essay that I’m happy with. This class really helped me become more confident when approaching writing.

**History and Economics of Slavery**  
*Spring 2015*  
*Instructor: Jonathan Ho*

**Description:**  
In this interdisciplinary class, students explore and discuss the historical and economic impact of slavery on the United States. Students read relevant historical and cultural texts and look at the historical timeline, numbers, and economics behind the institution of slavery. Additionally, students have the opportunity to participate on walking tours in various Brooklyn neighborhoods to study the role of slavery in the formation and development of this borough. Not counting trips, this class meets twice a week for five weeks.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
This class was part of a broader study we as a high school were doing about slavery. In this class we put together a timeline of the 1600s to the 1900s, and from that, researched names or terms we didn’t know. I learned about events that I never knew had happened, and the dates of things ranging from when a slave first had a book published to what state first legalized slavery. On the walking tours around Brooklyn, I learned a lot about history I had not known even existed. I found
everything thought-provoking, memorable, and engrossing, because I am constantly trying to expand my knowledge of social injustices.

The Personal and the Political: The Autobiography of Malcolm X
Spring 2015
Instructor: Jonathan Ho

Description:
In this literature class, students read and discuss The Autobiography of Malcolm X as a personal narrative, a spiritual conversion narrative, and a primary text of the Civil Rights movement. Students delve into the historical and social context of the United States during the time of Malcolm X’s youth, drawing historical and contemporary connections with both the institution of American slavery and the current political unrest of the modern American city. When appropriate, historical artifacts including photos, images, footage, music, and additional readings are brought into the class to supplement the discussion. Students have the opportunity to screen Spike Lee’s cinematic adaptation of the book and to participate in a walking tour of Harlem to explore historical sites relevant to Malcolm X’s life and activism.

Student Self-Evaluation:
It was powerful to learn about the history of that time in Harlem, the early life of Malcolm X and what led him to be who he was. Learning about the Civil Rights Movement is something I am interested in and continue to pursue independently.

Media Studies
Winter-Spring 2015
Instructor: Jonathan Ho

Description:
In Media Studies, students analyze images, videos, music, essays, and articles to explore the role media and media images play in contemporary life. Discussion topics, generated from student interest and input, include the psychology of advertising, the Bechdel test and gender representations in Hollywood, cultural appropriation in pop media, body image representation and manipulation, and representation of slavery in cinema and contemporary music, among others.

Student Self-Evaluation:
In Media Studies we addressed topics that really interest me - in particular target advertising, photoshop, and oppression in the media. What we discussed provoked a lot of really interesting conversations that led to debates that were informative, and challenged me to look at things in different ways.

Analytical Writing
Winter-Spring 2015
Instructor: Monique Scott

Description:
Students read and conduct research, draft a thesis statement, create an outline including quotations, write a rough draft, and revise with teacher feedback to complete an analytical essay addressing one of the following questions: What were the major ideas of Martin Luther King, Jr., and why aren’t they more publicly known? How does the media depict King and his ideas and why? Or
another question of the student’s choosing

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
We started this class by learning about Martin Luther King Jr. in depth; reading speeches of his that aren’t well known, learning about his family, and learning about how broad his ideas for social justice really were. That was really enlightening for me because before this class I didn’t know much about MLK, except for what is very widely known. From what we read, we chose something from his activism to research and write about. This was especially helpful for me to see him as a real whole person, not just an idea of one. I learned how to structure an outline, and began learning the skills of writing an analytical essay.

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**World Mythology**
*Winter 2015*
*Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura*

**Description:**
World Mythology will expand on the studies begun in the previous two cycles of work in Greek Mythology, though new students are welcome to join. In this class, we will be introduced to mythologies from cultures around the world. We’ll begin with a few creation myths from Nigeria and the west coast of the United States. From there, we will move to Persian and Zoroastrian myths, and conclude with the Aztecs. We will examine how these different cultures deal with concepts of good and evil, among other questions that arise. Students will gain experience with creative and analytical writing, discussion, and compare and contrast work. Final project will be a piece of creative writing.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I’ve always liked Greek Mythology so I decided to see what other myths were like. I learned stories about where we originated from and myths about the beginning and the end of the world. I enjoyed the myths we read about various times in history and discussions we had about good vs. evil. This class left me wanting to know more about different stories about where we came from and how we got to where we are today.

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**A People’s History of the United States**
*by Howard Zinn*
*Fall 2014*
*Instructor: Lily Mercogliano*

**Description:**
This course takes as a central focus the issues raised by Howard Zinn in his book *People’s History of the United States*. We will read in groups and discuss how Zinn’s descriptions and perspectives challenge the mainstream narrative of American History. Class discussions will grapple with understanding the significance of perspective and ideology in the writing of history and well as our own personal perspective and place within a historical context.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I asked for this class and attended it because I am interested in learning about America’s history from diverse points of view. I heard that Howard Zinn did not write just from his opinion but also took excerpts from people’s diaries and letters. It was really interesting and challenging to read parts of this book - I learned things that I could never have imagined, and struggled through reading the difficult text. This class was not entirely fulfilling because we didn’t meet as much as I would
have liked and because the primary sources and overall structure of the book was challenging. I would like to continue exploring Zinn’s work, and learn more about our history.

**Book Group: Graphic Historic Memoirs—Maus I & II by Art Spiegelman**

*Fall 2014*

*Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura*

**Description:**
In this class we will read Maus I & II by Art Spiegelman, and Persepolis by Marjorie Satrapi. And potentially, a third. We’ll supplement our reading with relevant articles and media. We’ll discuss the relationship of personal experiences and stories to the major historical events that shape them, and engage with the question of what makes a telling of history true. And of course, we’ll look at the imagery of each work, discussing symbolism and the graphic elements of each.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I took this class because I really like learning about people’s lives and I thought it would be interesting to do it in a different way than usual. This was a really interesting way to learn about history: the book being a memoir makes it very personal, and it being graphic makes it very visual. Being able to see exactly what the author wants you to see is really cool; it makes everything really clear and engaging. Reading graphic memoirs to learn about history is something I’m definitely going to pursue.

**Multi-Genre Writing**

*Fall 2014*

*Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura*

**Description:**
Students will be introduced to essay writing in its many forms. We’ll look at both traditional and experimental essays, as well as a researched and documented argument essay. Students will create rough drafts in multiple forms, and choose one to take through a multiple draft process that ends with a polished piece.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I have always been interested in and intimidated by the idea of learning how to write. Knowing how to write has been a goal for me for awhile and the idea of this class really interested me. At the start of each class we would do a freewrite, which helped me to not take writing so seriously and to just have fun with it. We started by reading some personal essays, because that was the kind of paper we were going to first learn to write. After reading each essay we would always have really incredible discussions that would start with simply talking about what we had just read, but would spiral into broader more controversial conversations. I really appreciated and learned a lot from these discussions, especially the ones about gender norms and ways women are portrayed in America.
Book Group: Random Family  
Spring 2014  
Instructor: Noleca Radway

Description:  
In Book Group, student participants collectively decide on a novel to read and meet weekly to discuss it. When appropriate, outside resources like additional texts or film are brought in to inform the primary texts.

Student Self-Evaluation:  
This book was unlike any book I had ever read before because it’s a nonfiction story about the city I live in but about lives so unlike my own. It is a detailed and intense book about love, drugs, and abuse. While reading we were asked to take note of things that stood out for us so that we could bring topics that interested us back to the group. Through discussion I learned that I wasn’t the only one who was shocked by the book, which was reassuring. In the end the book continued to shock me, and I’m really glad that I read it in a group setting because otherwise I think it would have been too overwhelming.

Shakespeare  
Winter 2014  
Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura

Description:  
This intensive will serve both new and experienced readers of Shakespeare. No prior Shakespeare knowledge is necessary! We’ll be reading Othello, and a second play yet to be finalized. For the second play, we’ll be choosing between Macbeth, Twelfth Night, and Hamlet. We’ll read, listen, watch, act, move, write, and come away with a whole new comfort with, and understanding of, Shakespeare’s work.

Student Self-Evaluation:  
I had only ever heard about the wonders of Shakespeare, so I decided to see what everyone loved so much. We began reading Othello, and acting out scenes from the play, which made it easier to understand. I enjoyed it at first, liking the old language and interesting storyline, but after awhile it was hard to motivate to read it. I was no longer enjoying the language or the story, and it became difficult for me to continue attend the class and participate in activities. I did continue the class and I think that even though I did not fall in love with Shakespeare, I participated in everything as fully as I could. Which means that I did all the work required for class and I prepared to perform a scene from Othello with some of my classmates for our end-of-cycle work fair.

World War II History and Literature  
Winter 2014  
Instructor: Jade Sanchez-Ventura

Description:  
This study group will begin with a basic overview of the events of WWII, and then delve into a deeper understanding through literature, primary source materials, poetry, and film.

Student Self-Evaluation:  
I am extremely interested in World War II, partly because I am Jewish and would like to know more about what happened to my ancestors. We started to read Maus, and Survival in Auschwitz, but
because the class was shorter than expected I finished reading the books by myself. We were also given some handouts to look at, including the timeline of the war. I think that because I am so fascinated by this time period, this class was really engaging and something I looked forward to. I am going to continue learning about this subject.

The Civil Rights Movement in its Own Words
Fall 2013
Teacher: Jade Sanchez-Ventura

Description:
In this interdisciplinary intensive, we will study the Civil Rights Movement through the lens of writing. We will work with writing in many forms; some possible genres include: speeches, newspapers, short fiction, essays, plays, and poetry. This is an introductory intensive. Students aren’t expected to come to the course with prior knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement or the genres of writing involved. For the culminating project, students will choose one genre to focus on and create a piece of writing that will go through a draft and revision process. The final piece will be publicized in a form of the student’s choosing. Some options include: submission to the Y and I Zine, a reading, displaying work in the school, or another method of the student’s design. The intensive will be supplemented by visual and audio documentary materials.

Student Self-Evaluation:
We started by discussing the murder of Emmett Till: I had never heard about him before. Learning about him has forever changed me—to learn in depth about someone my age who was brutally murdered is one of those things I don’t think I’ll ever forget. To learn about the case we read primary source material. The Emmett Till case was very controversial, and we read letters expressing a variety of the country’s strong opinions. After reading the letters and some newspaper articles about the case, Jade had us assume a fictional persona and write a letter from this persona’s point of view. When I first received the assignment I was nervous and didn’t think I would be able to complete it. And it was difficult for me when I first sat down to write it. I couldn’t think of what to say. But when I stopped worrying about it and just wrote, it came very easily to me. After I revised it I was really happy with the letter because I think I really pushed myself and did the assignment to my fullest ability.

Teacher Evaluation-Jade Sanchez-Ventura; Teacher & Advisor

This student is an exceptional Humanities student. I have had the pleasure of working closely with her over my five years at Brooklyn Free School. Before arriving at BFS, I also taught writing and literature at the college level, and I can say with confidence that this student has been doing work that would be considered excellent at the collegiate level since she was a sophomore. She is at ease reading, absorbing, and dissecting written text of multiple genres; including primary and secondary source historical texts, critical theory, fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. In class, she is focused and attentive to her classmates and teacher, taking in their ideas, and when appropriate using them to revise her own positions. She chooses her comments carefully, and as a result, both her classmates and teachers pay close attention when she raises her hand because her contributions invariably deepen the discussion at hand. For both formal and informal presentations, she speaks with confidence, successfully fielding questions and translating her work for her audience. Her written work is also sophisticated and nuanced. In her analytical writing, she crafts focused and compelling thesis statements and applies all the tools of the form—use of arguments and counterarguments, quote integration, transition phrasing, and persuasive language--to develop and defend her position. She scaffolds her work effectively, from graphic outlines through multiple drafts with written
and oral feedback, to arrive at polished final papers. In her creative work, she works deeply with the drafting process to capture her unique voice on the page, and takes it through multiple revisions to create lovely work. Finally, she consistently seeks out new subjects and asks for specific classes to be offered that she knows will challenge her and broaden both her skill and knowledge base; always seeking to know more and deepen her analysis.
B. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Astrobiology
Winter 2016
Instructor: Lily Mercogliano

Description:
In this class, students learned about the origin and evolution of life and the search for life beyond the Earth. This was an online course on the Coursera website, taught by Professor Charles Cockell of the University of Edinburgh.

Student Self-Evaluation:
Studying life in general is intriguing for me so the idea of broadening the study to the greater universe was exciting. Because it was an online course I did have somewhat of a hard time focusing on the videos when we were in class, so I continued to watch the videos on my own. I practiced note-taking, taking quizzes, and focusing on an online course. I continued to appreciate this class and what we were studying, and my final project was a presentation with a fellow classmate about whether or not there was or is life on Mars.

Biology, Evolution, and the Human Story
Fall 2015
Instructor: Jules Beesley

Description:
Students explored both the foundations and frontiers of biology with a particular focus on Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection. Students participated in simulations, conducted lab experiments and developed concepts through discussion. Guiding questions included: How can we distinguish the living from the nonliving? How did life on Earth begin? How did life’s huge variety of forms evolve? Where do we find bacteria? What is the role of DNA in evolution? How does a frog’s anatomy allow it to adapt to its habitat? How did humans evolve an instinctual fear of the dark?

Student Self-Evaluation:
I enjoy learning about living things so I enthusiastically participated in this class. It gave me a broad overview of evolution and how we decide what life is. From this class I have decided that I would like to pursue Biology in more depth.

Chemistry
Spring 2015
Instructor: Jules Beesley

Description:
In this six-session course students explored fundamental science concepts, developed lab skills, and applied scientific methods in order to answer the guiding question, “How do chemical explosions work?” Each session consisted of an initial collaborative, hands-on chemistry investigation followed by a discussion and explanation of the concepts involved.

Student Self-Evaluation:
It was fascinating to learn how to make explosions and thought-provoking to learn how easy it is for anyone to get their hands on materials that can create dangerous chemical reactions. The class was
crowded and at times too loud, but overall was interesting and something I would like to study further.

**Math Lab**
**2013-Present**
*Instructor: Jonathan Ho*

**Description:**
Math Lab is a daily period allotted for students to work on learning new material and improving skills in math. Students work at their own pace on material suitable to their own mathematical progress. During the school Work Fairs, students have the opportunity to create a poster or present a mini-lesson on a math topic of their choice.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
Over the past three years I have spent Math Lab studying Algebra and Geometry. One way this class has worked for me is that it has taught me how to get help when I need it. This has been a challenging class because I tend to prioritize humanities over math. Looking back I wish I had pushed myself more in this area despite my lack of curiosity in the subject. In my school I am able to choose not to go, and I prioritized other interests. I plan to study math more during this last part of high school to obtain more skills and confidence.

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**Teacher Evaluation-Jonathan Ho, Head Teacher**

This student’s eagerness to explore new topics and her disciplined study habits provided a very solid foundation for her work in math and the sciences. Her logical mind and quick access to prior knowledge enables her to make insightful connections and posit intriguing questions which benefit her own comprehension as well as other students. She approached unfamiliar material with curiosity and grit, persisting with her inquiries and strengthening her confidence in seeking assistance until she achieved clarity. She has consistently been a strong member of any group task, holding herself and others accountable to complete work to a high standard.

During her time as a high school student at Brooklyn Free School, this student participated in several science classes. According to Jules Beesley, science teacher, she was engaged and enthusiastic during the lab explorations and hands-on activities. She collaborated very well with others, helping her partners complete complex tasks. She was a careful and engaged listener during lessons and discussions, freely sharing ideas and formulating probing questions that enhanced the discussion by connecting science concepts to everyday experience and helping her peers to better grasp the ideas covered.

This student pursued her mathematics studies as an independent project. She studied geometry and algebra, from introductory algebraic concepts to equations of increasing complexity. She was a focused, consistent, and diligent student and sought staff assistance as needed. She is continuing work this fall to further her knowledge of math disciplines, again applying her thorough, determined work ethic to new areas of study.
C. Visual and Performing Arts

Theater and Musical Theater: *Hairspray*
*Winter-Spring 2015*
*Director: Nancy Bakinde*

**Description:**
Brooklyn Free School puts on an annual musical production. In addition to teaching the blocking, singing, and dancing for the musical, rehearsals focus on character development, costume design, teamwork, stage presence, and voice projection. Students aged 5-18 participated, rehearsing at least twice a week, with the goal of mounting a fully staged hour-long production of *Hairspray*. Students also had the opportunity to participate in other aspects of the production, including set design, crew, and hair and makeup.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I’ve always enjoyed theater, whether it’s performing or watching. I have performed in many school plays over the years, so this year I decided to see what it was like behind the scenes by becoming a stage manager and stagehand. Doing that required me to keep track of all the props and cast members, and make sure everything happened in the right way at the correct time. I practiced time management skills, leadership skills, and listening to and following orders. I participated in important conversations regarding the context of the play, the blatant racism, sexism, and classism. The end result of these conversations was a more enlightened progressive production, that was educational as well as enjoyable.

Theater and Musical Theater: *The Sound Of Music*
*Winter-Spring 2014*
*Directors: Nancy Bakinde and Corinne Goodman (volunteer)*

**Description:**
Brooklyn Free School puts on an annual musical production. In addition to teaching the blocking, singing, and dancing for the musical, rehearsals focus on character development, costume design, teamwork, stage presence, and voice projection. Students aged 5-18 participated, rehearsing at least twice a week, with the goal of mounting a fully staged hour-long production of *The Sound of Music*.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I debated whether or not to do this play, because I prefer drama to musical theater. Nonetheless I auditioned and got a lead role. I love acting and this role definitely improved my skills, and was fun to play. I worked to get over my stage fright more than in previous productions because of the size of my part, and it helped me decide that I would like to continue acting.
D. Foreign Languages

Spanish
Fall 2016
Instructor: Anne Barslev-Furst

Course Description:
A 6-week workshop building upon the work we did in our workshop before Christmas. Our focus was on the Spanish language and cultures where Spanish is spoken, and we also did a mini project on Pablo Picasso and his art. My course design rested on a practical approach to language with a learning-by-doing/seeing/hearing philosophy. Grammatical structures were introduced slowly and were simplified when possible.

Student Self-Evaluation:
For as long as I can remember I’ve wanted to know Spanish. I think it’s a beautiful, common, and versatile language to know. This class was, for the most part, a refresher course for me. It was a very short class, taught by an engaging teacher, that covered basics that I had already learned through traveling to Spanish speaking countries and studying independently. Because of this course I am reinspired to pursue learning Spanish - currently using an app called Duolingo to practice and learn. In this class, I got to have a leadership role because I knew a lot of the terms and words we were learning, so younger students would ask me for help and to check their work before handing it in or speaking up in class.

Introduction to French
Spring 2015
Instructor: Sarah Brooks

Description:
A six-week workshop providing an introduction to both the French language, and world cultures and societies where French is spoken. Designed as an oral, grammatical and written approach to French.

Topics Covered:
Salutations, alphabet, numbers 0-60, days of the week and dates, definite and indefinite articles, regular -ER verbs, negation, être & adjectives, avoir and expressions with, affirmative & negative questions, and French culture.

Methods Used:

Student Self-Evaluation:
This class was a great introduction to French language and culture. I attended this class with the goal of having an understanding of the basics of French. I want to study a language in depth, and this only inspired me more.
Spanish  
Winter 2013  
Teacher: Mark Sobel (volunteer)

Description:  
This class met once a week. Mark taught a beginner’s Spanish class, introducing the students to vocabulary and fundamentals of Spanish grammar. It involved a great deal of on-your-feet learning and speaking.

Student Self-Evaluation:  
I really like Mark. I thought his way of teaching made learning Spanish very enjoyable. I was very disappointed when he could not continue teaching. What we learned included: body parts, days of the week, months of the year, emotions, and more. I would like to pursue Spanish to a point where I can have conversations in Spanish.
E. Physical Education and Health

Salsa Rueda
Spring 2016
Instructor: Fernando Polanco

Description:
Rueda de Casino originates from Cuba and a format of Cuban-style salsa dance. It is danced to Timba, a cuban-style music. Salsa Rueda is formed in a circle of couples with fun and interactive moves with partner-switching dynamics. We meet two times a week for four weeks and all high school students are encouraged to participate.

Student Self-Evaluation:
I’ve been doing Salsa Rueda every summer since 2012, but this was the first year I did it at school. This class was truly great; our teacher was engaged, excited, and organized, and the students that attended were equally committed. This class was a great refresher; it helped me to improve my form, technique, while also teaching me a lot. I learned new calls, techniques, and overall improved my dancing. While also learning a lot and enjoying myself, I also took a leadership position. I demonstrated dance moves with the teacher when he was teaching the other students, I tried to make sure that people committed to the class and showed up, and, while dancing, would help my peers if they needed. I am definitely going to continue dancing Salsa at camp and if offered again at school, I definitely would be interested in participating.

Self-Defense
Winter 2013
Instructors: Anastasia Higginbotham and Kate Hammon (volunteers)

Description:
Anastasia and Kate met with students to educate them on the fundamentals of being street smart and protecting themselves. The emphasis was on how to use their own bodies and knowledge to their advantage when confronted with threatening situations. Safety and self-care were emphasized.

Student Self-Evaluation:
I am very interested in learning to defend myself and being street smart. The beginning stages of learning to defend myself include: hair grab, chest grab, wrist grab, and kneeling someone’s head. I did not go to this class every week because I was not comfortable practicing with fellow students.
F. Other

Senior Writing
*Fall 2016-present*
*Jade Sanchez-Ventura*

**Course Description:**
This year long work is incorporated into the Senior Advisory. With teacher support, each student uses outlines, drafting, and peer and teacher revision to create polished college application essays (when applicable), a polished narrative transcript, and a graduation essay.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I found these weekly meetings to be helpful in supporting the college application process and the writing of my graduation essay. To be able to talk to my fellow seniors about how everything is going in life, specifically senior year, and to not feel so alone in everything, was immensely reassuring and helpful. On top of that, having a scheduled time to be able to talk to my advisor was crucial in meeting my deadlines and feeling confident in myself and my writing.

Communications Studies
*Winter 2016*
*Instructor: Anyanwu Glenville*

**Description:**
Using documentaries students process a range of topics in the context of social issues locally and abroad and political shifts in the U.S. Through dialogue and reflection students examine their perspectives with a critical cultural consciousness lens as a means to question their own experiences and how they engage in the world around them.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
This group met weekly to watch a documentary about something happening around the world. I learned about parts of countries that are virtually enslaved by the US, some history of the Black Panthers, and about female genocide and infanticide in China and India. I appreciated this class because it was simple, informative, and engaging. Watching documentaries about those topics instead of reading about them was helpful and refreshing.

Life Skills 101: Personal Economics & Leadership
*Fall 2015*
*Instructor: Lily Mercogliano*

**Description:**
Students in this class learned knowledge and skills necessary to be a responsible adult in contemporary life. Topics were generated based on student interest and included resumes and job hunting, college and career interviews, financial literacy and taxes, and some basic driver’s education.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**
I went into this class hoping it would help me start to understand how to survive on my own, and it did. I learned how to create a personal budget, choose what to include on a resume, and write a cover letter. What had previously seemed so complicated was made clear by a guest speaker who
explained simply how investing works, which was very helpful and the first time I’ve even remotely understood it. All in all this class was very beneficial.

SAT Test Prep  
*Fall 2015-Winter 2016*  
*Instructor: Jonathan Ho*

**Description:**  
Students study the format and structure of the new SAT. Students learn various test-taking strategies, including how to manage one’s allotted time, how to properly eliminate incorrect answers, how to skim texts quickly, and how to use a calculator in test-taking situations. In preparing to take the SAT, students also review academic content, studying requisite algebra and geometry concepts and learning and reviewing the rules of standard written grammar.

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
This fall I started prepping to take the SAT by attending a weekly study group at school and studying on my own. I’m working on math for the SAT, learning about the structure of the test, and practicing comprehensive reading.
G. Guest Teacher Evaluations

**Teacher:** Jules Beesley  
**Science:** Biology, Evolution, and the Human Story; Chemistry

*Teacher Evaluation for Biology, Evolution, and the Human Story:*  
This student attended nearly every class. She appeared especially engaged during the lab explorations and hands-on activities. She collaborated very well with others, helping her partners complete complex tasks. During the lessons and discussions it was evident she was listening carefully and remaining engaged. I would encourage this student to further explore science topics that interest her through an independent study, a free online course or science project.

*Teacher Evaluation for Chemistry:*  
This student engaged in the collaborative lab activities with noticeable enthusiasm. In discussions she freely shared her ideas and formulated probing questions that enhanced the discussion by connecting the science concepts to her everyday experience. That helped everyone better grasp the ideas in the process.

**Teacher:** Sarah Brooks  
**Foreign Language:** Introduction to French

This student was great at written work but very shy when it came to speaking practice or participating in group activities. She appeared to enjoy lecture and asked very interesting and pertinent questions in regards to grammar. She has a great conceptual understanding for the functions of French grammar and also enjoyed our cultural discussions.

*Skill level with material presented and skill expected:*  
Developing; she prefered to work independently and asked questions when she needed. She did not like to be singled out during individual work on a group assignment.
IV. INTERNSHIPS

Joyce Bakeshop
Spring 2015

Student Self-Evaluation:
I went to a local bakery once a week and learned basic skills for working in a kitchen, prepping and storing large quantities of dough, and assembling a variety of tartlets, cookies, and mini-cakes. Since I can remember, I have loved to bake and have used it as a stress reliever, creative outlet, and personal challenge. My goals with this internship were to strengthen my baking skills and see if baking was something I might like to pursue as a career.

Brooklyn Free School Preschool Program
Winter-Spring 2015

Student Self-Evaluation:
I have always loved being around young children and was pursued by the Fours teacher to intern in her program. My primary role was to support the teacher in whatever ways she needed. My biggest challenge was dealing with such a large group of little children and I learned valuable skills to help deal with that.
V. INDEPENDENT STUDIES:

**Hydration & Cell Biology**  
*Fall 2016-Spring 2017*  
*Anna Tsomo and Jacob Greebel*

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
Water is life. I’ve been hearing that for months all over social media in reaction to the Dakota Access Pipeline. And it is, it really is. We all need water to survive but I didn’t understand, until this study, why our bodies need water. This was a study I wouldn’t have thought of doing, but am very glad I did. It re-inspired me to stay hydrated because I can now picture my cells absorbing water. I picture it traveling through my body, healing and nourishing me. Before this I’d never taken a science class that inspired me so much and it makes me excited to continue studying science. I think that was because of how small the class was and because it was about something as important as water. It was only a teacher, one other student, and me doing this study so it was really hands on and gave me a lot of opportunities to ask whatever I wanted.

**Independent Study: Statistics**  
*Fall 2016-Winter 2017*

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
I am not a fan of studying math that I don’t believe will benefit me in the future. I do not plan on pursuing a natural sciences or math based career. But I believe that learning how statistics work will be beneficial in many different areas of my life. For example, for another class I made a presentation that included charts and graphs and this study helped me understand what they meant, how to explain them to others, and interpret data for my studies. Because of my schedule this Cycle I didn’t have as much time as I would have liked to devote to this study but I plan to continue it into Cycle 2.

**Art**  
*2016-Present*

**Student Self-Evaluation:**  
Throughout my time in high school I have spent some of my free time making art, including collages, printmaking, political posters, knitting, sewing, drawing, painting, and writing. I have always been a creative person who likes to makes things with my hands. This past school year I was inspired by the current election and made political posters using paint, stencils, and freehand. I also got really into printmaking, specifically carving linoleum prints. To get the proper supplies for block printing I used the art class taught at school as a resource and for assistance. Making art is something I really enjoy and will definitely continue.
V. INDEPENDENT READING LIST

2013-2017
The Fault in Our Stars - John Green
East of Eden - John Steinbeck
Angela’s Ashes - Frank McCourt
My Sister’s Keeper - Jodi Picoult
Paper Towns - John Green
A Thousand Splendid Suns - Khaled Hosseini
Random Family - Adrian Nicole LeBlanc
13 Reasons Why - Jay Asher
Sapphique - Catherine Fisher
Incarceron - Catherine Fisher
Divergent - Veronica Roth
Insurgent - Veronica Roth
Maus 1 & 2 - Art Spiegelman
Survival in Auschwitz - Primo Levi
Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me? (And Other Concerns) - Mindy Kaling
The Lovely Bones - Alice Sebold
Vivian Apple at the End of the World - Katie Coyle
Vivian Apple Needs a Miracle - Katie Coyle
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo - Stieg Larsson
The Girl Who Played with Fire - Stieg Larsson
Still Alice - Lisa Genova
Of Mice and Men - John Steinbeck
The Diary of Anne Frank - Anne Frank
The Complete Persepolis - Marjane Satrapi
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings - Maya Angelou
To Kill a Mockingbird - Harper Lee
Bad Feminist - Roxane Gay
Wild - Cheryl Strayed
Luckiest Girl Alive - Jessica Knoll
Bossypants - Tina Fey
A Corner of the Universe - Ann M. Martin
The Outsiders - S.E Hinton
The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian - Sherman Alexie
Looking for Alaska - John Green
#Girlboss - Sophia Amoruso
Gone Girl - Gillian Flynn
How to Build a Girl - Caitlin Moran
The Perks of Being a Wallflower - Stephen Chbosky
The Invention of Wings - Sue Monk Kidd
Half Wild, Half Bad, Half Lost - Sally Green
1984 - George Orwell
The Giver - Lois Lowry
The Catcher in the Rye - J.D. Salinger
The Book Thief - Markus Zusak
Oryx and Crake - Margaret Atwood
Life of Pi - Yann Martel
Tenth of December - George Saunders
The Great Gatsby - F. Scott Fitzgerald
**Student Self-Evaluation:**

Ever since I learned to read, I’ve loved to read; I devour books quickly and immerse myself in stories, characters, and narratives. Books began my study of people, passion for social justice, and love of language. When I love a book or character or plotline, my book and I are inseparable. I will reread them, recommend them, and dialogue about them as long as possible to keep the story alive.

Once high school started I had less time to read, but it is still one of my all time favorite things to do. I am into all sorts of books ranging from teen fiction to old classics. Reading is something that naturally comes easily to me, but I continue to push myself when it comes to types of books I read so that I can keep expanding my knowledge.
VI. ATTENDANCE

A. 2016-17
   Present: 132 of 158
   Excused absences: 23
   Unexcused absences: 3

B. 2015-2016
   Present: 145 of 159
   Excused absences: 14
   Unexcused absences: 0

C. 2014-2015
   Present: 138 of 159
   Excused absences: 21
   Unexcused absences: 0

D. 2013-2014
   Present: 71 of 79 school days
   Excused absences: 8
   Unexcused absences: 0