Any changes to procedures regarding the 2020-2021 Academic Year will be posted by Monday, July 13, 2020.

This catalogue is intended for the guidance of persons applying for or considering application for admission to Barnard and for the guidance of Barnard students and faculty for the 2020-21 academic year. The College reserves the right to make changes to this catalogue from time to time, without notice. This catalogue is not intended to be and should not be regarded as a contract between Barnard College and any student or other person.

In accordance with its own values and with Federal, State, and City statutes and regulations, Barnard does not discriminate in admissions, employment, programs, or services on the basis of race, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Quick Links

Academic Calendar (https://barnard.edu/academic-calendar/)
Search for Courses (http://bulletin.columbia.edu/barnard-college/courses-instruction/course-search/)
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Registrar (http://barnard.edu/registrar/)

During the 2019-2020 Academic Year, Barnard College temporarily revised some of its academic policies in response to two unprecedented events, the tragic loss of first-year student Tessa Majors in December 2019 and the global COVID-19 pandemic in Spring 2020.

Fall 2019

In the days following the death of Tessa Majors, Barnard temporarily adjusted its end-of-term academic procedures. The College’s guidelines regarding incomplete and deferred work were altered for the Fall 2019 semester to meet the varied needs of the student community in a time of mourning.

Deferred Exam Policy

In Fall 2019, students who wished to defer their final exams as well as any students absent at the time of their final exams were granted deferrals without penalty or fee. Likewise, students who were unable to complete written work or other final projects received a temporary grade of “incomplete.” Students were informed that the “incomplete” or “deferred” designation would be permanently replaced by the final course grade once their exam or final coursework was completed.

Faculty were given latitude to make alternative arrangements to end-of-semester work, including changes to final work assignments and extending due-dates.

In late January 2020, Fall 2019 deferred exams were self-scheduled by students according to their preference. Those who receive testing accommodations through Barnard’s Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS) scheduled their deferred exams with CARDS. All students were asked to sign an additional pledge supplementing the traditional Barnard Honor Code, committing students to confidentiality and expressly prohibiting the sharing of exam information.

Spring 2020

In response to the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Barnard College has moved to virtual classes starting Wednesday, March 11, 2020, through the end of the Spring 2020 semester, in line with Columbia University. Barnard College has temporarily revised the following academic policies for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester.

Pass/Fail Policy

Spring 2020 has been mandated a Pass/Fail semester – i.e., all final grades for Spring 2020 will be either “pass” or “fail.” As the community adjusts to these new grading procedures, the College maintains its dedication to engaging students in thoughtful, rigorous learning. Faculty will continue to guide and measure the work of their students, providing feedback on all course requirements and helping students progress in their understanding, application, and mastery of course material. Given the great uncertainty about obstacles to academic study and instruction that students and faculty may be facing, faculty are encouraged to consult with their departments and programs to consider what a grade of ‘pass’ or “fail” looks like in the current circumstances, and to communicate this with their students.

Faculty are encouraged to keep their own detailed records of student work, performance, and participation for the purposes of future letters of recommendation. However, faculty are advised against assigning official letter grades for any student work completed since the disruption of the semester. Faculty are also encouraged to continue to help students in their efforts to gain mastery of course material with critical and timely assessment.

If faculty are concerned that a student in one of their classes may be unlikely to earn a “pass” as a final grade, they should submit an Early Academic Report as soon as possible. The student's class dean will then follow up by requesting a meeting with the student.

The pass/fail grading system was put into place this semester to try to create the conditions in which our students can successfully complete this disrupted semester and progress to the next stage of their studies or careers. Student transcripts from Spring 2020 will have clear notation clarifying that all courses in the term were graded exclusively on a Pass/Fail basis. Non-evaluative notations on the transcript will still be available, such as I (incomplete), UW (withdrawal from a course without official notification to the Registrar), X (absence from final examination), or IX (incomplete coursework as well as absence from final examination).

It should be noted that the Spring 2020 Pass/Fail policy is not an extension of Barnard’s usual Pass/D/Fail policy and that all faculty should be evaluating students with either a pass or fail grade, not a letter grade. A Pass grade in Spring 2020 will allow a course to satisfy both major and minor requirements, as well as General Education...
Requirements. For reasons of equity, no student will be able to uncover a grade at the end of the semester. Students who had previously elected Pass/D/Fail for a class in the Spring 2020 semester will have that election removed, so that it does not count against their total possible P/D/F elections.

Barnard, in partnership with Columbia University, is committed to ensuring that the Spring 2020 Pass/Fail policy does not disadvantage any student applying to graduate school, professional school, or competitive work opportunities.

The end of the academic year remains the same. No additional teaching days will be added to the academic calendar. The last day to withdraw from a course has been changed from March 26 to April 2, 2020. See the academic calendar and deadlines. (https://barnard.edu/academic-calendar/)

Guidance to Faculty for Providing Equitable Remote Learning

Many students are working asynchronously and coping with a range of challenging circumstances, and are studying at a physical distance from their instructors and from one another.

In order to facilitate equitable access to course material, faculty have been advised to record all their lectures in Zoom. These lectures may be shared by the faculty with those students who, for reasons of time or place, cannot join classes at the scheduled meeting time. Faculty may also adjust the times of their courses at their discretion and according to the needs of their students.

Students are reminded that the Barnard Honor Code includes relevant language for the proper use of electronic class material: “We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources.” Recorded class content is the intellectual property of the professor and attending students, and should not be distributed outside of class.

The Barnard Center for Engaged Pedagogy (CEP) can help faculty develop alternative assignments and group work. If you would like to consult with them, please write to pedagogy@barnard.edu.

Faculty are expected to be aware of any accommodations their students may have and plan accordingly. CARDS has created guidance for faculty regarding providing accommodations remotely. If a faculty member has specific questions about how to implement accommodations in their courses, CARDS is available for individual consultation at cards@barnard.edu.

End-of-Term Assignments

Especially given the events of this semester, end-of-term assignments can provide students with a sense of completion in their learning this term, which can be achieved by many means.

The challenges of administering final examinations asynchronously are not inconsiderable, and faculty may wish to consider an adjustment to their originally planned assessment formats (e.g., final papers, oral exams, open-book or open-note exams, etc.). Flexibility and creativity are encouraged, and faculty may consult their colleagues as well as their own students about how best to deliver the final assignment. They are also encouraged to create opportunities for students to study together for final assignments and to design assignments that promote teamwork and collaboration whenever possible.

For many courses, final examinations will remain the preferred end-of-term assignment. All final examinations for the spring 2020 semester will be administered online.

Academic integrity in end-of-term assignments is of the utmost importance. Both students and faculty have communicated a desire to foreground the heightened significance of academic integrity in Spring 2020, emphasizing the values that bind us as an academic community. All faculty should seek ways to engage their classes in supporting the highest standards of academic integrity at this moment.

BLAIS Personal Librarians, the CEP, and the Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning are available to assist and will have additional guidance.

Senior Theses

All Barnard seniors complete a required senior project. The senior project allows students to develop records of individual research that include theoretical engagement in the major discipline, the development of creative projects or research, and original empirical and interpretive analysis. The form of the senior requirement varies across majors, but the most common forms are the senior thesis (one or two semesters), supervised original research in a lab, a final creative project, and/or research that has been completed within a dedicated senior seminar.

Grading: The senior project is usually assigned a letter grade. For projects completed in the Spring 2020 semester, we recommend that faculty assign no letter grade, but instead provide an alternative evaluation of the work.

Awarding of Distinction: In Spring 2020, there will be no awarding of Pass with Distinction. Faculty advisors are encouraged to speak to particularly exceptional and distinguished work in their letters of recommendation.

Full-Year Thesis Work: Spring work will receive either a Pass or Fail grade. Some departments require thesis work to span both the fall and spring semesters. Where appropriate, faculty should assign a letter grade for fall semester work. Faculty supervising year-long theses should inform their students of the letter grade pertaining to their fall semester work by April 15. Students will have the option to accept either a Fall semester letter grade and a spring semester Pass/Fail, or a grade of Pass/Fail in each of the fall and spring semesters that reflects their year-long thesis work. Final Fall semester grades – whether P/F or letter grade – should be submitted by May 1. As per college policy, Fall semester theses that received the grade of Y for full-year thesis work will not be included in the calculation for departmental honors or Phi Beta Kappa.

Thesis Presentations: For all departments that require thesis presentations, accommodations should be made to allow for the remote presentation of work. We understand that this may require significant alterations to the usual format of these symposia.

Honors, Awards, and Prizes

The following guidance was offered to faculty to maintain the College’s commitment to honoring seniors for exceptionally distinguished work.

GPA Calculations: Spring 2020 passing grades will be excluded from GPA calculations (major and cumulative). A failing grade will impact these calculations, however.

Dean’s List: There will be no Dean’s List for the Spring 2020 semester.

Latin Honors: Spring 2020 passing grades will be excluded from Latin honors calculations. A failing grade will impact these calculations, however.
Departmental Honors: Departmental honors are awarded for distinguished work in the major to no more than 20% of graduates, as nominated by their major departments, and conferred by the Committee on Honors. Departmental honors display on student transcripts but not diplomas. Standard college and department procedures will govern the selection of recipients for departmental honors. For May 2020 graduates, department honors will be decided based on major GPAs through Fall 2020 and any additional consideration departments would normally use in determining such awards.

Academic Prizes and Awards: Standard college and department procedures will govern the selection of recipients for academic prizes and awards.

Phi Beta Kappa: Phi Beta Kappa decisions will not be impacted by the move to Pass/Fail. In keeping with usual college practice, Phi Beta Kappa calculations will be based on work completed through the fall semester of a student’s senior year. The national Phi Beta Kappa Society has confirmed that students can be elected to Phi Beta Kappa even in the absence of an in-person induction ceremony.

Additional Notes and Resources

Barnard’s Center for Engaged Pedagogy (CEP) and Instructional Media and Technology Services (IMATS) have partnered on training materials and other assistance for both students and faculty. See Virtual Class Resources and Instruction (https://alert.barnard.edu/virtual-class-resources-instructions/) for details.

All formally scheduled campus visit programs, including campus tours, information sessions, special group tours and class visits, are suspended until further notice. In the meantime, we invite prospective students to view our website (https://barnard.edu/), follow us on Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/barnardadmissions/?hl=en/), and explore our Barnard videos and student bloggers on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK_-X1scHmYhklUvF7_-4w/). Only limited services and access to certain buildings are available on campus at this time. All events and gatherings are cancelled for spring semester 2020.

For more information, please see the COVID-19 FAQs (https://alert.barnard.edu/faq/) and Student Semester Completion FAQ (https://alert.barnard.edu/covid-19-student-information/).

Coordinated by the Office of the Provost