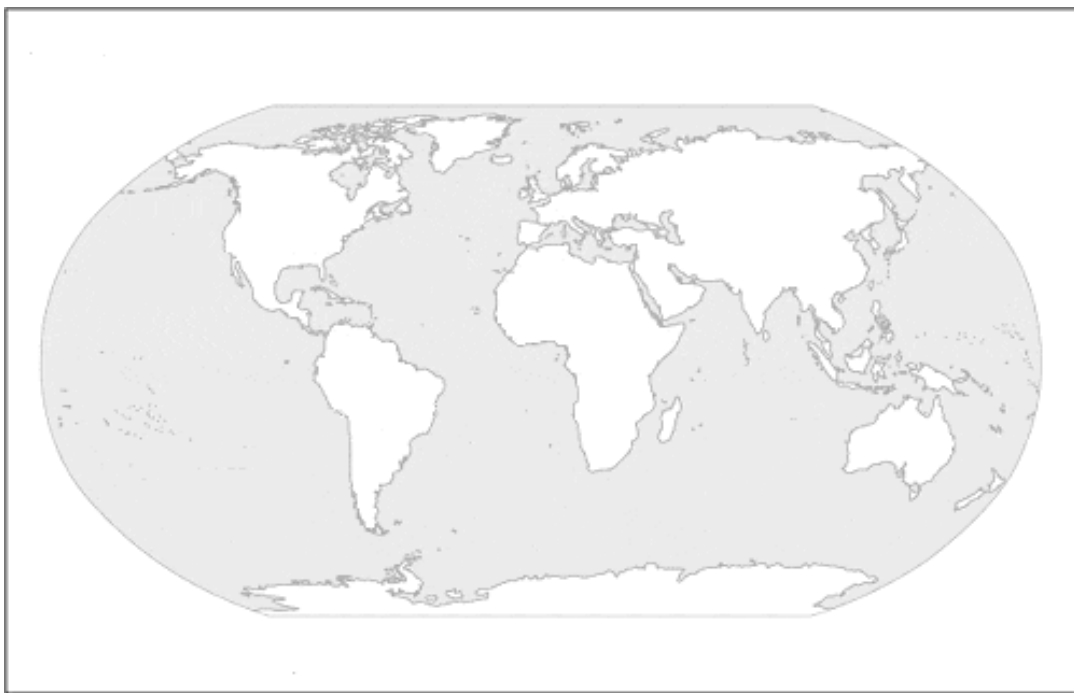


INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



2009-2010

WELCOME TO BARNARD COLLEGE

We hope that you will find this International Student Handbook helpful in adjusting to life in the United States of America, New York City, and the community of Barnard College and Columbia University. Take time to read this information and refer to it often.

In the meantime, please visit and get to know us. We are here to help you with issues relating to your status as international students studying in the United States, as well as any other concerns you may have about your Barnard College experience. We are located at:

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDIES
105 Milbank Hall
212-854-2024

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We would like to acknowledge our enormous debt to Michael Hindi, former co-director of International Student Services at the New School University, who gave us permission to borrow freely from its International Student Orientation Handbook. Those past and present at Barnard who deserve special thanks for their help in preparing this guide include Dean Karen Blank, Dr. Carmen Grau, Dr. Karen Seeley, Dean James Runsdorf and Dean Jayma Abdo.

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR F-1 AND J-1 STUDENTS

If you follow the guidelines below, you should have no problem maintaining your student immigration status. You should also make every effort to attend mandatory meetings scheduled by the international student adviser at which important information will be conveyed. If you have questions about any of the information in this handbook, you should seek the advice of the international student adviser.

- You must possess a current, valid passport—your passport must be valid at least six months into the future at all times.
- You must maintain full-time enrollment (with only a few very limited exceptions)—full-time enrollment is defined as 12 points per semester.
- You may not accept paid employment off campus without proper authorization—working without obtaining proper approval is considered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as the most serious violation of its regulations.
- Obtain extensions, as needed, of your permission to stay in the U.S.—F-1 visa holders are granted permission to stay for the period of time reasonably required to pursue a full course of study in an educational program, plus 60 days in which to depart from the U.S. or apply for a change of status. J-1 student visa holders are granted permission to stay for up to 24 months plus 30 days for the purposes of travel. This is known as admission for duration of status (D/S). If you will not graduate from Barnard within the expected completion date on your initial I-20 (Item #5) or will not complete your exchange program by the end date on your DS-2019 (Item #3), you must notify the international student adviser. **F-1 students must apply for a program extension within the 30-day period before the completion date on their initial I-20. J-1 students must apply for a program extension prior to the end date on the DS-2019.**

Important Terms Related to Your International Student Status

You should be familiar with the following documents and be aware of their importance in relation to your F-1 and J-1 student status:

SEVIS: Stands for the Student Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a secure internet-based system that allows schools and the U.S. immigration service to exchange data on the visa status of international students.

Designated School Official (DSO): The school representative who advises you on immigration matters, maintains your SEVIS F-1 record, and acts as the liaison between the student and USCIS. Ani Bournoutian is the Designated School Official in the Dean of Studies Office.

Responsible Official/Alternate Responsible Official (RO/ARO): The school representative who maintains the SEVIS J-1 record. The ARO at Barnard is Gwen Williams in the Provost's Office.

Passport: Your passport must be valid at least six months into the future at all times. You may apply for a renewal of your passport in your own country during a vacation abroad or through your country's embassy, consulate or mission in the U.S. Regardless of your visa type, you should be sure to bring your passport to the international student adviser soon after you arrive so that a copy of the ID page can be made for your file.

Visa: When you go to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest you in your home country and present a new Form I-20 or DS-2019, the consular official will place a visa stamp on a page inside your passport (except Canadian citizens). This visa gives you permission to apply for entry to the U.S. It indicates the type of visa you have been given for your stay in the US and when it will expire. Also, it will indicate how many times you can enter the U.S. using that visa (i.e., single, two, multiple). The length of time you are authorized to stay in the U.S. is determined by the date on your I-20 or DS-2019. (See also section on Renewing Your Visa.)

I-94 Card: A small white card will be stapled inside your passport by a USCIS official at the U.S. port of entry. On it will be your USCIS status, date of entry, and the length of time that your status is valid. A notation of "D/S" means that your F-1 or J-1 status is valid for the "duration of status" or the time it will take to complete your current degree program as a full-time student. This I-94 card will be removed each time you leave the U.S., and a new one will be issued on your reentry. All non-U.S. citizens are issued the I-94 card when they arrive at a U.S. port of entry. Therefore, all international students, regardless of visa type, should have this form stapled into their passport or other travel documents.

Form I-20: This is one of the forms used to document your maintenance of F-1 student status. Barnard issues it once you have been accepted and have provided financial documents that show your ability to pay for all your expenses as you pursue your studies. The Form I-20 is used to obtain your F-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. After your initial entry in the U.S., your Form I-20 ID (student copy) must be properly signed by the DSO in the Dean of Studies Office on the third page before you leave the United States. Signatures for travel are usually valid for six months.

Form DS-2019: This is the document issued to students who are seeking a J-1 visa to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program. After the J-1 student's initial entry into the U.S., you must see the ARO to validate your program participation by signing the DS-2019.

Identification Documents

Many countries require every person to carry an identity card. The United States has no such requirement. There is no national identity card. You should, however, carry identification with you at all times. To cash a check or purchase goods with a check usually requires two forms of identification. In the U.S., people normally use their driver's license and a major credit card. Often, international students substitute their passport for the driver's license and their valid Barnard College ID card for a credit card.

HOW TO APPLY FOR AN F-1 STUDENT VISA

Below is a summary of the procedures for applying for an F-1 visa. More detailed information can be found at www.unitedstatesvisas.gov.

If you are already in the US on an F-1 visa, or another type of non-immigrant visa, you will not need to change your visa status if your visa type allows you to study full-time in the United States. If your US visa is valid and you do not plan to travel abroad before you come to Barnard, you do not need to apply for a new visa. If your current visa has expired, however, the next time you travel outside the US you must apply for a new visa at an American embassy or consulate abroad if you wish to re-enter the US.

If you are a citizen of a country exempt from the requirement to have a visa to enter the United States (for example, Canada and Bermuda), you do not need to apply for a visa at a US embassy or consulate. To enter the United States, you must be able to establish both identity and citizenship. Documents that may establish citizenship are: birth certificate, citizenship certificate, and passport. Under current procedures, all travelers may be required to present photo-identification. A Canadian citizen arriving from outside the Western Hemisphere is required to present a passport. Your Form I-20 and entry visa will be processed at the port of entry to the US. Because the immigration officer at the border is doing the job of the consular officer, s/he may choose to interview you. Be prepared to show proof of financial support. Once the visa is granted, the immigration office will stamp your passport, your I-20, and I-94 card.

All other citizens will need a visa to enter the United States. You should apply for a visa at the US embassy or consulate in your home country. **The visa for which you will be applying as an international student is a nonimmigrant-type visa called the F-1 visa. Students are encouraged to apply for their visas early to provide ample time for visa processing.** American embassies and consulates can issue your F-1 visa within 120 days before the start date on the Form I-20. However, you may enter the US only within 30 days of the Form I-20 start date.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A J-1 EXCHANGE VISA

If you are outside of the United States, present the form DS-2019 to an American embassy or consulate to apply for your J-1 exchange visitor visa. (Canadians do not need passports or visa stamps to enter the U.S., but they do have to show form DS-2019 at the port of entry to obtain status as a J-1 exchange visitor). The consular will return all pages to you, and you should present them again to an Immigration inspector at the port of your entry to the United States. That officer will stamp and return page 1, along with an I-94 departure report card. Keep form DS-2019 and I-94 card with your passport. They are your only proof of J-1 status, and you will need them for such purposes as extending your permission to stay in the United States, work permission, and re-entry to this country after temporary trips abroad during the period of validity of form DS-2019. If your J-1 visa has another institution noted on your visa page and it is not expired, it is still valid. This means you could use that current visa and your new Barnard DS-2019 form.

Exchange visitors are required, as a condition of their J-1 status in the United States, to carry health insurance for themselves and any accompanying family members. By government regulation, minimum coverage must provide; up to \$50,000 for accident or illness; up to \$7,500 repatriation and remains; up to \$10,000 for medical evacuation to the home country, and a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness. Co-insurance may not exceed 25 percent payable by the exchange visitor or sponsor. Acceptable coverage may not exclude risk inherent in the activities in your visitor or sponsor. Many exchange students have health insurance coverage through their parents/guardians. Some will take out additional health insurance during their time at Barnard. For health insurance-related questions, please contact Student Health Services.

THE RULES

- 1. As someone who is seeking an *initial* F-1 visa or J-1 visa from an embassy or consulate abroad for initial attendance, you must pay a one-time only SEVIS fee of \$200 (US) for F-1 and \$180 (US) for J-1 visa applicants.**

You may use the on-line payment system by going to <http://www.FMJfee.com>. Any VISA, MasterCard, or American Express credit card, whether issued in the U.S. or overseas, can be used to pay the fee over the internet. Once payment is submitted, you can print a receipt for immediate verification of fee payment. You will also receive a Form I-797 receipt in the mail.

You may also pay the SEVIS fee by mail by completing the Form I-901 and sending it with a check or money order made in U.S. dollars and drawn from a U.S. bank to I-901Student/Exchange Visitor Processing Fee, P.O. Box 970020, St. Louis, MO 63197-0020. If you choose this fee payment option, you will need to receive the Form I-797 receipt before you go for your visa interview.

The third payment option is the Western Union Quick Pay service, available in over 130 countries. Western Union collects the SEVIS I-901 fee in local currency and the Form I-901 data and electronically transmits payment and data to SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program). The Western Union receipt serves as immediate proof-of-payment for a visa interview. You must read the instructions and bring printed copies of both the instructions and the sample of the completed Western Union form, available at www.ice.gov/sevis, to the Western Union office.

2. FAILURE TO CONVINC THE CONSUL OF ONE'S INTENTION TO RETURN HOME PERMANENTLY IS THE NUMBER ONE REASON FOR VISA DENIAL

The person who decides whether or not to give you a visa to come to the U.S. is a "consul." Student visas are only given to persons who can *convince* the consul that they intend to return permanently to their home country after they graduate.

3. You must have a good academic objective for coming to the U.S.

You need to have a good reason to attend Barnard College, be qualified for the program of study and be able to prove you can finance the education you will pursue here. Based on the financial documents you sent us, we are confident that you can pay for your education. Be sure to bring all original copies of the same documentation to the consul for review.

4. Consuls are impersonal when administering laws.

In the U.S., laws are applied equally to all people, regardless of status or gender. **DO NOT TRY TO NEGOTIATE OR DISCUSS PERSONAL MATTERS WITH THE CONSUL.**

5. U.S. government officials like documents.

Try to have papers for the consul's review that prove why you are qualified for a student visa. Along with your I-20, bring your original Barnard admission letter, an official TOEFL and/or SAT score report, a current passport, original financial documents and any other documents that prove ties to your home country (see #2 in the next section).

BE PREPARED

1. Be ready to clearly explain why you want to come to the U.S. to study at Barnard.

Why do you want to study in the U.S.?

Why are you going to pursue this program of study?

Why did you choose Barnard College?

For what career will your studies prepare you when you return home?

2. Be ready to convince the consul that you will return home permanently after you complete your studies.

Present papers that can prove you have "ties" to your country which are so strong, they will *force* you to return.

- If your family owns a business, take a letter from the bank describing it. If they own property, take the deeds.
 - If you have a brother or sister who studied in the U.S. and then returned home, take a copy of his or her degree and a statement from his or her employer.
 - If you have traveled to the U.S. before as a visitor, emphasize that you returned home after your stay here!
 - If your program of study is in great demand in your country, get a letter from a possible employer indicating that he or she is interested in hiring people with the degrees like the one you will receive.
- 3. Present the original financial documents you gave us instead of copies.**
Your documents must match what appears on your Form I-20 or DS-2019. Consuls will also want to see the original admission letter announcing your acceptance, an official TOEFL and/or SAT report, your current passport and any original documents you possess that demonstrate ties to your country.
- 4. Do NOT emphasize any ties you have to the U.S. or to family members in the U.S.**
- 5. Practice your English.**
You are expected to be able to speak English proficiently and show your TOEFL score to the consul.
- 6. Do not talk about working in the U.S. unless you have been awarded a teaching assistantship or fellowship on campus.**
You are required to prove that you can support the costs of studying and living in the U.S. Employment is strictly controlled by the Immigration Service and is not guaranteed. If the consular official asks you whether you intend to work in the US, you should say that you will work only as authorized by your F-1 or J-1 visa status.
- 7. Be sure your passport is valid.**
- 8. If you already began your studies in another nonimmigrant status and you received a change of status to F-1, be prepared to discuss how your original purpose for being in the U.S. changed to that of a full-time student.**
Take transcripts.

WHAT IF YOUR VISA IS DENIED?

Write to us with complete details of what was said and what documents you presented at your interview. Tell us the name of the consular officer and send a copy of any written answer you may have been given. Representatives of Barnard College will help in any way that we can.

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)*

SEVIS stands for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a secure internet-based system that allows schools and the U.S. immigration service to exchange data on the visa status of international students. Current information is transmitted electronically throughout an F-1 or J-1 student's academic career in the United States. Barnard must comply with the SEVIS reporting requirements because failure to comply could result in the loss of the college's ability to accept international students in the future.

How SEVIS Works*

- After Barnard admits an international student, Barnard issues an I-20 or DS-2019 through SEVIS. The new bar-coded I-20 or DS-2019 form is then sent to you.
- The student visits the U.S. Consulate abroad, and the consulate confirms that the I-20 or DS-2019 the student is carrying is a valid document. If everything is in order, the consulate issues the visa.
- An immigration officer at the airport reports to SEVIS the student's entry into the United States.
- When the student arrives on campus, she reports to the international student adviser or a designated school official and registers online to confirm her intention to enroll in a full course of study.
- The college continues to provide regular electronic reports through SEVIS throughout your time at Barnard.
- Finally, SEVIS records the student's departure from the United States.

Barnard's Reporting Responsibilities Under SEVIS

International students must not drop below a full course of study after classes have begun without prior authorization from the international student adviser, who will authorize the reduced course load on SEVIS. "Full time" means 12 credits per semester. **An F-1 student who is authorized for a reduced course load for an academic reason must still enroll in at least six credits.** Acceptable reasons for reduced credit load include:

Academic reasons:

* Information in this section was adapted from "A Student's Guide to SEVIS," a publication of Montclair State University.

- Students on F-1 visas who experience academic difficulties (for example, unfamiliarity with American teaching methods, English language difficulties, or improper course level placement) may take a reduced credit load. A student is allowed to drop below full time for academic difficulties only *once* during her degree. Documentation from the academic adviser is required.
- F-1 students in their final term of study need only to register for the credit hours required to complete the degree. Documentation from the senior class dean is required.

A student who is authorized for a reduced course load for an academic reason must still enroll in at least six credits.

Medical Reasons:

- Students who have a medical problem can reduce their credit load or take the semester off and not do any coursework. Documentation from a licensed medical doctor or psychologist is required.

Remember, only the international student adviser in the Office of the Dean of Studies may authorize a reduced credit load on SEVIS! At Barnard, you must also have your class dean approve your part-time schedule. These approvals must be obtained before dropping below full-time status.

You must inform the international student advisers at least thirty days prior to the ending date on your I-20 if you are graduating early or if you need extra time to complete your studies. The change must be made on SEVIS and a new I-20 will be issued to you.

If you transfer to another school or you are pursuing graduate study in the United States after Barnard, you must also notify the international student adviser so that your SEVIS record can be released to the new school. You will then receive a new I-20 from your new school.

Renewing F-1 Visas

When you received your visa stamp inside your passport, an expiration date was also noted. **If your visa expires while you are studying in the U.S., there is no need to renew it as long as you are staying in the U.S. However, if you travel abroad you must plan to renew it.** If you fail to renew your visa while you are abroad, you will be denied re-entry into the U.S.

It is NOT possible to renew your F-1 visa inside the U.S. You may renew your visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country to which you are traveling (preferably your home country because countries other than your own may impose stricter requirements or may be unwilling to renew a visa for a citizen or resident of another country). You will need a new Form I-20 from Barnard and updated financial documentation in order to renew your visa.

If you want to visit Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean for less than 30 days and you are not a citizen of the country you intend to visit, you may be able to return to the U.S. even with an expired visa as long as you are not a citizen of a country that is on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) classified "watch list." You must take with you all of the following:

- Valid passport (valid for at least six months into the future)
- Valid I-94 card (Do **not** surrender it. Explain to the immigration official that you will be returning in less than 30 days.)
- Form I-20 properly endorsed by the international student adviser or other designated school official
- Evidence of return transportation arrangements (e.g., roundtrip tickets)
- Sufficient funds for your planned length of stay in Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean
- Evidence of F-1 status (as shown by the F-1 visa stamp and/or I-94 card)

Keep in mind, however, that if you try to renew your visa in one of these neighboring countries and the renewal is denied, you will not be able to re-enter the U.S. on the already expired F-1 visa.

Obtaining a Social Security Number

A Social Security Number is only assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. Social Security Numbers are used to report your wages to the government. If you want to obtain a job on or off campus, you will need to see the international student adviser to receive instructions about how to apply for the SSN.

To apply for a SSN, go to one of the following Social Security Offices:

- 237 W. 48th Street, 5th floor (between 8th Ave. and Broadway)(Open 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.)
- 55 W. 125th Street, 6th floor (Adam Clayton Powell Avenue—7th Ave.) (Open 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.)
- 4292 Broadway (182nd St. and Broadway) (Open 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM.)

The application form, called an SS-5, is available at the Social Security Office, or it can be downloaded from the website, www.socialsecurity.gov. An F-1 student working on campus needs to bring her passport, I-94 card, I-20, an original letter on letterhead from the international student adviser or the designated school official, and an original letter on letterhead from the office employing you. To obtain a Social Security Number to work off campus, an F-1 student must bring the Employment Authorization Document issued by immigration services, along with your passport, I-94 card and I-20.

You should receive your Social Security card within about two to three weeks. When you receive your SSN, you should inform the Registrar in 107 Milbank Hall. The SSN will replace the nine-digit “fake SSN” that was given to you when you first registered at Barnard.

More detailed information about how to obtain a Social Security number is available in separate handouts from the international student adviser.

Employment for F-1 Students

There are five ways that F-1 students can be employed.

On-campus employment: Students are allowed to work on campus (within Barnard or Columbia) from the time they register. Employment on campus must be limited to 20 hours per week when classes are in session, but can be full-time during vacations. For on-campus employment, you will not need approval from any external government agency. Barnard Babysitting and Barnard Bartending (except the manager positions) are **not** considered to be on-campus employment. If you have any doubts about what is considered on-campus employment, consult the international student adviser.

Off-campus employment: To be eligible to work off-campus, an F-1 student must have been enrolled at Barnard for an academic year. Off-campus employment must be authorized by USCIS and recommended by the international student adviser. Types of off-campus employment include:

- **Optional Practical Training:** Employment that is directly related to your field of study and is limited to a maximum of 12 months of full-time employment. Application is made to the USCIS.
- **Severe Economic Hardship:** Employment due to unforeseen and severe economic difficulties that arose **after** initial enrollment at Barnard. Circumstances may include substantial changes in the value of the home country’s currency, unexpected financial difficulties of your sponsor, or unexpected medical bills. Application is made to the USCIS.
- **Curricular Practical Training:** Employment must be an important part of the program of study, such as a required field work experience or an optional but for-credit internship that is part of an independent study course or a Theorizing Civic Engagement course. This employment is authorized by the international student adviser.
- **Employment with an International Organization:** Employment with a recognized international organization, such as the United Nations or the World Bank. These international organizations are authorized to hire their own nationals to work in their offices in the United States.

International Students' Tax Obligations*

The information printed in this section is intended as general guidance on your obligations as an F-1 or J-1 student to file certain tax forms each year you are in the U.S. It should not be construed as tax advice. Specific instructions are available at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website (www.irs.gov). All tax forms must be filed by April 15 of each year. The forms are available on the IRS website, under "Forms and Publications."

If you are an F-1 or J-1 student who has been in the U.S. for five years or less and had no earned income (interest from a bank account is *not* earned income) or scholarships, then you need to file Form 8843 by April 15.

If you had any U.S.-source of earned income or scholarship, you will need to file:

- Form 8843
- IRS Form 1040NR-EZ or Form 1040NR
- NY State Forms IT-203 and IT-203-ATT (if your income was greater than \$7,500)

Each employer for whom you worked during the past calendar year is required to issue you a W-2 before the end of January. If you are filing Forms 1040 or IT-203, you need to attach copies of the W-2 when you file these tax forms.

If your employer withheld Social Security and Medicare (FICA) taxes from your salary, as a non-U.S. citizen, you are entitled to a refund of these taxes. You may request the refund from your employer. If the employer is unable to refund these taxes, you may file IRS Form 843 and Form 8316 for a refund from the IRS.

If you have any questions or need federal non-resident tax forms, call (215)516-2000 (Monday to Friday, 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM) or send an email via the website, www.irs.gov/taxlaw. For N.Y. State non-resident forms, call (800)225-5829 (free call) or (518)485-6800 (outside the U.S. and Canada) (Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM) or visit the website www.tax.state.ny.us.

To download tax forms and publications, go to Columbia's ISSO website (www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/tax/) or IRS website (www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html). In addition, CINTAX is a web-based non-resident tax preparation software program designed primarily for students, scholars, trainees, and researchers to aid in preparing their U.S. federal income tax return. It prompts you to respond to a series of simple questions. From your answers, it will determine whether you qualify as a non-resident for tax purposes and, if so, will

* Information in this section was adapted from the website of Columbia's International Students and scholars Office (ISSO), www.columbia.edu/cu/isso.

complete the federal tax form 1040NR-EZ of 1040NR and the 8843, a form required of all those in F or J status, regardless of any income. The completed relevant forms can be printed, reviewed, signed, and sent.

There can be immigration consequences for failing to file tax forms. For example, applicants for a change from F-1 to H-1B (the professional worker visa) can be asked by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service to submit copies of previous years' income tax forms as part of the H-1B application. Applicants for permanent residency ("green cards") can be asked to show copies of tax forms filed for previous years. A person who appears at a U.S. consulate abroad for consular processing of a permanent residency visa application may be asked to produce U.S. income tax forms from their previous years in the U.S.

HELPFUL ADVICE FOR SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM

One of the most important skills you can bring to your studies is a working knowledge of English. It should be good enough to enable you to read textbooks, follow lectures, ask questions, make speeches, succeed on examinations, write papers, and otherwise participate effectively in class. Beyond English proficiency, however, you may also need to learn a different approach to participating in class and to dealing with ideas and ways of doing things that may be new to you.

Deciphering U.S. Speech

Many international students have high hopes when they enroll at Barnard College. Most have studied English in their own countries and used English-language textbooks for a number of years. Their college entrance scores are very good; and for this reason, many international students are confident about beginning their new school.

Then they attend their first classes. That is when the realization hits: spoken English in the U.S. is often not the same as the spoken English they had been accustomed to in their home countries or the written English they had worked so hard to master. Instructors can speak very rapidly, and so do the students who volunteer in class. Words can fly by so quickly that note taking seems impossible.

Your first classes at Barnard can be overwhelming! Some students are surprised to find that the instructor may lecture on subjects that go beyond the information in the assigned reading. They also are not accustomed to using skills like listening and note taking when learning new subjects.

Tips on Listening

Attending your first college lecture can be scary, and it is important to realize that you may miss some material initially, but don't give up! Keep attending class. At every new class, you will find that you understand more and more. Here are some helpful tips:

- Listen for the major points. Don't worry if you don't understand every detail. Keep listening. You are not expected to have perfect comprehension.
- Learn to spot detours. If the instructor digresses or "gets off the track," there will be many clues to let you know. The clues often come through body language. Some speakers, for example, will take off their glasses or move to the other side of the classroom when they move away from a prepared outline.
- Learn the phrases that introduce a new topic, signal a change in topic, or summarize what has been said. Make a list of these types of expressions, such as "now we'll turn to," "I will give three examples why," or "my point is that."
- Notice what the professor writes on the blackboard. Pay close attention and put it in your notes. Also, be sure to pick up any handouts or materials that are distributed in class.
- Read the assigned material before class. Preparation is the single most important way to ready yourself to understand key concepts, words, and phrases.
- Come to class on time and sit close to the front. You should be in your seat, prepared to concentrate and take notes before the instructor begins.
- Do not use a tape recorder to do your listening for you. In some cases, taping lectures can be helpful. Yet, if you tape everything, you may fall into the trap of not listening carefully. Consider taping as a backup to note taking, not a substitute for it.
- Remember that the rhythm of spoken English tends to be uneven. Each syllable in an English word or sentence has a strong or weak stress. Speakers rush over unstressed syllables and stretch out stressed syllables.

Taking Notes in Class

Learning to take lecture notes is one of the key skills you will need to succeed academically. If note taking is new to you, you are not alone. In fact, most U.S. students new to Barnard need practice in taking notes.

The key to taking good notes is learning to listen, organize, and write at the same time. Skillful note takers do not write down every word they hear. Instead, they try to make sense out of the material as they put it on paper.

It is good to remember that whether or not they share it with you in advance, most instructors follow an outline. Try to figure out the outline as the instructor speaks, and take down the information in a modified outline form. Underline and indent to identify the main points.

Here are some techniques for taking good class notes:

- Check your syllabus before coming to class. It often includes a list of lecture topics by date so you will have an idea of what is likely to be covered in class.
- Take notes in English. You will become more fluent in the language if you try to think and write about the subject in English.
- Using abbreviations and symbols. Many shortened forms are standardized. Learn to make use of them.
- Develop a consistent format. Remember to put the date at the top of the page and to number the pages. Some students find it easier to have a notebook for each course. Leave wide margins when you write, particularly on the left-hand side. After the lecture, you can use this space for writing down questions or comments on the material.
- Read over your notes as soon as possible after class. Write in any additional information that you were not able to put down during the lecture itself. Some students use different color ink for additional comments.
- Forget about being perfect. You are going to get lost sometimes. All students do! But keep writing. Do not stop just because you are not sure of what you are hearing. You will be surprised at how much of what you write will be clear at a later date. If it is not, use the clues you did get down, and ask your instructor or a fellow student for help.
- Attend class regularly. You are expected to attend classes, whether or not the instructor formally takes attendance. The most important material may be provided in the lectures rather than in the readings. Much of the educational process at Barnard relies on the impromptu discussions that arise between students and teachers. If you are not there to hear them, you will miss a great deal.
- Write down all announcements regarding class business. Include dates for quizzes and exams, dates when papers are due, dates for special class meetings,

and the instructor's office hours. Put them in your calendar and refer to them regularly.

- Find a "study buddy," someone to call and exchange notes with if you must miss a class session. (This is also an excellent way to meet and make new friends.)

Speaking Up In Class

Many courses in American colleges include class discussions. In the U.S., and especially at Barnard, instructors believe in the value of individual ideas and commonly encourage students to express their beliefs, opinions, and concerns, even if different from their own. In the U.S., challenging or disagreeing with an instructor's point of view is not regarded as disrespectful. If instructors ask if there are any questions, they expect and want students to speak up. Never hesitate to accept their invitation to participate.

Discussion Groups

Discussion groups may be formed within larger classes to encourage students to do independent, analytical, and critical thinking. Students are divided into smaller groups and given a specific task to carry out within a set period of time. Once the groups are formed, it is the job of each individual to contribute to the discussion.

As a member of a small discussion group, you will have certain responsibilities. Here are some suggestions on participating:

- Volunteer for one of the jobs that will be assigned. Someone functions as the facilitator, guiding the discussion and reporting back to the whole group. Someone serves as the recorder, the person who takes notes. A third person often serves as the timekeeper.
- Express your own views clearly and honestly. When it is time to come to a consensus, be ready to modify your views or to incorporate other people's ideas as well. Complete the suggested reading before you come to class. Familiarity with the topic or theme will help you feel confident during the discussion.
- Listen carefully to the views of others. You can learn from other students' ideas. Be ready to steer others back to the main topic if they drift from it.
- Ask for clarification if you do not fully understand what is said. Don't be shy. The explanation may help others too.

- Observe the techniques U.S. students use to gain a turn at speaking. In small groups people rarely raise their hands to get permission to speak. Yet, no one interrupts when someone else is talking. Unconsciously, they have learned to use body language, eye contact, and verbal strategies to signal others that they would like to talk.
- Acknowledge what other people in the group have said when you make your comments. This makes people feel good because they know that you have heard and thought about their contributions.
- Stay on the subject and do not monopolize the discussion. Keep your comments short and focused.

Dictionaries

Many international students rely heavily on a bilingual dictionary to translate words from their native language to English and vice versa. However, bilingual dictionaries provide a very limited amount of information. Yes, many are small enough to put in your pocket, but they are not holistic learning tools.

The companies that publish the bilingual dictionaries often have few resources to check the information, and they publish in formats too small to be complete. A good dictionary should give all the definitions and meanings of a word in different uses and contexts. Bilingual dictionaries give the false idea that there is a one-to-one correspondence between words in two languages. This may cause misunderstandings about the meaning of English words. They give a limited number of meanings for each entry, with little information about the various contexts in which a word may be used. They limit your progress in English because they make it necessary for you to translate back into your first language—an ineffective strategy to learn a language.

Appropriate Behavior

Attendance is very important. Be present for the first day of class. If you miss a class, talk to the professor to explain your absence and get notes on what you missed from a classmate. If you are sick and miss several classes, be sure to let the professor or class dean know what is wrong. It is very important to communicate with professors. Often they will be more flexible with papers or exam deadlines if you have a good reason and approach them ahead of time.

There are some U.S. student behaviors that you may find surprising or that would be considered disrespectful in your country. For example, students may interrupt professors as they lecture to ask questions or raise objections to what is being said. In the U.S. this is not disrespectful conduct; on the contrary, one way for U.S. students to show respect for teachers is by being active participants in classroom discussion. Raising questions and giving your opinion is

considered to be proper class behavior. In fact, class participation is usually a positive factor which contributes to your grade.

You may see students bring food to eat in the classroom and only enough for themselves. If you find that because of your own busy schedule you cannot fit in a meal, it is probably all right to bring a meal to class (so long as it is not prohibited by the professor), but be sensitive to those around you. Do not bring foods in noisy wrappers or that are unusually pungent. Also, do not bring in food if it will in any way hamper your course work. For example, you probably will not want to eat and paint at the same time. Your professor might take it as a sign that you do not care much about creating your art.

Students may even exhibit more extreme behaviors, like sitting with their feet on the surface of the desk in front of them. Never assume that you may behave in ways that seem disrespectful unless you see others behaving in that way as well. Observe what other students do, and note how the professor and other students react to their actions.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas without acknowledgement. In some countries, incorporating the words of revered scholars into one's own work is an important part of the style of academic writing, but in the U.S. it is **not** acceptable to include the words or ideas of others without proper attribution. In fact, it is a serious violation of Barnard's Honor Code. The consequences of proven plagiarism can be severe and may include one or more of the following: failing grade, warning, probation, suspension, or expulsion. Borrowed words or ideas must always be clearly documented.

An important distinction also exists between group work and individual work. In general, papers, homework assignments, lab reports, and tests should be done individually, unless collaboration with someone else is specifically permitted by the instructor. Evidence of unauthorized collaboration can result in dire consequences. Studying with other classmates is a good idea, but you are expected to do your own individual work, unless otherwise specified by your professor.

Succeeding On Examinations and Papers

Even if you attend all your classes, take good notes, complete the required reading, and study hard, you may still not do as well as you expected on the first exams and papers. A common problem for many college students (not just international students) can be found in this typical comment from a professor: "You know the facts, but I want to see some critical thinking."

This points to an important facet of the U.S. college culture. To succeed you must do more than just learn the facts and parrot them back to the instructor. In most courses, you are asked to evaluate and interpret the facts. Merely memorizing the contents of your textbook or lectures is

not enough. As a college student, you are expected to use the content as the basis for your own analysis. Your instructors want you to express opinions, make judgments, and say what you think!

Critical thinking demands that you think for yourself. First, you start with the facts that you have learned. Add your own knowledge, experience, and ability to analyze. You then come to your own conclusion informed both by the facts and your own unique view of the world.

Academic Support Services

If you need assistance with writing a paper, in addition to consulting your instructor and/or teaching assistant, you may confer with a writing fellow in The Erica Mann Jong Writing Center in 18 Milbank Hall. The fellow can assist you with a particular writing project or discuss some broader aspect of your writing (for example, how to articulate, organize, and structure thoughts; how to use evidence effectively; or how to work on English as a second language). No appointments are necessary and help is free of charge. Writing fellows may also be assigned to work specifically with students in writing-intensive courses.

There are two mathematics help rooms located in 406 Mathematics and 333 Milbank for students seeking individual help and counseling from the instructors and teaching assistants. Hours are posted at the start of each semester. No appointments are necessary, and there is no charge to the student. You should try to use the help room during less popular hours and avoid the periods just before midterm and final exams. More information about the help rooms can be found at www.math.columbia.edu/programs/main/one/helprooms.html.

The Physics Help Room in 413 Pupin is for students taking any Columbia physics course. You should contact the Columbia Physics Department for its hours or check the department's website at www.phys.columbia.edu/~preceptor/student/helproom_hours.html. Check with your Barnard physics instructor to see what help may be offered outside of class by the Barnard Physics Department.

If you would like to request a tutor in the following specific courses:

Biology 1500 (Introduction to Organismal & Evolutionary Biology), Math 1101 (Calculus I), Math 1102 (Calculus II), Econ 3033 (Intermediate Macroeconomics Theory), Econ 3035 (Intermediate Microeconomic Theory), elementary foreign language courses and intermediate foreign language courses, please contact Dean Starks in the Dean of Studies Office at 212-854-2024. The Dean of Studies Office is located at 105 Milbank Hall. To receive tutoring you will be charged based on a sliding fee. The highest amount that any student will pay for tutoring is \$15.00 per hour. If you would like tutorial assistance in Chemistry BC3231 (Organic Chemistry II), Physics V1201 (General Physics), or General Chemistry I (BC2001), please be advised that we have tutoring workshop rooms for these courses. Also, if you are interested in submitting an application to possibly become a tutor, please call Dean Adjua Starks at 212-854-2024.

The first-year class dean also offers study skills classes during each semester. They are free of charge, and all Barnard students are welcome. Topics include note taking in class and from textbooks, preparing for and taking examinations, and the all-important issue of time management.

ADAPTING TO LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

It takes time for all new students at Barnard to adjust to college, to make new friends, to find their place on campus, and to feel comfortable in New York. It may take international students even more time. Everyone goes through a process of adaptation when moving to a foreign country, even people who have previously visited that country and who speak the native language fluently.

Adapting to a foreign culture can be difficult because it involves separation from what is familiar and “normal.” You may feel sad, lonely, and perhaps even liberated. At the same time, you are immersing yourself in cultural situations that are novel and alien, which may provoke feelings of fearfulness, nervousness, distress, discomfort, excitement, and (over)stimulation. You may also experience excruciating conflicts between what is expected of you (or forbidden to you) at home and what is permissible in your new college environment. What makes adaptation especially challenging during your college years is that you are dealing with separations, negotiating unfamiliar cultural situations, and managing cultural conflicts while facing intense academic pressures.

Initially, you will be excited by the challenges of living in a new culture. You have a sense of accomplishment for having made it thus far and are eagerly anticipating what is to come. After having been here a few weeks or so, you may start to feel that too many difficulties keep happening; and no matter how hard you try, they keep happening. You may have trouble communicating clearly; people may seem to react differently to you; and keeping up with your schoolwork may be difficult. Things may remain difficult for a long time; and since you have been unable to talk to family, friends, or anyone who really understands you, homesickness and sadness may set in.

To adapt effectively, you should first realize that you are not alone; it happens to many people new to a culture. Many international students experience similar feelings during some part of their stay in their host country. You should feel free to reach out to find someone who understands you, what you are feeling, and what you are going through. This can be another international student going through the same thing. It can be a U.S. student, an adviser, a professor, a counselor, or even a community of people that comes together in the dorms. Whoever it is that you decide to reach out to, make sure you reach out.

If you would like to meet with a counselor experienced in working with students dealing with issues of cultural adaptation, do not hesitate to call the Barnard Furman Counseling Center (located on the first floor of Hewitt Hall) and make an appointment or speak with an

international student adviser, the class dean, or your academic adviser for a referral. If you do not want to go to the Counseling Center, a counselor can meet you where you feel more comfortable. You may want to join a student group, such as the Multicultural and International Student Association (MISA) to meet other students who are from international backgrounds or who have international interests.

In addition to reaching out, there are things that you can do for yourself to help you keep in touch with your feelings. Work to eliminate the disappointment that originates from the differences between your expectations and reality. Sit down and write out your expectations of life in the U.S. Analyze them one at a time and throw out the ones that seem unreasonable. Narrowing the gap between expectations and reality can diminish some of the bad feelings you are experiencing.

It is also wise to be tolerant. You are in a foreign culture that has values, thoughts, and behaviors that may be quite different from those of your home country. Therefore, approach your daily activities with an open mind. Do not constantly compare the U.S. to your homeland. Instead, get involved with a mix of people in a variety of activities. Join in international student activities and socialize with people from many different cultures.

Do not be afraid to talk to family, friends, advisers, instructors, and other international students about your feelings. Find out how other international students are coping with cultural adjustment.

Rather than giving into the feelings of loneliness, sadness, and homesickness, remember that there are many things you can do to help yourself. Make an effort to eat well. This alone can make you feel much better. Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Few things deepen sadness more rapidly than poor sleep. And finally, give yourself a break. Don't feel that there is something wrong with you because of what you are feeling. Adapting to life in a new culture is very difficult. It is an ongoing process that takes time. There may be occasional setbacks, especially after spending time at home during a school break. So, when the pressure is too great, take a little time off from your responsibilities. Relax. When you are properly refreshed, you will have a brighter approach and be more able to cope with the challenges before you.

OFF-CAMPUS SERVICES

Off-campus services supplement the resources at Barnard, but do not replace them. Take advantage of the College resources before seeking any off-campus assistance.

AIDS/HIV Support Services

AIDS Hotline

Counseling and information about risk reduction and HIV testing (800) 590-2437

National AIDS Hotline

(800) 342-2437

American Red Cross of Greater New York
150 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10023 (212) 787-1000

Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
356 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011 (212) 271-7200
On-site clinic and health education services

Chinese-American Planning Council—HIV/AIDS Services (212) 941-0030
365 Broadway, New York, NY 10013 ext. 38

Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc.
119 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011 (212) 367-1000

NYC Department of Health Bureau of Public Health Education
AIDS Hotline (212) 447-8200
Counseling and information, including reduction of risk and HIV testing

Alcoholism

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10005 (212) 870-3400

New York Alcoholics Anonymous Family Intergroup
200 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003 (212) 254-7236

Intergroup Associates of AA of Greater NY
307 7th Avenue, #201, New York, NY 10163 (212) 647-1680

NYC Department of Mental Health
93 Worth Street, New York, NY 10013 (212) 219-5594

Blood Donation

New York Blood Center (212) 570-3158

Borough Presidents

Manhattan (212) 669-8300

Bronx (718) 590-3500

Brooklyn (718) 802-3700

Queens (718) 286-3000

Staten Island (718) 816-2200

Cancer Care and Support Services

Information and referrals and hospices which provide a range of services for terminally ill patients and their families

American Cancer Society, Inc.

361 West 125th Street, Manhattan (212) 663-8800

148 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn (718) 237-7850

19 West 56th Street, Manhattan (212) 586-8700

58 New Dorp Plaza, Staten Island (718) 987-8871

112-25 Queens Boulevard, Forest Hills (718) 263-2224

Cancer Care and National Cancer Foundation
275 7th Avenue, New York, NY 10001 (212) 221-3300

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
Cancer information service (800) 4CANCER

Civil Rights

NYC Commission on Human Rights
40 Rector Street, New York, NY 10006 (212) 306-7500

NYS Division of Human Rights
270 Broadway, #922, New York, NY 10007 (212) 417-5041

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
New York Office
90 Church Street, New York, NY 10007 (800) 669-3362

Consulates and Missions

A current comprehensive list of consulate offices can be found at:
www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/c9299.htm.

International Student Services

Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)
205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017 (212) 822-2600

254 Green Street, New York, NY 10012 International ID cards and travel discounts	(212) 254-2525
Customs, US JFK New York/Newark Area Tourist	(718) 533-1824 (212) 637-7500 (800) 697-3662
English Conversation Program, Riverside Church 490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027 Practice, tutoring, and classes	(212) 870-6735
English in Action, English-speaking union 16 East 69 th Street, New York, NY 10021 Practice, tutoring, and classes	(212) 879-6800
Foundation Center 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003	(212) 620-4230
Institute of International Education 809 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 www.iie.org Fulbright and other exchange programs, publications on international students and study opportunities	(212) 833-8200
International Center of NY 50 West 23 rd Street, 7 th Floor, New York, NY 10010 English lessons, cultural activities, discount tickets	(212) 255-9555
International House 500 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027 Dormitory for graduate students/sponsors social functions	(212) 316-8400
International Y 71 West 23 rd Street, #1904, New York, NY 10010 Discounts on US travel and lodging	(212) 727-8800
Metro International 285 West Broadway, #450, New York, NY 10013 www.one-to-world.org Special events throughout the year	(212) 431-1195
NAFSA: Association of International Educators 1307 New York Avenue, NW, 8 th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005-4701 www.nafsa.org	(202) 737-3699

Columbia University International Students and Scholars
Office, 524 Riverside Drive
www.columbia.edu/cu/isso

x43587

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
www.uscis.gov

Legal Support

Alliance for Mediation and Conflict Resolution Free consultation with attorneys	(212) 944-7416
NYC Legal Services	(212) 431-7200
Legal Aid Society	(212) 577-3300
Small Claims Court (Manhattan)	(212) 374-5779

New York City Complaints/Appeals

For complaints against government agencies

Mayor's Office Action Center 61 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007	(212) 788-9600
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NYC Human Resources Administration Central Complaint Unit Box 711, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013	(212) 417-6550
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NYC Ombudsman	(212) 669-7250
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NYS Appeals/Fair Hearings
80 Centre Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10013
NYS Department of Social Services hearings and complaints
Handles appeals concerning NYC Human Resources Administration agencies

Department of Environmental Protection Complaints about noise, air, sewer and water pollution	(718) 637-3000
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NYC Department of Sanitation	(212) 219-8090
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NYC Street/Traffic Lights	(212) 442-7070
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NYC Potholes and Sidewalks	(212) 225-5368 (212) 768-4653
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Window Fall Prevention (212) 676-2140

Water Main and Sewer (212) 676-2141
(718) 337-4357

Tax Assistance

US Internal Revenue Service (IRS), www.irs.gov
Forms Distribution Center (800) 829-3676
Tax Payers Assistance (800) 829-1040

Transportation

American Auto Association (AAA) (212) 757-2000
Emergency Road Service (800) AAA-HELP

Amtrak
Information outside of NYC (800) USA-RAIL
Lost articles in Penn Station (212) 630-7389

Bus Terminals
Port Authority (212) 564-8484
George Washington Bridge (212) 564-1114

Long Island Railroad (LIRR)
General Information (718) 217-5477
Lost Articles (212) 643-5228
Public Affairs (718) 558-8228

Metro-North Commuter Railroad
Information in NYC (212) 532-4900
Information outside of NYC (800) 638-7646
Disabled Services (800) 724-3322
Lost Articles, Grand Central Station (212) 340-2555
Commuter Relations (212) 340-2144
Headquarters (212) 340-3000
Vandalism Report/Police Hotline (212) 340-2733

NYC Transit Authority
Information (718) 330-1234
Lost Articles (212) 712-4500
Handicapped/Elderly Passes (212) 878-7294
Customer Service (718) 330-3322

NJ Transit
Lost Articles in NYC (212) 630-7389

Port Authority Lost Articles

(201) 714-2739

Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) Trains

Information outside 201 Area Code

(800) 234-7284

Information within 201 Area Code

(201) 216-6557

Lost Articles in NJ

(201) 216-2677