



Curriculum Overview and Academic Calendar 2025-2026

Curriculum Overview – NewU Early College

At NewU Early College, students complete a rigorous and highly supportive dual-enrollment program that integrates both high school and college coursework on our educational campus near Dupont Circle.

The curriculum is designed to ensure all students meet **DC high school graduation requirements** while earning **up to 80 transferable college credits** by the end of 12th grade. Many college-level courses are strategically aligned with high school credit requirements (marked in orange in the table below), allowing students to accelerate their academic progress without duplication of effort.

Each academic year begins with a **two-week pre-term** that prepares students for the demands of the upcoming year—supporting the transition into college coursework in 11th grade and upper-level college courses in 12th grade.

To promote academic success and personal growth, the program includes:

- Individual academic coaching
- Personalized advising
- Resilience and college-readiness training
- Guided collaborative learning
- Small class sizes to encourage engagement and faculty access

Upon enrollment, all students complete an **Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)** in partnership with a school advisor and a parent or guardian. This includes a comprehensive review of previous academic records, including any IEPs or 504 Plans, assessment of earned credits, and a customized course sequence. The ILP ensures that each student's academic path is aligned with their graduation timeline, learning needs, and college aspirations.

This **intentional, structured, and student-centered curriculum** empowers students to graduate high school having already completed two-thirds of a college degree. This is one of the most expedient paths to college completion and career readiness in the country, and a powerful launchpad for academic, personal, and professional success.

High School Graduation Requirements and Course Mapping

High School Subject	Carnegie Units Needed ¹ (Grades 9-12)	Carnegie Units at NewU (Grades 11-12)	NewU Early College (Courses in Orange are college courses ²)			
			Pre-term	Grade 11	Pre-term	Grade 12
English	4	2	Introduction to Rhetoric	Rhetoric: The Art of Persuasion I & II	Negotiations Fundamentals	Negotiations Mastery, Choice of 1 writing-intensive college elective
Mathematics (at least Algebra I & II, Geometry)	4	2	Introduction to Analytics	Foundational Analytics I & II	Introduction to Research	Data Analytics and Insight, Research Methodology and Design
Science (at least 3 labs)	4	2	-	Chemistry, Biology	-	Climate Science, Physics
Social Studies (includes World History I & II, US History, US Government, DC History)	4	2	Introduction to Modern World	Modern World I & II, Understanding Other Cultures, Special Topics I, Psychology of Human Behavior	-	-
World Language	2	1	-	Beginner/Intermediate Chinese	-	Intermediate/Advanced Chinese
Art	0.5	0-0.5	-	-	Introduction to Design Thinking	Design Thinking
Music	0.5	0-0.5	-	Music Appreciation	-	-
PE/Health	1.5	1	Introduction to Psychology	Positive Psychology, Physical Education	Introduction to Developmental Psychology	Theories of Developmental Psychology, Physical Education
Electives	3.5	2	-	Organizational Behavior, Special Topics II	Introduction to upper-level courses	Choice of 3 NewU University courses

¹ District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education graduation requirements: <https://osse.dc.gov/service/graduation-requirements>.

² Course descriptions for the college courses are at the end of the document.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2025-2026

School days: Monday-Friday 8:30am-3:00pm; 3:00-4:00pm advising, study period, extracurriculars

Pre-term: 18 August 2025 – 28 August 2025

Fall Semester: 2 September 2025 – 22 January 2026

Spring Semester: 26 January 2026 – 4 June 2026

Breaks

Winter Break: 19 December 2025 – 4 January 2026

Spring Break: 27 March 2026 – 5 April 2026

No Classes on these Federal Holidays

Labor Day: First Monday of September

Thanksgiving: Fourth Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of November

MLK Day: 19 January 2026

Memorial Day: 25 May 2026

Professional development/Parent-teacher Meetings

10 October 2025, 26 January 2026, 22 May 2026

Fall Semester Course Load

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Music Appreciation	Chemistry	Chinese	Chemistry	Music Appreciation
Psychology of Human Behavior	Rhetoric I	Psychology of Human Behavior	Rhetoric I	Chemistry
Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break
Modern World I	Foundational Analytics I	Modern World I	Organizational Behavior	Chinese
Special Topics	Foundational Analytics I	Foundational Analytics I	Organizational Behavior	Chinese

Course Descriptions

Rhetoric: The Art of Persuasion (8 credits) The course aims to provide all students with a solid understanding of and proficiency in the basic speaking and writing skills required for success as citizens and aspiring professionals. As a basis of thoughtful and effective written and verbal communication, students will be taught how to select appropriate sources, develop useful reading strategies and habits, and analyze and critique intellectually challenging materials. Course content will focus on the collection, evaluation, and usage of facts and evidence in developing and refining strong arguments, as well as on composition and delivery techniques and styles for different audiences. Students will be assessed through a variety of written and verbal assignments. Special attention will be paid to identifying and avoiding logical fallacies, as well as employing appropriate rhetorical devices in different contexts and situations.

Foundational Analytics (8 credits) The course aims to introduce students to a wide range of analytical skills for academic research, business analytics, and enhanced financial literacy. Key quantitative and qualitative methods for social sciences will be explored including a review of the specifics of different research process steps: research design, data collection techniques, analyzing data, reporting research findings, as well as useful tips in data visualization as one means of effectively communicating key findings. Statistical methods will be taught alongside basic elements of Calculus and Linear Algebra with a focus on applicability. In the second half of the course, principles of economics will also be introduced as a basis for further instruction in hands-on financial analytics. Students will learn to read and interpret key organizational financial statements for the purposes of financial analytics, defining business viability or assessing risk. Students will also be acquainted with the concept of ‘big data’, its characteristics, and methods of and tools for systematic evaluation and analysis of large amounts of data.

Modern World: The Shaping of Our Present (8 credits) The course reviews and discusses key local and global developments in the history of mankind that have led to the present-day world as we know it. The course covers focal points in history since the 15th century from the viewpoint and intersections of military, political, economic, social, cultural, and intellectual history. Topics begin in the early modern period and end with the beginning of the current millennium: from the so-called great geographical discoveries, the invention of the printing press, and Machiavelli’s writings through the age of political, social, and technological revolutions, the world wars of the 20th century and leading works of modern philosophical thought. The history and impact of imperialism, decolonization, globalization, and technological advancement will be discussed through exploring the past of states, societies, and individuals. Special attention will also be paid to the evolution of political thought, governance, and human rights, as well as issues related to technology, labor, and the public space of our days. Students will also be introduced to the scientific methods employed by the discipline of history, as well as taught how to critique and use primary and secondary sources, compile bibliographies, compose analytical reviews, etc. Students will be graded through a variety of regular assignments and significant final written work.

Psychology of Human Behavior (4 credits) This course is an introduction to the field of psychology, beginning with its historical context and looking ahead to some of the directions it is likely to take in the future. It offers the starting point on how the mind works, the perspectives from which that question can be approached, and directions for further learning. Experimental and nonexperimental research methods. Freud: theory of personality (id, ego, superego) and psychoanalytic theory. Classification of mental illnesses – an overview. An overview of therapies – cognitive, behavioral, psychoanalysis, etc. Models of motivation. Emotions and theories on emotions. Social psychology: influence and reciprocity, commitment, social proof, authority, scarcity, etc. Simple learning: Pavlov and classical conditioning, operant conditioning. Complex learning: Skinner and Noam Chomsky. Memory. Perception. Evolutionary theory, basic concepts, altruism and mating, parenting, aggression, overeating. Engineering psychology. Finish with a look at the most cutting-edge approaches and how science may develop in the future.

Positive Psychology (4 credits) Positive psychology is the science of happiness, optimal performance and human flourishing. This course will explore the relatively recent history of this field, its founders and major contributing researchers, and the main scientific findings on wellbeing, optimism, resilience, emotional intelligence, meaningful relationships and more. Students will learn what factors contribute to our overall satisfaction with life and how we can improve it, how we can lead happier, healthier and more fulfilling meaningful lives. The goal of this course is to give information about the science of positive psychology and to offer students practical tools to create positive transformation in their lives, to build resilience and develop their character strengths.

Understanding Other Cultures (3 credits) The course is designed to introduce students to themes in the fields of anthropology, archaeology, ethnicity, world religions, value systems, and ethics in order to critically analyze and discuss notions of “the other”; the construction and power of concepts such as culture, race, gender, class, and nationality. Students learn to work with ideas that help them understand “the self” as a historically situated idea with practical implications for the organization of cultures and shared value systems.

Organizational Behavior (3 credits) The course introduces students to the study of human behavior within organizations. The class discusses organizational and management theories of organizational high performance and uses case studies and exercises to help participants acquire a deep hands-on understanding of the concepts. Topics include organizational structure and culture, informal structures, organizational change, group dynamics, leadership, power, motivation, and corporate social responsibility.

Special Topics I: The Pressing Challenges of Our Time (1 credit) This seminar will cover special topics of contemporary interest through discussions, simulations, debates. Some of the possible topics that will be covered include education, climate change, health care, social support systems, natural disasters, demographic shifts, immigration, modern conflict, corruption, censorship, artificial intelligence, media literacy, and more.

Special Topics Semester II: Communication (1 credit) An introduction to the dynamic field of communication with an emphasis on persuasion. The course uses face-to-face communication, mass communication, digital media, marketing and public relations models to investigate how persuasive messages are developed based on argumentation and evidence. This course explores historical, theoretical, and applied aspects of persuasion in communication in order to promote both understanding and effectiveness.

Negotiations Mastery (4 credits) Negotiations are part of everyone's life. Whether it's divvying up the work with a fellow student or discussing the terms and pay in a job offer, striking a deal with a political or commercial partner, or even finding a compromise with your loved ones, it's all negotiations. Negotiating tactics can only take you so far; a successful negotiator needs additional tools and insight to empathize, collaborate, and understand the other parties so as to achieve not just the optimum outcome for today, but for the long-term as well. This course helps students understand negotiation dynamics and how to prepare for a negotiation, handle uncertainty, learn to craft a psychological strategy and be quick on their feet when presented with unexpected behavior, resolve differences before they escalate, and secure maximum value, while taking into account moral, ethical, and strategic long-term and larger picture dynamics around each negotiation situation.

Data Analytics and Insight (4 credits) The course is an introduction to statistical thinking and analysis as it applies to social studies, broadly speaking. Students will learn how to use statistical techniques to describe and display data, understand sampling, probability, correlation, various distributions, statistical inference, run regression models, and do hypothesis testing.

Research Methodology and Design (4 credits) The course covers scientific methods of studying human behavior, including field observations, experiments, interviews, historical archives. Different qualitative and quantitative approaches will be discussed in analyzing text, numerical, and image data. Students will learn to think carefully about research design: issues around collecting data and assessing its quality, posing the right questions, the connection between theory and methodology; and research ethics. The goal for students is to be able to formulate their own research project and to evaluate the claims made by other researchers.

Climate Science (4 credits) This course provides an in-depth overview of the science of climate change, including both naturally occurring phenomena and human enhanced greenhouse effects. It examines the impact of energy use and carbon emissions on climate patterns and variables, including sea-level rise, Arctic warming, and extreme weather. Alongside the causes and effects of climate change, the course explores solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation based on the current state of technological innovation (e.g., advances in green energy) and policy reforms (e.g., for reaching sustainable development goals).

Theories of Developmental Psychology (4 credits) Study of social, emotional, cognitive, and biological development through an individual's lifespan. The focus of this course will be from infancy to later life. How babies and young children develop the ability to make sense and function in the world. The importance of social attachment, and ability to communicate and think about the world.

Changes during adolescence and later life. Developmental theories. Different stages of human language, social, cognitive, and moral development. Development in infancy, adolescence and later life. Nature and nurture—how our genetic inheritance (our nature) interacts with our experiences (our nurture) to influence our development. Physical, cognitive, and social change throughout the life span.

Design Thinking (4 credits) Design thinking is a systematic approach to applying creative thinking to tough problems and coming up with innovative solutions. Using case studies, simulations, videos and texts, the course will introduce the theory and history of design thinking, challenge students to apply the methodologies of design to challenges in business and society, and then iteratively prototype a new solution. Focused on listening, empathy, collaboration, and experimentation, the design thinking process guides students to translate broadly defined opportunities into specific actionable ideas.