Wesleyan University
The College of Social Studies
238 Church Street
Middletown, Connecticut 06459
860 685 2240
www.wesleyan.edu/css

The College of Social Studies (CSS)
Transcript Letter

The College of Social Studies (CSS) is a rigorous, multidisciplinary major focusing on History, Government, Political and Social Theory, and Economics. Founded in 1959, the CSS is reading and writing intensive, encouraging intellectual independence with weekly essays, small group tutorials, and a vibrant intellectual environment. After applying to the CSS during their Freshman year, students begin the Sophomore year with intensive tutorials in History, Government, and Economics along with a Social Theory colloquium. In order to allow students to focus their energies and develop a faculty for independent analysis, there are no grades awarded during this year, and grades are converted to **CREDIT***.

Ordinarily, at the end of the Sophomore year, students participate in Comprehensive Examinations administered by Examiners from outside Wesleyan. These Exams consist of a week-long series of written essays in each subject area, and an Oral Examination. Each student receives a grade of High Distinction, Distinction, Commendable, Satisfactory, or Fail with the modal grade being Commendable. **For the Sophomore year, only the result of the Comprehensive Examination appears on the student's transcript: subsequent courses in the Junior and Senior years are graded in the conventional manner**.**

After the Sophomore year, CSS students take classes that build from the original tutorials and colloquium by evaluating theories and exploring their application to historical test cases and contemporary debates. During their Junior year, students participate in a colloquium on Contemporary Social Theory, as well as small group tutorials in two of the three other subject areas of their choice. These tutorials either follow the same weekly system of the Sophomore year or culminate in an extensive term paper. During the first semester of their Senior year, students participate in a multidisciplinary colloquium which examines debates and issues in contemporary social, economic, and political theory. The rest of Senior year is devoted to a Senior project, either a Senior Essay or an Honors Thesis.

The transcripts of CSS students show neither a GPA, nor a class rank; the lack of Sophomore grades would make rankings misleading. Having spent three years reading and learning in an intimate intellectual environment, CSS students are then able to construct their own arguments independently, and to make original contributions to their fields of choice.

* For students graduating before 2028, both CSS and non-CSS classes during the sophomore year are converted to Credit. For the graduating class of 2028 onward, sophomore year grades for CSS classes continue to be graded as Credit only, but letter grades received for non-CSS courses will **not** be converted to Credit.

** The CSS Sophomore Comprehensive Exams were cancelled for the CSS Class of 2022 because of the coronavirus pandemic—only the credits for the 3 tutorials and the 1 colloquium for the CSS sophomore year are recorded on the transcripts for this class.