

At Nightingale's  
Middle School, we  
learn as much about  
others as we do about  
ourselves. Rooted  
in these multiple  
perspectives—and  
buoyed by a joyful  
community—  
we practice not  
only advocating  
*for* our neighbors,  
but *with* them.

These connections to each other are mirrored by the connections found within our curriculum.

In this book, we showcase a few of the distinctive programs your daughter will experience as a student in our Middle School—along with a sampling of related lessons.

We hope you'll see that no project at Nightingale belongs to just one class. That no learning is limited to a single method, a single moment—or even, sometimes, a single answer.



## FIELD STUDIES

Science at Nightingale is professional, rigorous, and joyful—especially as evidenced by the recent trip to Iceland, where students both studied and presented research on local geology.

Students spent the fall developing deeply researched and written field guides on particular land formations, while also learning about Icelandic culture and language. Then, during their time in the country, they hiked out to glaciers and rock fields to explore, experiment, and present to their peers the research they'd compiled over the preceding months. (In 2020, students will visit Costa Rica.)

### THE GALAPAGOS PROJECT

Sophisticated science research continues into the Upper School, as ninth-grade biology students apply their learning in micro- and macro-biology to a single species from the Galapagos Islands. After researching the natural and evolutionary history, they create a digital field guide and formally present their findings to peers.

### THE SCIENCE OF ME

Fifth-graders learn about the body's systems—and how to measure and graph them—using their own bodies and physical experiences. These skills are extended in the sixth grade, where students practice forensic analysis using the world around them.

### US SCIENCE SEMINAR

Dr. Jose Silva, a leading cancer biologist, spoke recently to students in our Upper School science seminar, offering career advice to the aspiring scientists. Dr. Silva also regularly hosts Nightingale students in his lab for summer research internships.





## ENRICHMENT TIME 12:45-1:20PM

Nightingale operates on an eight-day academic calendar. The grid below shows the options students have during enrichment time for each of the eight days.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8
ENGLISH / HISTORY LAB			●		●			
LANGUAGE / LATIN LAB		●		●		●		●
MATH LAB	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
SCIENCE LAB	●		●		●		●	
ROOF/OPEN GYM	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
PEER TUTOR	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
DEBATE / CLUBS	●	●		●		●		
MUSIC ELECTIVES			●			●	●	
ART ELECTIVES / MAKERSPACE		●	●		●		●	●
STUDY	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

## TAKING ONE'S OWN TIME

Choice is an increasingly vital part of the Middle School experience, as students begin to take a larger hand in their own education.

From 12:45-1:20pm every day is time for enrichment, and the schedule at left shows the myriad options that students have day by day. As they learn more about their own strengths and weaknesses, students are expected to pick the best activity for themselves.

On any given day, they might feel the need for fresh air and recharging, and thus head up to the roof for play time; they might visit one of the many academic labs if they need extra support or just want to spend more time enjoying a new topic; or they might partake in some of the co-curricular options like debate and music electives.



### ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Nightingale's rooftop playground is shared by all divisions and offers fresh air, joy, and an unparalleled view of Central Park.



### BUILDING COMMUNITY

Another regular time in the schedule is Schoolhouse, when students from all divisions can gather to collaborate on fun activities. One recent example? When Classes VII and X gathered to participate in a marshmallow tower building competition.



### LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Students aren't the only ones learning at Nightingale, as parents and care-givers have access to talks and workshops throughout the year. Through our partnership with the Child Mind Institute, for instance, we hosted a recent series focused on mental health and how adults can best support students at various developmental stages.



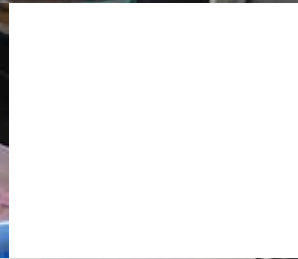
**BEYOND THE CURRICULUM**

Two academic structures help our students build connections across their learning, expose them to new ideas and fields of study, and encourage them to take risks and take more control over their course of study.

Students in each grade take a series of supplementary courses we call minors, in which they explore skills and concepts that can inform multiple disciplines. Psychology, for example, helps girls understand human behavior in a way that connects to their studies in English, history, and science—not to mention their own social development.

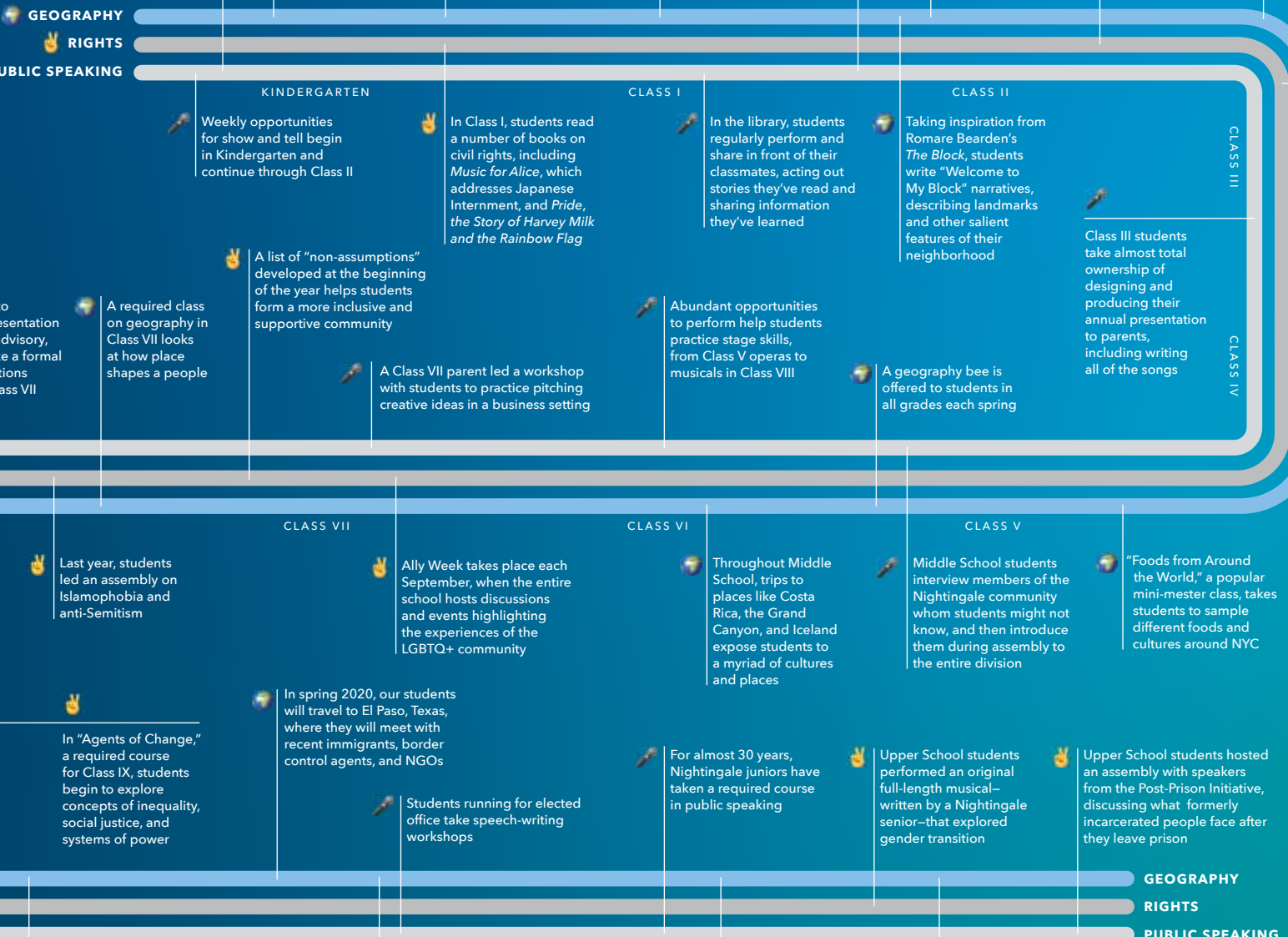
Every January, we take a week-long break from regular classes to host immersive “mini-mesters.” Often vocationally based and always joyful, these all-day experiences help students explore potential new interests with no consequence (there are no grades), solidify relationships with members of other grades (mini-mesters are open to all Middle School students), and get to know their teachers better and more holistically (courses are often developed around faculty members’ personal interests).

Recent courses have included Shark Tank (learning to pitch and market a new business), Broadway Page to Stage (working with theater professionals on makeup, stage combat, and design), and The American Sitcom (analyzing structure, genre, and societal context of shows from the 1930s to today).



# TAPESTRY OF LEARNING

Thematic threads connect any number of classes, projects, and experiences as students journey from Kindergarten to Commencement. Here we can see illustrative moments when students engage with three of these threads.



Community Class, beginning in Kindergarten, offers dedicated time to ask questions and discuss ideas in a group setting

In all grades, students and their parents give heritage presentations, when they share their family's history with their homeroom

Kindergarten studies the works of Yuyi Morales, a Mexican author/illustrator, identifying Mexico on a map and making connections to lessons from Spanish class



Class I learns about the role of place through visits to the Met Museum, where they look at traditional shelters from around the world, and visits to the Museum of the City of New York, where they study urban planning

All Lower School students are invited to participate in an April library poetry reading featuring works selected and written by students

Students throughout the Lower School participate in World Read Aloud Day, learning about other participating schools and pinpointing them on a map

As a precursor to the human rights curriculum in Class III, Class II students create a community agreement to ensure an open and safe space for all



Class III craft their own geographically accurate globes, while also working with the Lower School librarian on a travel guide research project on different regions of the world

GEOGRAPHY

RIGHTS

PUBLIC SPEAKING

KINDERGARTEN

CLASS I

CLASS II

CLASS III

CLASS IV

CLASS VII

CLASS VI

CLASS V

CLASS VIII

CLASS IX

CLASS X

CLASS XI

CLASS XII

GEOGRAPHY

RIGHTS

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Weekly opportunities for show and tell begin in Kindergarten and continue through Class II

In Class I, students read a number of books on civil rights, including *Music for Alice*, which addresses Japanese Internment, and *Pride, the Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag*

In the library, students regularly perform and share in front of their classmates, acting out stories they've read and sharing information they've learned

Taking inspiration from Romare Bearden's *The Block*, students write "Welcome to My Block" narratives, describing landmarks and other salient features of their neighborhood

Class III students take almost total ownership of designing and producing their annual presentation to parents, including writing all of the songs

Using HyperDocs, a collaborative interactive program, Class III created a digital book detailing the impact and actions of the Women's Rights Movement. This was part of their year-long and immersive human rights curriculum

In addition to ongoing presentation practice in advisory, students take a formal communications course in Class VII

A required class on geography in Class VII looks at how place shapes a people

A list of "non-assumptions" developed at the beginning of the year helps students form a more inclusive and supportive community

A Class VII parent led a workshop with students to practice pitching creative ideas in a business setting

Abundant opportunities to perform help students practice stage skills, from Class V operas to musicals in Class VIII

A geography bee is offered to students in all grades each spring

After learning about cardinal directions, coordinate grids, and scale, Class IV students design an imagined state map, incorporating knowledge of geography, mapping skills, and abundant imagination

At an assembly last year, students educated their peers on influential house and senate races during the midterms

Last year, students led an assembly on Islamophobia and anti-Semitism

Ally Week takes place each September, when the entire school hosts discussions and events highlighting the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community

Throughout Middle School, trips to places like Costa Rica, the Grand Canyon, and Iceland expose students to a myriad of cultures and places

Middle School students interview members of the Nightingale community whom students might not know, and then introduce them during assembly to the entire division

"Foods from Around the World," a popular mini-mester class, takes students to sample different foods and cultures around NYC

In the spring, parent-teacher conferences are planned and run by each student herself, reporting on her achievements and taking ownership over her plans for the future.

In "Agents of Change," a required course for Class IX, students begin to explore concepts of inequality, social justice, and systems of power

In spring 2020, our students will travel to El Paso, Texas, where they will meet with recent immigrants, border control agents, and NGOs

Students running for elected office take speech-writing workshops

For almost 30 years, Nightingale juniors have taken a required course in public speaking

Upper School students performed an original full-length musical—written by a Nightingale senior—that explored gender transition

Upper School students hosted an assembly with speakers from the Post-Prison Initiative, discussing what formerly incarcerated people face after they leave prison

Every year, the entire ninth grade spends a week in London, using the city as lab and classroom

Students from Classes X-XII are in a pilot program with four other schools to design and test student-focused workshops around the concept of internationalism

As part of our Round Square partnership, juniors are traveling to Indore, India, for a week-long conference to discuss international issues

For the Block Project, students research and then present the social, economic, and architectural history of a single NYC block from 1919 to today



## MEMORY AND HISTORY

As a capstone project to the Class VIII history curriculum, students researched and designed their own memorial for an individual of their choice—specifically, someone who is largely missing from history, often women or members of marginalized groups.

Students began researching memorials in the fall, as they visited the 9/11 Memorial and thereafter used part of their annual trip to Washington, D.C., to serve as tour guides for their classmates through several of the most prominent monuments and memorials. Their study emphasized not just the historical background, but the connections between history, legacy, design, and symbolism.

In the spring, students completed extensive research papers on the proposed subject of their memorial, then worked alongside a team of parent architects and designers to develop visual concepts and create renderings. As selected by their class, four finalists presented their chosen memorials to the entire Middle School community.



### SEEING HISTORY ANEW

As part of a year-long study of world religions, Class VII students participated in a workshop led by The Memory Project, sketching portraits of Holocaust victims as a means of continuing their legacy for new generations.



### NEW APPROACHES TO CIVIL RIGHTS

In the 2020–2021 school year, Class VIII will inaugurate a new civil rights trip through the deep South, visiting markers of the Civil Rights movement, meeting with modern-day Civil Rights leaders, and engaging difficult questions like those surrounding Confederate monuments.





## WE CAME, WE SAW, WE SPOKE

Developing one's voice is central to the Nightingale experience. In addition to innumerable informal opportunities, formal public speaking instruction in the Middle School begins with Class V debate, a required class in which all students learn how to shape and share an argument. Nightingale is the only all-girls school to host a debate team for Middle School students.

Our students' grasp of rhetoric and presentation is also bolstered by our rigorous Latin program, required for all students in Classes VI-VIII. Studying Latin requires deductive reasoning as they decode and translate, it forces them to think fully through a thought before speaking, and it asks them to confront something that is both familiar (Latin is the foundation for all Romance languages) and alien (Latin isn't a living language one encounters on a daily basis).

### **NIGHTINGALE SHORTS**

Class VIII students write "micro-essays" each year to practice developing their voice in short, creative non-fiction. A handful of these are selected by faculty to be presented at a division-wide assembly.

### **ANOTHER ROUND**

Debate continues seamlessly into the Upper School, where students bring ever more sophistication to their arguments. In April, Upper School students advanced to the semi-finals in the New York State Debate Championships.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Relationships are at the heart of everything we do at Nightingale. Especially during the Middle School years—when teenagers are often trying to close themselves to the world around them—we surround our students with adults and peers who support them at every turn.

Classes VI-VIII have a faculty dean to guide students through their year, while Class V has two deans to ease the transition into the Middle School. A schoolwide director of health and wellness oversees a dedicated Middle School counseling team. Each student has an advisor with whom they meet with weekly, and both the head and associate head of Middle School have open door policies, so girls can get guidance or celebrate an achievement. Teachers, staff, and coaches meet regularly to discuss individualized support for every student.

There are also many programmatic ways we invest in the health and wellness of our students. Whether it's learning to make nutritious meals with our kitchen staff, interviewing community members to learn more about their roles, or studying neuroscience to understand how their own bodies and perspectives are changing, students bring to bear both mind and heart as they learn about themselves and how to support their peers.







## WORK HARD, PLAY HARD

We like to laugh. We like to play. We take our tasks seriously without taking ourselves seriously. And sometimes? We plan a ping pong party for Middle School families—just because we can.

### **UT IOICULARIS**

The Middle School day is full of fun, both in and outside the classroom. In mid-April, for instance, Latin teacher (and stand-up comedian!) Ms. Schapiro hosted an uproarious assembly in which she told stories about the wacky teachers from her own childhood—all of whom were played, in full costume, by her colleagues in the Classics department.

### **NERDY DERBY**

Engineering can be hard work, but Class V students know how to keep it fun. In the recent Nerdy Derby competition, they used a variety of materials to design and construct their own model cars, then spent a couple joyful afternoons racing them down various tracks in the auditorium.

## IF RELATIONSHIPS DISTINGUISH US, OUR PROGRAMS DEFINE US.

**INFORMED BY EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH, OUR** pedagogy is both responsible and adventurous. Student interest guides everyday learning within a thoughtful and sequenced structure, and we embrace the joy of collaborative discovery while leaning into the innate curiosity and whimsy of young girls.

Through our expansive Middle School advisory program, we work with students so they grasp not only how they are changing, but why. As many teenagers seek to close themselves off, we surround them with adults and peers who are adamant in supporting them.

This focus on health and wellness is complemented by ongoing skills development and the increasing expectation that students take responsibility for their own learning: optional minor courses, annual "mini-mesters," and daily time for self-guided enrichment allow students to choose their own path and explore new interests.

This sense of self develops alongside deep connections to others. We embrace difference as a source of strength and believe awareness is only a precursor to advocacy. As individuals and as a school community, we move when the world moves, and we adapt to the needs of those around us, whether in the next seat or around the world.

As our students move into Upper School, they leave with not only a desire to do more, but the ability to do more. How to find and triage information, how to work more successfully with others, how to change knowledge into action.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

### **ADMISSIONS OFFICE**

admissions@nightingale.org  
212-933-6515

The surest way to learn about Nightingale is to visit us in person, feel the joy in the hallways, and see the excitement in our classrooms. There are opportunities to visit throughout the fall admissions season, so please join us at one of our events and get to know us better. We look forward to seeing you at the blue doors!

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

MCNY by Terecille Basa-Ong (page 11 Museum of City of New York); Chela Crinnion (pages 16-17, 18-19); Amanda Goodwin (pages 4-5, page 10 assembly); Emily Peters (pages 14-15); Matthew Septimus (page 6 rooftop); Lauren Toppeta (page 11 globes)

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# Nightingale

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