



## Chicago Engagement across the Curriculum: An Overview

Chicago Studies offers curricular and co-curricular opportunities to discover, study, engage with, and positively impact the diverse communities of our world-class city. Working with campus- and city-wide partners, we support the College community in encountering and learning with Chicagoans from all walks of life. In so doing, we facilitate the development of reciprocal, respectful collaborations between campus and city that empower students in the College to deeper critical inquiry and more impactful responses to complex and systemic issues in Chicago and in cities around the world.

### Chicago Studies Classes

Each term, Chicago Studies designates classes as “Chicago-focused” to facilitate students’ academic engagement with the city. These classes are eligible for additional pedagogical, logistic, and financial support for Chicago-based experiential learning from the College. *Not all of a course’s content need focus on Chicago in order to be designated; generally speaking, Chicago-related themes, examples, authors, or content should constitute 20% or more of the class’ material. Instructors or departments who wish to designate a class as Chicago-focused should [contact Chicago Studies’ Director Chris Skrable](#).*

Chicago Studies classes may include any of the following:

- Historical, literary, artistic, social-scientific, or scientific **exploration of Chicago**;
- Courses that integrate fieldwork, diversity learning, undergraduate research, or other forms of **experiential learning in Chicago** as constitutive elements of their pedagogy;
- Courses that engage students in academic projects developed and executed in **collaboration with one or more Chicago community partners**;
- Exploration of **topics or methods in urban studies** that consider or are applied to Chicago as a significant example.

Chicago Studies supports the design and execution of these courses, offering Chicago-specific content knowledge; pedagogical expertise; logistical/financial support for course research and experiential learning; and access to multiple networks of community and institutional partners throughout the city.

Regardless of type, we encourage the following pedagogical preferences in all courses that seek to engage students in meaningful study of the city:

- An emphasis on primary sources, first-person narratives, and/or experiential learning to expose students to Chicago’s communities, past and present;
- Acknowledgement and respectful consideration of knowledges arising from the experiences of Chicagoans of all walks of life, including those traditionally marginalized or excluded from academic discourse;
- The integration of high-impact teaching and learning strategies (see Kuh, et al., 2008) to reinforce critical thinking, reflective inquiry, and diversity awareness in engaging the city.

## Engaging the City through Experiential Learning in Other Classes

Chicago Studies can also provide support to instructors who wish to enrich *any* class with Chicago-related experiential learning or Chicago-based enrichment activities (e.g. excursions/field trips, guest speakers, and access to relevant cultural or historical sites).

Figure 1 may be helpful for instructors who are trying to assess whether or not a proposed class could be designated as a “Chicago-focused” class. “Enrichment” classes would not normally meet the criteria for designation; “Partner” and “Focus” classes would almost always meet those criteria. “Feature” classes require individual consideration.

**Figure 1: Levels/Types of Chicago Engagement in College Classes**

	<b>Chicago as Enrichment</b>	<b>Chicago as Feature</b>	<b>Chicago as Partner</b>	<b>Chicago as Focus</b>
<b>Summary of Chicago Engagement</b>	The class provides occasional or co-curricular opportunities to engage the city.	The course considers at least one Chicago example, author, theme, or topic as part of its academic content.	The course partners with one or more Chicago organizations/institutions to support ongoing experiential and/or high-impact learning.	The course’s primary content focuses on one or more aspects of the city and its diverse communities, past or present.
<b>Integration of Chicago-Related Content</b>	Course content does not specifically consider Chicago, but uses city-based experiences to illustrate or exemplify its academic content.	Although the course as a whole is not focused on Chicago, at least one unit explicitly considers Chicago-related content.	Course content may be method- or urban-focused, but is consistently illustrated by or applied to Chicago as a teaching strategy.	The course includes explicit consideration of how its content has been influenced or shaped by Chicago’s broader history, geography, demographics, etc.
<b>Possible Experiential Learning Strategies</b>	Field trip; guest speaker; relevant cultural experience; course content-related training provided by Chicago-area expert.	Field trip(s), guest speaker(s), cultural experience(s) or use of Chicago data or archival materials as part of class’ exploration of a specific unit that engages the city.	“In the field” teaching; regular use of Chicago-based high-impact pedagogies (fieldwork, diversity learning, project-based learning); partners engage regularly or function as co-instructors.	Integration of Chicago primary sources, first-person experiences, data, etc. as core elements of course’s academic content; student research is focused on Chicago themes/materials.
<b>Chicago Studies Support</b>	Identification of appropriate city-based opportunities; logistical support; recommendations for integrating enrichment experiences via reflection.	Identification of relevant Chicago elements or themes; logistical and pedagogical support for any experiential learning.	Course development/design assistance; pedagogical support for experiential and high-impact learning strategy and projects; facilitation of external collaborations; logistical support.	Course development/design assistance; identification of relevant Chicago elements, themes, or collaborations; logistical and pedagogical support for any experiential learning; publication support.
<b>Available Funding*</b>	Up to <b>\$750</b> to support students’ participation in Chicago-based enrichment activities.	Up to <b>\$1500</b> to support Chicago-based experiential learning.	Up to <b>\$3000</b> to support the class’ experiential learning strategy.	Up to <b>\$3000</b> to support class’ experiential learning strategy.

\*Microgrant application is available at <https://collequesurveys.uchicago.edu/chicago-course-connections-application>.

## Resources

Chicago Studies offers a number of resources for instructors interested in Chicago-based learning. Additionally, we support many forms of AAC&U-recommended high-impact teaching and learning practices, both as standalones and as these can be applied to Chicago in particular. These include collaborative learning, diversity learning, e-portfolios, and Chicago-focused undergraduate research.

The following list of resources is by no means exhaustive:

- Chicago Studies Website (main): <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu>
- List of designated Chicago Studies classes: <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/classes>
- Resources for course instructors: <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/faculty>
- Resources for online teaching: <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/faculty/online>
- Resources for online experiential learning: <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/faculty/reframed>
- Guidelines for experiential learning microgrants: <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/microgrants>
- Microgrant application: <https://collegesurveys.uchicago.edu/chicago-course-connections-application>
- Support for Chicago-focused undergraduate research: <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/research>
- Chicago Studies team (including faculty advisors): <http://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/people>

To schedule a virtual appointment with Chris Skrable (Director, Chicago Studies & Experiential Learning), visit <https://calendly.com/cskrable>.

To begin a conversation over email, contact [cskrable@uchicago.edu](mailto:cskrable@uchicago.edu).