

**The Student Guide  
by the graduate students of  
the Center for Neural Science**

**Spring 2004**



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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the CNS Unofficial Student Guide! First year students could find useful information to assist them in settling into the program and the city. New and old hands could use this as a resource to look up useful information like the location of the Barrow Street Ale House (it's on Barrow Street). This is not, of course, a complete or exclusive resource. It presents what current and past students consider *essential* information. Take advantage of this and the other resources around you to find out what you need to know. Talk with your fellow students. Get to know post-docs and faculty who share your interests, academic or otherwise. Basically, get comfy because you are likely to be here for a while! This Guide is an update of the first attempt at compiling bits of student wisdom. Please send us your comments and suggestions. More importantly, we ask that as you become wizened (as in older and wizer) students yourselves, you take another look at this Guide and improve upon it. In this and other ways, you can endeavor to assist future classes in their transition to graduate life at CNS.

## Officialese

### Navigating the NYU Bureaucracy

There are many resources to be found in this large institution. Finding and making use of them could involve some legwork. As with anything else, planning beforehand always helps. There are very useful web resources that provide information about the facilities (computing, health, gymnasium, etc.). Offices at these facilities can provide you with a mass of literature detailing what they have to offer (this is preferable to calling in and being put on hold, interminably<sup>1</sup>). Here are some tips that may smooth the journey a bit. However, we can't produce miracles (most of us at least) so, occasionally, you're still going to have to wait in line.

### Officialese

Your first encounter with the wilds of the NYU bureaucracy may be academic registration. In your first year, your committee will inform you about the courses that you need to register for (also see <http://www.cns.nyu.edu/doctoral/>). You will probably know all about this well before classes start from the information package that you receive on being accepted at CNS. Once you set up your login at Albert (see below), you will find that you need what are technically called *registration codes* for restricted courses. Lynne Kiorpes and Amy Yochum are the people to contact for these. You can also find a general schedule of all courses offered at NYU at <http://www.nyu.edu/academics.nyu> under “Departments and Courses” and Schedule of Classes”. To register for courses, you have two options: the telephone system, Torchtone, and the online version, Albert. Albert is easier to deal with.

### Albert

The online registration system, Albert, can be found at: <http://www.nyu.edu/resources.nyu> under the “Other Services” section. You can also login from your NYUHome page (<http://home.nyu.edu>). You can use Albert to access your class schedule, grades, unofficial transcripts, degree progress, financial aid status, account balance and address information. You will be prompted for your student ID and a four digit PIN number. Don't forget your PIN number! You will use this number only a few times each semester, so

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<sup>1</sup> Really.

you are likely to overwrite its memory with some random neuroanatomy fact over the course of your first semester. Choose something simple that you can remember.

## Torchtone

Warning: None of those involved in writing this edition have used this system. Nor have any of the students that we asked. ‘Nuff said.

Torchtone is “the telephone registration and information system at New York University”. You can access it by calling 212-995-4747. You may use Torchtone for accessing information about your account balance (choose the Bursar option) or course registration/grades/current schedule (Registrar option). The system is rather self-explanatory. However, there are a few tips that can help you avoid getting snagged. Torchtone is a menu driven system, so it pays to learn the numerical codes for the options you want. That way you needn't listen to the Torchtone lady run through all of her options. Lastly, expect busy phone lines near the end of the registration deadline. There is an enforced time limit and you run the risk of getting hung-up on without completing your business. So, it is better to make several calls early than try to make a 30-minute call the night before the deadline.

## NYU ID card

The next step is getting an ID card. This is your key to the library, paychecks, and Coles gym facilities, so you need it right off the bat. You will also need this to get into the Meyer building on weekends and holidays when the main entrance is locked. However, before you wait in line (and there WILL BE a line; it often stretches all the way back to the elevators, so bring something to do) there are two things you should do: register for classes and make sure your bills are all paid. You can register for classes without your tuition paid in full, but unless your bills are paid, you can't get your ID validated, so you'll have to go back to the ID center. The easiest way to check your accounts is to speak with Stu or call Torchtone (212-995-4747 Bursar option). Once you're prepared, you can march off to the NYU Card Center: 7 East 12th Street, Third Floor. E-mail: [nyucard@nyu.edu](mailto:nyucard@nyu.edu); phone: (212)-443-CARD (2273). The office is open Mon-Thurs: 9-6 and Fri: 10-4, with extended hours at the beginning of the semester. Check out the NYU Card web site for exact hours (<http://www.nyu.edu/nyucard/>). If you lose your ID, you can get a new one from the ID center for \$15 the first time, and \$50 the second.

New students: if you are here (in NYC) somewhat earlier than September, you can get your ID card without having to wait around in a line. The real crunch starts towards the end of August and continues through to the second week of September. Go to the Card Center as early as you can.

### Tuition and Fees

You must pay any outstanding balance on your Bursar bill by the GSAS due date, which will be reported both on your bill and in Albert/Torchtone, otherwise your registration will be cancelled. In recent years, CNS has taken care of all fees and health (including dental) insurance for all graduate students. However, expect a time when the department's funds haven't yet covered your tuition balance. If this is the case as the due date draws near, speak with Stu. He has a magical way of dealing with these things that will relieve you of tuition-bill anxiety.

### Paychecks (money comes...)

Now that you have your ID card, you could go straight to the library, but perhaps you were thinking about grabbing a drink (you might need one after all that standing in line). In that case, you might want to pick up your paycheck. Depending on whether you are TA'ing or not, paychecks will be available bi-weekly with Keilem Ng (CNS office, 8<sup>th</sup> floor) or on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) office. This is located at 1/2 (yes this office revels in the Carrollian address of "one-half Fifth Avenue") Fifth Ave. You may now also choose to have your paychecks deposited directly into your bank account – this is highly recommended as your paycheck will be deposited even if you aren't around (and need money – say while vacationing in Barbados).

### Taxes (and money goes...)

As long as we're talking about income, here's what you can expect from income taxes. Assuming you're single and have no other sources of income, roughly 15% of your paycheck will get eaten by federal, NY state, and NY city taxes combined. But unlike a regular employer, NYU does not withhold any tax from your paycheck unless you're an international student. International students should take a close look at the international section in this guide as what you need to file may depend strongly on what tax treaties your home country has with the U.S. Basically, keep an eye on your paycheck forms to keep track of:

- a. How much you're being paid
- b. How much is being withheld – if any

You may need to save money (yes, *ouch*) to pay your annual taxes if no amount was withheld from your paycheck. If a substantial portion was withheld, you may want to calculate your taxes extra carefully to ensure that you get the refund (woohoo!) that is owed to you.

American students need to pay estimated taxes quarterly. You could 'forget' to pay your estimated taxes, but the IRS can slap you with a penalty for doing that. And besides, you'll probably be getting federal tax-funded grant money at some point in your life, so quit griping and do your civic duty. Technically you should pay one installment before the end of the calendar year because you will probably be a little over the threshold (\$1000 owed in federal tax). If you're that organized, congratulations. Otherwise, you can just risk it and wait until the April 15 filing deadline to fill out the estimated tax forms.

All tax forms and instructions are available these days in Acrobat format on the web. Information and forms are available at:

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/index.html>

The site is actually amazingly useful. The Yahoo! website also provides federal, state and city forms and may be faster to access - especially in April.

NY city taxes are included on the NY state tax form, but don't get fooled into thinking that it's going to make your life simple. It can take hours to decide whether or not you are supposed to file additional forms. If you resent the time that you have to spend on your taxes enough then it might be worth using an online service like Intuit's turbotax.com or H&R Block's taxcut.com. If you're lucky enough to qualify for the EZ forms, either site will let you fill out and file your taxes for free. Otherwise, it costs about \$10-\$15 for your federal return and the same for each state return.

### CNS computer help

For CNS computer network related issues (cabling, hooking up computer equipment, getting computers fixed, etc.) you have to contact The Shop. Basically this means Ken Anderson ([anderson@cns.nyu.edu](mailto:anderson@cns.nyu.edu)) or Paul Bartel ([pbartel@cns.nyu.edu](mailto:pbartel@cns.nyu.edu)). For UNIX system administration issues (including

getting IP numbers) communicate with Paul Fan (8-7782; Room 804). A note about computing resources: there is quite a bit of software stashed around on the UNIX/OS-X systems here, but most of it is hard to find (and/or get to work). If you want something, ask around – it might already be somewhere on the network.

### Academic computing

Another handy office you may want to visit is the Information Technology Services website: <http://www.nyu.edu/its/>. There you can download free communications software for PCs and Macs. The help center is located on the 4th floor of 10 Astor Place (e-mail: [its.clientservices@nyu.edu](mailto:its.clientservices@nyu.edu); phone: 212-998-3333). If you want to get a DIAL/PPP account (which allows you direct Internet access) you can fill out a request form at the ITS accounts office. It should take about a week for them to process your request.

### Other issues

There are lots of people in the neighborhood who can help you out if you run into bureaucratic snafus, or just need something in particular. Stu is an all-around great resource for resolving difficulties that you are having trouble dealing with on your own. For example, he will go to bat for you when the maintenance people are ignoring you and your office is so cold, you can see your breath. Stu also knows where to go for a good adventure.

### Keys, Card Access and petty cash

Have the faculty member who is granting you access (card access to the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> floor lab areas or key access to a lab) send a request by email to Joanne. She is also in charge of petty cash and room scheduling. The room scheduling is available on the CNS intranet (<http://localweb.cns.nyu.edu/>) and you can submit requests for booking 815 or the meeting room. Bobst Library copy cards are available in the Bobst library – ask one of the students at the first floor reception/checkout counter.

### Office Personnel

Amala Ankolekar: Financial Analyst. Function as a fiscal liaison between FAS and CNS to oversee financial & grants related issues. Manage all departmental accounts, reconciling and correcting Central Division of Finance data to assure FAS and CNS staff and faculty have accurate information and projections.

Joey Azevedo: Administrative Asst Budget Assistant. Administer all aspects of expenditures for departmental account and account of faculty who do not have staffing to perform these functions.

Stuart Greenstein: Associate Director. Oversee all aspects of CNS operations including budgetary, personnel, visas, daily operations, physical plant, construction, faculty, postdoc, student, and staff needs and special projects. Assist Director and faculty with academic and curricular operations as requested.

Keilem Ng: Administrative Assistant Personnel and Visas. Administer all personnel, payroll, and visa matters for staff and students. Submit appointment forms and visa applications, monitor process to assure compliance with critical deadline. Reconcile records for accuracy.

Joanne Rodrigues Administrative Assistant to Director. Provide comprehensive administrative support to the Director.

Amy Yochum: Administrative Aide Student Affairs. Administer all undergraduate and graduate student matters including curriculum, registration, grades, records, recruitment, admissions, enrollment, funding and hosting events. Also administer Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP).

## Academia

### Summary of requirements and milestones

See: <http://www.cns.nyu.edu/doctors/> and the doctoral guide: ([www.cns.nyu.edu/doctors/docguide00.pdf](http://www.cns.nyu.edu/doctors/docguide00.pdf)) for details. Here is a summary prepared by Lynne:

Point Requirements: 72 total, 37 graded  
28 graded credits 1<sup>st</sup> yr (12 Fall, 16 Spring)  
9 graded credits 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> yr (3 3-pt. seminars)  
23 non-graded  
12 dissertation research (3pts x 4 semesters)

First year:

First year curriculum + 2 research rotations ( 1 AY, 1 summer)  
Research seminar (meets monthly – LK)  
Prepare First Year Talk

Second year:

Select research focus  
Continue course work  
Form advisory committee (must meet twice per year minimum thereafter)  
Write second year paper (translate to NRSA if possible)  
TA

Third year:

Complete course work  
Write thesis proposal  
Give Third Year Talk  
TA

Fourth/Fifth years:

Maintain matriculation  
Conduct dissertation research  
Form thesis committee  
Write thesis/defend

### First year students:

Your first year will be taken up mainly by courses that comprise the core curriculum and by your first rotation. Advanced entering students who have taken equivalent courses previously can opt to place out of some of the core courses – talk to Lynne if you think you have taken an equivalent course elsewhere.

Settle in – get to know other grad students, the CNS postdocs and of course – faculty. There are many opportunities for you to come out of your firstyear office and meet people. Teatime is at 3pm on Tuesdays and Fridays. The CNS colloquium is on Mondays at 12:30pm in the Mayer building or at noon at the Med School campus (you will receive e-mails about these and announcements will be posted on the bulletin boards). There is a CNS social mailing list ([cns\\_social@yahoogroups.com](mailto:cns_social@yahoogroups.com)) that is presently administered by Anita Disney ([anita@cns.nyu.edu](mailto:anita@cns.nyu.edu)) – you can e-mail her if you wish to be added to it. This is mainly used to herd a group together to go out for a drink Friday nights but you could also use it to alert your colleagues to events that you think might be worth checking out (an art exhibition that you found neat or a great new music venue that you discovered last weekend...).

### After the first year:

You are in charge of deciding the composition of your committee. You are usually asked to choose three CNS faculty members (but in some circumstances, you can have committee members from other departments). Each committee must be approved by Lynne. One member will be named “chair” of the committee. The chair is the person who will approve the formal reports and keep the meeting “in order”. The committee is usually a nebulous entity when you begin choosing its members. At some point it will be important to know how to pick a committee and to know what role the committee plays as you go through the program. Talk to Lynne, your peers and other faculty who you think might provide you with useful advice (your prospective advisor, for example).

### What does an advisory committee do?

As you begin setting up your first committee meeting, you will soon realize that it is quite trying to get all of your committee members in the same place at the same time. Before the meeting, e-mail your committee members to find out when they’ll be available, what they’d like you to do for the meeting. Also find

out what courses are going to be offered the following semester/year. Some committees are more formal than others. Some want a written report of your accomplishments, others may want an informal presentation of your accomplishments; most want you to give some sense of what classes you feel you need to take the following year. Be prepared to explain rotation projects, things you've learned and gained and a sense of what holes need filling (i.e., with certain research projects or with classes). The more prepared you are to explain your rationale, the better off you are. The committee may approve your decisions, and more importantly, may offer additional ideas and suggestions.

In general, your committee is meant to help you - not hinder you. It is true that they are responsible for reporting your successes and failures (and sometimes their personal opinions about you) in the once-a-year faculty meeting that decides your student status (i.e., if you are asked to leave the program, or are put on academic probation). Make sure that you get a sense of what they will discuss with the rest of the faculty. There is no reason why your committee should be secretive about their recommendation for you. If, however, you feel uncertain upon leaving the committee meeting, or find that they told you one thing and reported a quite different thing to the faculty, you can do a couple of things. One: mail your committee chair member after your committee meeting and ask for an e-mail synopsis of the meeting or two: Explain the circumstances of the meeting to Lynne or to the student representative ombudspeople (see below). In general, option 2 should only be opted for if you feel awkward communicating with your committee chair member, or if the problem involves a sensitive issue. Most of the time, you will leave the meeting with a pretty clear idea of what tasks you should tackle and a somewhat clear sense that you're doing okay. Paranoia may be common during graduate school but it can and should be minimized.

As you progress through the program, your committee may change its focus as well as its composition. You may drop and add members as your ideas about possible projects mature and gain focus. As you gain a clearer idea of what your dissertation topic is, you should choose committee members that can provide input to your research. Ultimately, your committee decides when you should begin to write your dissertation, and will be most of the members of your defense committee.

## How to choose a committee

If there is a faculty member that you are sure you're going to work under, then it is a good idea to select him or her to be on your committee. As you interact with other members of the faculty during your first year classes, you will begin to get a sense of personalities, research interests, and background. Avoid choosing committee members who are all constantly out of town, or are over-extended (have a tenure review arising, already sit on 15 committees, etc.). Choose members that have similar research interests and choose members that have personalities that are compatible with you and - more importantly - with the other members on your committee. Ask other students about their recommendations. Most of us are extremely opinionated on the matter. Keep in mind, however, that every student's needs and experiences are different, and that a committee that's right or wrong for one student need not be right or wrong for you.

## Courses

First year students will be given a list of courses for registration. After that point students choose their courses in conjunction with committee advice. Keep in mind, however, that not all classes are offered each year. Speak with the course instructor to see what the plans are for future course offerings. Many professors would like to know if a number of students are interested in taking a course on a particular topic and will plan accordingly.

Second and third year students ordinarily register for 9 points per semester. Students in the fourth year and beyond ordinarily register for courses, as needed, to achieve the 72 points required for graduation. You are required to have 37 of the 72 points in graded coursework. The courses "Readings in Neural Science" and "Research in Neural Science" allow students to get credit hours for the research. These courses are not graded, but can be taken more than once for credit. "Introduction to Research" should be taken by students doing rotations. Once students are attached to a laboratory, this course is inappropriate. The "Dissertation Research" courses should be taken only by students who have completed about 66 points and the required number of points in graded courses.

## Psychology classes

CNS students often find two Psychology classes rather useful. *Linear Systems* is taught by Larry Maloney and/or Bob Shapley and is offered every other year.

This course is an introduction to the basics of linear systems theory from a mathematical perspective. Prior mathematical background is not assumed beyond basic college calculus. *Sensation and perception* is another psychology class that provides background material, which some students have found helpful; but be warned that the class focuses on visual perception almost exclusively. This has been taught in recent years by Marisa Carrasco and Michael Landy. Psychology courses often need access codes for registration. Contact the Psychology office to obtain an access code ([marisa.eisenman@nyu.edu](mailto:marisa.eisenman@nyu.edu); 8-3874; room 158, 6 Washington Place).

### Courses in other departments

Some students have discovered great courses in other departments such as Computer Science, Mathematics and Biology. When searching for classes, you might wish to look into those sections of the course guide. Speak with Lynne or your advisory committee members for more information about other non-traditional course options if you need to fill some holes in your academic background.

### Courses at other schools

In theory you can take classes at other schools, including Columbia, Fordham, CUNY, the New School, and the NYU Medical School. Practically, it is a bit of work to find out what's being offered. It might be well worth the effort though.

### Funding

The center is committed to supporting you for up to five years. Some students require more than this amount of time, and as part of your education, you are expected to apply for those awards and fellowships for which you are eligible, so you may end up filling out multiple grant applications during the PhD process. This does not, however, apply to International students (non-residents) who are not eligible for any grants. In general, applying for a grant can also be good practice for future experiences in which you will have to support yourself. Most students in this program generally apply for two different types of grants during their time here: the NSF and the NRSA.

Whether you are eligible or not, the second year paper (see below; a requirement in the program) provides you with an opportunity to write a grant proposal. You can use this quite effectively to design a project and have your committee read it and give you their informed feedback.

## NSF

The National Science Foundation offers pre-doctoral training grants. In order to be eligible for these awards, you must have had less than the equivalent of one semester's worth of graduate level training (no more than a certain number of graduate credits). The application is due early in November. The competition for the NSF grants is quite stiff, but certainly not impossible. In each of the past five classes, at least one student has won either an NSF (or an HHMI – now discontinued - fellowship), and at least as many have received honorable mention. The applications for the two grants are quite similar, so don't worry about having to complete two completely different proposals. Keep in mind the following advice. The review board is not necessarily looking for someone who knows everything, or who has the best project, but someone who can think through ideas and present a proposal which asks a specific question and then proposes an experiment (or set of experiments) whose results will answer this question. In addition, it is important to have a faculty sponsor in whose lab you will do this research. The review committee likes to see that a professor plans to give you his/her time and resources. This does not necessarily have to be the person with whom you will do your thesis; if you get the grant, you do not have to complete the project you've proposed. Although you may be a little overwhelmed by the demands of course work, research and applying for these grants during the fall, it can be worthwhile to give the applications some extra attention: you really do have a significant chance of getting a fellowship.

### Second-year paper requirement (NRSA proposal)

Sometime in your second year, you should begin thinking about your second year paper, which is due at the end of the summer after your second year. The purpose of this requirement is to get you to think critically about a research problem and prepare a grant proposal which details the whats and hows of the experiments you've designed to get some answers to this problem. It can be an excellent exercise if you are writing a proposal based on your intended thesis project. The proposal forces you to dive into the relevant background literature, and to think critically about experimental design and analysis. However, the second year paper topic need not be the same as your thesis topic, and some people suggest that it is, in fact, good for it to be different. The timing and involvement of your rotation projects will help to determine which manifestation of the second-year paper is appropriate for you. However, since it is a requirement, and it takes a great deal of time and effort, the subject is worth some forethought.

The format of the second-year paper is a grant proposal, specifically a predoctoral NRSA proposal (an individual National Research Service Award). Offered by the National Institutes of Mental Health, these predoctoral awards were once available for anyone that fell under the realm of 'Neuroscience' but now they have been restricted to areas that fall under Mental Health exclusively (i.e. cognitive). The application process begins by submitting a paragraph to determine whether you can actually submit The Application. If you think your application might be related, give it a shot. When it comes time for application submission, the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP, 15 Washington Place) has the forms and instructions. You should also make an appointment to speak with your sponsor's grant officer at OSP. He/she will inform you of deadline changes and other details related to your submission. Be aware that you will need three letters of recommendation not including the letter of support from your sponsor.

#### When there are problems...

It is fairly safe to assume that while maneuvering through your graduate career, there will be a few obstacles to overcome. By asking around, you'll find that most problems have been encountered previously by senior students or post-docs around you. Utilizing these connections will help you work through most of the problems you might experience.

Student problems tend to involve either classwork or research/rotation projects. The department requires that students maintain a "B" average in the first year lecture class ("B" in lab class) and a "B" average for the remaining years to remain in good academic standing. A student who drops to or below this level might be placed on academic probation, a period in which the student's performance is monitored more closely by the advisory committee and other faculty. If the student's performance doesn't improve during the probation period, he or she might face expulsion from the program. Misunderstood or otherwise unmet expectations in research or rotation projects can also result in negative assessments of a student's progress. Faculty advisors might recommend that such a student spend a greater proportion of time on research activities.

Difficulties such as these are often averted by identifying potential problems before they get out of control. For example, many portions of the first-year curriculum are outside the experience of some students or require greater background knowledge in a particular area. Seeking help early for these

portions of the course, either from the instructor or qualified senior students, may help avert larger problems.

As the Director of Graduate studies, Lynne Kiorpes serves as advisor to students in all levels of the program, but particularly for first-year students. She can offer valuable advice to assist students in choosing rotations and committee members. The department also welcomes student's opinions on classes and teaching assistantships. Generally speaking, any problem facing students can be brought to him for discussion. Some problems, however, are more easily discussed among fellow students. For this reason, senior student “ombudspeople” are chosen by the students. Currently, the ombudspeople are Anita Disney and Jonathan Pillow. They are available for discussion of issues related to classes, research or other aspects of academic life and can help mediate student-faculty interactions when appropriate.

Of course graduate students continue to exist outside of the department as well and may experience burdensome problems in those sectors of life. You will no doubt develop friendships among your lab - and class-mates that will support you through such troubles, but you should know that University counseling services exist as well. You can find more information on this and other NYU offices in the NYU Student's Guide.

### Student-Postdoc Forum (SPF)

This journal club is student organized, and is designed to allow students and post-docs at CNS to present papers of interest or their own work to fellow colleagues (without the added stress of having faculty members present). Each participating student or post-doc usually presents once during the year. First year students are not expected to present, but certainly are welcome to do so. Food and drink for the journal club meeting are sponsored by the center. The schedule is posted on the SPF website (follow the link from the CNS “events” page) and e-mail reminders are sent out by the organizer. The Education Committee and Faculty Meeting representatives also report on recent meetings at SPF. The current reps are:

Education Committee Rep: Yasmine El-Shamayleh  
Faculty Meeting Rep: Neel Dhruv

## Not-so-academic

### Housing

Perhaps one of the toughest things you'll have to do in your time here at CNS is to find a place to live. NYU offers some Graduate Student housing. However, this is not subsidized and often will cost more than finding your own place (or at least sharing a place with 1 or 2 other people). On top of this, it is our understanding that in many of these NYU places you end up having a roommate (not a housemate). So what should you do? The first question that you need to answer is do you want to live alone (a very expensive option in this city) or share an apartment with some others?

If you want to live alone, or want to find an apartment to share with someone you already know, the first course of action is to use everybody you know in the city and even those you don't. The best apartment deals in the city are always passed on by word of mouth. Three ways to exploit this are:

1. Tell any and all family and/or friends that you know in the city that you are looking for an apartment.
2. Email everybody you know, as well as [students@cns.nyu.edu](mailto:students@cns.nyu.edu) and [postdocs@cns.nyu.edu](mailto:postdocs@cns.nyu.edu) and get the word out that you are looking for an apartment. Perhaps one of us is moving out.
3. One final technique is to put up signs in the neighborhoods where you are interested in living. Describe what you are looking for and leave your email address. If you do choose to do this, it helps to offer a reward for any information that leads to you signing a lease (\$100 is good incentive for people and it's a lot less than you would be paying a broker).

While you're doing these things, you should search the apartment classifieds in the Village Voice, the New York Times and Loot, preferably online, as the listings are released online before the paper hits the newsstands, and everybody else who is looking for an apartment is going to look online to try and get them first. The Village Voice listings (<http://www.villagevoice.com>) are released on the web site on Tuesdays at 1pm (the paper is released Tuesday evening and is free). The New York Times apartment classifieds are published in the Sunday paper. You can get that on the web (<http://www.nytimes.com>) the night before. Loot listings are continuously updated on the web at (<http://www.loot.com>), and you might also check out CraigsList

(<http://newyork.craigslist.org/>) One important thing to keep in mind is that many of the listings will actually be through brokers, and that will cost you up to 15% of your years rent. Try to weed through and find which ones aren't through brokers (typically they say NO FEE). Another possibility is apartment-hunting services which have databases and charge you a fee to use them. While they may charge up to \$200 up front, if they are state licensed then they have to return all but \$15 to you if they don't find you an apartment. Be careful and ask if this is the case beforehand.

If you are looking to share an apartment (making housing much more affordable) and you don't have someone in mind, the NYU off-campus housing office is a great resource. You can access them on the web via your NYUHome account – just login and then select the “Research” option (top right hand corner of the page). The office is located in Washington Square Village, on the corner of Mercer and Bleecker. You can only get in with a valid student ID. Apartments listed on the computer database are mostly shares, but sometimes sublets. Once again try emailing people you know and us at CNS as it is usually better to live with someone you know than someone you don't (or at least less of a gamble).

Some of the cheapest areas to find apartments are Astoria (Queens), Fort Greene/Clinton Hill, Williamsburg and Greenpoint (Brooklyn), Jersey City (New Jersey), and Washington Heights and Inwood which are the north-most areas of Manhattan. One thing to consider about living at the top of Manhattan is that it will actually take you quite a bit longer to get to school than if you lived in parts of Brooklyn, Queens or New Jersey. Living on the Island (Manhattan) is preferred by most, but we would recommend that you should seriously consider Brooklyn. Rents are cheaper in many places, or you get more space for your money. You're quite close to school, and it is a popular place to live for students and over young people in the city. It is also closer to school than living above 72nd street in Manhattan and the commute takes less time.

Looking for an apartment in this city is hard work. Leave yourself time to do this as your full-time job for a few weeks. You may luck out early, and you may not. Regardless, you'll see the best and worst this city has to offer. If you go through a broker, make sure that they show you only those apartments with the amenities you're looking for (separate kitchen, full size refrigerator, private bathroom, sunlight, number of “real” bedrooms you prefer, etc.). This will save you time. You won't believe the things they try to show you<sup>2</sup>. Many brokers

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<sup>2</sup> One of us followed up a listing for a “loft apartment” in the east village and found four NYU undergrads offering the top bunk of a bunkbed.

won't let you sign a lease without someone signing as guarantor (in case you flake out of your lease, that person is held financially responsible). Supposedly, you must make 40 times your monthly rent per year to avoid needing a guarantor - that's usually somewhere between \$40,000-\$50,000 year for the kinds of apartments most of us look for. The guarantor must be financially stable, and usually must live in the tri-state area (New York, New Jersey, or Connecticut). NYU now offers a guarantee program for MacCracken Fellow (us) that is worth looking into.

A word on the language in the Voice ads and the NY Times: don't expect consistency. It seems that realtors/brokers get thousands of dollars per apartment, but they won't pay the extra 50 cents to clarify their abbreviations. "Rent Stabilized" means that as long as the rent is less than \$2000/month, the rent on your apartment can only go up a set percentage every year (usually 24%). Buildings that aren't rent stabilized can go up hundreds of dollars/month every time you resign the lease. W/D means, of course, washer and dryer, D/W means dishwasher (a rare find in NYC apartments!), and if it just contains the number of rooms, it counts the kitchen, but not the bathroom (i.e., a 2 room apartment has a kitchen/living room and a bedroom; a 2 1/2 rm apt. has a slightly separate kitchen living room and a bedroom, etc.). How much you're willing to pay for an apartment is obviously up to you. On your own, you'll have a hard time paying less than \$850/month for a studio, and \$1400/month for a 1 bedroom in Manhattan (unless you look in Inwood or Wash. Heights). This doesn't mean it's impossible. If you choose to take a 2-3 bedroom apartment, it's easy to list in the off-campus housing office at NYU, and find roommates. Look into sharing an apartment - it's often a good way to start out.

### Eat, Drink, Dance, Play, Shop...

This list was generated by inputs from many people regarding their favorite eating places, watering holes and stores. Be sure to explore your own neighborhood as well. You never know what you'll find and you'll learn what to avoid.

Before we start to list specific places that we (and the other CNS students) like, here are some useful online resources:

[www.villagevoice.com](http://www.villagevoice.com): The Village Voice is New York's best free newspaper for finding out what's going on in the city. The on-line version is a great place to see what's on.

zagat.com: You can find all the restaurants in Zagat on citysearch, but the search engine is a bit different and you can sort your results by things like food quality and cost.

newyork.citysearch.com: Citysearch used to be sidewalk.com before Microsoft got involved. It used to be better, but it's still a great site to find movie listings, restaurants - with Zagat reviews, and events.

yp.yahoo.com: The Yahoo! Yellow Pages are a great way to find a store or shop that you are looking for. The site allows you to specify a location, like the address of the Meyer Building, and will sort your search results by distance. So if you want to find the nearest bike shop, enter your location, do a search for bike, and voila! 4 bike shops within 1/2 of a mile.

freshdirect.com: Is an on-line store that delivers groceries to your door - highly recommended by some in this department. *Not* recommended if you like to handpick your fruits and veges.

## Food and Drink

Mama's Home Cooking (3rd St at B) - Delicious home cooking! Fried chicken, meatloaf, salmon, mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, collard greens, grilled squash. YOU absolutely *must* try this place.

Power Juice Bar (on Waverly) - they use real strawberries, blueberries, peaches and raspberries.

Pizza Mercato (Mercer and Waverly) has the famous (or infamous) two-slices-of-plain-and-a-medium-drink for \$3 deal.

Lombardi's – Spring street between Mulberry and Mott. If you haven't noshed on pizza here, then, well, you are missing something.

A Salt & Battery - 80 Second Ave Between 4th and 5th Sts. (East Village) 212-254-6610. Subway Stops: F, V to Second Ave.; 6 to Bleecker St.

112 Greenwich Ave. Between 12th and 13th Sts. (West Village) Subway Stops: A, C, E to 14th St.; L to Eighth Ave. Fish and chips. Dishes sample: Cod with chips (\$11.36), mushy peas (\$2.50), pickled onions (\$.75), Heinz baked beans (\$3), deep-fried Mars bar (\$2.25).

Acme Bar & Grill 9 Great Jones St. (bet. B'way & Lafayette St.) New York (212) 420-1934. Cajun food.

Café Frida 368 Columbus Ave. (bet. 77th & 78th Sts.) New York (212)-712-2929. Mexican food, really good but expensive.

Café Habana 17 Prince St. (Elizabeth St.) New York (212) 625-2001 Amazing Mexican tortas, grilled corn = delicacy. Cheap.

Café Mogador 101 St. Marks Pl. (bet. Ave. A & 1st Ave.) New York (212)-677-2226. Moroccan/French, very very good and inexpensive.

Mitali East 334 E. 6th St. New York, NY 10003 (212) 5332508 Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi - probably the best breads in this city – if not the country. Try their nan with a single curry – don't mix and match.

Saigon Grill 620 Amsterdam Ave, New York 10024 (212) 875-9072 Vietnamese, amazing and cheap.

Bereket 187 E. Houston St. (Orchard St.) New York (212) 475-7700 Turkish fast food. 24 hrs. Really tasty.

GRIMALDI'S 19 Old Fulton St. (bet. Front & Water Sts.) Brooklyn (718)-858-4300

Dojo (E. 4th between Broadway and Greene and St. Marks between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) - CHEAP!!! Good for vegetarians and omnivores.

Emerald Planet (E. 3rd and Broadway) - wraps and smoothies. Recommended.

Two Boots (5 locations, the one closest to school is at Bleecker and Broadway) - expensive for pizza, but there's nothing quite as good. Exotic toppings like crayfish and andouillet sausage, crunch cornmeal crust, and spicy tomato sauce if you want.

Falafel and more – West 4<sup>th</sup> street just east of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Excellent falafel (they make it fresh) and kebbeh rolls.

Mamoun's Falafel (119 MacDougal) - cheap, good, and open until 4a.m. Middle Eastern take-out food.

Barrow Street Ale House (on Barrow St., around the corner from Tio Pepe) - good bar, game room with pool table in the basement.

KGB Bar (East 4th St at 2nd Ave upstairs) - A great dive bar any night of the week. Also the scene for readings (poetry/literature).

Kush (Orchard south of Houston) - This bar has a middle eastern theme. They have bellydancing on Tuesdays and it's the only place we know to go smoke a hookah. It is very cramped though and somewhat pretentious.

Double Happiness (Mott at Broome) Very Cool Bar To People Watch In.

To satisfy the craving for good, hearty, Eastern European food: (the prices drop as you go east, as does the ambience, but check them all out).

Odessa - Ave. A between 7th and St. Marks. Has two sections – one that is supposed to be food only (though they have a bar hidden away somewhere) and the other that is mainly a bar but has a full food menu.

Veselka - 2nd Ave. and 9th St. Great for weekend brunch. Open 24 Hours.

Kiev - 2nd Ave. and 7th St.

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Below is a list of places recommended in a previous edition of this guide. We have not checked to see if they exist anymore – most of them probably do. Check before you go.

East Village - East of Bowery, between Houston and 14th St.

Acme, under Acme (Great Jones between Broadway and Lafayette) - Greasy Cajun food upstairs, live music downstairs.

E 4th St (East 4th St at 2nd Ave) - great burgers and chili.

7A (7th St. and Ave A) - good burgers, tremendous spicy fries, also pasta, salads and sandwiches.

Boca Chica (1st Ave and 1st St.) - South American food and music, lively atmosphere, good drinks.

Cherry Tavern (6th St. between 1st and A) - doesn't it make you want to play the slot machines?

Cloister Cafe (9th St. between 2nd and 3rd Ave.) – beautiful garden, great for coffee and dessert (not for dinner), especially late at night (open until 3 am)

Detour (13th St. at 1st Ave) - Free Jazz!!!! Voted one of the best places to hear free music.

Elephant (1st St near 1st Ave) - Excellent Thai/pan asian. A bit pricey. Good date place. Make a reservation or be prepared to wait.

Flea Market (Ave A near 8th) - Good cheap French food.

Frank (2nd Ave at 5th) - Good cheap Italian food.

Guernica (Ave B at 3rd) Bar upstairs, dance downstairs, DJ's every night.

Gyu-ya (Stuyvesant between 3rd and 2nd, upstairs) - Japanese non-sushi in the front, Korean bbq in back for the meat eaters.

Haveli (2nd Ave and 6th St.) - although 6th street is lined with Indian restaurants, the best of the bunch, by far, is this one on 2nd Ave.

The Holiday, St. Mark's Ale House (St. Marks between 2nd and 3rd Ave.) - two good places to drink. All drinks at the Holiday are the same price (and dirt cheap). The Ale house has an extensive beer menu and during happy hour (weekdays 5-7), pints are \$2!

Holy Basil (2nd Ave between St. Marks and 9th St.) - very good Thai, \$10 to \$15.

Il Bagatto (2nd St between A and B) - Good cheap Italian food.

McSorley's (7th St. between 2nd and 3rd) - One of the oldest bars in the city, there's sawdust on the ground and they serve only two kinds of beer: dark and light. Packed on the weekends, but great during the week.

O.G. (6th St. between A and B) Really good pan-Asian for a good price.

Penang (Spring St. between Greene and Mercer, 3rd Ave. and 11<sup>th</sup> St.) - try some Malaysian food today! (the one on 3rd Ave. has a great lunch special)

Second Avenue Deli (2nd avenue and 10th st.) - one of the great NY delis. A little pricey for a student budget. Picks: matzah ball soup, (mushroom barley rocks, says Hannah), corned beef, and chocolate babka.

St. Dymphna's (St. Mark's Pl. between 1st and A) - Great food. Shepherd's Pie, Beef Stew, etc.

Stingy Lulu's (St. Mark's Pl. at Ave A) - Funky fun bar/resto. Transvestite staff are always a blast.

Yaffa Cafe (St. Marks between 1st and A) - a cool East Village hangout.  
Teresa's - 1st Ave. between 6th and 7th Sts.

“Central” Village - Between 6th Ave and Bowery/Houston and 14th - and a few places in nearby SOHO for good measure. These are places closest to 4 Washington Place.

Shima (on Waverly just west of Mercer) - great mushroom soup.

Kelly and Ping (Greene, just south of Houston) Excellent soups and cold sesame noodles.

Great Jones Diner (Great Jones and Lafayette) - for when you need a burger and a milkshake.

Eddies' (Waverly between Mercer and Greene) – great burger selection and hearty helpings of fries.

Fez (Lafayette between 4th St. and Great Jones) - inside/under the Time Cafe, great atmosphere (you can sit on cushions around a low table) neat desserts from upstairs, and live music.

Coffee master (E. 4th and Broadway) - salads and espresso drinks.

Coffee cuisine (Laguardia just south of Bleeker—next to Citibank) - Excellent Havarti dill sandwiches in both small (\$1.95!) and large sizes. Tons of tasty muffins.

Pluck-U (Laguardia, across from Citibank) - good chicken wings (all spiciness levels)

Harry's Burritos AND Reality Sandwiches (corner of W. 3rd and Thompson Sts.)- Cal-Mex cuisine, very vegetarian-friendly, with excellent burritos (\$5-\$6.25) and fresh salsa. Recently merged with Reality Sandwiches to offer their unusual sandwich fare at this location. Also a good lunch special for around \$6 which includes soup or a generous portion of chips and salsa!

VP2 (Vegetarian's Paradise 2 and the VP2 Dim Sum bar (both on W. 4th St. between MacDougal and Sixth Ave.) - prices are \$5-12 for most entrees. Totally vegan Chinese cuisine, in which traditional favorite meat, chicken, and seafood dishes are created in entirely vegetarian ways. Good brunch deal dumplings or (egg roll, brown or white rice, soup, entree) on the weekend, and similar lunch special weekdays.

Le Gamin (MacDougal between Houston and Prince) - cute little French cafe, great crepes (both sweet and savory), and usually a cute waiter with an accent that will make you melt.

### West Village

Though it's a tad pricey for meals, it might be fun to go to Jekyll & Hyde (7th Avenue at 9th St.) - it's sort of like eating in Disneyworld, but it can be fun. Pub food. All-you-can-drink brunches for \$9 on Sundays, and interesting atmosphere!

Tio Pepe (W. 4th just west of 6th Ave.) - moderately priced Mexican where they treat you well. Good sangria.

Greenwich Brewery (6th Ave. and 9th St.) - a preppy little bar with lots of dark wood on the walls and furniture. It's got a fairly extensive menu (for a bar, anyway) of personal pizzas and basic appetizers, etc.

Taste of Tokyo (13th St. between 5th and 6th Aves.) - good, relatively inexpensive Japanese.

Cucina della Fontana (Bleeker and Charles) – enclosed garden, great dinner specials before 7pm.

Grey Dog (33 Carmine St. near Bleecker) - A great place to go for brunch or for coffee.

### Lower East Side

There are a ton of amazing places to go in the lower east side. Just walk between Houston and Delancy on Orchard and Ludlow and you will find lots of good stuff. Here's a selection:

Baby Jupiter (Corner of Stanton and Orchard) - Good food, good drinks, and good ambience.

Baramundi - Beautiful garden in the back, but be warned - it is a quiet zone, so go with a special someone instead of a large group.

Tonic (Norfolk near Rivington) - Great place to hear interesting music - jazz, electronica, klezmer. Voted one of the best Jazz Clubs of 2000.

### Elsewhere

Practically every neighborhood in the city is packed with restaurants, and exploring them is fun. For example, check out the restaurants in Koreatown (32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> east of Broadway) and Chinatown (south of Canal around Mott street) if you're in the mood for some gastronomic exploration.

Fanelli's - Good Italian/pub food and great bar in a great historic (in the sense of "really old bar") setting. Featured in various movies including "State of Grace" John Turturro, Gary Oldman, and Sean Penn).

Pongsri (on 18th St. and 2nd Ave.) – Thai.

Kavehaz (123 Mercer) - a rather large coffee house with good (read: very chocolate) desserts. They have free music (usually jazz) on the weekends.

Jing Fong Restaurant (20 Elizabeth St.-- Canal Street and Elizabeth Center) - an excellent place to get dim sum.

The Chelsea Grill (8th Ave. between 15th and 16th Sts.) - a great Italian restaurant with a slightly Californian touch. (Almost all the wines on their wine list are actually from Italy, though.) Erica highly recommends the gnocchi.

California Pizza Kitchen (201 E 60th St.) - a fantastic import from the Sunshine state. They have every conceivable variety of pizza, and if you thought of one they didn't have they would probably put it on the menu. They also have a "pizza guarantee" such that if you order a pizza and don't like it, they will replace it with your favorite, at no extra charge. They have California wines on their wine list. Their deserts are decadently delicious (Erica loves their apple crisp). They also have various semi-California-ized Italian dishes for those diners who don't want pizza, all excellent.

Where to go for...

Produce, meats, etc.

The Farmers' Market at Union Square (14th to 16th St. between Broadway and University Place) is the best place to get good produce, cheap (in season only). Farmers from upstate sell produce directly from the fields to you on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. If you are looking for out-of-season stuff, then you are stuck with the expensive (but also really really good) places like Dean and DeLuca on Broadway north of Spring Street or Balducci's on 6th Ave. and 9th St. Alas, cest la vie.

For steaks and any other kind of meat, the Western Beef all-purpose grocery store on 14th street just west of 9<sup>th</sup> Ave., on the fringe of the meat-packing district. The cuts on the shelves sometimes don't look all that great, but you can go up to the counter in the back and have them cut up some new pieces for you right in front of your eyes. And the price is cheap cheap cheap! (An editor of the previous version of this Guide fed four people about a pound of beef apiece, and it only cost \$12 total). The rest of the store isn't bad, either.

For fish, baked goodies, vegetables and fruit and just about anything else you heart desires, we recommend Chinatown. This starts seriously at Broadway and Canal street, though there are excellent stores well north of Broadway. It extends west to Church street and east to Bowery. There are clothing stores, shoe stores, jewelry stores, grocery stores, random junk stores, occasional CD stores, and really cool bakeries. If you need art supplies to pursue that creative urge – Pearl Paint (also see below) has five floors of material. And pretty much all the restaurants are good (they pretty much have to be, since there are about six of them on every block). Keep in mind that Chinatown is best approached when you have plenty of time to be distracted. Also be warned that the weekend crowds are ridiculous. Keep in mind that all of this city is a tourist

attraction and the promise of cheap everything on Canal street draws ‘em in like nothing else.

Gourmet Garage - Greene St and Broome St. - Relatively cheap, very high quality food.

### Art and office supplies

If you want art supplies for any reason (like Neuroscience posters) Pearl Paint is the place to go (308 Canal St.). Great deals, and also fun to just browse.

Kate's Paperie (561 Broadway) - is a fascinating, although expensive, paper store (that came in handy for one editor last year when putting together an ARVO poster).

Staples – convenient for office supplies: 40th St. and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. is the main store, but there is a smaller outlet about four blocks south of campus on Broadway.

Office Depot - Broadway between 3rd and 4th St. This store is disgustingly close to NYU. It's a 3 story monster that carries computer supplies to furniture.

### Books

Used: The Strand - at Broadway and 12th Street. Huge! The only drawback is the staff – kids who don't hesitate to yell clear across the store – or carry on a conversation – loudly.

New: Barnes and Noble sale annex - at 18th St. and 5th Ave., both sides of the street. They also sell somewhat discounted textbooks there, although they may not always have the ones you want.

Used: Academy Book Store - 10 W. 18th St. Also has used CDs and tapes (mostly classical and jazz).

Used: Bleeker Street Books - 250 Bleeker St.

Used: Soho Books - 351 W. Broadway between Broome and Grand.

And of course – amazon.com for pretty good deals.

## Music and Electronics

Circuit City on Union Square has a wide selection of basic electronic items – TV’s, DVD players and portable audio, amps and speakers and essential accessory items like cables and blank media. Also has the occasional great deal on movies and music. Has a decent selection of monitors but not computers.

J&R Music World at 23 Park Row (down by city hall). They sell everything, and cheap: CDs, movies, TVs, VCRs, computers, large appliances, small appliances, and probably kitchen sinks.

NYU computer store – probably the best place to buy your Mac. It has student pricing on most items so is worth including in your comparison list.

Tower Records Clearance Outlet. The regular Tower Records is on West 3rd and Broadway. The Outlet is on the other side of the same building. They sell new, overstocked (and “cut-out”) CDs, and also movies.

Virgin Megastore on Union Square – HUGE – and has live DJ music.

Disc-o-rama is a decent used CD store. They have one location on Union Square East, and another on west 4th street between 6th ave and MacDougal.

There is a good used CD store on the north side of Saint Marks Place between 2nd and 3rd Ave.

## Flea markets<sup>3</sup> and street fairs

Broadway flea market, every weekend day throughout the year at Broadway and Grand street downtown.

Street fairs occur throughout the summer; locations are usually announced on the back page of the Village Voice.

Chinatown Phoenix Mall: 277 Canal/428 Broadway. Go THROUGH the stores at either of these locations, and you will find a “huge bazaar of booths” (to quote “Mr. Cheap”; see “Entertainment listings” below) selling just about everything.

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<sup>3</sup> As in “Buy one get one flea”.

## Clothes and personal supplies

There are a large number of discount clothing stores/outlets on 14<sup>th</sup> St. between 5th and 7th Ave.

There is no sales tax on clothing in NJ, so a good place to go to shop is the Newport Mall (located right at the PATH train stop at Pavonia-Newport). A huge mall, if you're into that kind of thing. Movies are ever-so-slightly cheaper at the movie theater there, too.

For personal supplies – a relatively cheap all-purpose store is the K-Mart at Broadway and 8th St. – the door is actually on the Lafayette side of the building. Others include the Pasteur Pharmacy near 8th street and Broadway, University Pharmacy on W. 3rd St. directly south of the CNS building (they accept NYU insurance for prescriptions). There is a Duane Reade on Broadway and 8<sup>th</sup> (next to the Sbarro's pizza) and one on West 4<sup>th</sup> between Broadway and Mercer (right behind CNS really).

## Hair

Astor Place Hair is cheap. Ask for Ann Marie or Josephine or take your chances with someone else. (Perhaps this section is so short because most graduate students we know go without thinking about their hair until they can no longer see).

## Booze

Be warned – liquor stores are *closed on Sundays*.

Astor Wines and Spirits - on Astor Place right beside Barnes and Noble. Huge! And whenever I have been there their salespeople have been really helpful in picking out decent wines, etc. They have many pretty good wines for about \$15 and under.

Warehouse Wines and Spirits - on Broadway across from Barnes and Noble is also really big and has a pretty good selection.

## Sporting goods

Paragon Sporting Goods - Broadway and 18th St. Their everyday prices are competitive, and they have really good sales on a fairly regular basis. They have EVERYTHING.

squashgear.com - probably the best resource for squash gear.

## Entertainment

Here are some of the things recommended in a student poll:

### Clubs

Webster Hall (10th St. between 4th and 3rd Ave.) has a discount pass on the internet. The passes used to get you free admission, but now I think they just get you a semi-substantial discount (like, it's \$15 to get in on weekends). But if you send them your name via the Internet, they might send you other discount-type stuff in the mail; for instance they sent one editor a pair of \$5 admission passes for Thursday nights (the night when all the New Yorkers go to clubs, supposedly, when you won't see so many tourists there).

There are a bunch of smaller, cheaper clubs in the meat-packing district (i.e. between 9th and 11th Ave. on 14th St. and a couple streets up, too).

We have been told that there are "party boats" that cruise the rivers starting from the South Street Seaport, that have dance-floors and bars on them, etc. I don't know how much they cost, but a night of dancing/drinking with friends on a boat on the Hudson might be worth checking out, regardless of cost. Take the 2, 3, 4, 5, J, M, or Z train to Fulton street, and go to the Pier 16 ticket booth.

## Art galleries, theaters, musical performances, museums

Leekan Designs, Inc. at 93 Mercer St. is a funky Asian art boutique. Some of the stuff is affordable. I spent about an hour just browsing. There are a bunch of galleries on and near Spring street, many featuring bizarre contemporary art, sculpture, etc. Admission is usually free. It's a cool day trip just to go and browse the galleries acting like you are a big art collector.

Artist's Space - 223 W. Broadway (TriBeCa). Multimedia art and performance art.

Fashion Institute of Technology - 27th St. at 7th Ave. Free admission to galleries showcasing clothing from various designers, as well as theater costumes.

The Julliard School - 144 W. 66th St. (769-7406). Music, dancing, acting. Many performances are cheap or free. Call and ask to be put on the mailing list to receive event listings.

NYU graduate acting program - the next building up from CNS on Broadway. Their plays are FANTASTIC. They have a mailing list, too. They put on several plays, four or five times a year. Plays by the 3rd year students are \ \$3 for students, and plays by the 2nd and 1<sup>st</sup> year classes are free.

There are free concerts every Tuesday 12-1p.m. at Trinity Church across from Wall Street. St. Paul's Chapel (Fulton Street and Broadway, 602-0747) also give free lunch-time concerts every Monday and Thursday.

The Blue Note - (131 W. 3rd St.) has discounts for people who want to listen to jam sessions between 2-4a.m. Also check out their weekend brunches (\$14.50 per person, between noon and 6p.m.).

Chicago Blues - on 8th and Greenwich Ave., occasionally has no-cover Tuesdays.

Small's (W. 10th St. at 7th Ave.) is a good place to go for decent jazz. The cover price is only \$10, and there are two bands every night, starting at 10:00 p.m. and ending at 6:00 a.m. There is no bar, though (hence the low cover price, I guess) and there are signs all over the place that say "no alcoholic beverages," but we don't think the proprietors care. (people bring in entire grocery bags full of liquor and no one objects).

A series of free movies happens every summer in Bryant park at 42<sup>nd</sup> St. between 5th and 6th Ave. Free live performances also happen here. Call 983-4143 for information.

Every summer there is a free theater series in Central Park. Near Central Park West and 81st St. (598-7100). It helps to know someone in parks services to get tickets to the really hot shows. There's also a bunch of other stuff to do and see in Central Park, like the roller-blading rink, and a carousel, etc.

When it's warm out, there are free performances every weekday afternoon at the north end of Union Square. Call 614-2404 for information.

The Ellis Island Museum is fascinating. And the admission is just the price of the ferry ticket (\$7 for adults the last time one of us went). There are many exhibits, both traveling and permanent, and a variety of free shows and films.

MoMA has a pay-what-you-wish night every Thursday from 5-9 p.m. Don't be embarrassed to pay a dollar or less. Several other museums, including the Jewish Museum, have pay-what-you-wish nights, too, so call before you go. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Natural History are always pay-what-you-wish.

There are two botanical gardens in NYC: the New York Botanical Garden at Southern Blvd. and 200th street in the Bronx (718-220-8700) and the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens at 100 Wash. Ave., Crown Heights, Brooklyn (718-622-4433).

In the winter, you can go ice-skating in the Wollman rink in Prospect Park in Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-788-0055). Admission is on the order of \$3. More expensive roller (summer) and ice (winter) skating can be had in the Wollman memorial rink in Central Park in Manhattan (the admission price is about twice that of the rink in Prospect Park).

There are at least two billiard clubs near campus. One is at 4th Ave. and 10th St., right across from the post office, and one is on 12<sup>th</sup> St. between 5th and 6th Ave. The price for the 4th Ave. one is roughly \$10 an hour; I don't know how much the other one costs.

Chelsea Piers (18th St. along the Hudson) is a really cool place to go for anything athletic. They have ice-hockey rinks, an outdoor roller-blading rink

and a place to rent blades, gymnastics rooms and classes, and just about everything else. It's not cheap, but as NYU students we can get some discounts through Coles gym. Call Coles gym for more information.

Discounted theater tickets: At the ticket booth in the 1st floor of Loeb, they sell half-price movie tickets (for most major theaters in the area, including the Angelika, which is a great art-flick theater) and discounted Broadway and off-Broadway theater tickets. (Note, however, that their selection of Broadway tickets is pretty limited, and they won't always have everything you want.) Also, the Theater Development Fund sells half-price tickets (cash only) in Duffy Square (47th St. and Broadway) the day of the performance. There is also a booth in the World Trade Center which is open during the week, and has shorter lines, but sometimes the selection is not as good. If you want cheap tickets for "Rent" or "Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk," you can get them by standing in line at the theater on the day of the performance (call the theater for details, including how early to get in line). Also, at Lincoln Center they sell standing-room tickets for their various theater and musical performances

The Bronx Zoo and The Central Park Zoo - are really great places to visit for an afternoon or for a short getaway.

The New York Botanical Gardens are right next to the Bronx Zoo and also make for a wonderfully relaxing escape from NYC. The Brooklyn Botanical Gardens} are closer to the Center and also a good year-round treat.

### Entertainment listings

The easiest place to look (of course) is on the web. There are online listings (and info about clubs, shows, museums, restaurants, etc., etc.) for example, on the village voice ([villagevoice.com/](http://villagevoice.com/)), Sidewalk New York ([newyork.sidewalk.com](http://newyork.sidewalk.com)), Citysearch ([newyork.citysearch.com](http://newyork.citysearch.com)). In print:

The Village Voice (which comes out on Tuesday nights every week and can be found at most newsstands and many local stores) has a comprehensive entertainment listing.

Time Out New York - comes in both guide-book and weekly-magazine form. The weekly magazine has great entertainment listings that emphasize cheaper stuff. They also have restaurant reviews, etc.

The New Yorker weekly magazine also has an in-depth entertainment listing, though they tend not to emphasize the cheap stuff as much.

Mr. Cheap's New York is a book by Mark Waldstein, which lists everything cheap, that exists in New York. A very cool book, highly recommended. You can get it at most Barnes and Noble stores.

### **Life's other necessities**

#### Banking

The local banks in the area are Chase and Citibank, which are corporate and expensive, but also reliable and pervasive. Republic is another banking option with the bonus of being only steps from the paycheck office.

#### Health care

As you probably know by now, we belong to one of the few luckiest graduate departments in the country and our healthcare is totally provided for. We are automatically enrolled in NYU's Comprehensive Health Plan as well as the StuDent Dental Plan (see below). This is paid for by CNS. Our experience with the University Health Services has been good. The people there (with maybe one or two exceptions) have been nice, friendly and helpful. Calling up Urgent Care in the middle of the night to ask a question and get some information actually gets useful responses. There are also counseling services (ask around for people who have used this to vouch for their quality). However, based on everything else, we would assume that they would be quite helpful. The general practice doctors are very competent and we have some great specialists. It definitely helps that NYU has its own medical school and hospital. While the insurance does seem to cover all sorts of emergency stuff as well as regular doctors visits, physical therapy if you need it (a really strong department), on site referrals, etc., it doesn't cover some minor things like vaccines for diseases not found in the states. The best thing to do is read the booklet detailing the health plan so that you know where you stand.

University Health Services (UHS) is located on the third and fourth floors of 726 Broadway in the Amalgamated Life Insurance building (appropriately enough, right next to MacDonalds). The general phone number is (212) 443-1000.

<http://www.nyu.edu/nyuhc/>

During the school year, their hours are 8-8 Mon-Fri and 10-6 Sat/Sun (these hours change on holidays). Urgent Care has someone answering the phones at all times. It is best to make an appointment before you go over (even if it's just for later the same day), but they do take walk-ins. If you do just walk in, you should expect to wait a little, but no more than with any other program that handles walk-ins (they will see you as soon as possible). All health issues should first be addressed by UHS. As you get into bigger and more specialized problems, referrals approved by NYU insurance are typically arranged on site.

We know considerably less about the StuDent Dental Plan, and it is harder to find information about. The department also pays for this and it should include a couple of visits a year. From what we understand the dentists are faculty, not students, and thus you're in for a better experience all round. The office is on Lafayette St. Emergency visits are also covered. Once again, the best way to get information on this plan is to read the booklets that they give you. Here's what one of us has to say about StuDent:

“The services provided by the StuDent plan are only a good deal financially if you need serious dental work. But if you only need a good cleaning once a year then the service is mediocre to poor. All the work is done by students, the dentistry faculty swing by at the end to make sure you're still alive. The students are very slow especially when it comes to taking X-rays (they come close to exceeding the yearly exposure limit allowed). The cleaning they provide does not come close to the thorough job that a private practice hygienist does. The StuDent administration has also changed its policies. For my first visit (3-4 years ago) X-rays were not mandatory before a yearly cleaning; today they are. Today it takes 2 visits to do a cleaning because they are very slow taking the X-rays. My X-rays from a year and a half ago are not good enough for a cleaning today. They claim that you could sue them if your teeth fell out during a cleaning. What if we sue them for excessive X-ray exposure?”

Remember, all of this is free for us. If you would prefer to remain with some other insurance plan (i.e. not NYU) then be sure to fill out a waiver form and return it to the NYU Insurance office (not the bursar's office) (212) 443-1020 before the deadline. NYU's default policy is to enroll you in the insurance plan. Finally, another good resource for information on Health Services and other things (with the possible exception of the StuDent Dental plan) is NYU's home page ([www.nyu.edu](http://www.nyu.edu)).

## Sports and recreation

### NYU sponsored programs

There is a wide array of inexpensive and free athletic/recreational things to do through the Coles Center and the Palladium, ranging from Intramural teams to ballroom dancing to running clubs. You just need to know where to start.

<http://www.nyuathletics.com/home/>

There are links (“facilities”) to other sports facilities such as Chelsea Piers (see below). Pick up a copy of the Coles Program Guide at the Coles Center (181 Mercer St. at Bleeker) which will provide you with the seasonal schedules for intramural teams, clubs and tons of recreational activities. If you can't find your activity of choice at NYU, it will likely be offered through Chelsea Piers. NYU students can get a discount on activities registered through NYU recreation program.

Chelsea Piers (212-336-6000): This is a new, huge and slightly expensive sports facility at the west end of 23rd St. NYU provides hourly free shuttle service to and from this facility. This place has almost everything: indoor and outdoor rinks, rock climbing, gymnastics, brewery, sailing, driving range, batting cages etc. Call to get more info. Yes, “brewery” - they make their own beer (which is OK) and have a nice little restaurant on the Hudson. There are also sponsored teams through Chelsea Piers (e.g., indoor soccer, hockey, basketball, etc.).

### City Sponsored Activities and Teams

There are also numerous clubs and teams offered through NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation. I would call them and see what they have going on (360-8111 or 408-0209). There are a million and one things to do in Central Park (some things you'll need to go and explore for yourself), but don't forget the other parks. East River Park (Houston and East River) has baseball fields, track and soccer fields, as well as ball courts. Randall's Island has softball fields and a golf center. Speaking of golf, Van Cortland Park in the Bronx (just a subway ride) has a decent public course, as does Moshulu Park next door.

### Other Clubs and Teams

There are also tons of privately sponsored clubs/teams in NYC. If you're into running, The New York Road Runners club sponsors lots of races, running

groups and events (860-4455). If you're into running and beer drinking/socializing, there are groups for that too (e.g. the Hash House Harriers 427-4692). There are also soccer leagues, baseball/softball leagues, hockey leagues and many others that I don't know about. Also, there are fun teams often sponsored out of bars/pubs, such as dart and pool leagues. Ask around in local places.

### Other Sources of Information

Check anywhere that is sports related. If you can't find a dart league, go to a darts store (ask Damian Stanley or look in phone book). The same applies for any other activity. Or, go to a large sporting goods store (e.g. Paragon Sports on 18th and Broadway) and they can likely point you in the right direction. Places like that also sponsor weekend or day ski trips, hiking trips, SCUBA lessons, etc. Local papers also may list local events and solicit new team members. Phone books can tell you where the closest bowling ball store is, and they will tell you when the next tournament is.

Basically, you can probably find whatever it is you're looking for, you just have to look in the right places. Hopefully, this info will start you in the right direction. And don't be afraid to try new things. For example, joining a low key pool league will also be very social and can open up all sorts of other new things for you to do, even if you've never played seriously before. Have fun!!!!!!

## **International Students**

Please remember, the information in this section is just intended to start you off and as a reminder, there is no substitute for the good advice and support you can get from the OISS (Office for International Students and Scholars) – especially with new rules and regulations in place. They are really great people and you should visit them! Particularly useful when you first arrive are the travel and employment workshops.

<http://www.nyu.edu/osl/oiss/index/index.html>

The Office for International Students and Scholars: 561 Laguardia Place, New York, NY 10012. Their phone number is: (212) 998-4720.

### Passports, Visas and Other Documents

Of course, now that you're here, the most difficult part of sorting out your INS documentation is behind you. There are just a few issues you need to be aware of at this point to ensure you “stay legal”. The best thing to do is to go to the OISS for an orientation. They will want to look over your passport and SEVIS I-20 form. For those of you that have entered from a "non-contiguous" territory (i.e. not Canada, South America or the Caribbean), the first step is to ensure that your entry was processed correctly.

When you went through customs, your passport was stamped somewhere near your visa. Above the line through the middle of this stamp should read F1 (the type of visa you are entering under) and below the line should read D/S, which stands for duration of stay. The same stamp and endorsement will be on your SEVIS I-20 form. If your stamp is endorsed with something else, you should go and see OISS.

### Travelling outside the US while you are on an F1 Visa

No matter where you are going, if you plan to leave the US you **MUST** get a signature of consent on your SEVIS I-20 form. This is done at the OISS office and during travel workshops. Each signature is dated and is valid for only 1 year, so you must go and get the form signed again each year. (You only have to take the workshop the first time).

As you passed through customs, you filled out an I-94 entry card (white card). The bottom of this card was returned to you (probably stapled into your

passport). The number on the top left of this card is your entry number for **THE WHOLE TIME YOU ARE ON YOUR F1 VISA**. Keep a note of this number. It should be written on your SEVIS I-20 at the top of page one.

If you want to travel to a contiguous territory (Caribbean, Canada, South America) you **DO NOT RELINQUISH** this card and you don't fill out a new card when you re-enter the States. Your passport will not be re-stamped on re-entry.

When you travel to non-contiguous territories, you must make sure that they take this card from you as you pass through customs on your way out of America. When you return, you'll be given a new I-94 card to fill out. You should cross out the entry number on this card and write your original entry number in its place. Again, make sure that your passport is stamped and endorsed F1, D/S.

### Getting a social security number (SSN)

You will want to have one of these. It makes renting apartments, opening bank accounts and getting credit cards much easier. Unfortunately, the US Government has changed its policy recently, trying to cut down on the number of SSNs they give out. When you apply, they will want to see your passport, and when they see the F1 visa, they may refuse to accept the application.

But, there is a way around this! OISS know about this problem. You should go to one of their employment workshops (even though you probably won't be looking for work while you're here). At the workshop, they will give you a letter stating that, under your F1 visa, you are entitled to obtain on-campus employment (which is true). The letter will also say that you are not able to access the NYU job listing service without a valid SSN.

If you take this letter with you when you apply for an SSN, your application will be accepted. To make things really smooth, go to the Social Security office on 59th St, they're really good about this issue and won't give you any trouble.

The following website has the details of the application process and points to the loophole that will allow you to get your card. It also outlines the kinds of documentation you will need to take with you when you apply.

<http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10096.html>

When you have an SSN, you are expected to report it to NYU and use it in place of the 991-xx-xxxx format identification number you were given when you applied. After a year – you will probably know this number as well as your birthdate – as it is your Albert login and the number you need to punch to access some of the swipe access areas.

## Taxation

Do go and see Jose Orjeula (212) 998-2982. People have had mixed experiences with his interpersonal style, but he knows international tax treaties and will help you make sure you understand your tax obligations and will help you fill out the forms that will determine how the university handles your pay check.

You should also take the time to get a copy of the tax treaty between your home country and the US, read it and make sure you understand your obligations. The IRS document that covers international tax treaties is called 'Publication 901' and is located at:

<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p901.pdf>

If you are required to pay federal taxes in the US you will find that, unlike many of the local students, you will have federal taxes taken out of your pay check each month. So don't be surprised when the amount is smaller than most of your classmates are getting. They have to put the same amount aside at some point and manage payment to the government themselves. It is kind of handy that the university takes care of this for you.

However, STATE AND CITY TAXES ARE NOT TAKEN OUT AUTOMATICALLY. If you pay federal tax, you probably have to pay state also, you will need to take care of this yourself. You have the same options of paying as you go or risking a fine as the other students do.

Tax returns have to be submitted by April 15th each year. Use the OISS web site to help you prepare your tax return. Their information is good and you will probably be able to complete your return for yourself, given a little time to wade through some rather odd and paper-intensive procedures!

## Additional Housing Advice

If at all possible, plan to go into a share arrangement when you first arrive in New York (of course, this may be difficult if you have brought a family with you). There are a number of reasons for wanting to share with others rather than trying to go out and sign a lease in your own name. You'll meet people!! This is a good thing. Your first year here could be tough at times, you are very likely to experience at least a little culture shock. Even Americans from other parts of the country find moving to NY tough!! Renting a place will be difficult when you have no credit record in this country. All landlords and brokers will ask you for your SSN, so they can check your credit. Paradoxically, no credit can be worse here than bad credit!! Many won't even consider you if they can't get a credit report on you. If they do consider and accept you, they will undoubtedly want a local (usually within NY state) guarantor who must have an income of 75 to 150 times the monthly rent you want to pay (figure it out, that can be quite a LOT of money!!) and an unusually large upfront payment of rent and/or security. Shares won't ask for any of this, in most cases. It's cheaper!!!

## General thoughts...

Settling into NYC may be tough at times. This is true even for many American students - so it is doubly true for those of us a long way from home, in an unfamiliar culture. The culture shock will come, in different forms for different people, and it will pass - the worst will probably be over by the end of your first year.

If you are from a very different cultural background and are feeling a little confused and lost, you should definitely go check out some of the courses at the OISS. They run classes on finding food and cooking, NY culture and customs, shopping, dating and all sorts of other good stuff. They also have support groups for students and their partners and cool cheap outings to get you started enjoying local activities (museums, jazz clubs, baseball games to name a few). And don't forget that there are lots of us already here, if you're stuck, confused, lonely or whatever - come say hi!

## OISS Newsletter

When you first visit the OISS they will take your email address and put you on their newsletter mailing list. This is a useful thing to read, at least in the first few months after you arrive. It comes out weekly and has a question and answer section, along with notices about upcoming activities and workshops.

This is an update of the Student Guide that originated many years ago in a grad-office high in the Meyer Building. (This update 6 February 2004. Previous update: 20 September 2000).

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