By ERIKA PRAFDER

THIS summer, rather than working on your tan, why not work on your college and career plans? Taking a precollege course as a middle or high school student can be an enriching and valuable endeavor, says Debbie Bester, senior director of marketing and communications for Hofstra University’s continuing education department. It’s a great opportunity for teens to meet teens from other areas and bond, experience life on a college campus and stand out on your application when you apply to college. These are experiences you can write about in your college essay,” says Bester.

About 70 class offerings are currently available through Hofstra’s precollege programming, including digital photography, precollege law, institute, culinary arts, criminal justice, and film, each with a unique benefit for students. “With so many kids today are losing the art of communication,” says Scott Baker, who teaches the film program. “When you know how to communicate, you have a leg up over those who are only interacting on Facebook and through texts.”

When Baker first taught that class, “I thought it would be performances who were my students, but they weren’t. They are high schoolers, college students, attorneys, and people, customer service representatives and tech geeks who don’t know how to talk to people — we help them out of their shell,” says Baker.

Listening skills are highlighted in Baker’s class. “It’s great to get your point across, but by listening and asking questions, you’ll get another point’s view,” he says. Learning to listen and think about the conversation and be more flexible are key components of his course. On a college interview, “if you’re going to just give ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ answers, admissions folks aren’t learning anything about you. You have to be able to have conversations and convince these people that you’re an asset to their school,” says Baker.

When applying for internships or jobs, “What are you going to do that shows something different from your resume? How can you use your GPA to show the colleges to see what you can do?” he asks.

For more information log on to hofstra.edu/academics/CE/pre_college_classes.long_island.courses.html

CLASS ACTION

Collect credits at these NY schools

■ Starting May 2014, and registering with the arrival of Dr. Lauren Mouny, vice president of enrollment management and student success at Adelphi University, the school’s precollege classes will undergo a major change — for all 2014 summer programs, students will be able to receive transferable college credit. "It’s more attractive, but intense," students come in with a cohort and live together in the dorms. Each class is two weeks in duration," says Mouny.

High school juniors and seniors must submit a transcript, essay and reference letter.

"Precollege classes show that students have an interest in something and a willingness to expose themselves, which helps contribute to knowledge and growth when applying to college," says Mouny. "Students will be offered, including business, introduction to nursing, gaming and theater. All are taught by full-time faculty. The cost is $2,900. This includes tuition, housing, all meals, all field trips, course materials and books. More info precollege.adelphi.edu.

■ At New York University’s Stern School of Business Undergraduate Program, a precollege program is slated for 2014. "Summer at Stern is set to attract students who are thinking of pursing business in college," says Rhett Dinsmore, vice dean of undergraduate academic affairs and strategic planning for the college. "Two six-week-long sessions will be offered — one focusing on business and another on behavioral economics and the science of decision-making. For acceptance, "You must be a rising high school junior or senior, have a GPA of 3.2 or higher, and submit both your academic transcript and a short essay." Enrollment will be capped at 30 students per class. The cost for both courses totals $8,000. Students will receive academic credit, although it’s not transferable to Stern. More info stern.nyu.edu.

SHOW ME THE FUNNY

From comedy improv to criminal justice, summer courses at local colleges can improve communication skills, college applications and career focus

Scott Baker's comedy improv class at Hofstra teaches the social media generation "the art of conversation," he says.