

First Year Seminars Course Descriptions Spring 2010

Catalog Description: First Year Seminars (FYS) are writing intensive, topic courses that introduce students to academic thought, discourse and practices. FYS courses prepare and orient students toward productive and fulfilling college careers by actively engaging them in a specific academic area of interest. Students will improve their writing, reading, research, and basic information and technology skills while learning to work both collaboratively and independently. These courses will fulfill the First Year Seminar requirement and may fulfill other requirements for the Core Curriculum. Each course may fulfill different requirements and topics may change each semester. Only one FYS course may be taken for credit.

Prerequisites for 199 courses: *Open to all freshmen with a writing placement score of 3 or above or a SAT score of 500 or above*

Students with 24 or more transfer credits will have this requirement waived.

ANTH 199-001 Africa Through Films

T 4:00-6:40 Dr. L. Badiane

This course examines current socio-cultural, political and economic issues pertaining to Africa and its peoples using documentary films, video clips, ethnographies and other visual media available such as fiction films. Topics to be explored include African history, colonialism, cultural groups, politics, laws, education, health, religious beliefs and practices, arts, economics and culture change. In this course we will also explore controversial subjects such as female genital cutting (Molaade), child soldiers (Blood Diamonds) and tensions inherent in a pluralized legal framework – customary versus westernized law (Sisters-In-Law). This course will combine documentary viewing in and outside the class, discussions and lectures. Writing assignments consist of four short papers on selected documentaries and a final research paper on an African topic. Students are expected to complete all assignments before each class and actively participate in class discussions. **(Social and Behavioral Science Core Distribution)**

BIOL 199-001 Food and Toxicity

TR 9:30-10:45 Prof. J. Roling

Every day we eat meals and snacks, but do we really know everything that we consume? Within that cheeseburger, the beef is loaded with hormones, the cheese is saturated with leached plastic, the wheat in the bun is genetically modified, and the ketchup can stand at room temperature for months. This class will examine the toxins and carcinogens within our daily diet from pesticides on vegetables to the birth control in our city water. **(Natural Sciences – Non Lab Core Distribution)**

CHEM 199-001 The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The effects of some molecules

MWF 8:00-8:50 Dr. L. Norman

Why are some molecules “good” and others “bad”? In this course, we will examine several molecules, some common and some controversial, and consider how they may be good, bad, or even ugly, depending on their usage. Through this exploration, we will discuss the social responsibilities of both chemists and consumers. **(Natural Sciences – Non Lab Core Distribution)**

CHEM 199-002 Crime and Chemistry

W 3:15-5:50 Dr. R. Taboada

Today, one of the most exciting career paths is in the field of crime investigation. In this seminar course, the link between science and the evidence left at the crime scene is established. From the broken glass or the fibers left by the individual to the methods used to crack the cases, this course will uncover the many tales told by trace evidence. **(Natural Sciences – Non Lab Core Distribution)**

COMM 199-001 Non-Verbal Communication and Sports

MWF 8:00-8:50 Prof. L. Mendoza

Picture the umpire throwing his arm in the air making a strikeout gesture. No explanation needed—his actions speak louder than any words he could utter. And just like in baseball our actions in relationships speak louder than our words. How we say something carries more weight and consequence than what we say making nonverbal communication very powerful. So, let’s turn off the sound to some Red Sox games and watch them through their

W 4:45-7:25

Prof. C. Del Prete

Have you ever wondered why our closets are full of clothes we hardly wear, why we feel the need to own the latest Blackberry or iPhone, or why so many of us are driving around in large, flashy automobiles we can barely afford? In this class we will examine the roots, the reality, and the repercussions of America's consumer culture, beginning with the way that we are groomed, from early childhood, to spend our money freely and mindlessly. We will explore the motivations behind our own buying habits as well as the impact our purchases have on our self esteem and personal finances, the economy, and the people who make the products that we use up and discard so rapidly.

(Humanities Core Distribution)

ENGL 199-004

Whodunnit? Detective Novels and an Orderly World

TR 9:30-10:45

Dr. A. Doyle

Detective novels engage our interests with a series of provocative questions. A crime is committed. Who did it? How? Why? Will the detective prevail? Will the guilty be caught? In this course, participants will examine 6 well-known examples of such mysteries written by some of the most famous authors of 20th century detective fiction, including Agatha Christie, Rex Stout, Raymond Chandler, and Dell Shannon. We will be considering the structure and nature of the mystery novel and the emergence of specific sub-genres such as the domestic cozy, the police procedural and the noir. Participants will explore the possibilities of the genre and conduct analyses of how the mystery writer both follows the genre's demands and reflects her or his own world in the fictional world.

(Humanities Core Distribution)

ENGL 199-005 or 006

From the Machine to the Mystic

MWF 8:00-8:50 or 9:05-9:55

Prof. G. Lagadec

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once said "We murder to dissect". The problem with this is that we may learn a great deal about biology, but the "frog" is nevertheless quite dead. This is a metaphor for what has been going on in the Western World for centuries. The benefits of science are undeniable. Scientific objectivity – separating oneself from that which is being studied – has its rewards; but it also has a potential down side: environmental destruction, epidemic mental illness, incessant armed conflicts, predatory exploitation and all forms of addiction. It is particularly ironic that the very methods of science have resulted in the fact that our consciousness has a great deal more to do with formulating what we "discover." This course will examine, through selected readings, the quests for a healing of this dissection of the world into two categories: the observer and the observed. Some latest discoveries in science, particularly physics, indicate that ultimately, we cannot always separate ourselves from the very things we are studying. Our search will not only include academic samples from literature, science, and philosophy, but will also offer some actual experiences in healing our own sense of alienation through secular meditation and yoga. An open mind and an inquisitive disposition are prerequisites. Main Text: *Measuring the Immeasurable: The Scientific Case for Spirituality*; Selected samples from Walt Whitman, the Transcendentalists [Emerson, Thoreau, Bronson, Alcott, Fuller], Rumi, Hafiz, Fritjof Capra, Deepak Chopra, Ram Dass, The Yoga Sutras, and others will also be included. **(Humanities Core Distribution)**

ENGL 199-007 or 008

The Soldier's Narrative

MWF 9:05-9:55 or 10:10-11:00

Prof. S. Nistendirk

This course is designed to offer an in-depth study of how war has been understood, responded to, and crafted into the genre of soldier narrative. In addition to reading memoir, which takes war as its subject, we will also look at the recent surge in digitized forms of communication: blogs, emails, and web pages, which significantly change the way stories of war, are transmitted and, therefore, interpreted by a culture. Texts written by combatants (O'Brien, Swofford, and Buzzell) as well as non-combatants—the embedded journalist (Wright); their experience and the ways in which they communicate that experience will serve as the focus of the course. **(Humanities Core Distribution)**

ENGL 199-009

Science Fiction Societies

MWF 8:00-8:50

Prof. R. Resendez

Science fiction is often viewed as otherworldly fantastic literature that has no relevance to the reader. In fact, the controlling forces in these works are extrapolations of specific elements in contemporary society. We will read works by Isaac Asimov, Orson Scott Card, Ursula K. LeGuin, Arthur C. Clarke and others in order to examine the social implications of the texts. **(Humanities Core Distribution)**

ENGL 199-010

Word Play: Poetry and Child Development

MWF 9:05-9:55

Prof. K. Whittingham

This course explores how literature, and poetry in particular, advances a child's thinking, reading, and writing skills. Students will research and write about techniques, such as those developed by the poet, Kenneth Koch, for creatively introducing poetry to children in the classroom with an understanding that developing an appreciation for language can be as instrumental to a young child's development as learning the foundations of math and science. Students will analyze work by poets characterized as children's writers like Shel Silverstein, Eugene Field, and Dr. Seuss. In addition, they will examine how work originally intended for adult readers by poets like Robert Frost and William Blake can also be interpreted and enjoyed by children in a different, yet equally significant way.

(Humanities Core Distribution)

HEAL 199-001

Alcohol: Balance

TR 12:30-1:45

Prof. C. Cooney Wilbur

Alcohol is the world's favorite drug. It's been a part of culture for approximately 10,000 years and it is used by about 2 billion people. A powerful drug, alcohol has both negative and positive aspects and effects. In this class, students will examine this powerful drug, looking at its history, its use, its characteristics and the effects, costs, and consequences of alcohol use and abuse. Students will explore their own beliefs and behaviors around alcohol. Because this class is a first year seminar, focus will be placed on developing writing skills and style. Students will work on the brainstorming, editing, and revising process, and will submit writing in various forms.

HEAL 199-002

Health and Popular Culture: Messages in the Media

TR 3:25-4:40

Prof. C. Cooney Wilbur

This class will explore health topics (violence, relationships, body image, and substance abuse) as portrayed by popular media. The influence of the messages in television, movies, and songs on individual behavior and cultural norms will be analyzed, and contrasted with skills and information necessary to achieve health and wellness. Students will utilize various forms of writing and media literacy skills to explore the relationship between popular culture and health behavior.

HIST 199-001 or 002

From Camelot to Watergate

TR 9:30-10:45 or 11:00-12:15

Dr. D. Culver

An examination of the major topics of the 1960's, including the Cold War (Berlin Crisis of 1961, Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the Vietnam War, 1965-1973), LBJ's Great Society and the welfare state, civil rights, women's rights, counterculture and Watergate. Students will write short essays based on readings in primary (e.g. JFK's June 1963 civil rights speech) and secondary sources. Film---among others The Graduate, Mississippi Burning, as well as documentaries---will be an important part of the course and a mirror on the era. **(Humanities Core Distribution)**

HIST 199-003

Colonial American Childhood

TR 2:00-3:15

Professor J. Stonehouse

This course will explore the history of colonial childhood including the lives of colonial children in the context of colonial attitudes toward children and childrearing. It will also explore the ways that historians have developed the field of childhood history in general and colonial childhood in particular beginning with Philip Aries's *Centuries of Childhood*, written in 1962. **(Humanities Core Distribution)**

LANG 199-001

Elements of Japanese Culture

MW 12:20-1:35

Dr. M. Savas

This introductory course presents the major elements of Japanese culture from prehistoric to contemporary times. An interdisciplinary approach will be taken, drawing upon the fields of history, literature, anthropology, religion, philosophy, and art. Emphasis will be on broad historical trends, focusing particularly on the three traditions of court, warrior, and merchant cultures. Included will be critical issues in present-day Japan, reflected in pop culture by anime, for instance. Materials will be presented through lecture, audio-visual aids, and reading assignments. Students should expect to participate in class discussion based on these sources of information. No knowledge of Japanese language or history is required. **(Humanities Core Distribution)**

PHED 199-001

Canine Athletes

TR 8:00-9:15

Prof. M. Ellis

In the 21st century we mainly think of dogs as pets. However, did you ever consider that canines, as a whole, are one of the most diverse and adaptable species of mammals on earth? Each breed was specifically developed by man

