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First-Year Seminar Descriptions for Winter Term 2026

First-Year Seminars offer every Dartmouth first-year student an opportunity to participate in a course structured around independent research, small group discussion, and intensive writing. Below you will find a list of the courses being offered next term.

Anthropology

ANTH-07.07-01 Planthropology

Hour: 3A **Instructor:** Charis Boke

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Planthropology: Plants and Humans in Anthropological Context

Course Description: What is a plant? How do plants shape human cultures—and how are they shaped by them? In an era defined by changing climate and political turmoil, the plants of the world take on a new importance as fellow living beings. In this course, we'll think, write, and talk about cross-cultural connections among plants and their peoples, addressing the politics, social structures, and relationships that draw the two-legged world together with the green world. We will consider anthropological and ethnographically informed writings alongside creative nonfiction and contemporary media

about plants. We will work together to refine our analytical, expository, and creative approach to writing about the world. Here, writing is a mode of thinking—we hone both together.

Textbook(s)Required:

Chao, Sophie. 2022. In the Shadow of the Palms: More-Than-Human Becomings in West Papua. Durham: Duke U. Press. <https://www.dukeupress.edu/in-the-shadow-of-the-palms>
Ghosh, Amitav. The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/N/bo125517349.html>
Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010).

ANTH-07.08-01 The Face

Hour: 2A **Instructor:** Samuel Novacich

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: The Face

Course Description: This seminar takes an interdisciplinary approach to thinking about the human face. We all have a face – perhaps multiple faces – about which we may, understandably, have some questions. For example: how do our faces relate to the ideas and feelings we have about personhood? Do our faces represent or instead hide who we “really” are? Are they static or fickle, revealing or deceitful? What happens when we decorate our faces? Using readings from anthropology, history, literature, and philosophy, we explore the face in all its grandeur, as a critical site of personhood and identity, as a window to the soul, and as a canvas upon which new portraits of selfhood are continuously painted. We will examine and challenge these varied understandings of the face and explore anthropological arguments about the face cross-culturally. Students will study how anthropologists write (and thus, think) about the face, how they build arguments, develop their ideas, and present those ideas to different audiences. Throughout the course, students will learn how to read anthropological and ethnographic works, such as those appearing in academic journals, and draw upon those readings as they write about faces in their own lives and across media. Ultimately, this course is designed to challenge assumptions we often make about the face as either a transparent

representation of personhood or as a superficial and unreliable mask of appearance, of the face as the epicenter of either inescapable authenticity or artifice.

Textbook(s)Required:

N/A

Art History

ARTH-07.02-01 Paris in the 19th Century

Hour: 10A **Instructor:** Kristin O'Rourke

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Paris in the 19th Century

Course Description: This writing course will examine the city of Paris as the cultural capital of the nineteenth century, looking at artists and art production in the mid-late nineteenth century. We will investigate changes in the city and how that impacted the art movements that made up the new category of “modern” art: Realism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. We will begin with a discussion of traditional forms of artmaking in the 19th century and contrast this with avant-garde art production in the works of Manet and the Impressionists, among others. We will look at Paris through the eyes of Parisians at the time, as well as through the gaze of filmmakers in our own time. We will investigate factors of contemporary life that affected subject matters, style, technique, and meaning in art works, in particular the invention of photography, urban planning and the modernization of the city of Paris, and the political and social situation in France and Europe. While exploring the impact of these factors on painting, photography, sculpture, architecture, posters, and film, the course will look at alternative art practices and exhibitions that challenged the status quo and that became the basis of modern art. We will investigate what makes Paris in the 19th century “modern” and explore characteristics of modernism that continue to resonate today.

Textbook(s)Required:

No textbooks required.

Asian Soc,Cultures&Lang

ASCL-07.04-01 Singers as Social Symbols

Hour: 10 **Instructor:** Levi Gibbs

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Singers as Social Symbols in Asia and Beyond

Course Description: Around the world and across time, professional singers and their songs stand at the crossroads of differing politics and perspectives. This writing-based seminar explores how a singer can symbolize different things to different people, giving rise to discussions of a range of cultural politics. Examining case studies from pop superstar Teresa Teng to Indian legend Lata Mangeshkar, from Beyoncé to BTS, we will focus on how interdisciplinary scholars of popular music develop, test, and refine ideas through writing, conduct research, build arguments, revise drafts, and engage with readers. Some of the topics covered will include how race, gender, and class are negotiated through performance, and the connections audiences draw between singers' lives and their art.

Textbook(s)Required:

No required books to purchase.

Biology**BIOL-07.02-01 Biology:Politicized Topics**

Hour: 12 **Instructor:** Carey Nadell

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Politicized Topics in Biology

Course Description: This course will explore the fact and fiction underlying politically contentious topics that have biology at their core. The majority of the course will consist of written and oral discussion of topics including climate change, genetic engineering, vaccine policy, and antibiotic resistance mitigation. One short essay (1000 words) will be

assigned for each of these topics, and feedback will be provided through peer review and professor input. Students will also compose a final 2000- word essay on a topic of their choice.

Textbook(s)Required:

No Textbook required

BIOL-07.13-01 What is Natural?

Hour: 2A **Instructor:** Wilbur Ryan

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Is the concept of naturalness useful in biology?

Course Description: The word “natural” has become ubiquitous in advertising and everyday speech to convey the sense that a product, process, or way of living is wholesome, virtuous, or beneficial for humans or other living organisms. In this course, we will use assigned readings, group discussions, and writing projects to explore how ideas of biological naturalness influence policy and public perception in (1) agriculture, (2) medicine, and (3) wildlife management practices. We will also examine the biological evidence in support of these perceptions to determine if and when concepts of naturalness are useful in scientific study and decision making. In the first half of the course, students will practice finding and digesting information in scientific literature as they compile and present informative briefs for their peers on topics related to each unit’s theme. Then they will each develop and answer their own research question by writing an in-depth review paper. Through interactive workshops and guided peer-review, students will become stronger and more confident writers as they learn the conventions of academic writing in the field of biology.

Textbook(s)Required:

No textbook required

Classical Studies

CLST-07.14-01 Intro to Ancient Textiles

Hour: 11 **Instructor:** Julie Hruby

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Unraveling the Past: An Introduction to Ancient Textiles

Course Description: Ancient textiles were far more than mere clothing, serving as essential components of daily life. These versatile materials were crucial in supporting various societal needs, in forms such as blankets, cushions, bags, shrouds, tents, tapestries, and the maritime sails that enabled exploration and trade. We will explore how people in the ancient world created, used, and valued textiles, examining surviving fragments, images in art, and ancient texts. Your first bigger assignment will address the analytical category of your own attire; what do you wear, and what does it mean about your identity? A key component of the course is hands-on experience: we'll actually make textiles (or at least a step in the sequence), providing a unique perspective for your second major writing assignment. You will then tackle a larger research project focused on an aspect of ancient textile production, building your skills step-by-step with a proposal, an annotated bibliography, an outline, and multiple drafts. Throughout the course, we will focus on essential academic writing techniques. We will produce workshops together on writing and speaking skills, including differentiating between various types of sources, using Zotero, using Generative AI ethically, utilizing informal lists of sources, understanding the difference between correlation and causation, outlining, writing, using graphics, reviewing, copyediting, and presenting data.

Textbook(s)Required:

Graff, G. and C. Birkenstein. 2024. They Say, I Say. ISBN 978-1324070054 (Kindle) or 978-1324070030 (paperback).

Comparative Literature

COLT-07.23-01 Europe's Violent Pasts

Hour: 3A **Instructor:** Joseph Aguado

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: The Holocaust, Communism, and Terrorism in Europe and the USA

Course Description:

Has the time come for a new approach to identity in Europe? If we are in agreement as to the desirability of some form of identity at the European level and if Europe faces new challenges in terms of how it accommodates peoples seeking economic, political, and personal refuge from outside its borders, we might be facing a new opportunity to rethink just what defines our notion of the "European." The old identitarian links need to be reformulated: mainly the inseparable ties between birth, territory, language, and ethnicity that condemn many Europeans to live outside and excluded from the conventional formulations of identity or territory.

No required textbooks available

Earth Sciences

EARS-07.08-01 Leaving Our Mark

Hour: 12 **Instructor:** Benjamin Barnes

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Leaving our Mark: How Humans Shape the Geologic Record

Course Description: When the International Union of Geological Sciences recently rejected a proposal to define an Anthropocene Epoch, it sparked fresh debate over humans' impact on our planet. Our species has undeniably influenced Earth's biodiversity, landscapes, and climate, but will this activity be preserved in the geologic record, and if so, how? In this class we will explore the evidence in the rocks for ancient catastrophes, from the warming which nearly extinguished life as we know it, to the asteroid impact which ended the Age of the Dinosaurs. Based on these analogs, we will predict what signals of human activity will be preserved in the rocks, and how geoscientists in the distant future might use these to reconstruct the global climate change playing out in our lifetimes. Throughout the term, students will craft their own reconstruction of a geologic event as a research paper, write an op-ed on the relevance of an Anthropocene Epoch for general audiences, and develop a scientific proposal for how and where to mark the boundary of the "human era" in the rock record. We will use class time to edit and discuss

our writing in a collaborative environment and engage in debates over the ultimate geologic legacy of humans.

Textbook(s)Required:

No required textbook, readings on canvas.

Engineering Sciences

ENGS-07.09-01 Analyzing Medical Imaging

Hour: 2A **Instructor:** Paul Meaney

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Analyzing Medical Imaging: Developments and Controversies

Course Description: Medical imaging has evolved significantly over the last 100 years and has transformed modern medical practice. Today, very few clinical decisions are made without relying on information obtained with contemporary imaging modalities. The future of medical imaging may be even more promising. New technologies are being developed to observe the structural, functional, and molecular characteristics of tissues at ever-finer spatial scales. In this first-year seminar, we will write as a way to explore the use of imaging to screen for disease. We will also explore the costs to the health care system of routine application of imaging technology and the benefits of the information provided by medical imaging. Students will be required to read, present, and discuss materials in class and write papers analyzing the development, uses, and benefits of medical imaging. The papers will progress incrementally in complexity from a short paper to a research paper.

Textbook(s)Required:

No textbook required.

English

ENGL-07.47-01 Tales of the Avant-Garde

Hour: 10A **Instructor:** Andrew McCann

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Tale of the Avant-Garde

Course Description: Can art, literature and music really constitute a rebellion against the status quo? For at least the last hundred years avant-garde movements from futurism to punk have embraced the possibility. This course will explore radical, experimental art and writing that challenges social norms and moral conventions. We will encounter the utopian promise of the avant-garde, but also its self-perpetuated myths, and its sometimes dubious political associations. Along the way we will meet some of the most influential figures of recent cultural history: Antonin Artaud, Joseph Beuys, William Burroughs, Kathy Acker, Cindy Sherman, Johnny Rotten, Sid Vicious, and Roberto Bolaño. "Tales of the Avant-Garde" is also about the process of writing, and writing as a form of critical thinking. Students will learn to write scholarly essays about art and literature. But through shorter, less formal writing exercises and canvas posts they will also have the opportunity to explore some of the hybrid forms of nonfiction (manifestos, textual collages, autobiographically informed cultural criticism etc.) that have played a role in the unfolding of avant-garde movements.

Textbook(s)Required:

Alex Danchev ed., 100 Artists' Manifestos: from the Futurists to the Stuckists (Penguin Modern Classics), ISBN-10: 0141191791 ISBN-13: 978-0141191799

Cesare Aira, An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter (New Directions Books), ISBN-10: 0141191791 ISBN-13: 978-0141191799

Somerset Maugham, The Moon and Sixpence (Penguin Classics), ISBN-10: 0143039342 ISBN-13: 978-0143039341

Kathy Acker, Great Expectations (Penguin Modern Classics), ISBN-10: 9780802131553 ISBN-13: 978-0802131553

Roberto Bolaño, Distant Star (New Direction Books), ISBN-10: 9780811215862 ISBN-13: 978-0811215862

ENGL-07.57-01 Murder & Unbelonging in Lit

Hour: 3B **Instructor:** Kimberly Brown

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Murder and Unbelonging in the Literary Imagination

Course Description: This course will examine the way murder functions in the global literary imagination, particularly as violence relates to racialized and gendered otherness and influences the structure of artistic representation. Writers (and filmmakers) concerned with marginalized people and the world they inhabit will be investigated, paying close attention to the parameters of who gets included into a culture's homogeneity and who exists on the literal and metaphorical border of inclusion. We will focus primarily on fictional renderings of historical murders and connect our readings to cultural narratives of violence as experienced through race, gender, class, geography, and sexuality. Relationships between nation, violence, and cultural commodification will be incorporated into a cross-cultural understanding of modernity, embodiment, and exclusionary practices. Assignments include short response papers, a presentation and a research paper.

No required textbooks available

Film Studies**FILM-07.15-01 Women & Comedy in Film**

Hour: 3A **Instructor:** Joanna Rapf

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Women & Comedy Film

Course Description: This seminar focuses specifically on women in film comedy in the United States, from the early twentieth century to the present day. In exploring this subject, students will be asked to think and write about what cultural factors have led some to argue that women aren't funny, and why the field of comedy has traditionally been dominated by men. We will interrogate Hollywood's hegemony by calling attention to and studying the attitudes women endorse, the roles women play, and the stereotypes they reinforce or challenge. With an emphasis on writing, students in this class will be asked to keep a journal dealing with specific topics each week. There will also be three papers of increasing complexity: a response paper, an argument, and a substantial research paper,

the topic of which will be developed with the instructor around the middle of the term. With all three, there will be ample opportunity for revision. Through close “readings” of films, students should not only improve their writing, but also their visual literacy. Our approach encourages a reassessment of film history and new ways of thinking about the potential women have for influencing society through laughter. A society without laughter is not a free society.

No required textbooks available

FILM-07.23-01 The Freedom to Move

Hour: 11 **Instructor:** Jennie Chamberlain

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: The Freedom to Move: Agency and Mobility in Our Everyday World

Course Description: What invisible forces shape how we move through everyday life? By investigating and writing about everyday mobility, you will develop and refine your perspectives on how our mobility networks form, who participates in their design and operation, how they impact daily lives and communities, and what the future of mobility should be. You'll begin your research on our streets, gaining first-hand experience evaluating infrastructure with critical eyes. You'll make connections between research, data, infrastructure, and lived experiences. You'll explore a topic of your choosing related to everyday mobility – transit, autonomous vehicles, e-scooters, ride-shares, hyperloops, wheelchairs, walking, bicycling, sustainability, access, economics, safety, etc. The main writing and research assignments will be a public-facing blog post, which will allow you to explore ideas through writing to set you up for success in further assignments, and a public-facing essay. Our emphasis will be on examining evidence, understanding the usefulness of different kinds of data, stories and analysis, and crafting compelling arguments by testing ideas through your writing process. Readings and viewings will include multiple types of media: articles, podcasts, videos, design guides, data visualizations, primary sources from the mobility industry and advocacy organizations, our streets and pathways and more. Workshopped writing assignments will include: a blog post, a one-minute scripted oral presentation about one of your academic sources or professional policy documents, an annotated bibliography for your public-facing essay, and a public-facing essay.

No required textbooks available

Geography

GEOG-07.20-01 Into the Wild

Hour: 10 **Instructor:** Coleen Fox

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Into The Wild

Course Description: The US Wilderness Act of 1964 states that wilderness exists “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor and does not remain.” This straightforward definition obscures the ambiguity and controversy surrounding both the idea of wilderness and its expression on the landscape. In this class, we will draw on personal narratives, scientific research, literature, and policy documents to explore the historical context and contemporary debates concerning wilderness in the US and around the world. We will investigate the idea of wilderness at a variety of scales, from the personal to the global. At the personal scale, we will focus on the transformative power of journeys into the wilderness. At the national and global scales, we will analyze the science, discourse, and politics of wilderness protection.

Textbook(s)Required:

J. Krakauer, Into the Wild

Government

GOVT-07.12-01 Intelligence & Ntl Security

Hour: 11 **Instructor:** Jeffrey Friedman

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Intelligence & Ntl Security

Course Description: This seminar explores challenges and controversies of U.S.

intelligence analysis. Almost all important issues in intelligence are surrounded by secrecy and uncertainty. It is inherently difficult to know “what works” in intelligence, to define “good” analysis, or to make sound recommendations for improvement. Specific controversies we examine include the September 11 terrorist attacks, assessments of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programs, and CIA methods of “enhanced interrogation.” Students draft, peer review, and revise three short (5 page) essays analyzing these controversies, and then expand one of those documents into a longer (8-10 page) research paper. In discussing conceptual and practical issues surrounding the study of intelligence, we engage broader debates about what it means to analyze high-stakes decisions in a manner that is both rigorous and useful.

Textbook(s)Required:

There are no books required for this course

GOVT-07.14-01 Does Democracy Work?

Hour: 9L **Instructor:** Jennifer Jerit

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Does Democracy Work?

Course Description: Ordinary people are a crucial part of a democracy—in terms of their beliefs and attitudes as well as the political actions they do or do not take. Indeed, some scholars go so far as to describe voters as the starting point of a democracy. But are citizens up to the task? This first-year seminar investigates the topic of voter competence, which refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that support a functioning political system. We will consider what is required of citizens in a modern democracy and discuss the standards by which we evaluate how well people fulfill their democratic duties. Course readings focus on public opinion and political behavior in the American context. As part of the first-year writing program, this course involves analytical writing and small group discussions. Students will write and revise two 3-page papers with significant class time devoted to writing challenges and giving/receiving feedback in peer groups. The seminar also involves a final 6- page paper.

Textbook(s)Required:

No textbook is required for this course

History

HIST-07.38-01 Misinformation and China

Hour: 10 **Instructor:** Yi Lu

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Misinformation: A Chinese History

Course Description: Why does misinformation exist and persist, how does it spread and divide, and what can we do to combat them? Treating words such as "information" as concepts with their own history, this course explores the unstable relationship between truth and politics using Chinese history as case study. From Marco Polo's fabled journey in the 13th century to the origin of the Covid-19 pandemic, you will examine techniques for controlling information, including secrecy, censorship, propaganda. From printing press to generative AI, you will also explore the role of technology and the social publics they have created. As an introduction to historical reading, writing, and research, the course features source analysis, guided research, peer reviews, and draft revisions; by the end, you will not only complete an independent research project, but also acquire critical information literacy for our "post-truth" era.

Textbook(s)Required:

No required textbooks.

HIST-07.42-01 Science and Empire

Hour: 11 **Instructor:** Tara Suri

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Science and Empire

Course Description: How did science enable and justify European imperial expansion?

And how did empire shape the making of modern science? In this seminar, we will investigate the relationship between science and empire by following vaccines, fingerprinting technologies, lac bugs, cinchona trees, and uranium mining. Through such cases, we will examine science's role in the production of global hierarchies of race, caste, and religion—and equally, how colonized peoples in Asia and Africa mobilized science to contest and remake those hierarchies. We will build skills in historical research and writing by analyzing primary sources, developing op-eds, and pursuing our own academic research projects. In the process, we will consider the legacies of these histories for contemporary inequities in science, medicine, and health.

Textbook(s)Required:

No required textbooks.

Humanities

HUM-002-01 Global Humanities 2

Hour: 12 **Instructor:** Jessica Beckman, Paul Young, Rebecca Biron, Petra McGillen

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

No description available

Textbook(s)Required:

HUM2, Winter 2026 works will include: Aeschylus, Agamemnon. Aeschylus, Oresteia, trans. Peter Meineck (Hackett Publishing, 1998). ISBN: 978-0-87220-390-7 Christa Wolf \u201CA Letter about Unequivocal and Ambiguous Meaning\u201D William Shakespeare, Macbeth (c. 1606). Norton Critical Edition, 2025. ISBN: 978-1-324-04437-6 Jean de Mandeville, The Travels of Sir John Mandeville (1357, selections) John Milton, Paradise Lost (1667, selections). Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN: 978-0-140-42439-3 Georges M\u00E9li\u00E8s, short films 1896-1908 (including The Trip to the Moon, 1902) Charles Chestnutt, The Conjure Woman and Other Tales (1899) Elena Garro, \u201CThe Tlaxcaltecs Are to Blame\u201D (1963) Wangechi Mutu (painting) Margaret Bourke-White, \u201CThe American Way\u201D (1937 photograph) Heinrich von Kleist, The Broken Pitcher (1811) \u201CThe Great Moon Hoax\u201D (1835) Dashiell Hammett, \u201CThey Can Only Hang You Once\u201D (short story, 1932) Akira Kurosawa, High and Low (film, 1963) Jorge Luis Borges, \u201CNarrative Art and Magic\u201D (essay)

HUM-002-02 Global Humanities 2 (Discussion)

Hour: OT **Instructor:** Petra McGillen, Rebecca Biron

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

No description available

Textbook(s)Required:

HUM2, Winter 2026 works will include: Aeschylus, Agamemnon. Aeschylus, Oresteia, trans. Peter Meineck (Hackett Publishing, 1998). ISBN: 978-0-87220-390-7 Christa Wolf
"A Letter about Unequivocal and Ambiguous Meaning" William Shakespeare, Macbeth (c. 1606). Norton Critical Edition, 2025. ISBN: 978-1-324-04437-6 Jean de Mandeville, The Travels of Sir John Mandeville (1357, selections) John Milton, Paradise Lost (1667, selections). Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN: 978-0-140-42439-3 Georges M\u00E9li\u00E8s, short films 1896-1908 (including The Trip to the Moon, 1902) Charles Chestnutt, The Conjure Woman and Other Tales (1899) Elena Garro, "The Tlaxcaltecs Are to Blame" (1963) Wangechi Mutu (painting) Margaret Bourke-White, "The American Way" (1937 photograph) Heinrich von Kleist, The Broken Pitcher (1811) "The Great Moon Hoax" (1835) Dashiell Hammett, "They Can Only Hang You Once" (short story, 1932) Akira Kurosawa, High and Low (film, 1963) Jorge Luis Borges, "Narrative Art and Magic" (essay)

HUM-002-03 Global Humanities 2 (Discussion)

Hour: OT **Instructor:** Paul Young, Rebecca Biron

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

No description available

Textbook(s)Required:

HUM2, Winter 2026 works will include: Aeschylus, Agamemnon. Aeschylus, Oresteia, trans. Peter Meineck (Hackett Publishing, 1998). ISBN: 978-0-87220-390-7 Christa Wolf
"A Letter about Unequivocal and Ambiguous Meaning" William Shakespeare, Macbeth (c. 1606). Norton Critical Edition, 2025. ISBN: 978-1-324-04437-6 Jean de Mandeville, The Travels of Sir John Mandeville (1357, selections) John Milton, Paradise Lost (1667, selections). Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN: 978-0-140-42439-3 Georges M\u00E9li\u00E8s, short films 1896-1908 (including The Trip to the Moon, 1902) Charles Chestnutt, The Conjure Woman and Other Tales (1899) Elena Garro, "The

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HUM-002-04 Global Humanities 2 (Discussion)

Hour: OT **Instructor:** Jessica Beckman, Rebecca Biron

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

No description available

Textbook(s)Required:

HUM2, Winter 2026 works will include: Aeschylus, Agamemnon. Aeschylus, Oresteia, trans. Peter Meineck (Hackett Publishing, 1998). ISBN: 978-0-87220-390-7 Christa Wolf \u201CA Letter about Unequivocal and Ambiguous Meaning\u201D William Shakespeare, Macbeth (c. 1606). Norton Critical Edition, 2025. ISBN: 978-1-324-04437-6 Jean de Mandeville, The Travels of Sir John Mandeville (1357, selections) John Milton, Paradise Lost (1667, selections). Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN: 978-0-140-42439-3 Georges M\u00E9li\u00E8s, short films 1896-1908 (including The Trip to the Moon, 1902) Charles Chestnutt, The Conjure Woman and Other Tales (1899) Elena Garro, \u201CThe Tlaxcaltecs Are to Blame\u201D (1963) Wangechi Mutu (painting) Margaret Bourke-White, \u201CThe American Way\u201D (1937 photograph) Heinrich von Kleist, The Broken Pitcher (1811) \u201CThe Great Moon Hoax\u201D (1835) Dashiehl Hammett, \u201CThey Can Only Hang You Once\u201D (short story, 1932) Akira Kurosawa, High and Low (film, 1963) Jorge Luis Borges, \u201CNarrative Art and Magic\u201D (essay)

Italian

ITAL-07.08-01 What is (Italian) Cinema?

Hour: 2 **Instructor:** Matteo Gilebbi

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: What is (Italian) Cinema?

Course Description: Cinema is a form of expression that, by integrating different media and disciplines (including writing, music, dance, theater, architecture, fashion, etc.) creates something that is beyond the sum of its parts. But how does cinema integrate all these other media into something new? What are the specific tools needed to read, understand, and critically analyze this multifaceted form of expression, and how can we use them effectively? In this course we will tackle these questions through an exploration of Italian cinema. Italian filmmakers played a pivotal role in advancing the language of cinema, via both technical and narrative experimentation. While Italian films are, of course, artifacts of a specific culture, they also transcend national boundaries and influence cinema around the world. At the same time, Italian filmmakers have always been avid watchers and attentive critics of foreign films – in particular, French, German, Russian, Japanese, and American – which, in turn, left a mark on their work. For these reasons, we will watch and analyze five Italian films to explore what cinema in general is and does. Importantly, the critical tools acquired in this course will help you tackle the complexity of other texts and develop a critical reading of those texts. Finally, critical analysis of films, like that of any other text, should not happen in a vacuum. Watching a film with a critical eye, like doing any critical reading, is a social interaction. For this reason, this course is organized as a student-led seminar and all writings rely on peer-reviews. In this class you will become part of the same learning community: we will take responsibility for collaborating, sharing each other work and reflections, and respect each other opinions.

No required textbooks available

Jewish Studies

JWST-07.11-01 Heaven Hell Yiddish Lit

Hour: 11 **Instructor:** Andrew Caplan

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Heaven, Hell, and the Spaces In-Between in Yiddish Literature

Course Description: A Rabbinic dictate (Mishnah Chagigah 2:1) famously describes four topics on which it is forbidden to speculate: what is above in heaven and what is beneath

the earth, what preceded the creation of the world and what will follow our death. Characteristic of Rabbinic thought, however, these prohibitions are followed by lengthy discussions about what heaven and the Divine Throne looks like, and what the consequences are for sages who embark upon esoteric studies. This course will provide a reading-and-writing intensive introduction to East European Jewish culture by focusing on the diversity of unofficial speculations on life after death that have preoccupied and entertained readers and audiences over the past four centuries. Beginning with folktales and rabbinic legends collected in Yiddish at the beginning of the modern era, we will consider sources such as Hasidic storytelling, Yiddish satires from the nineteenth century, theatrical melodramas, gothic stories, and twentieth-century Yiddish film. Authors will include Reb Nakhman of Breslov, Y.L. Peretz, S. An-ski, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Sarah Hamer-Jacklyn, and the Coen Brothers, among others. All readings available in English as well as Yiddish.

No required textbooks available

JWST-07.12-01 A Jew's Best Friend

Hour: 2A **Instructor:**

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: A Jew's Best Friend: Jews and Dogs from Antiquity to the Present

Course Description: Jews and dogs have been constant companions throughout history. In this first-year seminar, we ask a series of questions about the nature of this underexplored interspecies relationship. How were dogs portrayed in Jewish traditional texts? What was the Jewish attitude toward dogs in the medieval period? How have images of Jews and dogs been juxtaposed in literature? Why were Jews historically afraid of dogs? How did pet-keeping evolve amongst Jews? How did the Nazis train dogs? What roles did dogs play in founding the State of Israel? Why are dogs so funny to Jews? What are current understandings of canine origins, psychology and genetics? By the end of the course, students should have a deep and nuanced understanding of the multiple roles dogs have played in Jewish history and culture.

No required textbooks available

Latin Am/Caribbean Studies

LACS-07.07-01 Afro-Latin American Visuali

Hour: 2A **Instructor:** Reighan Gillam

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Afro-Latin Visualities

Course Description: Outside of Africa, the majority of people of African descent live in Latin America, specifically Brazil. In this class we will examine Black visual cultural production and representation in Latin America. Students will learn how to write about, interpret, and analyze film and visual culture. Additionally, we will examine the social and cultural context that inform the production and meaning of these films and visual culture.

Textbook(s)Required:

They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing. ISBN-10 \u200F : \u200E 039393361X ISBN-13 \u200F : \u200E 978-0393933611

Mathematics**MATH-07.04-01 Analyzing Network Data**

Hour: 9L **Instructor:** Peter Mucha

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Analyzing Network Data

Course Description: We live in a connected world, where the confluence of the different connections — social, political, financial, informational, technological, biological, behavioral, epidemiological — affects virtually every aspect of our lives. The mathematical study of networks provides a framework for describing these connections. Writing about the properties of networks leverages this framework to test ideas and increase understanding of the resulting impacts of a network on the system it interconnects, especially when describing the comparisons and contrasts between different types of networks. Most people are familiar with the concept of a network from hyperlinked web

pages or online social networks. Online networks are of particular interest, but networks are also useful for representing and studying a wider variety of connected systems. With “nodes” representing actors of interest and “edges” connecting the nodes representing relationships, the concept of a network can be flexibly used across many applications. Students will analyze network data by developing three written documents — critical evaluation of a journal article, a computational notebook, and a journal-style project report — across multiple milestones through the term.

No required textbooks available

Middle Eastern Studies

MES-07.03-01 Jerusalem: Vision & Reality

Hour: 3B **Instructor:** Lewis Glinert

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Jerusalem: Vision and Reality

Course Description: Jerusalem has always mesmerized minds—Royal City of Solomon, mystical core of the world, site of a foretold apocalypse, twice razed to the ground, focus of Jewish messianic dreams, since 1948 once more a Jewish capital city but still savagely fought over. In this course, we will sample the symbolism of Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic intellectual and artistic expression, from the Bible down to the present. Why has this city evoked such passions? Assessment will be by three papers analyzing academic and creative course readings, with an emphasis on clarity, concision and grasp of content.

No required textbooks available

MES-07.04-01 Steamships to Social Media

Hour: 10A **Instructor:** Andrew Simon

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Steamships to Social Media: History of Technology in the Middle East

Course Description: What may pandemics and their maritime passage in the past teach us about Covid-19 today? How may cameras assist us in picturing the past and archiving the present in the Arab world? And what is the relationship between social media and mass demonstrations in Iran, Egypt, and the the United States? In this first-year seminar, we will explore the impact, significance, and surprising stories of numerous technologies throughout Middle East history. We will cover devices we often take for granted as well as things that command our attention. Cameras, clothing, and the Internet, dams, printing presses, and modes of transportation will all surface in readings that transcend any single historical genre, bridging the local and the global, the social and the cultural, the intellectual and the environmental. The scope of this course is consciously panoramic in nature. In traversing nearly two hundred years of history, from the Ottoman Empire to the present day, we will examine a wide array of case studies that unfold across the Middle East and occasionally travel further afield. To assist us on this journey, we will conduct close readings of several primary sources, from films and photographs to comics and music videos. These materials will inspire lively discussions that engage larger themes, including modernity, mediation, power, politics, infrastructure, and identity. In the spirit of intervening in broader debates and developing one's writing skills, students will have the opportunity to undertake a wide variety of assignments, from a film review to a critical biography. Likewise, students will have the chance to pursue a final research project on a topic of their choosing that advances an original argument. By the end of the quarter, it will be clear that the trajectories of objects, small and large, were essential to the making of the modern Middle East.

No required textbooks available

Music

MUS-07.07-01 Animal Musics

Hour: 3A **Instructor:** Rowland Moseley

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Animal Musics

Course Description: Sonic performances by non-human animals, including many species

of bird and whale, have excited humans in various artistic and scientific pursuits for millennia. Singers, instrumentalists, and composers have engaged in animal mimicry; philosophers and scientists have perched on the human/animal boundary to ponder what “music” and “musical culture” are; researchers and technologists have toiled to capture specimens of animal sound that humans can hear and study. Meanwhile, human music already presupposes animal sound: our pleasure in music depends upon sensory and cognitive capacities that we evolved to survive in teeming ecosystems, parsing our acoustic environment and attending to its rhythms. This first-year seminar takes selected topics in animal “musics” and humanity’s interest in them for the purpose of learning how professional non-fiction authors, journalists, and academic humanities scholars engage U.S. audiences in new ideas and new research about music through their writing. During the course, students develop three pieces of written work: first, a program-book essay about a musical composition and its use of animal sound; second, a magazine feature about the current science of animal sound in which the writer engages directly with one species; and third, the script for a lecture to be given at an organization such as the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, which we will visit. Class meetings comprise activities that target specific writing and research skills, student-led discussion of assigned reading and listening, and experiential learning of working with sound media.

No required textbooks available

Philosophy

PHIL-07.01-01 Contemporary Moral Issues

Hour: 2A **Instructor:** Ann Bumpus

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Contemporary Moral Issues

Course Description: Do you wish you had a better grasp on the arguments for and against the death penalty? Drug legality? Physician-assisted suicide? In this course we will study two or three currently contentious moral issues. Assigned content will include academic papers, articles from the popular press, films, and documentaries. Class time will be devoted to discussion, debate, argument-analysis, and peer review of written work.

Students will be assigned at least two argumentative essays, several reading reactions, argument reconstructions, and a final presentation.

No required textbooks available

Physics

PHYS-07.10-01 What is Real?

Hour: 3A **Instructor:** James Whitfield

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: What Is Real? Physics, Perception, and the Power of Writing

Course Description: This course will explore the fundamental question of what constitutes reality through the lens of modern physics, philosophy, and technology. We will explore various scientific writing styles and examples connected to the theme of our course. Student will use writing to explore, analyze, and argue for their own positions on the nature of reality, and to respond to the position of their peers. Daily and in-class writing exercises will help students develop their science-writing, peer-editing, and problem-solving skills. The two major assignments are one essay and a second, longer paper. The writing process will be iterative, and feedback will be provided via peer review and via direct professor input.

Textbook(s)Required:

Draft #4, and, Oranges, both by John McPhee

Psychological & Brain Sciences

PSYC-07.07-01 Imagination

Hour: 10A **Instructor:** Jamshed Bharucha

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Imagination: Perspectives from Psychology & Neuroscience

Course Description: We will explore the role of imagination in cognition from the perspective of psychology and neuroscience. Imagination is a faculty of the mind that enables us to be conscious of more than what is immediately available to our senses. The contents of imagination take many forms, including the simulation of perception or movement, scenarios, abstract ideas, and emotions. People vary substantially in the relative salience of these forms, and there may be implications for mental health. Students will begin by introspecting on and writing about the most salient manifestations of imagination in their lives. We will explore the historically controversial issue of writing scientifically about phenomenological experience. Students will review the research literature on one aspect of imagination, critique the research, pose questions for further research, and propose carefully designed research studies to answer open questions. Each stage of this process (from introspection to critical review of the literature to carefully designed proposals for future research) will be written up and revised following feedback from the instructor and the class. All sections will be integrated for the final paper. A theme of the course will be learning how to summarize research clearly and succinctly – and yet vibrantly -- for a general educated audience without sacrificing scientific accuracy.

Textbook(s)Required:

NO TEXTBOOK IS REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE.

Sociology

SOCY-07.01-01 Race and Ethnicity

Hour: 10 **Instructor:** Emily Walton

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Race and Ethnicity: Social Constructions and Social Realities

Course Description: In this course we start from the premise that racial and ethnic distinctions are socially constructed. We will also explore the very real consequences of racial distinctions by interpreting the social science literature on inequality, considering the manifestations of interpersonal and institutional forms of racism, and discussing prospects for change in the future. We approach the sociological content of the course

through a number of writing components. First, you will respond to course readings through informal writing in reading journals and short reflection pieces throughout the term. Second, you will engage in formal writing through two main assignments: a short, written analysis of personal experiences with race and ethnicity embedded in a sociological context, and a somewhat longer research paper in which you will draw on outside sources to explore a research question related to race and ethnicity. In addition to out-of-class writing, you will participate in writing workshops and discussions, primary source analysis exercises, and peer feedback sessions.

Textbook(s)Required:

None required

SOCY-07.07-01 Inequality in America

Hour: 10A **Instructor:** Jason Houle

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Inequality in America

Course Description: When we think about social inequality, it's tempting to view it as the inevitable byproduct of effort, where those at the top are rewarded for their perseverance, and those at the bottom should work harder to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." In this class, we will interrogate these naïve assumptions and explore sociological understandings of social stratification and inequality in the context of 20th and 21st century United States. We will specifically focus on how sociologists write, craft arguments, and develop and test theories about social inequality. As part of this process, you will learn how to write (and read) formal sociological research papers, such as those that appear in academic journals, and how to package these ideas to public audiences (such as op-eds). Substantively, we will focus on a range of topics, including (but not limited to): social mobility, poverty and social welfare policies, race and gender stratification, the causes and consequences of rising wealth and income inequality, and the changing face of inequality before and after the Great Recession.

Textbook(s)Required:

none required

Spanish

SPAN-07.10-01 Porn: Sex, Food and Poverty

Hour: 9L **Instructor:** Sebastian Diaz

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Pornographies: Sex, Food, and Poverty in Latin-American Studies of Visual Culture

Course Description: Discussions about “porn” in Latin America show how culture often displaces its meaning onto ideas of excess, marginality, shallowness, lavishness, vice, and addiction, especially emphasizing porn as a spectacle marked by exaggeration and obscenity. This displacement is similarly evident in cultural representations of food and poverty, where focus shifts from the phenomena themselves to how they are shown—as spectacles of overindulgence or deprivation. In this seminar, “porn” will be a key concept to interpret Latin American visual culture. First, we will use Porn Studies and Critical Sexuality Studies to explore representations of bodies, sexual cultures, gender, and desire. Second, we will examine Food Porn within Food Studies to consider how themes of excess and scarcity reveal complexities in food systems impacting territories and governance. Finally, we will discuss “poverty porn,” analyzing how portrayals of inequality shape public perceptions and social attitudes toward marginalization. Although “porn” is often associated with immorality and vice, such oversimplifications obscure that these “pornographies” are also industries operating as lucrative businesses, reflecting their complex cultural and economic roles.

No required textbooks available

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality

WGSS-07.21-01 Listening in East Asia

Hour: 9L **Instructor:** Yiren Zheng

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Listening Intersectionally: Considering Gender and Power in East Asia through Sound

Course Description: In this seminar, students will read and analyze a selection of philosophical, scholarly, and literary texts that explore the interconnection of sex and gender, sexuality, citizenship, power, language, and media in a wide range of historical periods in East Asia. In particular, we will focus on how such an interconnection manifests through sound, including music, accent, tone, and other sonic aspects of a linguistic communication. By combining analytical approaches from sound studies and intersectional analysis, students will see that sound and listening are not neutral, universal, and technologically determined. For example, we will explore the gender politics latent in foundational texts in theory of music and poetics from ancient China and medieval Japan; we will explore both the asymmetry and connections between the ideas of early twentieth-century Chinese feminist anarchist thinker He-Yin Zhen and those of American feminist theorist bell hooks; we will also read contemporary Korean writer Han Kang's novel *Greek Lessons* in light of recent discussions of accent and class politics in post-colonial India. Through preparatory and formal writing assignments, discussions, peer-review workshops, students will learn how to produce an original and insightful analysis of both literary and theoretical texts and develop skills in conceptual thinking.

No required textbooks available

WGSS-07.21-02 Listening in East Asia

Hour: 12 **Instructor:** Yiren Zheng

Requirements Met: WCult: None; Distrib: None

Description:

Course Title: Listening Intersectionally: Considering Gender and Power in East Asia through Sound

Course Description: In this seminar, students will read and analyze a selection of philosophical, scholarly, and literary texts that explore the interconnection of sex and gender, sexuality, citizenship, power, language, and media in a wide range of historical periods in East Asia. In particular, we will focus on how such an interconnection manifests through sound, including music, accent, tone, and other sonic aspects of a linguistic communication. By combining analytical approaches from sound studies and

intersectional analysis, students will see that sound and listening are not neutral, universal, and technologically determined. For example, we will explore the gender politics latent in foundational texts in theory of music and poetics from ancient China and medieval Japan; we will explore both the asymmetry and connections between the ideas of early twentieth-century Chinese feminist anarchist thinker He-Yin Zhen and those of American feminist theorist bell hooks; we will also read contemporary Korean writer Han Kang's novel *Greek Lessons* in light of recent discussions of accent and class politics in post-colonial India. Through preparatory and formal writing assignments, discussions, peer-review workshops, students will learn how to produce an original and insightful analysis of both literary and theoretical texts and develop skills in conceptual thinking.

No required textbooks available