This First Year Seminar will focus on failing well as a way of knowing. The course will focus on and cover the material found in the FYS Anthology. In a supplement to the anthology, we will read about and discuss how to “fail well”! Failure is something most people are terrified of experiencing. Nevertheless, failure is also a way in which people learn and grow. It is by holding failure with grace and kindness that we learn to use it as a tool for critical growth and change. In this FYS we will discuss how they should, musts, perfectionism, and other pressures impact our lives. The discussions will also focus on resiliency, compassion, mindfulness, and confidence as some of the ways to re-frame failure.

"Oh, look, a Chicken"....Those who choose this course will be invited to examine ways of knowing through embracing [little ants, carrying a morsel of food across the table] what it means to be a distracted [I smell bacon, what time is it? I’m hungry] learner as well as [OMG--I get to go to the beach this summer—warm sand under my feet] developing an awareness [I love snow caps—little dark chocolate drops with white candy thingies on them] of one's senses. The instructor teaches in the school of music, [do I hear water dripping?] so there will be an element related to that spun [spiders are amazing] into the course. [Oh, it's the fish tank behind me] Those registering for this journey may even learn to juggle. And, if you were attentive to the distractions in this description, you might pick up on another direction your professor will take those willing to explore their empirical selves.

What does it mean to know ourselves and one another in an age of constant digital connection? Exploring the impact of technology on our thinking, and on our behavior, provides an important avenue for considering how we come to know the world around us and our neighbors in it. Supplementing the readings in the First-Year Seminar Anthology, we will explore Nicholas Carr’s *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* as well as Charles Duhigg’s *The Power of Habit* in investigating the intersection of technology, behavior, empathy, and what it means to “know” one another.
Chris Brown
Ways of Knowing: "The Language of Life"

In 1953 James Watson and Francis Crick demonstrated that the molecule of heredity, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), exists as a double helix. DNA is found in all free-living organisms on earth, and it is so important to life as we know it that it has been called "The language of Life." We live in a time where we have the ability to read and even modify the DNA of humans. Pandora's Box has been opened! What will be the ramifications of making "improvements" to our DNA? What will be the outcome of selecting "preferred" embryos before they are born? How does the concept of heredity at the DNA level affect our sense of identity and belonging with regards to race and cultural heritage? Will the ability to extend life and cure disease be a benefit for all mankind, or will it further separate the "Haves" from the "Have-Nots?" We will examine advances in human biology to address the many questions of just what it means to be human and how far we should be willing to go in our quest for immortality and perfection.

Manual Cruz
Life, Power and the Death of God

How does our experience of life, power, and desire open the way for faith and religion? Modern thinkers have recognized that these same aspects of the human condition can also give way to despair and loss of faith, tragically expressed in the phrase, "God is dead." The course engages this thorny paradox: how can the modern experience of life build but yet also tear down the meaningful possibility of religion and faith as a way of life? To approach this paradox, one must delve into the basic desires of human beings. Is the human desire for happiness meaningful? What about justice and love – are these meaningful ideas or realities? Is true life found in a desire for power and domination? Do science and technology fulfill our natural desire to know and understand life? What kind of knowledge or experience could satisfy our desire to know ourselves? Moreover, what's God got to do with it? By reading the works of spiritual and anti-spiritual iconoclasts – mathematicians, philosophers, novelists, scientists, – the course will examine how our ways of knowing and ways of life create (and potentially distort) the meaningful possibility of religion.

David Schreiber
Survival of the Fittest in a Creative World

What does ‘creativity’ mean to you? Maybe, it is the way you think, dance, draw or solve problems? Or the way you live, learn, or challenge yourself? ‘A truly liberal education is one that prepares us to live responsible, productive, and CREATIVE lives (AACU). Through the lens of ‘creativity’ we will explore the origins of what it means to ‘be creative’, learn the creative process, how to embrace and encourage creativity and study some of the greatest creative works from film directors, actresses, musicians, singers, advertisers and business gurus. By tapping into our imaginative & innovative potential we will explore and expand our thinking while stretching the limits to solving problems thoughtfully and creatively. Encountering this theme will enhance your understanding of “ways of knowing” by enabling you to think, learn and express
Noel Boyle

**Ways of Knowing: Late Fifth Century Athens BCE**

Between 430 to 399 BCE, the Peloponnesian war was fought and ultimately lost, Socrates taught and was eventually executed, and Plato set his philosophical dialogs. The history, literature, philosophy, and culture of those few decades still resonate twenty-five centuries later. Moreover, they set a provocative context for considering the cultural, philosophical, and political questions of our own times. Supplementing the readings in the First-Year Seminar Anthology, we will use Mary Renault’s historical-fictional novel, *The Last of the Wine* to set a dramatic and narrative context. However, most of our readings will be from ancient Greek sources: Sophocles, Plato, Thucydides, and Xenophon. This inter-disciplinary encounter with late fifth century Athens will further elucidate the nature of the liberal arts, while offering a rigorous encounter with college level reading material.

Douglas R. Bisson

**Denying the Holocaust: How we know what isn’t so**

Who says the Holocaust never happened and why do they say it? What arguments do these deniers present to support their claims? Is there a difference between “Holocaust revision” and “Holocaust denial?” What answers have been made to the claims of the Holocaust deniers? What are the motives of Holocaust deniers?

This course will explore the larger theme of “ways of knowing” by acquainting students with the methods of historians and showing how the latter use written documents, eyewitness testimony, photographs, physical evidence and demographic data to demonstrate that the Holocaust actually occurred.

Judy Bullington

**Visual Intelligence & Critical Perception in the 21st Century**

Humans developed two fundamental systems for documenting, exploring, understanding and communicating ideas about the complex world in which they lived. The first involved drawing images on rock surfaces which significantly pre-dated the second system of written language that ushered in the historic era. Even in the 21st century, we still use the English-language idiom of “a picture is worth a thousand words” to suggest image-making is somehow more effective in conveying the meaning and essence of ideas. In truth, the art of visual reading and reading visually are different, yet parallel, systems of expression meant to capture the creativity and scope of human imagination. This seminar explores critical perceptions which emerge when ideas captured in liberal arts literary texts are contextualized and aligned with case studies from the visual arts. The scope of material ranges from historical to contemporary and is multi-disciplinary and global. Ways of seeing-through-images and comparatively analyzing them as counterpoints to a broad selection of ideas drawn from literary sources are
explored. Emphasis is placed on developing and enhancing experiential and holistic knowledge gained through the discovery of social, natural, intellectual and visual diversity.

John Niedzwiecki
**Science and the freedom at ask questions**

Description: What came first Science or the Enlightenment? Core to the scientific method is the ability to ask questions, and then accept the conclusions drawn from empirical data. Traditionally many thought that with political freedom came the opportunity to ask questions and then science developed, while others suggest that in order to profit from Science, political powers allowed the freedom of inquiry of science, and that eventually led to the more general concept of free inquiry and freedom of conscience. Either way science or the freedom to pursue questions and answers has been key to the scientific revolution over the past 400-500 years. Innovation, efficiency and improvement in any field comes more from the willingness to creatively and humbly ask new and disruptive questions, not from "knowing the answers". History in general and development in any field is a push and pull between established "facts" and questions that disrupt "facts" and the status quo built upon those "facts". We will look at the historical development of the scientific process and scientific revolutions, and see how the same openness to questioning and testing can lead to the development of new and better knowledge, government, business plans or artistic insights. The key insight of science is to question answers, and provisionally accept the conclusions we find, until we ask and tentatively answer the next set of questions. The scientific process has been successful enough that many fields emulate this process. Knowledge comes from knowing how to ask questions rather than mastery of any set of facts.

Nathan Griffith
**Unconventional Wisdom, or How to Become a Stand-Up Skeptic**

If hell is other people, think of this course as asbestos underpants. One of the things we cannot escape is the need to work together with other people to accomplish tasks we can’t manage individually. To do this successfully, we need to understand how we relate to reality (so that we can communicate with each other) as well as how we relate to each other (so that we can adjust our behavior). So, we will begin by asking how and why we produce knowledge. The answers to that question then tell us what it means to be an educated person, which leads to the question of what it means to be a citizen in a democracy. And part of what that means is having to act in concert with other individuals, so we will also look at causes and patterns in human behavior, and how to use a knowledge of them to solve the problems that bedevil collective action.

Chris Agans
**Ways of Knowing: A Look Within Ourselves and Others**

In this section of First-Year Seminar, the core theme will be supplemented with a focus on “Looking Within” at mankind’s common search and struggle for happiness through an examination of needs, desires, strengths, passions, and purpose by turning awareness to each
individual’s mind and exploring the minds of others. Supplementing the readings in the First-Year Seminar Anthology, we will read Matthew Kelly’s New York Times Best Seller “The Rhythm of Life” and will utilize Gallup’s “Strengthsfinder” assessment to bring into focus who we are as individuals and why we are here through self-examination activities and discussions, as well as how we can better understand and live with those around us through the art of listening, asking critical questions, researching, and sharing experiences to ultimately become the “best version of ourselves”.

Davon Ferrara

**Ways of Knowing: Science and the Search for Truth**

Since the time of Galileo, the rapid advances in science has made the foundational theories of our universe difficult to grasp by all but highly-trained specialists. This separation between scientists and other disciplines represents a challenge for society that increasingly relies on scientific knowledge for the development of technology and enacting government policy. A poor understanding of the scientific method often leads the non-scientist to dismiss well-established scientific claims as “just a theory” while accepting poorly tested science. In this course, we will explore how knowledge is generated across the liberal arts using our First-Year Seminar Anthology, while supplementing the readings with selections that will help us understand the concept of Truth in science, the importance of experiment, and how progress in science is made. Scientific theories such as General Relativity, Quantum Field Theory, the Big Bang and other foundational ideas will briefly be discussed as conceptual examples. As this year marks the 100th birthday of the late Richard Feynman, we will also use examples from his life and work to understand what it means to be “a life-long learner,” which is a goal of a liberal education.

Tabby Bewley

**Ways of Knowing: ‘For the Love of a Dog’**

When we are quite enough, freed from all our inner noise and chatter, we can see with new respect the natural beauty and wisdom of the world around us and appreciate our ties to it. Such perceptive silence opens up our lives to healthy reverence and awe for all things; it creates a capacity for acceptance that is both humanizing and life giving.

*The Monks of New Skete, 2011*

In this First Year Seminar course, the students will be challenged to reexamine attitudes about everything, including dogs. Supplementing the readings in the First Year Seminar Anthology, we will use Larry Levin’s non-fictional writing about an abused dog who forms an unbreakable bond with his family. In addition, we will read Emma Pearse fictional novel, *Sophie* that tells the story of loyalty and the power of human-animal relationships. To appreciate our ties to the world around us through the eyes of an animal.
Mona Ivey-Soto
**Talk about It, Be About It: Exploring Race, Class and Gender Inequality in Society**

This interactive, highly engaging discussion based course will guide students through the deep and complex understanding of historical and current policies and practices that have built and maintained an inequitable society. As a way of knowing and being in this world, we will explore how race/racism, social class and gender bias have contributed to injustice in the many systems we live in and by today (education, housing, criminal justice, employment etc.). Particular emphasis will be placed on developing skills and strategies of advocacy and ally ship in dismantling injustice and rebuilding a more just and equitable world.

Erin Pryor
**The Permanence of Inequality?**

First-Year Seminar (FYS) is designed to introduce students to an academic conversation and as a gateway to help students intellectually transition to our challenging academic community. The primary goal of FYS is to increase both awareness and use of multiple ways of knowing. This section will focus on understanding social inequality. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, we will explore ways of knowing related to our social structural position and the social construction of difference. Specifically, students will examine social constructions of race, class and gender to analyze the creation and perpetuation of social inequality. This exploration will be accomplished through extensive reading requirements, multiple writing assignments and thoughtful discussion within a seminar style course structure.

Francesca Muccini
**“Ciao bella!” Italy in Movies.**

This course will provide a portrayal of Italy's rich cultural heritage through some of the most iconic Italian and American movies. Supplementing the readings in the First-Year-Seminar Anthology, we will read Italo Calvino’s novel Mr. Palomar. Italo Calvino’s Mr. Palomar looks at the sky, his lawn, the sea, starlings, tortoises, Roman rooftops, a girl, giraffes, and much else. He wants only to observe and to learn from creatures and things. Like Mr. Palomar, we will learn about Italian culture by carefully watching and understanding its most famous cinematic productions.

Melanie Walton
**Our Postmodern Condition**

What is the condition of knowledge today? Has there not been a withdrawal of *the real* that cracked reality’s smooth veneer, revealed a roil from which ‘many truths’—fake truths, your truths, my truths, all but true truths—gushed, pained and pleased us, left us ‘best informed’ and least capable of commitment to certainty, in a “crisis of narratives,” longing fractured for lullabies of unity but with “incredulity toward metanarratives”? This is the “postmodern condition:” culture’s state after all its rules changed, revealed reality as infinitely deep,
individually ephemeral webs of rules, codes, orders—a state best grasped as a mood. So, how does it feel? How’s our relationship to/with knowledge today as we stand before it, in it, knocked down, raised up by it? How do we live it, think it, feel our ways in, through it? Using postmodernism’s defining text and premise of knowledge-existence-aesthetics’ inextricable relation, we will explore “ways of knowing” (First-Year Seminar’s theme) uniting theory/practice through interdisciplinary reflections on education, cultural critique, knowledge models, and alternate world views.

Joy Kimmons

**Leadership Habits and Attitudes: The Art of Navigating Transitions**

Let’s take a trip. What’s the territory? Life. What’s the means of transportation? Images. Life is full of transitions—from middle school to high school; from high school to college; from college to career. Each transition is an opportunity to establish great habits. The goal of this course is to help get you where you want to go. Images like Windshields and Rearview Mirrors, Compass or GPS, Tollbooths or Roadblocks, Travel Agents or Tour Guides, Shortcut or Second Mile are used to examine thirteen vital principles on how to handle major changes or transitions in life. Using Dr. Tim Elmore’s Habitudes for the Journey: Images That Form Leadership Habits & Attitudes, we will use The Art of Navigating Transitions as our discussion guide.

Mitchell McCoy

**How Will My Liberal Arts Education Shape My Identity?**

What is Liberal Arts education? What is it good for? The anthology for our seminar will help us begin to answer these questions and others, and provide a path for considering how to approach the intellectual journey that is a four year college degree. Additionally we will work together to consider the idea of identity: what it is, how we understand it, how knowing and interacting with others shapes who we are. We will intersperse our Belmont anthology readings with *The Principles of Uncertainty* by Maira Kalman whose unique illustrations and quirky ways of considering life, history and her own personal experiences might help us better understand our own identities. The book has been described as follows: “An irresistible invitation to experience life through a beloved artist's psyche, *The Principles of Uncertainty* is a compilation of Maira Kalman’s *New York Times* columns. Part personal narrative, part documentary, part travelogue, part chapbook, and all Kalman, these brilliant, whimsical paintings, ideas, and images - which initially appear random - ultimately form an intricately interconnected worldview, an idiosyncratic inner monologue.”

Lauren Lunsford

**Whatever happened to Ferris Bueller?**

Did he become the CEO of an innovative company or a deadbeat destined to live at home with his parents forever? Was quick witted Ferris the ultimate goof off or ahead of his peers and wise beyond his years? What made school so repelling to Ferris? How do our classroom experiences impact who we become? How do we learn and who influences the process the most? This seminar will explore the role that schools play in how we learn and who
we become by examining current national data and findings, fictional characters, and ourselves. Readings will include *Smartest Kids in the World and how they got that way* by Amanda Ripley, *How We Learn and Why It Happens* by Benedict Carey, and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire.

Ken Corbit

**Learning through laughter**

Learning through laughter: An interdisciplinary approach to cultural and diversity education. This course will be an inclusion of the anthology to express the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to learning, then utilized diverse stand-up comics to establish unique narratives of cultural, race and religion. Students will work in teams in order to choose the specific comics and present case studies and class demonstrations specific to the narrative.

Jimmy Davis

**Having a Mind of Your Own**

Among the many ways to describe people one of the most compelling, to me, is that people are creatures of “want.” Humans are able to mix together “needs” and “desires” and “drives” to create a complex web of “wants” that make them (us) difficult to understand. You’d think that our “wants” come from inside ourselves but it’s not clear that this is really true. For example, there was a time in my life when I had no desire for a cell phone, but now I want a new one every couple of years. To what extent is this desire something I generated on my own and to what extent is this desire the result of larger cultural forces acting upon me? This is the driving question behind this First Year Seminar. In the end it’s a very personal question because it asks us to explore our own motivations and actions. Our reading and discussion will include a wide variety of short essays from the and reports as well as two books: *My Name is Asher Lev* (Potok), and *Ishmael* (Quinn).

Dana Drew Shaw

**Sport and Culture**

Sports are an integral part of culture. Whether a participant or spectator, the social impact of sport on culture can be traced throughout history, analyzed in real time, and fashioned as to the future. Sport influences culture in numerous ways including but not limited to encouraging health and wellness, promoting political agendas, addressing human rights issues, generating business, and uniting diverse groups of people. In addition to the readings of the First-Year Seminar Anthology, additional readings examine sports leagues, collegiate and interscholastic sports in the United States (*Why Football Matters*), and international sport issues (*Invictus*) as well as how successful teams/organizations build culture (*The Culture Code*). This course will take a deep dive into the influence of sport as it is woven through the global culture.
Kevin Trowbridge

In the Mirror and Beyond: To Know as We Are Known

Created in God’s image, we were made as social beings to live in relationship with others and the world around us. We are malleable creatures and our interactions shape us just as much—if not more—than we shape our world. We have been charged to care for one another and the rest of creation. But, how can we care for something we do not know? The Apostle Paul described our knowledge like “puzzling reflections in a mirror.” He wrote, “All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely” (1 Corinthians 13:12 NLT).

This seminar will explore ways of knowing and understanding reality—specifically through the lens of social construction. You will discover more about who you are and how you relate to the world. We will consider our responsibilities for and ways of knowing and co-creating the world in which we live. You will be encouraged to view your continuing educational pursuits as a spiritual journey. Our calling for this season is a virtuous one. “The deepest wellspring of our desire to know,” Parker Palmer wrote, “is the passion to recreate the organic community in which the world was first created.”

Cheryl Slay Carr

Ways of Knowing: Race and the Film Industry

The way we see others is often reflected in the media and in turn can have a cyclic effect on the way we see ourselves and how our culture and its values are shaped. Motion pictures and the film industry provide a context for contemplating how readily we accept or challenge those images, their messaging, and their impact. This course offers the opportunity to explore how U.S. films depict Americans, American culture, and the racial history of the United States by examining film content and the way films are produced, marketed, and distributed. Inclusion, stereotypes, implicit bias, and cultural studies in the context of race, as well as concepts related to the film industry are amongst the ideological frameworks that form the basis for the course’s exercises in critical thinking and analysis. America On Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality At the Movies, by Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin is the textbook that will supplement the readings in the First-Year Seminar Anthology. Several films will also be assigned and viewed to elucidate the course content, and are as integral to the course as the assigned readings.

Dorian Harrison

Exploring our childlike truths

This course is designed as a critical examination of how we’ve come to know the world by investigating our experiences as children. Through the use of children's literature, the anthology, and other texts we will take a reflective journey back in time.
Mark Hogan
“Was, Am, Will Be”

This FYS focus is looking at identity as a way of knowing, particularly knowing oneself and how that frames knowledge and socio-vocational development. Students will look at their identity as it has been shaped (Was) and then who they are today (Am), and finally project goals to frame who they will become in the future (Will Be).

Bonnie Riechert
One Ounce of Truth

Part protest and part celebration. That’s one way of describing the poetry of Nikki Giovanni, who has written dozens of books over the past several decades. She’s been described as a national treasure, and she will speak on our campus Sept. 23. One of her untitled poems begins: “One ounce of truth benefits like ripples on a pond . . .” The class will explore some of her best-known and most recent works, inviting us to find “one ounce of truth” and consider ways it can benefit “like ripples on a pond.” The class will also consider themes in Tom Rath’s books on Well Being: The Five Essential Elements and Vital Friends: The People You Can’t Afford to Live Without. He provides guidance for maintaining healthy careers, relationships, finances, physical health and community wellbeing.

Rachel Flynn Hopper
Ways of Knowing: Mindset

When faced with the ups and downs, challenges, victories and unknowns of life, how do you respond? Throughout this course, we will explore how life experiences can shape mindset, and discover how resilience, vulnerability, self-reflection, contextual understanding, and a growth mindset can contribute to success by going beyond the known and looking inside for strength, wisdom, and light. We will uncover various ways of knowing through engaging class discussions, personal reflections, co-curricular activities, and the reading of thought provoking and award winning fiction and nonfiction works, including the FYS Anthology, Carol Dweck’s Mindset: The New Psychology of Success and the Newbery Award winning novel, A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L’Engle.

Chris Brown
"The Language of Life"

In 1953 James Watson and Francis Crick demonstrated that the molecule of heredity, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), exists as a double helix. DNA is found in all free-living organisms on earth, and it is so important to life as we know it that it has been called "The language of Life." We live in a time where we have the ability to read and even modify the DNA of humans. Pandora’s Box has been opened! What will be the ramifications of making "improvements" to our DNA? What will be the outcome of selecting "preferred" embryos before they are born? How does the concept of heredity at the DNA level affect our sense of identity and belonging with
regards to race and cultural heritage? Will the ability to extend life and cure disease be a benefit for all mankind, or will it further separate the "Haves" from the "Have-Nots?" We will examine advances in human biology to address the many questions of just what it means to be human and how far we should be willing to go in our quest for immortality and perfection.

Ann Coble

**Harry Potter and the Hero’s Quest**

This class will use Joseph Campbell’s theories of the hero’s quest to analyze five of the Harry Potter books and two of the Harry Potter films. We will research the Harry Potter phenomena by reading scholarly articles as well as popular literature. If you are a Harry Potter fan, this class is for you! Students need to be aware that this class has a heavy reading load. In addition to the Harry Potter books, we will be reading two other books, including the common book, The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures.

David Dark

"Ways of Knowing": Weird Religious Background

In the exchanges we overhear when people discuss the state of the world in public, in private, and on screens large and small, religion is often the radioactive elephant in the room. As an almost impossibly broad term forever springing leaks, religion can be the ultimate conversation stopper even as it occasionally marks the beginning of a breakthrough. It flips the script of whatever it is we think we have in mind and seems to render mad the otherwise thoughtful and decent people it gets hold of. Religion. What is it good for? Is it possible to even talk about it without losing our critical faculties?

Patrick Schneider

“Sleep, Eat, Move”

This course will examine some simple, yet effective strategies for encouraging students to sleep sufficiently, eat wisely and move often. These three behaviors are instrumental in shaping one’s quality and quantity of life. As a first year student it will be important to establish some consistently healthy behaviors and understand how small changes in the areas of sleeping, eating, and moving can lead to bigger results over the short and long-term. In addition, we will also examine factors that influence some of the dietary decisions we make on a daily basis. We will discuss how variables like packaging, plate/container size, labels, colors, and smells influence the over 200 decisions we make about food each day.
Joshua Riedel  
**Exploring our Belonging to God, Others, and Self**

Everyone has a desire to belong, and at some point in our lives we experience exclusion and feel the pain of not belonging. While the desire to belong is common to all, we don't often take time to explore what it is we are actually looking for in belonging. In this course we will critically examine the idea of belonging and explore the question "what does it mean to belong?"

What does it mean to belong to God? To others? Who gets to decide what it means to belong? What inhibits belonging? We will explore these questions, among others, from a variety of perspectives including theology, literature, film, psychology, and personal reflection. This course is highly interactive with regular class discussion and reflection.

Amy Bertram  
**Ways of Knowing: Fantasy Narratives and Graphic Novels**

Through a consideration of two beloved fantasy novels and two historically based graphic novels, we will consider the human condition in fiction and reality, including topics such as racism, sexism, and other forms of social and structural inequality. Both *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L’Engle and *The Two Towers* by J. R. R. Tolkien are part of literary trilogies, and also have been adapted to cinema. Readings and screenings of these texts will inform lively classroom discussions that analyze and contextualize the content in order to better understand the use and intent of the fantasy format. With *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale: My Father Bleeds History* by Art Spiegelman and *March: Book One* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell, we encounter the impact of visualizing historic atrocities in the graphic novel format, while also considering cinematic documentations and depictions of some the actual events portrayed. We will again explore issues of social inequality, but in the real, historical context of the Holocaust and Civil Rights. Combined with the First Year Seminar anthology, this course asks students to read and think deeply by developing key critical and analytical tools that will help them throughout their college career and as lifelong learners.

Martha Minardi  
**Ways of Knowing – Faith, Voodoo, and Development: An In-depth Look at Haiti**

Students will study the subjects of faith, voodoo, development with a particular concentration on Haiti. A 2010 earthquake devastated parts of Haiti. The history of Haiti will be studied to consider how the nation’s history contributed to not only to the massive destruction, but the recovery efforts, as well. A great deal of money was given to the earthquake recovery. How has that money been used? The concept of long term development and best practices will be explored. Voodoo is a reality that plagues the people of Haiti. The connection of this religion to Haiti’s history and current situation will be explored. Haitian natives who now live in the US may be scheduled as guest speakers. Ways of knowing as related to critical thinking will be interwoven into the course materials. The reading list for this class includes: *When Helping Hurts, Longing to Know* and *Ways of Knowing: First Year Seminar Anthology*. 

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Cate Loes
“The best version of yourself.”

In this particular section of First-Year Seminar, that core theme will be supplemented with a focus on “The best version of yourself.” Encountering this theme will enhance understanding of “ways of knowing” by examining how our life’s experiences may shape our decisions and the ways to seek wisdom to choose the paths we take in our lives. In turn, these pathways of knowledge may lead us to our true calling or vocation.

Barry Padgett
“Becoming a Person.”

The primary goal of this course is to increase your recognition, appreciation, and use of multiple ways of knowing.

This topic-based seminar addresses the purpose of a liberal education, issues of teaching and learning, and "ways of knowing" - both within and beyond the university. It is an intensive course that will involve a substantial number of readings and several written assignments. This course is designed to help entering first-year students make the academic transition to the Belmont University intellectual community by engaging them in challenging readings and ideas, while providing them with significant opportunities to practice critical thinking. It is to be taken in the same semester as First-Year Writing.

Andy Watts
Neither Wolves nor Dogs

Is knowledge autonomous, fixed and permanent like, as many argue, the instincts of wolves? Or is knowledge dependent, adaptive and changing like the many personalities and qualities of dogs? How is it influenced by history telling and power dynamics? This section of First-Year Seminar will provide an encounter with storytelling and ‘American’ identity. Here, ways of knowing about ourselves and our socio-cultural realities in ‘America’ are explored through the eyes of Lakota citizens. *Neither Wolf nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder* by Kent Nerburn frames knowledge as a process of relating to others and one’s self, and history as a way of life. *The Journey of Crazy Horse: A Lakota History* by Joseph M. Marshall III frames history as storytelling and knowledge as a living tradition.

Daniel Schafer
UFOs, Conspiracy Theories, and the Age of Unreason

Today’s world is full of pseudoscience, bogus medical claims, pseudohistory, historical fantasies, conspiracy theories, fake news, political propaganda, superstition, lies, delusions, and unreason of all kinds. Some of this is harmless. But fictional or irrational views of the world result in poor public policy and can be used to justify prejudice, discrimination, and violence. The Holocaust happened in part because Germany’s leader embraced conspiracy theories about the Jews; fanaticism is almost always based on fantasy. If we want to live our lives based on reality,
we need ways to determine what is true and real amongst all the smoke and mirrors, or at least to just identify the baloney. This course will equip you with a functioning “baloney detector” – ways to recognize the bogus arguments, logical fallacies, and rhetorical tricks used by the purveyors of nonsense. We will also explore how scientists and other scholars decide which claims are probably more truthful than others. Readings for this semester will include *UFOs, Chemtrails, and Aliens: What Science Says* by Donald R. Prothero and Timothy D. Callahan, and *Voodoo Histories: The Role of Conspiracy Theory in Shaping Modern History* by David Aaronovitch.

Paul Gatrell  
**Lost in La La Land**

The movie *Lost in La La Land* was a surprise hit, garnering many awards in 2017. Conventional wisdom held that the movie musical was dead; the team behind this film took a big risk in realizing its creative vision.

The creative act in and of itself is a dangerous one. The creative individual, in the arts or any type of endeavor, makes something new that may or may not fulfill its intended purpose. We will explore creativity as a way of knowing the world. How can we creatively approach life, both our work and our play, and in doing so deepen our experience of it?

James Al-Shamma  
**Creativity and the Arts**

We will explore ways in which creativity is integral to any endeavor and also the means by which humans understand and describe the world and their experiences through artistic expression. Activities will address specific art forms to include theatre and the visual arts. Students will have the opportunity to examine and develop their own creative process, in relation to the arts and other ventures.

Brad Schleben  
**“Trust and Vulnerability”**

This seminar will explore the nature of trust, as well as related questions of power, morality, privilege, and wisdom. We will examine many factors that affect our willingness to be vulnerable: how we form trust, how we identify trustworthiness, how it shapes our actions, when do we recognize it being violated and how we respond.

Throughout the seminar, we will take a closer look at many of the factors influencing trust amongst individuals, communities, and social institutions - including corporate manipulation, religious conflict, personal morality, and pseudoscience. We will discuss and debate important personal, political, and scientific issues in order to better understand these dynamics and reflect on our role in both the formation and betrayal of trust.
Mark Anderson
“Thinking Life.”

In this class we will think, read, talk, and write about what it means to be a thinker, to live as a thinker, and not just as a thinker but a creative thinker. We will engage primarily with philosophical texts that address and exhibit the characteristics of creative thinking and living.

David Bridges
Love and Laughter...are they important?

Love and Laughter...are they important? With discussion, readings, video, film, music, and other media, we will explore what love and laughter are and how to bring love and laughter (humor) to others, especially those that are very different from us.

We will discuss the following:

The various definitions of love and humor, how they have evolved, and what they mean in our current culture

Is love an act of will versus a pleasurable feeling that one might have toward a person or thing?

What makes us laugh?

Is humor different for every person of group?

Can humor/laughter about a person or group be painful/inappropriate?

What is authentic self-love versus narcissism?

What ways we can bring love and laughter to others?

Susan Jellissen
Political Dystopias: Real and Imagined

Building on the themes laid out in the FYS Anthology, this course will examine the general question of political order. We seek to accomplish this through a survey of literature and film, including The Republic, 1984, Brave New World, and Network.

Christie Kleinmann
Renegades Wanted

RENEGADES WANTED: Individuals willing to question reality and illuminate the influences that mold our perceptions. In this session, students will examine the lives and writings of renegades and their influence on our understanding of self, our relationships with others, our journey of faith, and our role in society.
Peter Kuryla
**How Do We Know What's There and What Isn't? The Epistemology of Haunted Houses**

In this course, we'll read several books about haunting and haunted houses, among others Mark Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*, Edgar Allen Poe’s *Fall of the House of Usher*, Henry James’ *Turn of the Screw*, and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. We'll consider carefully what it means to rely on sense perception as a way of knowing, and what it means to doubt one’s senses. We'll also talk about the conceptual work that ghost stories do for a culture or a person.

Virginia Lamothe
**“Old Stories Made New, and What They Have to Offer You!”**

This reading-intensive First Year Seminar class will explore Ways of Knowing by reading modern fiction books that are based on ancient tales. Each of these novels presents what is “real” in many mysterious ways, and begs us to question “how do we really know what we know?” These books include Robin Sloan’s *Mr. Penumbra’s 24 Hour Bookstore* (2012), Karen Russell’s *Swamplandia!* (2011) and Paolo Coelho’s *The Alchemist* (1988). We will also spend time reading the First Year Seminar Anthology and other co-curricular activities. This class involves the participation of every member of the class in order to see new and insightful points of view.

David Tough
**Big Data: The Great Algorithm**

In this particular section of First-Year Seminar – Big Data: The Great Algorithm – The core theme will be supplemented with a specified focus on student understanding of how data science is often used in critical decision making in today’s society. Modern models of “ways of knowing” will be compared and contrasted with those from the past. Specifically, students will examine how algorithms and computer decision-making directly affects everyone’s lives in the 21st century; from predicting the qualities of hit commercial songs, to applying for a car loan. This exploration will be accomplished through extensive reading assignments, multiple writing assignments and thoughtful discussion.

Beth Ritter Conn
**You Are What You Eat: Food, Faith, Ethics, and Identity**

Sara Miles, a cook-turned-journalist-turned-activist-turned-theologian, says that she “had understood the world, first and best, by putting it in [her] mouth” (Take This Bread, p. 60). To examine the way we eat is essentially to examine the way we live and, by extension, the ways we come to know the world. In this section of First-Year Seminar, we will study the food system (both local and global); learn about hunger and food insecurity in Nashville, the U.S., and abroad; explore the economic, political, and practical dimensions of farming and sustainability; contemplate the role food plays in ritual and religious life, both Christian and otherwise; consider ways our personal eating choices both shape and are shaped by our particular social locations.
and identity markers (race, sex, class, religion, etc.); and maybe even share a few meals—with some Nashville neighbors and with one another—along the way.

Charmion Gustke

“Ways of Knowing”: The Pros and Cons of Marxism

Marxism, the material analysis of class struggles, offers many insights into the social thought behind the power relations structuring our current social, political, and cultural challenges. Karl Marx understood the way in which economics, more specifically, money, affects all aspects of our life: what we eat, how we learn, what we see, how we travel, what we wear, what and how we think, where we live, and, of course, how we live. There is virtually no facet of our daily life that is not somehow shaped by the material realities of the world in which we live. But Marxism, like any theory or philosophy, has its shortcomings, and for many, cannot encompass the vast territory spanning across our global capital market.

To what extent Marx was “right” will be for you determine. Regardless of what you decide or where you land, my hope is that you will have the power and knowledge to choose your next purchase wisely. Buyer beware: this course intends to change the way you consume information, goods, technology, knowledge, media, and images.

With close readings by Marx, and other scholars and writers from various backgrounds, we will explore both the pros and cons of Marxism in order to formulate new approaches to “ways of knowing,” seeking to understand how capital works, and how we work for capital.

Focusing on socially specific themes in literature, consumerism, the visual arts, and language, we examine individual knowledge and cultural practices in relation to the institutions and ideologies of their environments. “Ways of knowing” will thus be presented as a fluid and evolving process in which cultural difference and representations of self are always at play.

Jane Duncan

Creativity and the Arts

We will explore ways in which creativity is integral to any endeavor and also the means by which humans understand and describe the world and their experiences through artistic expression. Activities will address specific art forms to include theatre and the visual arts. Students will have the opportunity to examine and develop their own creative process, in relation to the arts and other ventures.

Rush Hicks

An Invitation:

The primary theme of the course is “ways of knowing,” a broad theme that can go in multiple directions, each of which increases the recognition, appreciation, and capacity to use multiple ways of justifying or defending claims to knowledge. Knowledge is a critical aspect of human life, and the pursuit of knowledge is the reason that universities exist. Therefore, the best
way to start a university education is to learn about different kinds of knowledge claims, how to construct them, and how to evaluate them.

In this particular section of First-Year Seminar, that core theme will be supplemented by encouraging students to dream big. Students through awareness of their own creative abilities will incorporate culture, literature, art, entertainment and music all viewed in the context of significant historical events to help them to realize their dreams. Encountering this theme will enhance an understanding of “ways of knowing” by providing students the tools needed to enrich their lives by pursuing knowledge.