Humanity; Community; Posterity: Exploring Human Nature in Place and Time

Cicero’s term humanitas, literally “human nature,” meant the pursuit of an ideal that included humankind’s noblest aspects. That ideal influences our beliefs, our political systems and our principles of education and intellectual inquiry today. This course asks what is and is not human, what it means to be fully human, to be in community and to function with awareness of limitations in both place and time. Beginning with FYS requirements, we will also view several films as a class, including 12 Angry Men and Dead Man Walking, and we will add selected readings from Shakespeare, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, George Orwell, C. S. Lewis, Eudora Welty, and Wendell Berry. We will listen to Ernest Gaines’s A Lesson Before Dying and tackle Margaret Atwood’s speculative novel Oryx and Crake. Written and oral responses take various forms in this class and culminate in a project of the student’s choosing.

Oh, Look, A Chicken!

“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.
Caution: Curves Ahead

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 with reading, discussion, outside viewing/listening to video/recordings, etc. Encountering this theme will enhance your understanding of “ways of knowing” by becoming knowledgeable and experiencing the resources available to you relative to changes you will be experiencing in your college and adult life.

Finding Common Ground

As we move through our lives we tend to interpret information through the lens of our worldview. We often “know” things to be true or untrue in light of this lens. Increasingly it seems we may consider those who view the world from a perspective that is not our own to be morally or intellectually corrupt. This polarization is a major impediment to social justice. This class will allow students an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the perspectives of others, in an effort to find common ground, as well as reflect on how their own worldview may color this understanding. We will engage in challenging reading, writing, and co-curricular assignments that explore the views and experiences of others, especially those on the margins of society, with the aim of expanding our appreciation of ourselves and our neighbors.

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.

**TR 9:30**  
GND 1015.09  CRN 11523  
Cathy Hill

**Ways of Knowing: Pathways to Our Vocation**

Do you sometimes wonder what you are supposed to do with your life? Do you question if you have discovered your true calling and how will you know if you are on the right path? Knowledge can be its own reward but exactly how does it shape or transform us? Our work is our best opportunity to live out our vocation, where we should gain a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. This course will examine 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.

Beginning with developing an understanding of the multiple “ways of knowing,” we will then explore other ways of knowing by means of the following “pathways”: through the art of listening, asking critical questions, research, mentors, sharing others’ experiences, and by utilizing various resources and methods in discovering our strengths and developing our unique talents. As we progress through the semester, we will discover how the value of these pathways of knowledge, along with the impact of socio-economic factors, shapes our decisions and how we can make the best choices in our lives.

**TR 9:30**  
GND 1015.10  CRN 11524  
Deen Entsminger

**Oh, Look, A Chicken!**

“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.

**TR 9:30**  
GND 1015.50  CRN 12063  
Lori McGrew
Humanity; Community; Posterity: Exploring Human Nature in Place and Time

Cicero’s term humanitas, literally “human nature,” meant the pursuit of an ideal that included humankind’s noblest aspects. That ideal influences our beliefs, our political systems and our principles of education and intellectual inquiry today. This course asks what is and is not human, what it means to be fully human, to be in community and to function with awareness of limitations in both place and time. Beginning with FYS requirements, we will also view several films as a class, including 12 Angry Men and Dead Man Walking, and we will add selected readings from Shakespeare, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, George Orwell, C. S. Lewis, Eudora Welty, and Wendell Berry. We will listen to Ernest Gaines’s A Lesson before Dying and tackle Margaret Atwood’s speculative novel Oryx and Crake. Written and oral responses take various forms in this class and culminate in a project of the student’s choosing.

Politics, Lies, and Cinema: Are You Being Brainwashed?

"It's just a movie" is a foolish assumption, which denies the reality that every film has a message, some overt and others alarmingly covert. What are Hollywood and foreign cinema telling you? What do they want you to believe is "true," and what are their real agendas? Have the messages changed over the years? Students will engage with film masterpieces and a selection of lesser-known gems to grapple with ways of knowing. Featured films will present a variety of constructs through which students will analyze what we know, how we know it, and what to do when we realize that those with inordinate amounts of power might be lying to us.

In addition to the FYS common text, films we will consider are: The Third Man, The Godfather I and II, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Grand Illusion, Dazed and Confused, The Candidate, Bridge of Spies, Munich, and others.
**Politics, Lies, and Cinema: Are You Being Brainwashed?**

"It's just a movie" is a foolish assumption, which denies the reality that every film has a message, some overt and others alarmingly covert. What are Hollywood and foreign cinema telling you? What do they want you to believe is "true," and what are their real agendas? Have the messages changed over the years? Students will engage with film masterpieces and a selection of lesser-known gems to grapple with ways of knowing. Featured films will present a variety of constructs through which students will analyze what we know, how we know it, and what to do when we realize that those with inordinate amounts of power might be lying to us.

In addition to the FYS common text, films we will consider are: The Third Man, The Godfather I and II, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Grand Illusion

**From the Inside Out: Developing Our Notion of Emotion**

When you think of emotions, you probably think of a softer, more intuitive, and, perhaps, less rational part of your being. However, when was the last time you thought about what your emotional response to a situation should be in order to achieve a desired outcome or goal? Although we naturally think of emotions as being more spontaneous and intuitive in nature, they are often strategically managed and expressed by way of cultural norms and "rules" that dictate what is and is not appropriate emotive behavior. The more digitalized and mediated our communication becomes, the greater the challenges we face for conveying our emotions in ways that are authentic, accurate, and meaningful. I am sure many of us have attempted to communicate something emotively through a text, twitter or email only to realize that the emotional tone we intended to convey was not what was received! Or perhaps you have been on the receiving end of a message that was less than appropriate or meaningful. The purpose of this section is to broaden our understanding of what emotion is by examining our communication of emotion and how we come to know and understand contextually appropriate and effective ways for connecting with others.

How do different disciplines treat emotions? Are emotions more spontaneous or strategic in nature? What are the different emotive display "rules" that serve to shape our family dynamics, our socially mediated interactions, as well as our workplace and classroom behavior? How and why might these rules shift over time? Is emotional intelligence a form of knowledge we can learn or is it something we inherit from birth? Through a variety of texts (i.e., books, articles, case studies, film, live presentations), we will explore how answers to these and many other questions reflect and even redefine our existing notion of emotion.
In this particular section of the First-Year Seminar, our pursuit of understanding various ways of knowing will proceed by and through a consideration of the relationship between humankind and the rest of the natural world. While this relationship has been the subject of express consideration and debate throughout human history, our capacity to impact our physical environment has grown exponentially over the past two centuries alongside population growth and the rapid expansion of industrial activity. Over the course of the semester we will take up the question of the extent and importance of natural limits, debates over human consumption, the challenge to synthesize environmental policies and priorities as between the wealthy and poorer countries of the world, and questions surrounding the content and implications of environmental justice.

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.

Dreams have long fascinated human beings in terms of their nature, content, and purpose. They are bizarre, funny, disturbing, and creative and range from the completely outlandish to the utterly real. In this course, we will examine different theories of dreams, looking at them from the perspectives of philosophy, religion, psychology, neuroscience, and experience. We will also think about how dreams serve as a source of creativity, intellectual discovery, and self-knowledge. Drawing from these theoretical approaches as well as our own dream lives, we will learn to see dreams as an important way of knowing about ourselves, others, and the world around us.
Do you sometimes wonder what you are supposed to do with your life? Do you question if you have discovered your true calling and how will you know if you are on the right path? Knowledge can be its own reward but exactly how does it shape or transform us? Our work is our best opportunity to live out our vocation, where we should gain a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. This course will examine 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. Beginning with developing an understanding of the multiple “ways of knowing,” we will then explore other ways of knowing by means of the following “pathways”: through the art of listening, asking critical questions, research, mentors, sharing others’ experiences, and by utilizing various resources and methods in discovering our strengths and developing our unique talents. As we progress through the semester, we will discover how the value of these pathways of knowledge, along with the impact of socio-economic factors, shapes our decisions and how we can make the best choices in our lives.

You know you are enrolling in Belmont University, a campus just southwest of downtown Nashville. But even if you have lived here all your life, do you really know where you now live? And do you know where you live intellectually? These sections of First Year Seminar will focus on knowing our campus as place and academy, knowing our intellectual frameworks, and knowing our city. Through your own observation and description, you will develop your knowledge of Belmont’s campus and, through our readings in the FYS Anthology, explore the idea of a university and of a liberal arts education. In reading Blue Hole Back Home, a novel by Joy Jordan-Lake, and attending and writing about Campus Theater productions, you will reflect on how local communities accept or reject difference. In responses to our readings in the FYS Anthology, you will define your intellectual territory. You will also explore aspects of Nashville through readings and direct experience, and this will be the subject for your argumentative research project. Our classes will include discussions, campus walks, essays and research, and co-curricular learning experiences.

Among the many ways to describe humans one of the most compelling, to me, is that we 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 and reports as well as three books: *My Name is Asher Lev* (Potok), *Feed* (Anderson), and *Ishmael* (Quinn).

**TR 12:30**  
GND 1015.24  
CRN 11538

**TR 12:30**  
GND 1015.25  
CRN 11539  
Jennifer Carter

"Ways of Knowing" - both within and beyond the university

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.

**TR 12:30**  
GND 1015.26  
CRN 11540  
Timothy Ehresman

**Green Planet Blues**

In this particular section of the First-Year Seminar, our pursuit of understanding various ways of knowing will proceed by and through a consideration of the relationship between humankind and the rest of the natural world. While this relationship has been the subject of express consideration and debate throughout human history, our capacity to impact our physical environment has grown exponentially over the past two centuries alongside population growth and the rapid expansion of industrial activity. Over the course of the semester we will take up the question of the extent and importance of natural limits, debates over human consumption, the challenge to synthesize environmental policies and priorities as between the wealthy and poorer countries of the world, and questions surrounding the content and implications of environmental justice.
**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.*

**The Lives of the Heart**

We take the name of our seminar from a poem by Jane Hirschfield called “The Lives of the Heart.” In it, Hirschfield suggests that in every nook and cranny of the earth, we can encounter hearts full of ambition, courage, suffering, grief, joy, ingenuity, and death. But what does the heart have to do with knowing? All first-year seminars study ways humans “know” (or don’t) through academic disciplines, philosophical orientations, and diverse experiences. This seminar in particular explores the many ways humans try to know through storytelling, through relationships with others, and through the human body itself. We will begin by considering how stories can lead to misunderstanding or ways of not knowing, what Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie calls "the danger of [knowing through] a single story." Our seminar will tackle big questions about justice, the body, mercy, death, and happiness. And we will consider how the Western way of distinguishing mind (intellect, thinking) from heart (or emotion, feeling) can lead to unknowing.

**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.
Dreams and Dreaming

Dreams have long fascinated human beings in terms of their nature, content, and purpose. They are bizarre, funny, disturbing, and creative and range from the completely outlandish to the utterly real. In this course, we will examine different theories of dreams, looking at them from the perspectives of philosophy, religion, psychology, neuroscience, and experience. We will also think about how dreams serve as a source of creativity, intellectual discovery, and self-knowledge. Drawing from these theoretical approaches as well as our own dream lives, we will learn to see dreams as an important way of knowing about ourselves, others, and the world around us.

Ireland: Shamrocks, Shillelaghs, and Seanchais

The subtopic for this First-Year Seminar will provide an interdisciplinary look at Ireland and her people. Together we will read, write, think about, and discuss what it has meant to be Irish over the last century or so, and how it has shifted over time, and what sorts of events have contributed to the Irish identity and culture of today. Specifically, we will look at ways in which religion, politics, and culture have formed the Irish identity in both the Republic of Ireland and in the North of Ireland. Along with the required texts, there will be additional essays, articles, and handouts provided for you.

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.

**TR 2:00**  
GND 1015.36  
CRN 11695  
Jennifer Carter

"Ways of Knowing" - both within and beyond the university

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.

**TR 2:00**  
GND 1015.37  
CRN 11696  
Bonnie Smith Whitehouse

The Lives of the Heart

We take the name of our seminar from a poem by Jane Hirschfield called “The Lives of the Heart.” In it, Hirschfield suggests that in every nook and cranny of the earth, we can encounter hearts full of ambition, courage, suffering, grief, joy, ingenuity, and death. But what does the heart have to do with knowing? All first-year seminars study ways humans “know” (or don’t) through academic disciplines, philosophical orientations, and diverse experiences. This seminar in particular explores the many ways humans try to know through storytelling, through relationships with others, and through the human body itself. We will begin by considering how stories can lead to misunderstanding or ways of not knowing, what Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie calls “the danger of [knowing through] a single story.” Our seminar will tackle big questions about justice, the body, mercy, death, and happiness. And we will consider how the Western way of distinguishing mind (intellect, thinking) from heart (or emotion, feeling) can lead to unknowing.

**TR 2:00**  
GND 1015.38  
CRN 11697

**TR 2:00**  
GND 1015.39  
CRN 11698  
Marcia McDonald

Local Knowledge: ourselves, our campus, our Nashville

You know you are enrolling in Belmont University, a campus just southwest of downtown Nashville. But even if you have lived here all your life, do you really know where you now live?
And do you know where you live intellectually? These sections of First Year Seminar will focus on knowing our campus as place and academy, knowing our intellectual frameworks, and knowing our city. Through your own observation and description, you will develop your knowledge of Belmont’s campus and, through our readings in the FYS Anthology, explore the idea of a university and of a liberal arts education. In reading Blue Hole Back Home, a novel by Joy Jordan-Lake, and attending and writing about Campus Theater productions, you will reflect on how local communities accept or reject difference. In responses to our readings in the FYS Anthology, you will define your intellectual territory. You will also explore aspects of Nashville through readings and direct experience, and this will be the subject for your argumentative research project. Our classes will include discussions, campus walks, essays and research, and co-curricular learning experiences.

**TR 3:30**
GND 1015.40      CRN 11699
Christy Ridings

**Ways of Knowing: Perspectives of God, Ourselves and Others**

What shapes our own stories? How do we listen to the stories of others? This course will help introduce students to critical reflection and dialogue through the lens of narrative. We will explore the significant aspects that contribute to our own personal narratives as well as how those narratives fit into a larger story. This course is designed to help students deepen their sense of self, articulate their personal narrative and broaden their connection to the community around them through shared ways of knowing.

**TR 3:30**
GND 1015.42      CRN 11700
Kimberly Balding

**Ireland: Shamrocks, Shillelaghs, and Seanchais**

The subtopic for this First-Year Seminar will provide an interdisciplinary look at Ireland and her people. Together we will read, write, think about, and discuss what it has meant to be Irish over the last century or so, and how it has shifted over time, and what sorts of events have contributed to the Irish identity and culture of today. Specifically, we will look at ways in which religion, politics, and culture have formed the Irish identity in both the Republic of Ireland and in the North of Ireland. Along with the required texts, there will be additional essays, articles, and handouts provided for you.

**TR 3:30**
GND 1015.43      CRN 11701
Ken Corbit

**TR 3:30**
GND 1015.44      CRN 12058
"Ways of Knowing" - both within and beyond the university

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.

Fake News and True History of the Ancient World

What is the job of a historian? Like modern investigative journalists, historians have long been expected to travel, interview sources, and engage in research. While even Herodotus, the Greek father of history, sought to discover and report the truth, the best historians have always faced great difficulties in gathering accurate information and have, whether intentionally or not, shaped their narratives to fit their own world views. Moreover, completely fake and heavily biased histories were well known and popular in the ancient world just as fake news is today. In the face of this, how do we judge truth in history? In addition to the core anthology, we will be reading selections from some of the most influential historians of the ancient world and will examine in detail how they approach the problem of reporting the "truth" when opinions vary, and sources are questionable or missing.

Faith & Science

In addition to the primary focus of this course—various ways of knowing and arriving at truth—the complementary theme will be the intersection of modern science, reason, and faith. We will explore whether and/or how these ideas are compatible, the importance of worldviews in the interpretation of data, specific issues in the ongoing debate, and how scientists grapple with these issues in theory and practice. Students in the College of Sciences and Mathematics or those majoring in Nursing or Audio Engineering Technology are eligible for enrollment.
### “Becoming a Person.”

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

From Belmont’s Undergraduate Catalog:

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.

### Faith, Vodou, and Development in Haiti

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 with the study of faith, vodou, and development in Haiti.

### Individuals, Actions, Decisions

Drawing on student suggested themes from my Fall 2016 FYS, the topic of this course is looking out of the past and into the future. We will explore how individuals shape the future, how actions determine or influence future choices, and how decisions are formed and evaluated within the contexts of cultures, personality, and ways of knowing. We will embrace the educational role playing game on the French Revolution as a means of exploring the roles of custom, language, and ideology in causing and reacting to change and large and small scale transformation. Using the works of Johansson and Weber, we will explore how to find the gaps in what we know and what we do and how to develop solutions to future problems, before they are fully developed by reading the “signals” that are around us.
Knowing Yourself: A Fascinating Lifelong Study

Self-knowledge and your worldview are the lenses through which you learn everything. Self-exploration is continual as you change and as you are influenced by relationships, knowledge, environments, religion, challenges, health, emotions, work, and more. This course focuses on how you develop and learn about yourself through culture, nature, adversity, faith, character, and creativity. Readings include NY Times bestselling books by contemporary authors, as well as classic literature by such writers as Plato, Emerson, Dickinson, and DuBois, that raise questions and offer insights into understanding yourself (and others, too).

Individuals, Actions, Decisions

Drawing on student suggested themes from my Fall 2016 FYS, the topic of this course is looking out of the past and into the future. We will explore how individuals shape the future, how actions determine or influence future choices, and how decisions are formed and evaluated within the contexts of cultures, personality, and ways of knowing. We will embrace the educational role playing game on the French Revolution as a means of exploring the roles of custom, language, and ideology in causing and reacting to change and large and small scale transformation. Using the works of Johansson and Weber, we will explore how to find the gaps in what we know and what we do and how to develop solutions to future problems, before they are fully developed by reading the “signals” that are around us.
Be Not Afraid of My Body: Knowing the World through Enfleshed Existence

Words like knowledge, intellect, and theory often make us think of a realm of activity reserved solely for the mind, soul, or spirit—the presumably “disembodied” parts of human beings. In this class we will explore the ways that thinking and acquiring knowledge are in fact thoroughly bodily experiences. We will discover the history of the conceptual split between body and mind in Western and Christian thought, and we will examine resources from within that very thought tradition that enable us to re-link body and mind. We will look at the ways that the split between the body and mind, and the consequent devaluing of bodily knowledge, has historically worked to undergird various forms of social inequality. Concepts like habit/habitus and fields of study like phenomenology will be introduced. Along with more traditionally academic resources, forms of media and creative pursuits that take embodied knowledge seriously—such as poetry, dance, and culinary arts—will be engaged.

Faith, Vodou, and Development in Haiti

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 with the study of faith, vodou, and development in Haiti.

“Living an Intentional Life”

In this section, we will address the following questions: How can I live a productive and fulfilling life? How can I best make day-to-day decisions? How do I set priorities? What is truly important? What do I gain from going to college? How do I find my place in this world? What plan does God have for my life?
The World Is Trying to Kill You

Author and TV show host Dan Riskin said that “nature is a bloodbath” and he is right. In this class we'll explore this idea in two main ways. For the first part of the class, we'll take a deep dive into the world of biology and talk about some of the most potent killers out there including predators, parasites, and the world’s most deadly diseases. In the second part of the class, we'll take an inward look at ourselves and discuss how humans may be the most dangerous animals of all. For this part, we'll examine how violence and war have always been a part of us and the role that our evolutionary history plays in fueling this violence. Activities will include reading two books, watching films, having student led-discussions, and talking with experts on these two topics.

Knowing Yourself: A Fascinating Lifelong Study

Self-knowledge and your worldview are the lenses through which you learn everything. Self-exploration is continual as you change and as you are influenced by relationships, knowledge, environments, religion, challenges, health, emotions, work, and more. This course focuses on how you develop and learn about yourself through culture, nature, adversity, faith, character, and creativity. Readings include NY Times bestselling books by contemporary authors, as well as classic literature by such writers as Plato, Emerson, Dickinson, and DuBois, that raise questions and offer insights into understanding yourself (and others, too).

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?
Build Your Own Baloney Detector

Our world is chock-a-block full of nonsense, pseudoscience, science denial, 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 at their worst can be used to justify prejudice, discrimination, violence, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide. 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 evidence and reason, 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 unreason. We will also explore how scientists and other scholars decide which claims are probably more truthful than others. Lastly, we will look at a case study of nonsense in action: the trial of a Russian Jew on bogus charges of ritual murder in early twentieth-century Russia. Readings for this semester will include Daniel Dennett, Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking; Brooks Jackson and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, unSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation; Carl Sagan, The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark; and Robert Weinberg, Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis.

Interrupting Injustice: Exploring the Intersections of Race/Racism, Social Class and Gender Inequalities

We are living in increasingly polarized times where fear and divisions across differences are pervasive. Our own multiple identities (i.e., racial, social, cultural, gender) and the systemic structures within which we engage and live (i.e., education, community, faith,) have a profound impact on who we are and how we see others who are different from us. Our journeys in higher education should position us in such a way that we find spaces to have critical conversations that engage us, challenge us, empower us and move us towards justice and action. This course will bring together a community of learners seeking to understand the theoretical and practical underpinnings of complex social issues that impact our society. We will explore race and racism, social class divides and gender differences as they apply to historical and current contexts and learn about advocating for systemic changes.
**MWF 11:00**  
GND 1015.70  
CRN 12841  
David Bridges  

**Is it LOVE. . . or. . .?**

With discussion, readings, video, film, music, and other media, we will explore what love is and how to demonstrate love toward others, especially those that are very different from us and those people who have never experienced love as we know it.

We will discuss the following:

1. the various definitions of love, how they have evolved, and what the word love means in our current Western culture,
2. the idea of love being an act of will versus a pleasurable feeling that one might have about another person or thing,
3. the idea of self-love versus narcissism and how our religious beliefs have influenced those two concepts of love,
4. ways of giving and receiving love which are authentic and healthy.

**MWF 11:00**  
GND 1015.94  
CRN 14295  
Manual Cruz  

**Life, Power, and the “Death” of God**

How does our experience of life, power, and desire open the way for religious faith? Modern thinkers recognize that these aspects of the human condition can also lead to religious despair, tragically expressed in the phrase, "God is dead." We will seek to unravel this thorny paradox: how can the modern experience of life both unlock and undermine the meaningful possibility of religion and faith as a way of life? To approach this paradox, we delve deep into the basic desires of human beings. Is the human desire for happiness, justice, and love meaningful? 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 who we are? Moreover, what’s God got to do with it? By reading the works of spiritual and anti-spiritual works of mathematicians, philosophers, novelists, priests, and farmers, we examine how life shapes the meaningful possibility (or impossibility) of faith in the midst of human life.

**MWF 11:00**  
GND 1015.91  
CRN 14278  
Jim Al-Shamma  

**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?

**MWF 12:00**  
GND 1015.71       CRN 12842  
Noel Boyle

**The American University: Purpose and History**

This class seeks to dislodge the assumption that university education is reducible to professional preparation. By looking at the history of American university, we will see that their mission has changed over time, with an ever growing influence of corporate aims and values. As access to university education has democratized over time, the challenge of living up to their core mission has also grown. By looking directly at the purpose of liberal learning, we will see that a university education can and should prepare students for life in all of its manifestation. It should contribute to students’ capacity to understand and relate to the experiences of other people, broadening their own capacity to move effectively in the world. Along the way, students are inoculated against the prejudices and ideology of their upbringing. With that picture clearly in view, we will explore the profound and growing value of liberal learning in preparing for a career in a dynamic market. Ironically, it turns out that the university’s turn toward strictly professional education actually undermines professional preparation.

**MWF 12:00**  
GND 1015.72       CRN 12843  
Manual Cruz

**Life, Power, and the “Death” of God**

How does our experience of life, power, and desire open the way for religious faith? Modern thinkers recognize that these aspects of the human condition can also lead to religious despair, tragically expressed in the phrase, "God is dead." We will seek to unravel this thorny paradox: how can the modern experience of life both unlock and undermine the meaningful possibility of religion and faith as a way of life? To approach this paradox, we delve deep into the basic desires of human beings. Is the human desire for happiness, justice, and love meaningful? 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 who we are? Moreover, what’s God got to do with it? By reading the works of spiritual and anti-spiritual works of mathematicians, philosophers, novelists, priests, and farmers, we examine how life shapes the meaningful possibility (or impossibility) of faith in the midst of human life.
**MW 12:30**
GND 1015.74    CRN 12845
Mona Ivey-Soto

**Interrupting Injustice: Exploring the Intersections of Race/Racism, Social Class and Gender Inequalities**

We are living in increasingly polarized times where fear and divisions across differences are pervasive. Our own multiple identities (i.e., racial, social, cultural, gender) and the systemic structures within which we engage and live (i.e., education, community, faith,) have a profound impact on who we are and how we see others who are different from us. Our journeys in higher education should position us in such a way that we find spaces to have critical conversations that engage us, challenge us, empower us and move us towards justice and action. This course will bring together a community of learners seeking to understand the theoretical and practical underpinnings of complex social issues that impact our society. We will explore race and racism, social class divides and gender differences as they apply to historical and current contexts and learn about advocating for systemic changes.

**MW 12:00**
GND 1015.75    CRN 12846

**MW 12:00**
GND 1015.76    CRN 12847
David Bridges

**Is it LOVE... or...?**

With discussion, readings, video, film, music, and other media, we will explore what love is and how to demonstrate love toward others, especially those that are very different from us and those people who have never experienced love as we know it.

We will discuss the following:

- the various definitions of love, how they have evolved, and what the word love means in our current Western culture,
- the idea of love being an act of will versus a pleasurable feeling that one might have about another person or thing,
- the idea of self-love versus narcissism and how our religious beliefs have influenced those two concepts of love,
- ways of giving and receiving love which are authentic and healthy.
Build Your Own Baloney Detector

Our world is chock-a-block full of nonsense, pseudoscience, science denial, 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 at their worst can be used to justify prejudice, discrimination, violence, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide. 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 evidence and reason, 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 unreason. We will also explore how scientists and other scholars decide which claims are probably more truthful than others. Lastly, we will look at a case study of nonsense in action: the trial of a Russian Jew on bogus charges of ritual murder in early twentieth-century Russia. Readings for this semester will include Daniel Dennett, *Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking*; Brooks Jackson and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *unSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation*; Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*; and Robert Weinberg, *Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis*.

The Epistemology of Property: How and Why Do We Know That We Own Things?

The idea of private property is fundamental to many modern societies, particularly free market democracies. To be sure, most Americans began as “homespun Lockeans,” viewing the ownership of private property as an indelible, natural right. This untroubled assumption enjoys widespread currency in the United States even today. But how and why do we know that we own something? Considered from a more global, historical perspective, the idea of private property was/is hardly settled. Even in those societies where private property works as a kind of absolute presupposition, the modern state (and the legal systems that support it) complicates its logic. A nation-state might practice “eminent domain,” assuming a right to the property of individual citizens; it might use forms of surveillance to watch its people, challenging a person’s ownership of their privacy; or it might struggle to discipline new technologies and forms of knowledge, providing openings for all sorts of challenges to individuals’ ownership of their ideas or their bodies, and so on.
“Every joke is a tiny revolution.” George Orwell

Sigmund Freud theorized that laughter results from repressed energy being released, in effect creating a catharsis or cleansing such as Aristotle posited in his Poetics was a function of tragedy. While tragedy, as a genre, is usually considered important and noble, comedy is often dismissed as merely silly or entertaining. Yet, we are in an age rich in satire, parody, and comedy used to critique everything from pop stars to politicians and police actions. The comic often flirts with the tragic (hence the oft-cited formula that comedy is tragedy plus time), and it deflates as well as defangs the powerful and the dictatorial. It is a coping mechanism, a critique, a release, an escape, a displacement, and it requires a high level of intellectual engagement to create, and to understand. After spending several weeks discussing the (serious) essays in the First Year Seminar’s anthology that set up various ideas about ways of knowing, this section of First Year Seminar will explore aspects of comedy as a way of knowing. Our comedy texts will include a short book on the theory of humor, and also several plays, most likely Aristophanes’ Lysistrata, Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing, Molière’s The Misanthrop, and also the film Stranger than Fiction. There will likely be other texts brought in throughout the semester, as we consider kinds of comedy as a way of thinking about the world. This is a class for students ready to take the comic seriously and the serious comically. As Peter O’Toole’s character of an aging actor in the film My Favorite Year explains, “Dying is easy. Comedy is hard.”

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, we’ll examine questions such as these: Who am I? Who are my neighbors? How will I live in this world? The answers to these questions are often sought through story. We create stories whenever we try to understand our experiences and answer big questions. Through fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and film we’ll seek a deeper understanding of self and others. As Socrates pointed out, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” And as experts in our own lives, we’ll plum memory and experience to make sense of the world in which
we find ourselves. Using the tools of the creative writer and frequent writing exercises, we’ll shape our experiences into meaningful and stylish narratives and essays.

**MWF 1:00**
GND 1015.84 CRN 14283
Lauren Lunsford

**Teaching 21st Century Leaders**

What skills do you really need to be successful in the 21st century? How do our classroom experiences effect who we become? 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 for this course will include nonfiction examinations of our educational system, the FYS anthology, Bronson & Merryman’s Nurtureshock.

**MWF 2:00**
GND 1015.85 CRN 14296

**MWF 2:00**
GND 1015.86 CRN 12856
Peter Kuryla

**The Epistemology of Property: How and Why Do We Know That We Own Things?**

The idea of private property is fundamental to many modern societies, particularly free market democracies. To be sure, most Americans began as “homespun Lockeans,” viewing the ownership of private property as an indelible, natural right. This untroubled assumption enjoys widespread currency in the United States even today. But how and why do we know that we own something? Considered from a more global, historical perspective, the idea of private property was/is hardly settled. Even in those societies where private property works as a kind of absolute presupposition, the modern state (and the legal systems that support it) complicates its logic. A nation-state might practice “eminent domain,” assuming a right to the property of individual citizens; it might use forms of surveillance to watch its people, challenging a person’s ownership of their privacy; or it might struggle to discipline new technologies and forms of knowledge, providing openings for all sorts of challenges to individuals’ ownership of their ideas or their bodies, and so on.

**MW 2:00**
GND 1015.95 CRN 14297
Erin Pryor

**The Permanence of Inequality?**

First-Year Seminar is designed to introduce students to an academic conversation and it is a gateway to help students make the intellectual 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 position and the social construction of difference. Specifically, students will examine social conceptions of race, class and gender to analyze the creation and perpetuation of social inequality. This exploration will
be accomplished through extensive reading assignments, multiple writing assignments and thoughtful discussion.

**MW 2:00**
GND 1015.82 CRN 12854
Carla McDonough

“Every joke is a tiny revolution.” George Orwell

Sigmund Freud theorized that laughter results from repressed energy being released, in effect creating a catharsis or cleansing such as Aristotle posited in his *Poetics* was a function of tragedy. While tragedy, as a genre, is usually considered important and noble, comedy is often dismissed as merely silly or entertaining. Yet, we are in an age rich in satire, parody, and comedy used to critique everything from pop stars to politicians and police actions. The comic often flirts with the tragic (hence the oft-cited formula that comedy is tragedy plus time), and it deflates as well as defangs the powerful and the dictatorial. It is a coping mechanism, a critique, a release, an escape, a displacement, and it requires a high level of intellectual engagement to create, and to understand. After spending several weeks discussing the (serious) essays in the First Year Seminar’s anthology that set up various ideas about ways of knowing, this section of First Year Seminar will explore aspects of comedy as a way of knowing. Our comedy texts will include a short book on the theory of humor, and also several plays, most likely Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, Moliere’s *The Misanthrop*, and also the film *Stranger than Fiction*. There will likely be other texts brought in throughout the semester, as we consider kinds of comedy as a way of thinking about the world. This is a class for students ready to take the comic seriously and the serious comically. As Peter O’Toole’s character of an aging actor in the film *My Favorite Year* explains, “Dying is easy. Comedy is hard.”

**MW 2:00**
GND 1015.87 CRN 14154
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.

**MWF 2:00**
GND 1015.92  CRN 14284
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 a number of articles from 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.

**MWF 3:00**
GND 1015.93  CRN 14285
Virginia Lamothe

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

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**MWF 3:00**
GND 1015.88  CRN 12857
Cynthia Watkins

“Ways of Knowing: Cultural Responsiveness, Identity &Resilience”

Ways of Knowing: Cultural Responsiveness, Identity & Resilience
What constitutes a culture? How do I know how to respond to individuals from a culture different to my own? What is MY culture? How do I survive in a world of ongoing change? These are the questions facing today’s America. This seminar will examine ways of knowing related to such questions by looking at who we are historical cultural reference and findings from educational research.
“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.

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