MONTSERRAT COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
Fall 2024 – Spring 2025

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

THE ACADEMY
Common Area Designation: Social Science

Principles of Higher Education (fall):
This seminar provides an overview of the institutions, people, and issues that shape higher education in the United States. Students will explore the history of higher education, including its purpose and evolution over time. We will examine the extent to which colleges and universities are inclusive learning spaces, and consider the changing needs of the student population in recent years. Throughout the semester we will explore the challenges and opportunities that higher education faces today, including access and equity, community relations, online learning, and artificial intelligence.

College Student Well-Being (spring):
This seminar focuses on the holistic development of college students, with an emphasis on learning and well-being. During the first half of the semester we will examine the extent to which classrooms create an equitable learning environment for diverse learners, and consider pedagogical approaches to creating more inclusive learning environments. The second half of the semester will focus on college student well-being. We will explore issues related to student physical health, mental health, personal relationships, and identity development, and identify campus resources designed to support student well-being. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

SEEING CIVIL RIGHTS IN VIETNAM
Common Area Designation: Literature
C.I.S. Concentration: Peace and Conflict Studies

Civil Rights Consensus Memory (fall):
The Civil Rights Movement has become a familiar narrative grounded in iconic photographs and visuals, which has formed a consensus memory about the movement's goals, timeline, and principal actors. This course will examine contemporary visual narratives -- from photo-books, to comics, to film -- to analyze how these stories challenge consensus memory by choosing to remember differently. In doing so, we will investigate this history for insights into modern extensions of the Civil Rights movement, from LGBT Pride to Black Lives Matter and beyond. We will begin the course with narratives by canonical authors and civil rights personas such as Toni Morrison and John Lewis, celebrated films such as *Selma* and *Hairspray*, as well work by lesser known but equally powerful authors such as Howard Cruse and Lila Quintero Weaver.

The Vietnam War: Film & Comics (spring):
The Vietnam War was experienced by the average American on their TV set. Despite this shared experience, there is no shared narrative as to what the meaning of the Vietnam War and its cascading traumas actually is. In the absence of a consensus narrative, visual narratives have become the repository of our cultural memories of the war. Hence, we will examine film and comics from then and today to come to terms with the turmoil of the 60s and 70s and what it reveals to us about contemporary challenges facing U.S. society today. We will begin with the work of such visual auteurs as Francis Ford Coppola, Stanley Kubrick, and Aaron Sorkin as well as newer texts offering new perspectives on the war, such Trung Le Nguyen's *Magic Fish*, Derf Backderf's *Kent State*, and the modern classic *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui.

ACCESSIBILITY & ABLEISM
Common Area Designation: Literature

Disability Histories & Futures (fall):
This course will introduce students to the history of disability activism and theories in the United States as they take shape in literature, media, and the arts. We will approach disability with a definition that encompasses emotional, mental, and physical disability; distress or “madness”; as well as chronic illness and health conditions. Our course materials will encourage us to think about disability intersectionally, as both an embodied and sociopolitical experience, with the understanding that our society restricts disabled people through limited accessibility, militarization, and the law. This course prioritizes shared knowledge-building through

discussion, alongside mini lectures, writing, group work, and experiential learning with Worcester organizations. This course entails a commitment to Community-BasedLearning.

Accessing Higher Education (spring):
In this second-semester course, students will refine their knowledge about disability and ableism by examining contemporary conversations around accessibility in higher education. Our course materials will include nonfiction and fictional accounts by disabled writers, digital media geared toward college faculty and students, and institutional policies outlining the responsibilities and priorities of college administrations. We will then turn our attention to Mount St. James to investigate how access and care function in academics and student life here at Holy Cross. This course entails a commitment to Community-Based Learning through a semester-long project.

ART'S POWER: ITS LEGACY AND CURRENCY

Common Area Designation: Arts

Display, Theft & Repatriation (fall):
The commissioning and owning of art objects often have been ways of establishing social, political, economic, and religious authority or influence. Even after the moment of an object's creation, ownership of art has been its own kind of power. We will consider both the moment of creation (for example, the way that Roman emperors used coins as propaganda), and the afterlife of these objects, as they have been displayed, destroyed, stolen, and used as diplomatic gifts. In addition, we will consider the challenges for contemporary society of handling the legacy of art objects which are associated with these kinds of power, for example the repatriation of stolen objects.

Art and Contemporary Activism (spring):
The twenty-first century has seen unprecedented artistic engagement with topics of social justice, environmental policies, and political activism. Many artists view themselves as cultural changemakers. In this class, we will examine issues of engagement, audience, and acquisition in contemporary art. Our material will include artworks that have addressed identity issues like race, gender, and sexuality; cultural issues like colonial and post-colonial politics, national identity and history, and the role of museums; and societal issues like climate change, immigration, economic inequality, and globalization. We will also consider episodes in which art objects have been the subject of activist engagement, for example the recent targeting of art objects by climate-change groups in Europe.

MUSIC AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Common Area Designation: Arts
C.I.S. Concentration: Latin American, Latinx, & Caribbean Studies

Music, Protest, and Power (fall):
Music has long played an important role in social and political movements. Musicians have called attention to human rights abuses and social inequities in song, financial support, and direct action. At the same time, protesters and activists have adapted texts and adopted techniques from music to aid in their organizing, recruitment, and commentary. This course examines the stakes and mechanisms at play when music is centered in movements for social justice. We will develop vocabularies for discussing social movements and musical sound through investigation of social scientific and musicological scholarship. We will learn to listen to musical texts for their meanings and debate our interpretations in collective discussion. No prior musical training is required.

Music and Anti-Racism (spring):
Anti-racist movements throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have frequently relied on music as an important communicative and affective tool. This class will closely examine how music and musicians have participated in anti-racist activism in the US Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter movement, at the border of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as an historical corrective in Brazil, and during and after the South African anti-apartheid movement. We will examine primary texts (in a variety of media) and secondary scholarship on these movements. In addition to a final analytical project drawing on one of these case studies, students will engage in collective songwriting to pen their own protest song(s) drawing on the techniques and skills developed throughout the year.

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CORE HUMAN QUESTIONS

THE FIRE OF EROS

Common Area Designation: Literature

Conflagration of Wild Passion (fall):
Sex and sexual desire exist in every human society, yet how a civilization understands and negotiates these biological realities usually constitutes a distinct feature of its culture. This year-long course will explore how the civilization of the Ancient Greeks and Romans conceptualized and negotiated the ambivalent power of sexual passion. In the first semester-long half of the course, we will engage in close readings and critical analysis of Greco-Roman texts that characterize erotic love, embodied by the gods Eros and Aphrodite, as an elemental force of disorder and devastation. In particular, we will focus on the depiction of Aphrodite's sinister influence on mythical figures including Helen, Medea, Phaedra, Ariadne, and Dido.

Radiance of Controlled Flame (spring):
In the Spring, we will deepen our understanding of Greco-Roman views on erotic love as we thoughtfully examine texts - the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* - that offset narratives of destructive "inward-looking" passion with depictions of love that are more "outward-looking" and constructive. We will critically investigate attempts to "manage" Aphrodite's elemental power as well as the entanglement of these efforts with the ideologies informing ancient conceptualizations of family, heroism, and national identity. Finally, we will consider how the depiction of love in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* corresponds to the Greco-Roman understanding of erotic passion as a fundamentally ambivalent force that, much like the force of fire, has the potential to greatly benefit or harm.

THE PROBLEM OF TIME

Common Area Designation: Literature

Looking Back (fall):
How does memory shape who we are? How can we agree on remembering our shared history? What is the distinction between the act of remembering and memory itself? This course explores memory's origins and bearing on the ways it forms how we think about and perform our "identities," how we can use it to understand our society, and the opportunities and dangers of historiography and other forms of narration. Students will read fiction, historical, and sociological writing on personal memory, collective memory, traumatic memory, and the archive. They will produce their own writing in the form of analytical essays and creative nonfiction.

Looking Forward (spring):
Building on our conversations about how memory informs our lives, in the Spring we will turn our attention to thinking about the problems endemic to our present moment and how we imagine possible futures. Where does prediction help or hurt us? How can our feelings of anxiety about the future be used to generate positive change? How can we find hope for the future in a culture of apathy and instant gratification? We will think about our attitudes toward the future across four units: present problems, hope, nihilism, and artificial futures. We'll explore current and past attempts to negotiate technology and selfhood, the effects of late capitalism, science fiction's warnings, and cultivating hope in building a better future. Students will produce assignments arcing toward a final research project and oral presentation.

ILLNESS, NARRATIVE, & HEALING

Common Area Designation: Literature

Reading Illness (fall)
How do the stories we tell about illness and health influence the way we understand ourselves, our families, and the world around us? During the first semester, we'll analyze literary representations of physical and mental illness in essays, fiction, and film. We'll ask how those depictions shape our individual and societal attitudes toward age, toward ability and disability, toward body size and body image, and read works including Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emma Donoghue's *The Wonder* (along with the 2022 film adaptation starring Frances Pugh). Throughout the semester, students will develop their critical reading and writing skills through a range of short and longer analytic writing assignments, including a film review.

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Writing the Body (spring)
In the spring we'll turn to nonfiction writing and documentary film to examine how different forms of personal expression can provide powerful avenues for understanding others and healing ourselves. We'll read accounts by medical practitioners, patients, and those who care for them; examine graphic works like Raina Telgemeier's *Guts*; and engage with personal essays and films that reclaim agency in relation to disease, body image, neurodiversity, and mental health. While continuing to hone your analytic skills, you will also have the opportunity to explore and relate your own family and personal illness stories through a series of creative writing exercises, culminating in an extended personal narrative, and to develop your oral presentation skills by telling a Moth story.

WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS AND WHY?

Common Area Designation: Social Science

Consequences of Inequality (fall):
Human beings experience social life through relationships that are rooted in the places they live such as cities and neighborhoods. People make meaning of their experiences within the context of their connectedness to who they consider to be their neighbors. However, relationships, experiences and connections are not the same for all people and are often shaped by economic, social, cultural and political resources. This course explores the meaning of neighbor by considering four basic questions: (1) How is social life organized? (2) How do people define and relate to who their neighbors are? (3) How are resources distributed between neighbors and across communities? (4) What are the social consequences of how resources are distributed?

Neighbors in Action (spring):
The social sciences have long analyzed how power is organized, exercised and maintained. This course will do the *opposite and examine how communities and neighbors* collectively challenge and reorganize social life economically, culturally and politically. This class will examine how groups develop relationships to challenge systems, envision what they want the future to look like, how they will get there and what politics and power are. We will use this information to develop our own understanding of who our neighbors are and what responsibilities we have to one another. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

GOD AND THE BOMB

Common Area Designation: Studies in Religion
C.I.S. Concentration: Peace and Conflict Studies

Nuclear Weapons & Human Limits (fall):
Nuclear weapons are back in the news—*Oppenheimer* won several Academy Awards, the violent campaigns in Ukraine and Gaza have elicited fears of nuclear weapon use, and Pope Francis condemned their very possession in 2017. Taking a step back from questions of deterrence, this seminar investigates the racialized, gendered, economic, and technological impacts of nuclear weapons. What does it mean that humans have developed the technology to create such destruction? We will analyze accounts from religious and secular perspectives on the impacts of nuclear weapons, as well as from the victims of the nuclear weapons industry. Through an exposure to various sites of nuclear activities, students will consider what it means to be human, and how humans have responded, in an increasingly insecure world.

Peace and Security? (spring)**:**
In the spring, we will continue our investigation of nuclear discourse by investigating the concept of "security." Proponents of nuclear weapons claim that nuclear weapons provide security to nations and their allies in the global arena. Anti-nuclear activists argue that these weapons provide nothing but a false sense of security. Who or what do nuclear weapons secure and protect? Why have faith or no faith in such weapons? This seminar will investigate the approaches to peace and security of both nuclear weapons proponents as well as secular and faith-based anti-nuclear activists. Students will develop research, oral communication, and writing skills on the rhetoric that motivates the possession of and resistance to nuclear weapons, from secular and religious standpoints.

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DIVINE

LOOKING fOR GOD IN ALL THINGS

Common Area Designation: Studies in Religion

The Divine in History (fall):
"Seeking God in all things" – a Jesuit motto – sums up one of a multitude of ways in which human beings have approached "the Divine" or "the transcendent." Such terms may refer to one God, or a multitude of spiritual beings beyond ordinary sense experience, or an overall sense of "the spiritual" in the world. During this fall semester of the seminar, we will focus on ways in which ideas of this kind have shaped culture and politics throughout history and continue to do so. We will use tools from several disciplines, including social sciences, history, arts and literature, and theology. Students will be required to spend a minimum of two hours per week in a Community-Based Learning placement in Worcester, and to attend several group events outside of class time. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

The Divine in Daily Life (spring):
In this second semester of the seminar, we will focus on ways in which people have recognized, described, and pursued a personal and practical sense of the divine / transcendent / spiritual, and continue to do so. We will try to understand how the practice of religion and spirituality has been shaped by the long human development we considered in the first semester. Continuing to make use of a variety of disciplines and practices, including required Community-Based Learning and on-campus cultural events, we will also look at our own attitudes and experiences regarding "the transcendent," to deepen our understanding of where they might fit into the overall human story. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

IDENTITY, DIVERSITY, COMMUNITY, AND LEADERSHIP

Common Area Designation: Studies in Religion
C.I.S. Concentration: Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Exploring Difference (fall):
One of the most important tasks for the human person as a moral being is to come to 'know thyself,' as the ancient philosophers recommend. But how do we do this? The African ethic of Ubuntu suggests that persons come to know themselves through other persons, that is, through relationships within diverse communities. Our willingness to place ourselves outside the boundary of our 'comfort zone' and compassionately encounter difference, disability, and 'otherness' may paradoxically lead us to a more honest and merciful knowledge of the self. Through film, readings in theology and literature, and Community-Based Learning placements in the Worcester community, we will consider difference and disability and how such encounters with others in their 'otherness' bring us to a more challenging and deeper knowledge of ourselves. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

Exploring Leadership (spring):
The second half of our seminar will build on discussions of identity, diversity, disability, and community and focus on diverse ways of leadership. How do different social groups approach leadership? What ways of leading are privileged? What ways of leading are marginalized? How do we come to know ourselves through difference and leadership? How and in what ways does Holy Cross' Jesuit mission call us into leadership? With the help of film and readings in theology, leadership, and education, as well as continued involvement in Community-Based Learning and a case study in leadership, students will become knowledgeable about diverse and critical ways of leading, leadership styles that an increasingly diverse, global, and divisive world may require. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

SCIENCE & RELIGION

Common Area Designation: Natural Science

Religion/Science Until Galileo (fall):
The religious impulse and associated behaviors date back to the origins of humanity, while the beginning of what came to be called science only emerged a few thousand years ago when the earliest interests in noting the "heavenly bodies" and calendar cycles transformed into questioning creation myths. In the first semester we will track the development and early essence of both religion

and science from their origins, through their easy collaboration and amity, and up until what is oft considered their first historical scuffle, that between Galileo and the Catholic Church.

Science/Religion Since Galileo (spring):
The religious impulse and associated behaviors date back to the origins of humanity, while the beginning of what came to be called science only emerged a few thousand years ago when the earliest interests in noting the "heavenly bodies" and calendar cycles transformed into questioning creation myths. In the second semester we will continue to track the development and interactions of both religion and science from the trials of Galileo, through Newton, Darwin, and Einstein leading to contemporary theists and atheist scientists and thinkers.

ART & FAITH

Common Area Designation: Arts

Origins (fall):
What is art, and what does art have to do with faith? This course will examine the origins of art and faith in prehistory and around the globe before the year 1500 CE. We will explore the pyramids of Egypt, the earliest representations of Jesus, and the forms of the historical Buddha in Asia. We will learn about icons and iconoclasm, in which believers smashed and burned divine images. What happens when the divine is represented in art -- what kinds of choices have to be made when a divinity is rendered in human form? How does the visual form of a god impact the ways in which people relate to that god?

Today (spring):
This class will explore the role of faith-based art and architecture after the year 1500 and especially in the world of the present day. Field trips to local churches, mosques, and other religious sites will help us to think about the presence and visual construction of faith in our community. We will focus on specific pieces of religious art on display in the Worcester Art Museum, and we will contribute to a new digital resource, available from iPads within WAM's galleries, connecting historical artworks to thoughts and ideas from the present day. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

THINKING FOR ONESELF

Common Area Designation: Philosophical Studies

Genius and Mediocrity (fall):
In this class we'll study the concept of genius, glorified as god-like by nineteenth-century philosophers in the name of truth, of freedom, and of meaningful life itself – as well as the literary and philosophical depiction of those who fail to reach its heights. We're all supposed to "think for ourselves," according to Socrates and the philosophical tradition, and also according to everyone else. But only the genius manages to think anything actually original – so what about the rest of us? Should we just stop with the thoughts and questions, and aim for happiness and conformity instead? Along with philosophical texts from Kant, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, we'll read literary texts from Goethe to Sinclair Lewis.

Machine and Revolt (spring):
When we stop thinking for ourselves, it can happen that we become mere instruments. In this class we'll look at the threat mechanization poses to human freedom – not the threat of machines becoming too intelligent, but of human beings becoming mechanized, machine-like, cogs in machines. We'll study Marx's theory of alienation, Heidegger on technology and Arendt on the banality of evil. We'll also practice a turning towards the other in a way that exceeds the technological and calculable by engaging in the Worcester community, both in service and in creative practice. This course therefore entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component: there will be a community placement and a mural project.

CONTEMPLATION: THEORY & ACTION

Common Area Designation: Social Science

Exploring Mindfulness (fall):
Mindfulness practices have their roots in ancient spiritual traditions but have recently been secularized to promote health and wellness. It seems everywhere you look there are mindfulness apps being advertised as well as magazine articles touting its

usefulness in psychotherapy, job performance, school learning and even athletics. This seminar explores the secular mindfulness phenomenon including its usefulness for enhancing well-being and its psychological basis. We will examine the different kinds of secular mindfulness practices being used as well as their similarities to those used in contemplative traditions such as Buddhist meditation practices and Catholic prayer. Because one cannot understand mindfulness practices without experiencing them, the class will consist not only of the presenting and discussing of readings as in a traditional seminar but also the practicing mindfulness in guided exercises to experience the mental processes involved.

Encountering Music (spring):
"But you are the music while the music lasts". This course explores the foundations of musical experience, why music has the effect on us that it does and why it has such importance in our lives. To accomplish this goal, we will examine how we encounter music differently through listening, performing and composing, as well as the evolutionary origins of music and philosophical questions about the meaning in music. We will also investigate psychological topics such as how music lives in the brain and exceptional musical abilities and disabilities.

ENGAGED SPIRITUALITY

Common Area Designation: Social Science

Everyday Spirituality (fall):
How do Americans engage with spirituality, faith, and/or religion? How do these play out in people's actual lives? Starting with childhood and what parents want for their children, we move to the role of spirituality and/or faith in the lives of adolescents and college students: How do adolescents and college students seek and find meaning? Moving then through adulthood, we consider work, marriage and divorce, economic challenges, addiction, illness, and health care. We end by looking at spirituality, faith, and religion in aging and the end of life. Through a variety of readings, film, and media, we consider how people engage transcendence in their everyday lives. This seminar has a Community-Based Learning component.

A Faith That Does Justice (spring):
"A faith that does justice" is a Jesuit motto linking faith to the pursuit of justice. What does that look like? In this seminar we will examine the role that faith, spirituality, and religion can play in mobilizing social action such as starting social service programs, launching social movements, and/or engaging in advocacy. We will study leaders, movements, and ordinary citizen activists motivated by a wide array of religious and spiritual backgrounds to work towards making the world a more just place. We will also consider different religions' teachings motivating social action. Throughout the seminar, you will deepen your own leadership skills through a variety of readings, films, case studies, and a Community-Based Learning requirement.

GLOBAL SOCIETY

IDENTITY IN MOTION

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies or Cross-Cultural Studies

Asian Migration to the U.S. (fall):
This course explores the dynamic experiences of Asian migration to the United States, focusing on the evolution of identity across different historical periods. Through a combination of literature, film, documentaries, scholarly articles, and potential field trips, students will examine the complexities of Asian-American identity formation from the late 19th century to the present day. A critical component of the course is a weekly participation of the Community-based Learning (CBL) program, in which we will partner with local organizations to support the ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in Worcester. In this mutually beneficial process, you are able to gain a deeper understanding of course content by integrating theory with practice, while communities gain access to volunteers, resources, and the wide-ranging research and scholarly expertise housed in the College's many disciplinary departments.

Ellis Island to Modern Italy (spring):
Migration, a multifaceted phenomenon, intricately shapes societies, individuals, and the cultural fabric of nations. This course endeavors to untangle the intricate narratives woven into migration experiences, acknowledging the nuanced intersections of race, ethnicity, and identity. It will delve into the experiences of Italians migrating to the United States, individuals migrating to Italy, and the development of a "hyphenated Italian identity" across continents. Through literature, film, documentaries, scholarly articles, and

potential field trips, students will explore the complexities of Italian-American identity formation from the late 19th century to the present day. The course includes a Community-Based Learning (CBL) component, offering students a firsthand exploration of Italian-American identity formation within Worcester. By collaborating with the local Italian-American community, students will immerse themselves in experiences that enrich their understanding of this facet of migration history.

UNITY AND SOLITUDE

Common Area Designation: Literature

The Search for Unity (fall):
The drive to form intimate and group ties in the form of sexual and romantic bonds, friendships, families, and communities has been the driving force in the development of global civilization and has always been one of the central themes in the stories that human beings tell. In this course, we will explore how narratives across thousands of years have grappled with human needs and desires for protection, support, companionship, love, meaning, and communion with the divine, as well as the central role of storytelling and the reproduction of narrative tropes in reinforcing pair and group identity. We will also investigate the dark side of the search for unity and connection, including the formation of cults and repressive communities. Texts include folklore, myth, epic poetry, novels, short stories, memoir, visual art, music, and film.

The Quest for Solitude (spring):
With the development of civilization came its discontents, ranging from the growth of elaborate hierarchies to the availability of temptations to weaken the body and soul. The quest for solitude in order to achieve personal freedom, mastery over desires, mental clarity, creative inspiration, or a greater connection with the divine, or else to heal heartbreak or atone for crimes and sins, has been a major element in the development of philosophy, religion, art, and literature in cultures around the world for millennia. In this course, we will explore a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts that grapple with the motivations and rewards of rejecting social and personal bonds and the desire for connection that inevitably challenges the commitment to solitude. Materials include Christian, Buddhist, and Jain scriptures; philosophical essays; poetry; short stories; novellas; memoirs; visual art; music; and film.

MIGRATION NARRATIVES

Common Area Designation: Literature
C.I.S. Concentration: Peace and Conflict Studies

The Long Journey and Arrival (fall):
In this year-long course, we will examine contemporary migration narratives alongside mythological stories of ancient Greece and Rome, such as Vergil's *Aeneid*, Euripides' *Medea*, and Homer's *Odyssey*. Over the two semesters, we will trace the stages of migration journeys in reverse order. In the first semester, we start with the later stages, including the education of immigrants in America. What are the costs of "integration"? Who decides who gets to enter into new lands, and how are those decisions made? We will then consider stories of the long and often dangerous journey from one place to another, and the transformations these journeys affect. This semester entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

Leaving and Finding Home (spring):
In the spring semester, we will study displacement and read stories about why people leave their homelands. How are these contexts and reasons understood in other times and places? Alongside Greek and Roman epic or drama, we will consider contemporary narratives of global conflict and mass migrations. How do these challenges reverberate around the world, and what are our responsibilities as global citizens today? How can ancient representations of immigration help us negotiate our democratic society today? This semester entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.

EARLY AMERICA AND THE WORLD

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies

Pirates to Patriots (fall):
We talk a great deal about "globalization" and "global economies" in the 21st century. However, people living in America were "globetrotters'' touched by international webs of trade as early as the time of Columbus. This course will explore North America's first global age beginning in the 1400s and extending through the American Revolution. It examines this history thematically by

focusing on various kinds of trades through the lives of people who pursued them. We will begin with the gold and silver that indigenous peoples mined to fill Spanish treasure galleons and that pirates plundered. We will end with the Patriots who eschewed tea for coffee as they boycotted English goods on the eve of revolution in defiance of imperial constraints.

Canton to King Cotton (spring):
This course begins by looking at the formation of the Early Republic through a Pacific lens. We will explore the ways in which the fledgling nation's involvement in the China trade, linked together with the trade networks of the Atlantic World, enabled the fluorescence of American democracy. We will examine the social, cultural, economic, and political implications of these global trade connections as we question their effects on individual lives among people of African, European, and Native American descent. We will explore how such connections contributed to distinct regional identities in areas ranging from the South, New England, and the Far West, to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. These distinct identities often led to conflicts, the most notorious of which was the American Civil War.

IMAGES FROM LATIN AMERICA

Common Area Designation: Arts

Franco, Bridget

C.I.S. Concentration: Latin American, Latinx, & Caribbean Studies

Latin America through Cinema (fall):

What do you think of when you hear “Latin America"? In this seminar, we will explore cinema from and about Latin America to expand our understanding of this culturally diverse region comprising more than twenty countries and territories. Together, we will examine topics such as gender, race, family, migration, politics, and religion through the lens of films by Latin American screenwriters and directors. Students will gain experience in film analysis, learning how to articulate the relationship between content and artistic form. Through this cinematographic encounter, we will begin to see and understand Latin America in new ways.

Diverse Art of Latin America (spring):
We will begin the spring semester with a role-immersion game, The Prado Museum Expansion: The Diverse Art of Latin America, that introduces a wide range of movements and styles present in 20th through 21st century Latin American art. In what ways do Latin American artists dialogue with European, African, and indigenous aesthetic traditions? What are the implications of framing paintings as “art for art’s sake” versus creating art for political purposes? How do gender, ideology, and race interface with artistic production? Students will perform close readings of art works with a focus on the formal elements of painting and will hone their public speaking and argumentative writing skills. We will also explore public art in 20th and 21st century Latin America. Together, we will document and share different examples of public art in our communities and participate in the creation of a public art project.

GLOBAL ASIAS

Common Area Designation: Cross-Cultural Studies

Spam, Musubi, Chaufa, Boba (fall):
We think of Asia as a place far away, distantly related to our own lives here, if it all. But here in North America, we live with a variety of Asian presences. In this class, we will explore our connections to global Asias through food and foodways. What does it mean to have foodstuffs from boba to pho be an integral part of the ways we eat here? How do Asian foods and foodways travel and how do they take root abroad? What does it mean for food to be authentic and how does food relate to identity? How does the availability of Asian foodways here affect our understanding of what Asia or Asias are? These are some of the questions we will explore over the course of the semester. In doing so, we will examine essays, novels, films, and of course, partake of the food itself. And with any luck, we’ll venture into Worcester’s own small but vibrant Asian communities and food scenes.

Between 7 Samurai & Star Wars (spring):
What is George Lucas without Kurosawa Akira? What are the Wachowskis or even Quentin Tarantino without Yuen Woo-ping? Would Danny Boyle have faded into obscurity without the films of Bollywood? Popular culture here, film culture here is suffused with vocabularies from across global Asias. The films, music, TV, and books we love owe a large part to the circulation of popular cultures from across Asia’s multiplicities. For this semester, we’ll look to interrogate the ways in which Asia has been and has become global. We’ll examine film, print, TV, and music from across global Asias in an attempt to both explore how the local and the global interact and question our understanding of Asia, or Asias, as something far away.

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TRANSIT AND DISLOCATIONS

Common Area Designation: Cross-Cultural Studies
C.I.S. Concentration: Latin American, Latinx, & Caribbean Studies

Invention and Invasion (fall):
Since the Age of Discovery, culture and globalization have crossed paths in complex and, oftentimes, unsuspected ways. With an emphasis on the Americas, this course will consider the intersections between the production and circulation of culture and larger processes of global exploration and imperial expansion. With topics ranging from conflicting accounts of discovery of "the New World" to sports and warfare, we will delve into a broad array of materials (chronicles of discovery and conquest, narrative fiction, essays, poetry, films, etc.) in order to interrogate the ways in which the study of culture informs our understanding of the creation and circulation of ideas and things in relation to questions about power, emancipation, sovereignty, war and violence in the globalized world.

The Global Ways of Culture (spring):
With an emphasis on the Americas, this course explores contemporary definitions of, and counternarratives to globalization in cultural production from the Cold War to the present. We will explore how works of literature and the arts, among other materials across several fields of inquiry, signifies and grapples with the challenges of living in today's globalized world. Through detailed study and discussion of course materials, we will address questions of international trade, hemispheric relations, extractivism, migration, organized crime, environmental disasters, and "the end of the world."

NATURAL WORLD

DIVERSITY & BIODIVERSITY

Common Area Designation: Natural Science

Biodiversity (fall):
Life, in one form or another, has existed on this planet for 3.6 billion years, with organisms evolving to occupy every corner of the world, and every ecological niche imaginable. How did this happen? What are the rules governing how organisms interact and change over time? In this course we will discuss the basics of evolution and the origins of our modern understanding of selection and inheritance, explore ecological processes to understand how living things interact and form communities, and walk through deep time, tracking the rise and fall of species through the history of Earth.

Diversity in Biology (spring):
In 1831 a recent college graduate embarked on a voyage that would ultimately last 5 years and fundamentally change his world view. The voyage of the HMS Beagle would inspire Charles Darwin's thoughts on evolution and ultimately help bring about the Theory of Evolution. But what does it mean for the foundations of an entire field to be established by a single Victorian Gentleman? How does that worldview affect the growth of the field? Whose voices get heard and whose are silenced? And what happens when we take the visionaries and founders off their pedestals? How do we instead start to lift-up more diverse voices?

FOODWAYS PAST AND PRESENT

Common Area Designation: Social Science

Why We Ate What We Ate (fall):
Food might be the most important tool for thinking about how humans interact with their environment. And yet, our foodways are—and have always been—more complex than the sum of edible things in our immediate vicinity. Using human evolutionary studies and archaeology, this semester we will think through the foodways of the human past to explore the relationship between cultural ideas about food and how humans have existed in, exploited, and transformed their natural environment. Moreover, we will look to past societies around the world to help us think through the environmental problems of the present and, perhaps, how the trial and error of past foodways might guide us to a more sustainable future.

Why We Eat What We Eat (spring):
Throughout human history, there has never been anything like the modern food system. The availability of different foods is nothing

short of dazzling, and the visibility of foreign foods on social media has led our species to become the most food curious we have ever been. Rather than a simple story of improved technologies and cultural openness, modern foodways have entangled us in bizarre relationships with other humans and the environment. Using popular culture, social sciences, and the natural sciences, we will explore the web of factors that has generated our modern foodways and, moreover, the often-unintended consequences these relationships have on our health and the health of the environmental system around us.

ENVIRONMENTAL MODELS

Common Area Designation: Mathematical Science

Modeling the Natural World (fall):
How each of us lives contributes to humanity's place in the natural world. As we begin to understand the consequences of our use of Earth's natural resources, we face several challenging decisions concerning our environment. How will we respond to rising global temperatures and rising sea levels? Are there realistic alternatives that could sustainably provide for society's energy needs with fewer harmful effects? Our approach will be through a quantitative lens, which is just one of many strategies to help us understand the potential consequences of our choices. Mathematical models are simpler representations of our complex real-world that can be used to gain insight and to predict the future. Students will learn how to build simple mathematical models and then use them to explore a range of environmental topics. We will see how quantitative models can help inform public policy, as well as our own personal choices.

Environmental Reasoning (spring):
How can mathematical models be used to shed light on the impact of the choices we make every day? Our models will become more sophisticated in the second semester. The equations we develop will be used to investigate topics such as population growth, sustainable fishery and forestry approaches, and the spread of diseases and pollution. Students will design an environmental project that has personal resonance for them and will have additional opportunities to utilize technology to enhance their analytical and presentation skills. The mathematics used will build upon high school algebra, which is the only prerequisite for these courses.

WATER

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies

Water and Humans (fall):
This course addresses water both across the globe and through time. In it we will examine the hydrological cycle, consider the different types of water sources, and explore how water impacts human populations. We will see that this necessity is not only vital for survival and integral to daily life, but also that it can be destructive. This course includes a mandatory Community-Based Learning (CBL) placement.

Humans and Water (spring):
This course addresses water both across the globe and through time. In it we will examine human interactions with water, consider how humans approach different types of water resources, and explore human impacts on waterscapes. We will see how human ingenuity is utilized to exploit this vital necessity, but also how human intervention can be destructive. This course includes mandatory Community-Based Learning (CBL) projects.

WRITING THE ENVIRONMENT

Common Area Designation: Literature

Writing American Nature (fall):
In modern America, the natural world is often imagined to be a perennial, pristine, and wild environment that is separate from the ever-changing sphere of human life. Yet humans are a part of nature, and human conceptions of the natural world vary dramatically across history. This course explores how humans inhabit natural environments by forming nuanced cultural ideas about them. Our particular focus will be how writers and rhetoricians in the nineteenth century invented powerful, competing, and influential conceptions of the American environment against the historical background of expanding westward settlement. Analyzing the invention of American nature raises fundamental questions about our place in the natural world with consequences for our everyday lives.

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Writing the Future Environment (spring):
The second semester builds upon the first semester by projecting its focus on representing the environment into the future. Imagining the future is a key aspect of human experience. From prophecy to forecasting, humans have developed complex strategies to engage with the unknowability of what is to come. This course will examine modern cultural approaches and concepts (such as Utopia and dystopia) that have been used to imagine the future. Our focus will be how speculative fiction attempts to imagine the environment of the future as it will have been altered by climate change. Analyzing these representations will lead us to explore core questions about the future of human flourishing on a warming planet.

(UN)NATURAL FOOD IN AMERICA

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies

The Rise of Modern Food (fall):
In this seminar, we will explore the dramatic transformation of the American food system. We will start from when diet was deeply shaped by where one lived and what time of year it was to our supermarket present, where one can walk into a grocery store and pick from tens of thousands of products no matter the day or where they live. This semester will examine the advances, events, and individuals that made this extraordinary abundance our expected normal, as well as the environmental and social costs of so much "cheap" food.

A More Natural Food System (spring):
The American system makes a lot of inexpensive food. But there are high hidden costs to this abundance, such as the plight of immigrant laborers or manure run-off from farms in Iowa slowly suffocating sea life in the Gulf of Mexico. In the spirit of a Jesuit commitment to forming 'women and men for others,' our seminar discussions will explore alternative visions for what a more 'natural' or harmonious food system might look like. We will make special use of contacts in greater Worcester and meet with representatives from local businesses and nonprofits who are leading the way towards a more just, sustainable, and equitable food system for all involved from field to fork.

SELF

IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, & TRAUMA

Common Area Designation: Literature

Self & Conflict (fall):
Over the past century-and-a-half societies have changed rapidly and in often traumatic ways, leaving the individual as well as collective identities contested and confused. In this seminar, we will read a variety of literary texts to examine the political, social, and psychological construction, destruction, and reconstruction of identity within the context of major international conflicts. Likely texts include: Chinua Achebe's, *Things Fall Apart*; Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*; Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*; Claudia Rankine*, Citizen*; and excerpts from Jonathan Shay's *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. These texts will lead us to larger investigations of how to locate personal agency in the face of structural and institutional oppression.

Memories, Stories, Histories (spring):
How do we create individual and communal narratives in relation to ideas of home, place, and the consequences of contemporary dislocation and migration? Specifically, we will explore the relationship between memory and story-telling to history and community-making through literary works by authors such as Jamaica Kincaid, Seamus Deane, Toni Morrison, and Dorothy Allison. By examining together, the experiences of dislocation and trauma from diverse perspectives, we will consider how race, ethnic identity, gender, class and sexuality are constructed and interrelated. In the process, we will raise complex moral questions that challenge us to investigate the relationship between identity, community and justice and our own responsibilities as individuals and members of identity groups.

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WAYS OF SEEING

Common Area Designation: Arts

Photographic Tools (fall):
Get ready to make photographs! This studio art course emphasizes visual literacy and technical skill sets as they relate to the digital photographic image. Students master manual technical tools relating to the camera and immerse themselves in a variety of cutting-edge complementary technology and software as essential and intentional tools for expression. Students explore contemporary photographic themes in writing through a research paper, and students actively consider their personal relationship with the medium of photography through a series of unique projects in this fast-paced, production art course. Students are required to supply their own digital camera with manual controls (DSLR or equivalent such as mirrorless). Course Studio Fee of $115.

The Photo Essay (spring):
Building on the skillsets learned in *Photographic Tools*, students conceive, build, and refine a comprehensive and cohesive portfolio of sequenced images around a theme of the student's choosing. Students revisit the theme throughout the semester and revise the image sequence over the course of several months to create a refined photo essay and cohesive portfolio. Students examine the art of visual and photographic storytelling by exploring the intersection of different genres of photography. There is an emphasis on verbal and multimedia presentation skillsets. Core questions include: What communities do I belong to? Who and what do I owe these communities? Students are required to supply their own digital camera with manual controls (DSLR or equivalent such as mirrorless). Course Studio Fee of $115.

THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

Common Area Designation: Social Science

Self Discovery (fall):
Influenced by Aristotle, John Locke coined the term 'pursuit of happiness.' Thomas Jefferson never explained his use of this phrase as stated in the Declaration of Independence. The social sciences, however, have plenty to say about it. Positive Psychology in particular makes a large contribution to this area of inquiry. Positive Psychology concerns itself with the use of psychological theory, research, and clinical techniques toward understanding resilient, adaptive, creative, positive, and emotionally fulfilling aspects of human behavior. As you pursue your own independence at the beginning of your college career, in this class you will explore what the science of happiness has to say about your own pursuit of happiness in the context of increasing autonomy.

Flourishing (spring):
So, what is the good life anyway? Who is capable of achieving it? What are the factors that sustain it? How can you achieve it for yourself? How do you know if you're living it? We all have opinions about these matters, but psychologists approach these questions scientifically, based on objectively verifiable evidence. Through the lens of Positive Psychology, you will tackle these compelling and life-enriching questions as you reflect on your own adjustment to college life, and exposure to those with serious life issues to address. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning (CBL) component (a weekly service commitment in the Worcester community totaling 15-25 hours/semester). CBL connects classroom learning objectives with civic engagement.

OUR CORE CONTRADICTIONS

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies

Slavery & American Identity (fall):
Thomas Jefferson was the embodiment of our country's founding contradiction. The primary champion of the United States' foundational ideas – natural rights, liberty, and equality – enslaved hundreds of people. The persistence of slavery, and the power the institution had over the country's politics and society, left indelible marks on Americans' collective selfhood. In this seminar, we will seek a greater understanding of our country by examining the centrality of slavery to our nation's history. We will explore the roots of slavery's most enduring legacies on our national identity: race, racism, and inequality. Reading about, writing about, and discussing this difficult aspect of our history should give us an important perspective on ourselves, collectively and individually.

Abolition & American Democracy (spring):
Another dimension of our founding contradiction is that it produced a robust, interracial freedom movement. The movement to abolish slavery was driven by enslaved people, Black intellectuals, white allies, and justice activists interested in fundamentally

altering the identity of the country by ridding it of its "original sin." Abolitionists originated the notion that American democracy could transcend race, and they were the first to envision the inclusive citizenry we profess to hold as an American ideal. Reading their words and reflecting on their ideas should teach us a lot about our collective selves – what freedom and equality mean in our context, and what we can do to persist in overcoming slavery's most harmful legacies.

PURSUING HEALTH

Common Area Designation: Studies in Religion

Health as a Personal Project (fall):
What does it mean to be healthy and what is the place of illness and disability in a good life? How does stigma influence notions of illness and moral responsibility? What does ethics have to say about dignity (persons created in the image and likeness of God), autonomy, and interdependence in medical contexts that place a high value on independence and control? How is the view of persons as consumers of health care shaping approaches to health and well-being? In this seminar, we will draw on sources from Christian ethics, literature, film, and memoir to explore experiences of illness, injury, disability, and the desire for health and healing.

Health as a Common Good (spring):
What are the implications of claiming access to health care as a human right and a common good? What are some of the social determinants of health and illness? How do racism, sexism, and economic inequality impact health? What might solidarity, stewardship, the option for the poor and vulnerable, and other themes in Catholic social teaching contribute to medical ethics today? Together, we will explore issues in public health (including controversies around vaccines, communicable and infectious diseases, and other epidemics); the roles of markets, governments, and other institutions in providing access to care; the participation of human subjects in research; and environmental justice. Spring semester includes a project-based Community-Based Learning component designed to understand and enhance campus health and well-being.

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SELFHOOD

Common Area Designation: Philosophical Studies

Selfhood and Freedom (fall):
Who am I? What are the conditions of selfhood? What does it mean to think for oneself, and to choose for oneself? By examining these questions through the lens of political philosophy, we will explore the concept of selfhood not only as a matter of discerning one's personal identity but also in connection with broader questions about the implications of understanding human beings as individual selves. Different visions of selfhood draw upon different conceptions of freedom, society, and the good life. Whereas some philosophers seek a balance between the individual and society, others see an irresolvable conflict, arguing that the truly free individual must transcend all conventional constraints. What would such radical freedom look like? What is its relationship to democracy? Does it leave the individual in an ethical void or is it the foundation for an authentically ethical existence?

Selfhood and Community (spring):
This semester, we will dive more deeply into the question of how to reconcile claims of individual freedom with the idea of a common good and the requirements of community. Drawing on philosophical texts in the Western tradition as well as literary works and essays by contemporary writers, we will explore the following questions: Must the pursuit of selfhood generate "otherness?" Are there ways of thinking about the individual self that affirm the value of community as something more than a social contract based on reciprocal protection of individuals rights and pursuit of self-interest? Conversely, are there ways of theorizing human community and solidarity that incorporate the values of individual freedom and self-determination?

FICTIONS OF THE BODY (IN LATIN/X AMERICA)

Common Area Designation: Cross-Cultural Studies
C.I.S. Concentration: Latin American, Latinx, & Caribbean Studies

Bodies (fall):
Central to the colonial and imperial projects of the Americas was the regulation of the body, from the display of Indigenous bodies to European "civilized" spectators, to the classification of human beings in *Pinturas de Castas*, a genre of painting that claimed to represent a racial and social taxonomy of colonial societies in Latin America. Drawing from the interdisciplinary field of Disability

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Studies, this seminar explores how bodies are constructed as different in these colonial and imperial systems by examining contemporary film, visual art, literature, and performances from the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. How do we understand corporeal and cognitive difference? What happens when the bodies of Others (the enslaved, women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, non-human animals, LGBTQ+ individuals) become objects of entertainment or scientific study?

Fictions (spring):
In the second semester, we will continue to learn from and about bodily difference as we discuss the history and representation of zombies, witches, cyborgs, vampires, cannibals, and mythical creatures in Caribbean and Latin American societies. What is a monster? How can we explain the fascination with the monstrous throughout history? Examining different media and genres, including graphic novels, music, and Science Fiction, we will look into how these "monsters" become sites of resistance, identity celebration, and empowerment. We will discuss topics of colonialism, Western biomedicine versus Indigenous healing practices, Afro-descendant knowledge, reproductive justice, experimentation with human and non-human animals, and racism in healthcare settings, as we reflect on the intersections between empathy, cultural competence, Otherness, and community.