

MONTERRAT SEMINARS FALL 2017 – SPRING 2018

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES SEMINARS

CONTEMPORARY 1: ENCOUNTERING DIFFERENCE

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies or Cross-Cultural Studies
C.I.S. Concentration: Africana Studies

Africa and the Other (fall):

Most people in the West know little about Africa. We might have studied Africa for a few weeks in school or glanced occasionally at newspaper headlines about war, genocide, AIDS, or even a safari adventure, but rarely have we actually thought seriously about Africa. Anyone who wants to understand contemporary Africa *needs* to understand the African past. This semester, will examine dominant ideas about colonial Africa and Africans' experiences during colonialism. We will pay particular attention to important historical debates on Africa's colonial past and the legacy of colonialism, resistance and response to the imposition and entrenchment of colonialism, and the nature of colonial rule as revealed in economic (under)development, ethnicity and conflict, and the environment in the twentieth century.

Living with Africa (spring):

The second part of our seminar will focus on evaluating the twentieth-and twenty-first century post-colonial outcomes in Africa. In particular, we will explore together the challenges (and promises) facing present-day African nations as they grapple with neo-colonialism marked by dependency, political instability, ethnic/resource conflicts, and indebtedness. Most of these challenges are steeped in history, but new and emerging challenges also have complex contemporary dynamics that are marked by hyper-globalization, climate change, HIV-AIDS, and the new politics of democratization in Africa. We will examine these issues using specific country-studies and thematic studies.

CONTEMPORARY 2: HOW THEY GOT AWAY WITH MURDER

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

Degradation and Demonization (fall):

The 20th century saw some of the most heinous crimes against humanity ever committed. War crimes, genocides, and global terrorism all force us to grapple with the frightening realities of evil, hatred, and violence. How was it even possible for these crimes to happen, and who bears responsibility or blame? In this seminar, we will examine the victimizers and oppressors — in particular the methods of demonization and dehumanization that enabled human beings to marginalize and later to eliminate entire groups of people. We will explore these issues concretely through numerous historical cases, including the Holocaust and World War II, the legacy of European colonialism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the tactics of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Together, we will consider questions of human rights, ethical responsibility for the other, the problem of evil, power structures that enable oppression, and the nature of hatred itself.

Reconciliation and Restoration (spring):

During the spring semester, we will shift our focus from victimizers and oppressors to consider victims and survivors. Our primary consideration will be the choice between forgiveness/reconciliation and revenge/retribution. Through case studies such as the "Troubles" of Northern Ireland, the Rwandan Genocide, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Syrian refugee crisis, we will consider the questions: What role should memory and forgetting play in the process of healing and forgiveness? What steps can be taken toward appropriate remembrance of the victims, and what must we do to ensure that such terrible tragedies are never again committed? Is the restoration of right relationships possible, or are some crimes beyond the possibility of reconciliation? Themes such as memory, truth, justice, reparations, mercy, punishment, and the mere possibility (or desirability) of reconciliation will also be explored.

CONTEMPORARY 3: SCI/FI: (RE)DEFINING THE HUMAN

Common Area Designation: Literature

Perfecting Ourselves (fall):

Science fiction is the world seen through the funhouse mirror, allowing us constantly to define and redefine what it means to be human. In this seminar, we will explore the history, development, technique, and larger social and political functions of the genre. During the fall semester, we will focus on stories that explore our sense of self and self-worth. How and why do we categorize ourselves as acceptable or unacceptable? Is that decision our own to make? What happens when the "different" tries to infiltrate "our" group? Can the outsider ever become an insider? What does it mean to be human? Is it a matter of biology? As our discussion evolves, we will find there is so much more to it (us) than we think. Readings and films include *Metropolis*, *Do Android's Dream of Electronic Sheep?* and its film adaptation *Blade Runner*, as well as *Children of Men* and *Gattaca*.

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Prognosticating the Other (spring):

Having examined ourselves in the funhouse mirror of science fiction, our gaze this semester will shift to the heavens and what may be waiting for us “out there.” Call them gods or monsters, angels or aliens, humans have always told stories about those which exist beyond us as a way to further define who we are. These stories reveal our greatest hopes and desires for what the good of mankind could and should be, as well as our deepest fears of what we might be - the inner darkness we might never really overcome. Together, we will analyze what these stories and images reveal about the moments in which they were created, as well as their contemporary and more universal meanings. Readings and films include *War of the Worlds*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Slaughter House 5*, *Roadside Picnic*, *Alien*, and more.

CONTEMPORARY 4: THE CYBORG SELF

Common Area Designation: Social Science

The Human/Machine Dichotomy (fall):

In this seminar, we will explore the figure of the “cyborg”, a concept that attempts to capture the increasingly tenuous boundaries between living organisms and technologies. Social media, cellphones, reproductive technologies, toys, weapons, comic-book characters, video surveillance, and factories will be among our many objects of inquiry. Our aim is to understand how science and technology are inherently social – produced by power struggles, cultural patterns, economic trends, and political urgencies. In turn, these new technologies transform the ways in which we socialize, communicate, and interact with each other as human beings, creating new political horizons. Given the centrality of technoscience to our everyday lives, our analysis will allow us to better understand the rapid pace of change in our contemporary, globalized society.

Virtual and Artificial Humans (spring):

In our continued exploration of the “cyborg,” we will turn our focus to posthuman identities that further blur the distinction between humans and their technological others. Together, we will investigate virtual reality, robotics, gaming, prosthetics, and artificial intelligence – technologies that have serious implications for our self-construction as knowing subjects, as well as ethical implications for our very humanity. We will examine opposing views regarding the safety, desirability, and future potential of these technologies. Some authors consider them to be positive developments that improve humanity, while others are very wary of the dehumanizing, alienating, and even deadly effects that these technologies could represent for us. Using science fiction to explore narratives of possible futures, we will puzzle through the grey areas of a reconfigured humanity that might not look very human at all.

CONTEMPORARY 5: THE IMPORTANCE OF ENEMIES

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

Forging Citizens and Soldiers (fall):

How do leaders compel obedience and inspire patriotism? In this seminar, we will look at the rise of different variants of popular dictatorship in the early twentieth century, particularly the regimes of Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin and the ideologies of fascism and communism. We will examine the sources of support for these leaders and their world views, paying particular attention to the way each of these systems attempted to construct or re-construct a powerful, attractive group identity by targeting certain other groups as outsiders and threats. We will focus on the experience of World War II and explore what drove the involvement of millions of people in total war. Did politics succeed in shaping, or in some cases in transforming, morality? If so, how? What compelled Nazi collaboration? What inspired Soviet loyalty? Together, we will investigate how individuals caught in such a calamitous and violent experience came to see the world around them and how they judged their own actions, both at the time and in retrospect.

“Evil” Empires and “Holy” Wars (spring):

The superpower struggle that shaped the world post-1945 involved a competition not only for military might, but also for moral supremacy. During this time, leaders of the US and the USSR each sought to demonstrate, first to their own citizens and then to the world at large, the superiority of their country’s social system and the failures of that of its greatest rival. In this seminar, we will explore this clash of values as it played out in the decades after the Second World War, as the United States and the Soviet Union came to define themselves in opposition to each other. We will look at the postwar norms that each superpower promulgated, the mechanisms each used to entrench and enforce those norms, and the space (or lack thereof) each society left for dissent and criticism. We will examine how the figure of a rival “enemy” power helped, in both East and West, to solidify a positive national or Soviet socialist identity, as well as to shape policy. We will pay particular attention to the development of the nuclear arms race and

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the way the threat of atomic warfare spilled into politics and popular culture, as well as the way the Cold War conflict influenced public memory of the Nazi experience and the global battle against fascism.

CONTEMPORARY 6: US AND THEM

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies or Cross-Cultural Studies

Race, Science & Classification (fall):

How many racial categories are there? What constitutes each category, and who decides? In this seminar, we will examine historical and contemporary efforts in the Americas to classify human difference based on race. Case studies will include the United States, Mexico, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina, among others. We will trace how our understanding and study of racial classification has evolved from “scientific” methods to socially constructed approaches—and back again. We will also consider why states have constructed/enforced racial boundaries and why these boundaries have changed over time. We will survey the tools through which states identify, classify, and legitimate racial difference, including censuses, passports, and registration systems. Together, we will explore the effects of official racial classification on notions of belonging and citizenship, political representation, and social welfare and immigration policy.

Group Identity Politics (spring):

Having examined why states classify individuals based on race, we will turn our discussion to explore the link between racial categories and group identity. To what extent do individuals develop racial and ethnic group identities that conform with “official” racial categories? Together, we will consider what characteristics determine racial and ethnic groups and group membership. Is group membership based on shared experiences, what we look like, our religion, language or descent? We will also look at how groups establish differences between themselves and others, and whether these boundaries persist. Additionally, we will explore the link between racial group identity and racial consciousness. Do individuals who self-identify or are identified by others as white, black, Latino, Asian, etc. see their own fortunes tied to those of their “group” and mobilize on behalf of their group? Special topics will include black, Latino, and nativist movements in the United States.

CONTEMPORARY 7: COMMUNITY, UTOPIA, AND TERROR

Common Area Designation: Social Science

The Ideological Community(fall):

Political ideologies can provide the basis for a more extensive and diverse community than has traditionally been possible, heralding a utopian vision of unity on the basis of shared ideals. However, even the most cosmopolitan systems may introduce new sources of division or inflame old ones. This semester, we will focus on ideological conceptions of citizen and alien, examining how and why these communities resort to violence against one another or generate terroristic movements within. Topics of study will include medieval Christendom, the French Revolution, socialism, nationalism, and competing notions of American identity based on ethnicity, shared experiences, or a common belief in liberal ideals. In addition to historical case studies, we will read texts such as Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, and Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and look at films such as *The Battle of Algiers*.

Liberty and Terror (spring):

A conflict between a state and a terrorist organization is in large part a battle to shape public perception. Each side attempts to represent itself as the guardians of freedom and its adversaries as the terrorists, against whom violence is necessary to achieve a utopian vision of peace and security. By examining cases such as the United States and Al Qaeda, Israel and Palestine, Northern Ireland, and Sri Lanka, we will discuss the competing narratives of terrorism and counterterrorism, and explore political methods of resolution and reconciliation. In addition to an in-depth analysis of political decision-making and rhetoric, we will read texts such as Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, Matt Ruff's *The Mirage* and Ben Fountain's *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, and look at films such as *The Baader-Meinhof Complex*.

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CORE HUMAN QUESTIONS SEMINARS

CORE 1: ETHICS AND POLITICS OF WORK

Common Area Designation: Philosophical Studies

Ethics: What's in it for Me? (fall):

Each of us needs to work. At the very least, each of us needs to work for a living to meet our basic needs. More interestingly, it seems plausible that each of us needs to work in order to fully develop our potential – to fully become ourselves (whatever that might mean, exactly). But some ways of working make our lives worse, and some ways of working interfere with our ability to “fully become ourselves.” So what do we do about that? In this seminar, we will explore classical ethical theories from Mill, Kant, and Aristotle to try to answer that question, “What is “work” and what can it contribute to our lives?”

Politics: What's in it for Us? (spring):

Society needs people to work. There is an enormous amount of “stuff” that needs to happen for a society to function, and it is plausible that the government should play a role in making sure that all of that stuff is happening – that the right people are working on the right things. In this seminar, we will study the contemporary political theories that grew out of Kant and Aristotle: what do liberalism, libertarianism, conservatism, and capability theory have to say about this? What kinds of work should we be required – or allowed – to do? How does working affect us as citizens? And what should the government do about it?

CORE 2: MOVIES AND THE WORKING LIFE

Common Area Designation: Arts

A Job of Work (fall):

This seminar will focus on the ways in which movies depict the working life and our relationship to the demands of the professional work we do, the way in which we immerse ourselves in its distinctive details and traditions, and the intimate communities that work fosters. Together, we will look at movies that portray a wide range of jobs and professions. Since this is a film class, it will also provide an introduction to the process of reading movies as texts. Among the films we will look at are *Melvin and Howard*, *Spotlight*, *From Here to Eternity*, *Tootsie* and *Once*.

At Odds with the Job (spring):

Most of the movies in the fall semester imply a basic harmony between work and those who engage in it. In the spring, we will examine movies that are concerned with the tension that arises when we become skeptical about the value of the work we do, of its aims or priorities, or when we feel uneasy about the way our work makes us feel about ourselves. Some of these films imply a profound dislocation – moral or ethical or even philosophical – with the working world in general. Among the films we will look at are *L.A. Confidential*, *The Conversation*, *M*A*S*H*, *Taxi Driver* and *Bicycle Thieves*.

CORE 3: OUR LIFE'S WORK

Common Area Designation: Philosophical Studies

Theory & Therapy (fall):

The most fundamental--and difficult--work of our lives is to determine how best to live them. With a focus on the early Greek philosophy of the Stoics and Epicureans, this seminar will take seriously Pierre Hadot's claim that philosophy is not a subject of study but a “way of life.” Beginning with Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, we will try to see/enact the connection between genuine attempts to understand and find one's place in the world, and the therapeutic possibility of discovering the true sources of our anxieties and insecurities.

Creativity & Catharsis (spring):

In conversation with Sartre's claim that building our lives is akin to constructing a work of art, this semester we will consider the various ways in which we can/must be challenged, transformed, and healed through the creative process and its products. Through texts from Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Freud, we will look at the connections between creativity and freedom, art and philosophy, interpretation and truth. Through a study of existential philosophy and psychoanalytic theory, we will continue to dig at the fundamental link between how we see and who we are/become.

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CORE 4: PLAYING AT WORK IN ART & LITERATURE

Common Area Designation: Arts

The Modernist Response (fall):

At the beginning of the last century, artists rebelled against the atomization of society caused by the Industrial Revolution and urbanization. These artists issued aesthetic manifestos and created transgressive works that played with structure, form, and imagery in a futile howl against a world that they believed was rushing towards its own self-destruction. In this seminar, we will explore modernist art movements-- from symbolism to surrealism in visual arts and theater--that reflects the ever-growing alienation of the individual to work and society. We will explore how various modernist artists represented labor and work, ranging from the soul-deadening existence depicted in Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener* to the human automatons in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, and the authoritarian fantasies of the Soviets and Nazis.

The Postmodernist Response (spring):

The postmodern aesthetic rose in tandem with the coming of the Information Age. Some argue that television, and later, computers created a false sense of community and connectivity that merely disguised an ever-growing sense of isolation. This semester, we will examine a range of contemporary works of art, performance, and literature that reflects the disconnect caused by living and working in a world where the liminal space between the real and the virtual-- between fact and alternate fact--becomes blurred and indistinguishable. Late modernists such as Rothko and Beckett deconstructed the object past the point of endurance, shattering the boundaries of high culture and opening aesthetics to the post-modern dilemma of indeterminate meaning and decontextualization. We will survey the threads of postmodernism in the works of Pollock, Rothko, Beckett, Handke, Albee, and Warhol.

CORE 5: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ROMAN WORK

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies

Senators & Ladies (fall):

In ancient Rome, neither lawyers nor priests practiced distinct vocations: instead, men of power might advocate for clients in court or adopt the role of priest when circumstances required. A number of prestigious tasks were reserved for men of wealth and power. Moreover, the wives of elite men were also expected to engage in tasks considered appropriate to their station. These tasks included weaving, some child-rearing, and *cultus*—a complex array of skills that involved both personal grooming and witty conversation. In this seminar, we will consider the archaeological and literary evidence for elite work in the Roman world, and think about how this work contributed to the power of those who did it.

Slaves & Shopkeepers (spring):

Archaeology is crucial for the recovery of information about ordinary people in antiquity. In ancient Rome, slaves did much of the manual labor, but they might also be teachers or doctors. They were legal property, but they could practice a trade and sometimes even buy their own freedom. We read about such slaves in ancient literature, but the free poor, who represented an enormous percentage of the Roman population, are virtually absent from that literature. This semester, we will consider the evidence, mostly archaeological, for slaves and the free poor in the Roman world, and we will think about how archaeology can help us recover the stories of those who are not well represented in textual sources.

DIVINE

DIVINE 1: DIVINE RELATIONS

Common Area Designation: Philosophical Studies or Studies in Religion

Of Gods and Humans (fall):

Whether the figure of the divine be that of a personal God, cosmological form, or conceptual reason, humans have always been concerned with how such a figure relates to, interacts with, and structures the lives of human beings. In this seminar, we will explore the interaction between humans and God through close readings of religious and philosophical texts. These texts include the Scriptural book of *Genesis*, Platonic dialogues, Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*, and Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Together, we will ask questions concerning how one ought to live, whether an existence ordered by divine law or will is actually livable, and whether a life ordered by human reason can function in a similar existential manner to one ordered by divine law or will.

Of Humans and Gods (spring):

In the second half of our seminar, we will reverse our emphasis and focus on how humans think about, and relate to, God. We explore this interaction through close readings of religious, philosophical, and literary texts, including Maimonides's *Eight Chapters*,

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Augustine's *Confessions*, Freud's *Future of an Illusion*, Elie Wiesel's *Souls on Fire*, and Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*. Together, we will ask questions concerning how different people allow the divine to enter into their consciousness and life, whether we need to let the divine into our lives at all, and whether the divine is, in fact, 'let into'--or rather, erupts into--our lives.

DIVINE 2: IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY

Common Area Designation(s): Studies in Religion

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 relationship 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 (CBL) projects 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.*

Modifying Technologies (spring):

The second half of our seminar will focus on the ways in which advances in modern western reproductive and genetic medicine and technologies challenge our notions of "normal" and "disabled" and how we understand the boundary between them. As these advances bring us the hope of cure as well as more choice and control over our bodies and minds, what might be lost with the diminishment of difference and diversity? With the help of readings in bioethics and social ethics, as well as continued involvement in Community-Based Learning (CBL), we will consider the following question: Can the human community thrive while those who are outside the "norm" are increasingly stigmatized, isolated, and perhaps eliminated? Students will become knowledgeable about medical and genetic technologies that may be used to diminish diversity and reinforce boundaries between "normal" and "disabled." *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

DIVINE 3: THE BODY AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Common Area Designation(s): Studies in Religion

Who Were the First Christians? (fall):

In the ancient world, not unlike today, the body stood at the center of discourses about identity; it marked the boundaries between groups. The first Christians participated in these same discussions as they figured out what they believed and who they were in the Roman world. This course examines the ways Christians and others used the body to talk about race, ethnicity, gender, and status, and how their new identities in Christ shape their self-definition. We will read a variety of texts from the earliest period of Christian history. As we examine various strategies of defining human difference in the ancient world, students will have the chance to explore similar issues in their own environment.

Embodied Theology and Practice (spring):

At the core of Christian belief and practice is the startling proposition that the divine became flesh, died, and was resurrected in bodily form. The divine and human are inextricably tied together. This course will investigate how this connection shaped early Christian experience and belief. How did the first Christians explain the incarnation and resurrection? How did they experience their own transformations in their bodies? Together, we will explore the variety of ways Christians imagined and practiced this divine/human relationship by studying theology, ritual, martyrdom and asceticism. Students will also pursue similar questions in their own contexts.

DIVINE 4: TRIALS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Common Area Designation: Natural Science or Studies in Religion

Galileo (fall):

Most Holy Cross students recognize "science" and "religion" as two of humanity's most powerful institutions. However, most of us have not thought deeply about how we or others interact with these two institutions, or how we may be encouraged to interact given the natures of science and religion. Physicist Ian Barbour has identified four modes in which science and religion have commonly interacted throughout history: conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration. This semester, we will focus on the first major interaction between science and religion, the trial of Galileo. We will discuss the trial and re-enact some of the debates

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regarding Aristotelianism, the “new cosmology,” and the Catholic Church. Neither prior knowledge of physics nor the use of mathematics beyond basic algebra and geometry is required for this course.

Darwin (spring):

In this seminar, we will continue to follow and examine the interaction between science and religion—are they in conflict, independent, in dialogue, or two facets of an integrated whole—by exploring a second major case study of science and religion: Darwin, evolution, creation, and the rise of naturalism. Together, we will study and discuss the life and work of Darwin, and re-enact the debates of the Royal Society as it argued about whether or not to award him the Copley Medal, the society’s highest award for lifetime achievement in science. We will conclude the year with a discussion of where we and society stand today regarding the relationships between science and religion, drawing on many of the issues first raised in the 17th and 19th centuries.

GLOBAL SOCIETY

GLOBAL 1: ANCIENT CHINA IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

Common Area Designation(s): Cross-Cultural Studies or Literature

Traditional Chinese Culture (fall):

China is one of the world’s oldest continuing civilizations, extending back in time more than three thousand years. In order to understand modern China, we need to understand the foundation on which it is built. In this seminar, we will explore an overview of China’s history and geography, customs and traditions, food, music, drama, and more. Through readings, lectures, discussions, videos, music, and hands-on workshops, we will compare China with the West, looking at differences large and small that lead to different values and different ways of viewing the world. In the process, students will learn to be global citizens capable of viewing events from multiple cultural perspectives.

Encountering the Strange (spring):

Since early times, China has witnessed a strong interest in the accounts of the strange. What does the strange mean? How does this kind of writing reflect various concerns of Chinese culture in different historical periods? In this course, we will examine representations of the strange in traditional Chinese literary works and their modern cinematic adaptations. We will explore the historical, philosophical, and religious backgrounds of these literary works and pay attention to recurrent themes and narrative strategies to consider issues such as the representation of gender and the relationship between self and the “other”.

GLOBAL 2: COMPETING VISIONS OF FREEDOM

Common Area Designation(s): Historical Studies

Republics of Liberty (fall):

What did Americans mean when they claimed the United States was founded as a “republic of liberty”? What did this liberty entail and who was entitled to it? In this seminar, we will examine several chapters in 19th century U.S. history in which Americans debated competing ideas about nature of republicanism, democracy, and equality. Together, we will explore race slavery and the abolitionist movement, westward expansion and Native America removal, and immigration and the making of a multicultural society. In each case, we will make connections to similar movements beyond the United States, while also examining how art and performance have played a role in these debates. Students will work on a project that involves volunteer work with organizations engaged in local social justice initiatives in the Worcester community. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

Human Rights and Wrongs (spring):

We will build on our work in the first semester to examine how Americans wrestled with questions regarding democracy, equality, and justice in the 20th and 21st centuries and how these questions connected to concerns around the world. We will focus our inquiry on movements for economic justice, civil rights, and peace, as well as related human rights struggles in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Together, we will pay special attention to the life stories of people involved in these movements, especially the development of their self-awareness as members of an oppressed group and commitment to bringing about social and political change in the service of justice. As in the fall semester, we will continue to examine how art and performance have played a role in these movements. Students will continue in their Community-Based Learning projects. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

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GLOBAL 3: GLOBAL IMAGERY

Common Area Designation(s): Arts

The Human Body (fall):

Across the globe, from prehistory to the present, humans have depicted themselves in art. Different cultures developed highly varied ideals of representation of the human form that could emphasize transcendence of the material world, embrace the brutality of physical force, enforce stereotypes of gender, or be abstractions that transcend the physical body. Together, we will look at the art of the human form through sculpture, film, and painting from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States. Students will spend time looking at and contemplating original works of art on campus, at the Worcester Art Museum and at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The World Around Us (spring):

What a society values invariably appears in its art. Landscape developed in the West as the “Age of Discovery” brought the exploration of new worlds. In the East, art has been a part of religious contemplation for millennia. This semester, we will examine artistic works designed to awaken their audience to political issues, such as environmental protection and personal freedoms. We will analyze contemporary artists from across the globe create installations that become a part of the natural environment, sometimes for periods as brief as a day, or sometimes as a permanent alteration. These works can be of ice, beams of light, or mown grass as well as of earth and stone. During the spring semester, students will take trips into Worcester to see public art, meet artists, and participate in a collaborative art project.

GLOBAL 4: IMAGES FROM LATIN AMERICA

Common Area Designation(s): Arts or Cross-Cultural Studies

Latin America through Cinema (fall):

Tropical beaches? Spicy tacos? Merengue dancing? Narcotrafficking? These are images that some people think of when they hear “Latin America.” In this seminar, we will explore cinema from and about Latin America to expand our understanding of this culturally diverse region comprised of more than twenty countries and territories. We will examine topics such as gender, humor, food, history, globalization, politics, memory, 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 in Latin America (spring):

We will begin the spring semester with a role-immersion game, The Prado Museum’s Second Expansion: The Diverse Art of Latin America, that will introduce students to a wide range of movements and styles present in 20th through 21st century art from Latin America. 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 centuries Latin America. Together, we will take trips into the local Worcester community to see public art and participate in a collaborative art project.

GLOBAL 5: LOVE AND WAR

Common Area Designations: Arts or Literature

Love, Text and Performance (fall):

Our intellectual inquiry in this seminar will center on the universal theme of love, through the lens of its myriad forms of artistic expression, including poetry, theater, film, visual art, narrative, and dance. While our primary focus will be on the literature of Spain and the Hispanic world, our explorations of different types of love (romantic, erotic, maternal, unrequited, and spiritual, to name but a few), will incorporate a variety of literary and artistic traditions. Texts will draw from the Early Modern to the Contemporary periods and will include works by Lorca, the Generation of ‘27 in Spain, Neruda, Paz, Lope de Vega, Cervantes, Petrarch, and others. Performance and improvisation will have a central role in the course. **No previous acting experience is required.**

War and Coming of Age (spring):

The experience of war has always provided fertile ground for artists and writers. What does it mean to come of age in times of conflict? In this seminar, we will explore war and its repercussions, especially on the young, through various modes of artistic expression. Together, we will read texts that address different periods of historical turmoil in numerous genres, and delve into the

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themes of exile, conflict, immigration, genocide, and alienation, among others. A sampling of texts will include: post-Civil War novels in Spain by Laforet and Rodoreda, as well as early modern works such as the picaresque novel and texts by Cervantes. Performance and improvisation will have a central role in the course. **No previous acting experience is required.**

GLOBAL 6: MUSIC, POLITICS, CULTURE

Common Area Designations: Arts or Cross-Cultural Studies

Jazz-Civil Rights- Hip Hop (fall):

This seminar will focus on themes central to the African American experience, and by extension the American experience in music of the 20th and 21st centuries. We will consider the social and political roots of the Blues, and the struggle for racial justice and civil rights as reflected in the music of Nina Simone, Miles Davis, and the Hip Hop artist Kendrick Lamar. The central question for this seminar is will be, what effect did the black struggle for equality have on the aesthetics of Jazz styles, and on the symbolic meanings that are attached to this art form? Special "hands on" workshops and concerts will be an important element of this course. Students will pursue innovative projects that combine writing, music, and media.

Dreams, Myth and Performance (spring):

Composers and artists, working individually or collectively, create works that communicate important social, political, spiritual, or personal values to their audiences. In this seminar, we will focus on several large scale works inspired by myth, folklore, literature, or historical events. We will examine how an initial idea, when transformed into a work of art, awakens and elicits powerful responses from an audience. We will study Igor Stravinsky's 1913 ballet- *Le Sacre du Printemps*, Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, Lin Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*, and the opera *Dr. Atomic*, by the American composer John Adams. Films, visits to museums in Worcester and Boston, and concerts will be an important component of this seminar.

GLOBAL 7: WHOSE STORIES ARE THESE?

Common Area Designation(s): Literature or Cross Cultural

Who Says? (fall):

What does it mean to speak for someone else? When a novelist creates a character who hails from a different identity – nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, socioeconomic class, time period, etc. – is this an act of empathic imagination or of cultural appropriation? Journalists writing about people whose experiences differ from their own can only do the story justice to the degree that they are conscious of their own assumptions. And readers need to ask questions about power and perspective in order to apprehend the stories we read wisely. Through studying the written and performed work of Jamaica Kincaid, Rowan Williams, Lionel Shriver, Anna Deavere Smith, Sarah Jones and others, we will practice both how to read and how to relate stories. We will wrestle with instances in which the human need to communicate can result in harmful miscommunication. Along the way, we will bring our curiosity and ethical concerns to the question of who speaks - and for whom?

Who Sees? (spring):

The rise of the graphic novel has opened up new avenues for seeing the world and its stories. In recent years, some of the most harrowing experiences from around the globe -- from genocide to revolution -- have taken the form of the graphic novel in order to be disseminated amongst the Anglophone reading public. In this seminar, we will explore the graphic novel as both a literary medium and as a symbolic space for forgotten or alternative histories. We will begin with Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, which will provide us with a critical vocabulary for the graphic narrative form, particularly in regards to the active participation demanded by comics from their readers. From here, we will take on Hillary Chute's assertion that graphic novel readers function as symbolic witnesses, as we read the work of Joe Sacco's *Safe Area Gorazde*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Lila Quintero Weaver's *Darkroom*, and many others. Together, we will consider what it means to be symbolic witnesses that see the world through the medium of the graphic novel.

GLOBAL 8: SEEING OURSELVES AND OTHERS

Common Area Designation: Arts

Global Self Portraiture (fall):

You might think selfies are a new phenomenon, but in fact, humankind has long created images of the self. Whereas in the past, this might have been an oil painting created to mark the acceptance into an artist's organization, today, such an image might be one's best pose made on a smart phone to share with family and friends around the globe. How have these images changed over time and what might they reveal—or even conceal--about individuals and their world? Who is the person and what are the cultural

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forces behind these visual productions? In this seminar, we will explore these questions together as we examine a wide range of self-portraits throughout art history and across diverse geographic contexts. Through a variety of critical viewing exercises, we will sharpen our observation and writing skills to interpret a fuller meaning of self-portraiture and to understand better how the visual arts contribute to the creation of identity and community in a global context.

Portraying Others (spring):

Portraiture can reveal a great deal about not only the subject, but also the maker and the viewer. This semester, we will shift the focus of our investigation from the self to the power of visual culture in representing others. How has the art of portraiture developed over time? What might we learn about a given culture's values from the ways in which individuals—from the famous to the unknown—have been represented? Together, we will explore a rich local resource of visual culture – the wide variety of portraits in the Worcester Art Museum's encyclopedic collection of world art. Be it a terra cotta figure of a dead male on an ancient Etruscan sarcophagus or a recent photograph derived from a family's DNA, these works will help us to interpret both past and present and understand the ever-changing concept of portraiture in our rapidly evolving world.

NATURAL WORLD

NATURAL 1: ENVIRONMENTAL MATHEMATICS

Common Area Designation: Mathematical Science

Modeling the Environment (fall):

If we continue to use fossil fuels to generate energy for transportation, what effects can we expect to see from the pollution they generate? Are there realistic alternatives to those fuels? Our ability to develop answers to such important questions and to understand the political, economic, and social issues involved depends on understanding quantitative information. Mathematical models--equations of various sorts capturing relationships between variables involved in a complex situation--are fundamental for understanding the potential consequences of the choices we make. In this seminar, we will introduce a number of basic techniques for constructing models and seeing the ways they are applied to pressing environmental issues.

Analyzing Environmental Data (spring):

Are we experiencing global climate change? Does a high-fat diet lead to increased risk of certain cancers? Statistical thinking is one method humans have developed to discern underlying patterns in quantitative information. Statistics form an ever-growing component of our public debate on issues in the environment, human health, and politics. In this seminar, students will learn some basic tools of statistical inference (that is, the process of inferring the presence of a general pattern from the data contained in a smaller sample) and how and why those tools actually work. In the process, students will develop an appreciation of the power and the limitations of statistical thinking and learn to analyze claims backed by statistics.

NATURAL 2: HABITAT EXPLORATIONS

Common Area Designation(s): Arts

Germany's Greening (fall):

Germans' engagement with nature blossomed around 1800 during Romanticism and bore fruit almost two centuries later in the founding and subsequent parliamentary election of the Green Party. When Germany became the last European nation to coalesce into nation in 1871, industrialization brought not only the shift from steam energy to electricity, but also the transformation of impoverished rural laborers into urban factory workers as well as democratic minded-activists. In this seminar, we will explore German countercultural movements that look to "Nature" and the countryside as means to escape urbanization, pollution, and modernization in order to recover psychological and physical well being. One natural resource in particular became a cultural, political, and economic symbol in these movements: the Rhine river. Together, we will investigate how this natural border between Germany and France, and natural trade route between the Alps and the Atlantic, eventually drew international attention from Greenpeace, providing the world with an exceptional environmental case study.

Celebrating Geometry @ Bauhaus (spring):

In 1919, shortly after WWI ended and Germany embraced democracy for the first time, Walter Gropius founded the fine arts and crafts school called the Bauhaus. Gropius' students, with their diverse backgrounds, shared not only a multicultural experience but also lived with ecological concerns. In this seminar, we will explore the creative world of the Bauhaus. Gropius and his colleagues strove for a holistic approach in their design ideas for a new Germany and a new century. Bauhaus instructors taught their students mindfulness and, most importantly, encouraged their creativity by challenging them to make the most out of a piece of paper, and

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by staging theatrical happenings, as well as nature-oriented celebrations. Circle, triangle, rectangle, cylinder ... the list of geometric figurations as design elements for costumes, furnishings, and buildings may seem limited but, as students will discover, the combinations proved endlessly pleasing, surprising, and visually challenging.

NATURAL 3: SCIENCE, NATURE AND RELIGION

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies

Science and Religion (fall):

How did God fit into the world with the advent of the Scientific Revolution? Were science and religion at odds? How did early modern scholars and writers see mankind's place in the universe? Did they believe in life on other planets? In this seminar, we will examine several historical events, such as the Lisbon earthquake and the Boston smallpox epidemic, to discover how early modern Westerners understood natural phenomena and God's role in scientific inquiry. We will read about such famous scientists such as Galileo (through a role-playing game) and Newton, as well as how women participated in scientific endeavors. Debates among different groups over how scientific laws of nature fit within a Christian-dominated society will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of the relationship between science, nature, and religion. Finally, we will read popular literature to see how ideas about science and religion were disseminated to non-experts in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Health and Sickness (spring):

Nowhere does the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality become more apparent than in history of patient expectations and experiences of health and sickness. In this seminar, we will discover that the assignment of disease and health are much more fluid than most imagine. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been used to justify racism, sexism, and other discrimination as "natural". We will analyze patients' diaries and nineteenth-century hospital records to discern how religion, class, and gender affected patient expectations of medical care. Readings such as Tom Savitt's "Black Health on Plantations" and Audre Lorde's "Confronting Breast Cancer Treatment as a Black Lesbian" underscore the differences in how patients experience and perceive health and disease over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

NATURAL 4: WILDERNESS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies or Social Science

The Idea of Wilderness (fall):

Wilderness, whether understood as a concept in the imagination or as the reality of a resource-rich hinterland available for exploitation, is central to the American experience. In this course, we will trace the incorporation of wild, ostensibly unsettled lands into the expanding American republic from the first European settlements to 1940. Together, we will explore evolving religious and cultural attitudes toward nature, wild lands, and settlement, as well as the progressive displacement of the original inhabitants and the destruction of the Indian way of life.

The Last Wilderness (spring):

In the seminar, we will examine how an expansive environmental movement emerged in the United States after World War II, as well as issues related to quality of life, species preservation, and the effects of human activity on the natural world. The growing appreciation for the remaining wild lands culminated in the 1964 Wilderness Act that ensured significant tracts of land would be preserved in their natural condition. Together, we will consider how the national parks movement affected the lives of Native Americans living on lands designated to be preserved as wilderness. While the focus of this seminar is largely on the history of North American wilderness and its connection to environmentalism, a gripping narrative of contemporary wilderness in the larger world will be part of the second semester's readings. John Vaillant's *The Tiger* offers an extraordinary study of the fraught interactions between humans and the Siberian tiger in Russia's Far East.

NATURAL 5: WRITING/READING PLACE

Common Area Designation(s): Literature

Go West, Young Man and Woman (fall):

Since America's beginnings, the frontier has shaped our sense of who we are. Frederick Jackson Turner claimed that westward expansion gave rise to a sense of freedom and opportunity by "breaking the bond of custom [and] offering new experiences...." In this seminar, we will use American literature to complicate Turner's thesis: To what extent was the American West always a myth since the region had been populated by native people long before Europeans "discovered" the continent? How does "nature"

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continue to be important to our sense of well-being? Does the wilderness still offer us new experiences that lead to self-discovery? Students will produce literary analysis and creative work.

Lost in the City (spring):

We'll turn away from the solitary adventurer of the first semester and focus in the second semester on community and who we are in relationship to each other. Readings on the state of American communities and how they are changing will inform our seminar discussions. Through a series of journalistic projects, we will investigate our classroom and college community before moving beyond the Hill to explore the city of Worcester. We will also survey the terrain of literary responses to urban life, providing students with examples of how they might frame their experiences of different places. Students will work alone and in groups on documentary and narrative projects.

SELF

SELF 1: ACCOUNTING AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

Bridging Boundaries: Accounting (fall):

Accounts have been kept for as long as humans have been able to record them. Accounting defines selves or entities, measures them, and communicates performance between them. What is measured and how it is communicated depends on the entities involved and the purpose of the communication. Whether you are aware of it or not, accounting is everywhere--it forms the nexus between dyads such as self and corporation, corporation and government, government and society and nation to nation. In this seminar, we will explore through art, literature, and film, the evolution of accounting from a system of measuring stores at the individual level to a profession with shared language and values.

Accounting and Accountability (spring):

How might accounting provide a tool to affect positive change and make a more just world? Critics of accounting claim accounting rules contribute to financial crises and fraudulent reporting, causing pain and suffering for governments, corporations, and individuals. However, current trends in accounting focus on issues of social justice and sustainability. In the aftermath of financial crises, we often see the establishment of laws, such as the Securities and Exchange Act and the Social Security Act, which serve to protect investments, ensure the security of individuals in old age and relieve suffering. Together, we will explore the role of ethical accounting in protecting the self, defined broadly.

SELF 2: BOUNDARIES OF A BIOLOGIC SELF

Common Area Designation: Natural Science

Constructing a Biologic Self (fall):

How is the biological self constructed? What are the biological principles that direct the complex molecular and cellular dance that generates the adult body plan from a single cell? What makes one body the same as or different from another body? What are the boundaries that are created during this process? In this seminar, we will use the study of developmental biology to help us explore the cellular and molecular biology that underpins the massive complexity of creating an adult body plan. Together, we will discuss the role of stem cells in creating and maintaining the adult form and explore ways in which the biological self can be remade through tissue regeneration.

Deconstructing a Biologic Self (spring):

What happens when the biological self is deconstructed? What are the consequences of malfunctions in the complex cellular and molecular dance that creates the adult body plan? In this seminar, we will build on our knowledge from the fall to explore the dark underbelly of developmental and stem cell biology. What happens when stem cells misbehave? What happens when rogue stem cells become cancerous? How does this affect our view of the boundaries of the biological self? Together, we will also explore the natural deconstruction of the biological self that occurs with aging, and examine creatures that have mastered the capacity to avoid aging.

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SELF 3: CROSSING BORDERS AND BARRIERS

Common Areas: Literature or Cross-Cultural Studies
CIS Concentration: Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

Selves in a New Language (fall):

How does crossing cultural and linguistic borders impact one's sense of self? In Eva Hoffman's memoir *Lost in Translation*, she describes her unhappy teen-age self who "used to be pretty in Poland" but can't connect with young people here, their jokes, or their junk food. The protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*, arriving illegally from India with nothing but a little knowledge of English and adopts no less than six different personal names as she rockets across her new world. In this seminar, students will improve their writing as they analyze fiction and nonfiction depicting the challenges such newcomers face in America, the rewards they seek, and the painful losses they carry with them.

American Dreamer Selves (spring):

Can those who survive the challenges of crossing cultural and linguistic borders really remake themselves? Can they attain to whatever new self they wish, an ideally successful self? The American Dream has always promised that the answer is yes. But the Jewish immigrant protagonist of Anzia Yezierska's novel *Bread Givers* finds that even after she perfects her English and lands her dream job and a husband to go with it, haunting ties to her orthodox religious past remain. Crossing social class barriers may be no less hazardous, as J. D. Vance explains in his memoir *Hillbilly Elegy*, though he's attained wealth. This seminar will offer students opportunities to push their writing as they reflect on your own American Dream journey.

SELF 4: DEATH & SOCIETY

Common Area Designation: Social Science

Making Sense of Mortality (fall):

In this seminar, we will address the question, how do we make sense of death? Together, we will consider how historical, cultural, and institutional conditions shape people's understandings of mortality. We will also use ideas of death as a way to understand what it means to *live* in the 21st-century United States. We will explore how sociologists think about health, illness, medicine, and mortality, while also asking students to think about the relationship between death and the pursuit of a meaningful life. Specific topics will include: Holocaust survivors, American attitudes toward death prior to the Civil War; medicine in the post-modern era; physician-assisted suicide; and death in the context of international migration and injustice.

Caring for Our Dead and Dying (spring):

This class asks students to consider how we care for people at the end of life. Students will examine the roles of professional and non-professional caregivers and learn about alternatives to mainstream models of care. We will use end-of-life caregiving as an opportunity to explore themes related to risk, authenticity, intimacy, emotional labor, humor, and social inequality in post-modern American life. Ideal for students considering a career in the health professions, this seminar has a Community-Based Learning component that requires care-related volunteer work. Topics will include: doctors and curative care, palliative and hospice care providers, family caregivers, nursing home and home care aids, funeral directors, and death midwives/end-of-life doulas. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

SELF 5: GENDER IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science
CIS Concentration(s): Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Gender Normativity (fall):

What is gender? How do we develop gender throughout our lifetimes? What is gender normativity and why does gender have such a powerful impact on our everyday lives and one's sense of self? How do the borders between genders become solidified? In this seminar, we will explore these questions and more, attending to the ways that gender shapes us and is shaped by us. Students will learn to think critically about gender in their own everyday lives and understand the impacts that gender has on their social relationships on a college campus.

Gender in Flux (spring):

Gender is a powerful social construct, but how do people challenge gender normativity in everyday life and throughout adulthood? In this seminar, we will consider the countless ways that people challenge gender expectations and work to shift the norms associated with masculinity and femininity and, in some cases, deconstruct the borders altogether. Together, we will explore ongoing questions such as: how do women in leadership positions respond to gender-based stereotypes? How do stay-at-home dads negotiate expectations of being a breadwinner? What do we learn about gender from people who are gender nonconforming or who transition their gender? What are the cumulative effects of various challenges against societal gender norms?

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SELF 6: HEALTH, DECISION-MAKING & SELF

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

Risk-Taking During Adolescence (fall):

Adolescence is a time period of many developmental changes and often the testing ground for risky health behaviors. Adolescents ask, “Who am I?” and “How I can become who I want to be?” Together, we will examine how brain development, identity struggles, perceptions of peers, and the media contribute to risky health behaviors such as substance use. Students will examine psychological theory and research and will consider how different decision-making models help us to understand how young people make health choices. The seminar will include a community-based learning component where students are placed in youth development settings to bring to light the connections between psychological research and theory and adolescents’ everyday experiences. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

Promoting Positive Development (spring):

What are the most effective ways to prevent adolescents from taking health risks and to promote positive youth development? In this seminar, we will examine how strengths-based strategies promote the resilience of adolescents and support them in avoiding health risks. Students will continue their Community-Based Learning experiences from the fall and reflect upon how communities can be effective agents in promoting mental health, connections to school and family, and adaptive decision-making among adolescents. Special topics will include strengths-based models of resiliency, problem-solving and creativity, resiliency across cultures, mentoring, and school- and community-based prevention and intervention. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

SELF 7: THE ARC OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

CIS Concentration(s): Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies

Beginnings of Social Injustice (fall):

Although American society has made significant strides in its pursuit of “liberty and justice for all,” many social groups continue to experience significant marginalization and inequality. Why? In this seminar, we will explore the arc of social injustice—how social inequality based on gender and sexual identity is created, maintained, and mitigated through the actions of individuals and groups. In the fall semester, we will focus on the beginning of this arc, considering how phenomena such as prejudice, stereotyping, and motivations to preserve the status quo work in tandem to create and maintain social injustice. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

Endings of Social Injustice (spring):

If each of us in the Holy Cross community is called to “be men and women for and with others,” how might we act in ways that promote justice? In this seminar, we will consider when and how social injustice based on gender and sexual identity can be alleviated. We will explore together the motivations, political strategies, and rhetoric activists have used in order to dismantle inequality or maintain the status quo. What have been the “wins” and “losses” in modern women’s and gay liberation movements in the United States? What can we learn from them? Based on this knowledge, we will develop “mini-movements”—group projects designed to affect change on our campus or in our society at large. *This course also entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

SELF 8: THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

Common Area Designation(s): 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, and “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 and adaptive, creative, positive, and emotionally fulfilling aspects of human behavior. As you pursue your own independence at the beginning of your college career, you will explore in this seminar what the science of happiness has to say about your own pursuit of happiness as you declare your independence.

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

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compelling and life-enriching questions as you reflect on your own adjustment to college life, a Community Based Learning project requiring 2 hours/week on site, and exposure to those with serious life issues. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*