

Spring 2024 Liberal Studies Core Course Descriptions

Please note that course descriptions are for reference only and are subject to change.

Comprehensive archives of past [GLS](#) and [LS Core](#) course descriptions are available on the Liberal Studies website.

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Arts and Cultures Towards the Crossroads

ACC-UF 102

Kathleen Bishop

In ACC we shall examine some of the major works spanning the period from the early Middle Ages to the Baroque period -- literary, visual, and musical. Students will develop their knowledge of the conventions of lyric, epic, and drama. Through reading, viewing, listening, discussion, and critical writing, students will discover some of the great works of world civilization – east and west.

Liora Brosh

This course studies the arts produced within diverse cultural traditions from the early Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. The Middle Ages were a time of intense religious devotion in both the Christian and Islamic world. This course will explore the impact of religious fervor on the literature and visual arts of the Medieval world. In literary texts, we will examine the tensions between spiritual ideals and material or physical desire. We will explore attitudes towards the body in both Christian and Islamic literary and visual culture. The last part of the class will examine how the Renaissance both departed from and maintained Medieval traditions as it forged a very different approach towards the arts.

Peter Chapin

Art, Religion, and the Self

Arts and Cultures Towards the Crossroads examines literary, musical, and visual arts from the rise of Islam to the 17 th century. We will both closely read and analyze individual “texts,” asking questions about the way in which and not just what they mean, and consider the social and cultural roles they play. The course will give particular attention to the relation in the medieval and early modern periods between religious traditions and works of literary, musical, and visual arts. Another important focus of the course will be the role of the “self” in art and literature, and we will consider not only the different conceptions of the self reflected in the works, but also the implications of the way in which the self is represented in art and literature. Potential texts include Tang poetry, Rumi, Dante, Arabian Nights, Marie de France, Shakespeare, Milton.

Brian Culver

Modern vs. Classic – Progress or Decline?

Do the arts progress? Can the very idea of progress (an idea we readily apply to scientific discovery and technological change) be relevant to the creation of such things as stories, paintings, and songs? Cultural Foundations II covers a period of time during which many cultures throughout the world asked these questions. By the middle of the 1 st millennium CE, the cultures of Europe, the Near East, South Asia, and China all had ancient pasts that each culture regarded as “classical” – as a standard by which to compare and evaluate later work. And each of these cultures wondered how it might measure up to its own past cultural achievement.

By comparing with one another such works of literature as troubadour poetry, Nizami’s Layla and Majun, and John Milton’s Paradise Lost, works by such visual artists as Fan Kuan, Kamal al-Din Bihzad, and Michelangelo, and such music as Islamic plainsong, Indian raga, and J.S.

Bach's Brandenburg concertos, we will discover how different cultures from the 6th through 17th centuries answered these questions, and why during these centuries they thought it so important to do so.

Elizabeth Lee

This course will look at the literary and artistic products of various cultures from around the world between 700 and 1700 CE. Drawing upon textual sources like the Book of the City of Ladies, Sundiata, and the Hamzanama alongside sculpture, architecture, and material culture commissioned in royal courts and by wealthy patrons from the Middle East, Japan, Paris, and India this course will explore the various ways in which people have envisioned and made sense of the worlds (real and imagined) in which they lived.

By examining a variety of sources (literary, material, visual, and where possible, musical), we will examine how and under what circumstances these works of art functioned. We will learn that things like poetry, plays, ornament, and architecture, served multiple purposes which were highly dependent on the social and spiritual traditions within which they were made. We will also investigate the audiences they were made for to understand why certain visual and literary motifs, patterns of language and form, and mythic tropes were employed in the creation of art in the past. Moving across both time and space, we will dive deeply into the cultural contexts of widely different groups of people to gain not only a better understanding of their beliefs and practices, but also our own. By learning about how people of the medieval to premodern time periods challenged and redefined conceptions of the world around them, this course will illuminate some of the very same conflicts and ideas as they present themselves in the contemporary world.

Heather Masri

Out of the Garden & Into the World

This course examines literature and art from the Middle Ages to the beginnings of the modern world in the 18th century, exploring the ways art has shaped the way we see the world. Art has been used both to express and to challenge dominant cultural beliefs; to give voice to individual desires and fears; and to pose questions about the nature of the world and the role of humanity. But art is more than just a channel for ideas—the continually evolving conventions and aesthetics of form constitute a language that provides unique pleasures and creates new modes of knowing and being in the world.

One powerful image that structures our exploration in this course is the idea of a garden paradise—earthly or divine—as a symbol of perfection and an object of desire. Humans have cultivated gardens since prehistoric times, and gardens real or imagined have played a powerful role in many cultures—from the primordial Garden of Eden to the Muslim vision of

Paradise to the idealized vistas of Chinese landscape painting. The garden is often imagined as a secluded place where human beings can exist in harmonious balance with wilderness and civilization, nature and the Divine. The garden can be seen as a miniature version of the cosmos, a place for solitude and meditation, a realm of innocence and joy that we have lost but perhaps could find again.

Afrodesia McCannon

Liberal Studies concerns becoming conversant with some of the most significant and striking artistic works humanity has produced. In this second part of the three-course series, we will cover the modern geographic areas of Europe (France, Italy, and England), the Middle East (Arabian Peninsula), Asia (China), and Southeast Asia (India) as they existed from 599 AD through the early 1700s. In the semester to come, I will follow artistic developments in these parts of the world with sidebars on what other cultures (those in the Americas for example) were contributing to the arts. In order to understand and appreciate the literature, art, and music of the distant past, we will study the cultural history that forms the underpinning of the works. While covering a broad time span and diverse cultures, students will be encouraged to draw lines of connection between the cultures and their arts while considering the unique qualities of each. We will be tourists on a pre-modern world cruise, but, being human, I hope that we will be able to connect with the humanity of the artist we encounter as they express and sculpt into art what concerned them most: The themes of religion and sensuality (and the relationship between the two) informed the choices of texts for the class.

Heather Masri

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Roberta Newman

The period stretching from 700 to 1700, CE saw massive transformations across multiple continents. Over the course of 1000 years, from the early Middle Ages through the Early Modern era, major religions were institutionalized, often blending with older, traditional spiritual practices, creating new belief systems. Beginning with a move out of cities and ending with increasing urbanization, travel, and trade, this period was also marked by significant cross-cultural interaction. As is virtually always the case, such changes in ways of living were reflected in various modes of expression and representation. The cultural products of these changes, especially in the arts, will be the focus of this course. As such, the course will be loosely organized around the theme of travel.

Chris Packard

This course continues the Arts & Cultures sequence by exploring literature and the visual and spatial arts (including music) from the thousand-year period between the rise of Islam (in the 7th century CE) to the beginnings of the early modern period (ca. 1700 CE) in several regions around the world. Students in this class are expected not only to engage with and critique these texts, but also to contextualize them in history. Most importantly, students are expected to demand that these works produce meaning that is relevant to them today.

Roughly chronological, the course investigates what Mary Louis Pratt calls “Arts of the Contact Zone” – polyvocal works of expressive literature, visual art, architecture, and music that speak about mixtures of cultures during their times of creation. And since power and influence are never distributed equally, this course will pay attention to how minority voices mixed with majority voices, or how dominant cultures recognized subordinate cultures, and how individual texts both conform to tradition and extend beyond it. In particular, this course will investigate the long heritage of gender non-conformers, crossdressers, transvestites, third-gender identifiers, eunuchs, and defiant females, in addition to the never-ignored canonical patriarchs.

Nancy Reale
The Art of Love

In ACC we will consider some of the most influential literary, visual, and musical texts from the early Middle Ages to the mid-18th century. Through them, we will engage a variety of philosophical questions such as: What is mankind’s relation to nature and/or the divine? How do we experience kinds of love? How can love—divine or romantic—aid in the search for transcendence? We will also consider these works aesthetically, interrogating the nature and function of the beautiful, and we will consider how the arts act as agents of social change. Among the literary works examined will be the Qur’an, Dante’s *Inferno*, Kalidasa’s *The Recognition of Sakuntala*, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Rumi’s *Spiritual Verses*, Marie de France’s *Lais*, and Shakespeare’s sonnets. We will also examine medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music, including Chinese opera, works of the troubadours, and religious music; and we will study the visual arts, focusing on portraiture and religious paintings, sculpture, and religious architecture.

Martin Reichert

In our class, we will try to articulate insight into our own cultural foundations, into the rules and biases we live by, into the experiences and practices that have shaped these rules, by attempting to explore different perspectives and worldviews. Our exploration is thematic, and it is interdisciplinary: we will seek to incorporate and integrate the knowledge, methods, and genres of different fields of study, such as history, psychology, philosophy, religion, sociology, and anthropology. Our purpose is to question writers and artists and how they describe love (broadly speaking) and the world. But we should go farther. If the goal of education is to learn how to think, we should also question our own conceptions of love and the world — and the conceptions of those who proclaim to teach us how to think. Do not believe that you need to swallow wholesale what your professors expound. Dissent is welcome.

Anthony Reynolds

Translatio Studii et Imperii: Global Humanities from Islam to the European Enlightenment

In Arts and Cultures Across Antiquity we considered the role of the arts in the emergence and development of early cultures around the globe. In the most literal sense of the term, we began to view the arts as integral to the process of “globalization” by which I mean the very formation of the world. As we return to our

work this term in Arts and Cultures Towards the Crossroads, we will continue to follow this ongoing process of globalization or world formation, as we study the role of the arts in the global consolidation of systems of belief, knowledge and power that will, in turn, be challenged in the historical period under investigation in Arts and Cultures of Modernity

Jared Simard

Magic and Mysticism, Folklore and Fantasy Travel

This course is an extension of my Cultural Foundations I course. There, we examined a series of parallel myths and archetypes that permeated through nearly all of the ancient civilizations. Cultural Foundations II continues this investigation focusing on a variety of accounts of magic, monsters, and mysticism from the end of antiquity to the 1700s. This is a very large time period to cover, to say the least, and we will take the approach of reading longer chunks of fewer texts from different time periods and civilizations. Possible texts we will read include but are not limited to: Beowulf, the tales of Sinbad from Arabian Nights, Journey to the West, The Blazing World, and Don Quixote. We will examine why elements of mysticism and magic occur in fantasy travel narratives and why such narratives were popular at all. Topics and concerns from folklore studies will also be brought into discussions of the texts as a way of deepening our analysis. Our concern will be with how humanity tries to make sense of the other, the unknown, and the far away and with how journey narratives have long been associated since antiquity with inward discovery.

Bob Squillace

[TBD]

John Steen

The arts and cultures of the 7th through the 17th centuries resist easy categorization. Like those of the ancient world, they reflect the perspectives and experiences of individuals and communities shaped by geographic, historical, and religious forces so distinct as to seem, at times, utterly alien to each other. Even when they take up questions as fundamental as, “what is the meaning of life?”, the works we will study offer divergent answers, from devoting oneself to works of service in anticipation of a final judgment (The Qur’an) to wildly procreating to preserve one’s own image in the face of death (Shakespeare’s Sonnets). Our work as scholars in this class is complicated by the fact that we have only fifteen weeks to make connections between works that make their most significant impact on us when they are recognized in their singularity. We’ll attempt this delicate balancing act by close reading, careful reflection on the work as well as the process of studying it together in these strange times, and a willingness to tolerate the provisional nature of our answers in anticipation of encounters with these and other texts beyond the NYU online classroom.

Minu Tharoor

Being Human & Creating Many Worlds

This course is designed to introduce students to major developments in literature and the arts of selected parts of the world from roughly the 7th to the 17th centuries C.E. Our focus will be on the following major topics pertinent to this period: the cultures that emerged from Islamic influences in southern Spain, Arab world, Persia and India; the making of Germanic-Christian cultures in western Europe; the revival of Classical Greek and Roman learning and the arts during the “Renaissance.” Our purpose will be to examine the ideas, beliefs and assumptions that shaped these materials, as well as the modes by which they are represented. We will pursue our inquiry through careful reading and analysis, classroom presentations, discussions and written responses, and continue the first semester’s examination of the trans-regional, multi-sourced making of cultures.

Joan Varnum

Angels, Demons, and Chameleon Kings: Portrayals of Transformation, from the Middle Ages through the Early Modern Period

Like a chameleon that changes its color to conceal its true self from view, Shakespeare’s Richard III is a masterful pretender, capable of showing qualities of charm, brilliance, or deceit at any moment. Shakespeare’s character will serve as the touchstone for our studies in this course, “Angels, Demons, and Chameleon Kings: Portrayals of Transformation.” This course will be active and collaborative. You will be encouraged to participate as an individual and as a member of a learning group in the interactive “Reacting to the Past” game Stages of Power: Marlowe and Shakespeare 1592, a play competition in which the rival London acting companies of seasoned playwright Christopher Marlowe and young upstart playwright Will Shakespeare vie for sponsorship and licensing of their plays. Throughout the course, we will interpret some of humankind’s greatest achievements in literature and the arts, including masterworks by Rumi, Dante, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Voltaire.

Arts and Cultures of Modernity

ACM-UF 201

Katie Deutsch

The Art of Nostalgia

Svetlana Boym has described nostalgia as a “romance with one’s own fantasy,” a “longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed.” This course examines how cultures and individual artists constantly re-imagine and mythologize the past, their own artistic inheritances, and worlds familiar and foreign. In this course we look at nostalgia as concomitant with aesthetics: how might desire and (displaced) homesickness provide the basis for the study of art and of the beautiful and the sublime? To what extent is the “aesthetic experience” predicated on a longing for a retrospective future or a prospective past? In looking at texts and artworks we will consider dichotomies that thinkers of the 18th- 20th centuries labeled as “sublime” and “beautiful,” “Dionysian” and “Apollonian,” and “naïve” and “sentimental” – in conjunction with the categories “self” and “other,” “West” and “East,” and “Hellenism” and “Orientalism.” In a globalized world of cultural exchange, we will examine how cultures “appropriate” one another.

We will read texts by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rousseau, Mann, Nietzsche, Pound, Lu Xun, Woolf, Rushdie, Said, Walcott, Lahiri, and others, and study the visual arts, music, and film.

Jessamyn Hatcher

Scholars don't agree on what to call the period in which we are living. Some possible names include "the Anthropocene" ("the moment when human existence began to overwhelm all other biological, geological, and meteorological forms and forces"); "the Capitalocene" (the material conditions of the last 500 years of capitalism); or "Modernity," as in our course title. Whatever name we give it—and names do matter—we've inherited its institutions, inequalities, ways of being, and structures of feeling. These institutions, inequalities, ways of being, and structures of feeling land on us differently depending on who we are and where we are from. In this course, through the study of novels, films, theory, poems, art, fashion, and popular culture drawn from around the world from the early 19th century to the present, we will try to start to investigate what we have inherited. At the same time, we will pursue the possibility that art can offer us tools. Everyday and tactical tools of recognition, endurance, resistance, and joy. Tools that open our understanding to what is all around us but is not yet in our field of vision, or what is felt but not yet named. And tools that might help us fathom what alternative arrangements of existence we might draw on or imagine. As the Black feminist poet Audre Lorde put it: "Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought...It lays the foundations for a future of change, a bridge across our fears of what has never been before."

Linnea Hussein

History, Criticism, and Resistance

Designed as a journey through a historical period that set the foundation for today's perspectives on globalization and its discontents, this course uses modernity's developments in arts and culture as a lens to study the different ways history is written, critiqued, and resisted. Situating ourselves as modern subjects, we start with the question, what does it mean to be modern? What influences, inventions and innovations in arts and culture form our understanding of modernity that distinguishes it from Antiquity and the Middle Ages? What stylistic shifts can we notice in older art forms such as painting or the novel that shaped and were shaped by modernity? How can we study art practices new to this age such as photography, film, and online media both as inventions coming out of modern thinking and as tools for shaping the way we think about the modern world?

The course is structured in five parts. In Part I, "Critical History," students learn about different approaches to studying history via arts and culture and vice versa. Part II, "Dominant Histories," uses examples from travel literature, opera and poetry to introduce fundamental historiographic questions regarding power, access, and authorship within the Americas and Europe at the beginning of modernity. Part III, "Histories of the Everyday," invites students to take three different local perspectives towards the turn from the 19th to the 20th century. From the provincial boredom of a professor in the Russian country side, to the smirky commentary of a cat living in Meiji Japan to a feminist sci-fi dream set in Bengal, how do similarities and differences in sentiment towards transnational movements in imperialism and industrialization manifest themselves through different local art practices? Part IV takes a critical lens towards the use of art as a means to document history. By studying the photographers of Roosevelt's Farm Security Administration, writing and painting during the Harlem Renaissance, and Leni Riefenstahl's NAZI films, we will discuss larger questions about socialism, racial (in)equality and antisemitism, to study how modern art can be employed to explore, generate, and propagate

ideological convictions. The final part of this course, "Histories of Resistance," takes a look at post-colonial literature from the Antilles, Third Cinema from Latin America, and online media activism coming out of the Middle East to inspect rebellious currents that challenge monolithic foundations of history and inspire us to look at art's potential for rewriting the past.

Eduardo Matos-Martin

Modernity and its Outcasts

What is the dark side of modernity? How do literary and artistic expressions of modernity engage with the outcasts, such as the condition of the colonized? How can we rethink the implications of modernity for the contemporary world context through literature and the arts? This course examines cultural representations of political and economic violence over the last three hundred years. We will begin our exploration with the historical processes of colonization and slavery in the 18th and the 19th centuries, and then focus on the 20th century experiences of fascism, dictatorship, oppression, war, colonialism and decolonization. Within this framework, we will attend to the cultural representations of the Armenian Genocide, the Spanish Civil War, fascism in Germany and Italy, the Apartheid in South Africa, the Dirty Wars in Latin America, the Central American Civil Wars, the Algerian decolonization, as well as the Lebanese Civil War. We will use the course materials to raise questions about violence in the contemporary world associated with globalization, and address experiences of exclusion and marginalization due to race, gender, class and ideological oppression. In that light, we will study a selection of literary and artistic genres, including novels, graphic novellas, short stories, film, drama, poetry, painting, photography, and propaganda murals.

Peter Nickowitz

Fashioning and Refashioning Narratives in Literature, Painting & Film

In this section of Arts & Culture of Modernity, we explore a range of literary and artistic texts that exemplify central movements from the mid-17th through the 20th centuries. With these, we watch a series of films by international filmmakers (including Sofia Coppola, de Sica, Farhadi, Heckerling, Hitchcock, Kurosawa, Satyajit Ray, and Truffaut) that reinterpret aspects of literary Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Modernism, or Realism and Naturalism within a cinematic context, and in so doing examine how these films are themselves representative of Post-Modernism. In each text we explore major themes including the meaning and fashioning of the self, race, class, gender, and sexuality; the meanings of love, desire, and romance, and the ways that these categories are defined and/or undone within the artistic texts. Texts will include: graphic novel, novels, drama, poetry, painting, and film.

Daniel Paliwoda

The (In)Humanity of War

War raises many complicated moral questions, and writers and artists have tried to understand and describe them. There are times when war seems necessary and just; however, there are times when war is an injustice and crime. As a soldier performs his/her duty to protect his/her war buddy, unit, commanding officer, and nation, he/she sometimes must make various and difficult moral choices while fighting, and sometimes those choices may or may not harmonize with his/her own moral codes. War is the ultimate indignity. As a result, many soldiers suffer not only horrific physical and mental wounds but also emotional and moral injuries. Moreover, war traumatizes and damages civilians. War does not spare anyone. This course will focus on the dehumanizing and degrading effects of war on civilians.

Among others, the poet Wilfred Owen has taught us that it is not always sweet and fitting to fight and die for the Motherland. And yet, what drives people to enlist into the armed services, attend military academies, and confront enemies? What is that force found in war that gives meaning, and at the same time, what is that force inherent in war that robs meaning? War is hell. Why do some individuals cheer for war, and other people fight against it? Furthermore, other political and moral dilemmas complicate matters: questionable leadership, unjust reasons for going to war, etc. While in the theatre of war, issues of command responsibility and individual accountability can determine whether a soldier is perceived as a war hero or war criminal. Like it or not, we, civilians, have become a generation of war, and by scrutinizing the multi-aspects of war, we will try to understand how war has shaped global culture. In this course, we will examine how various writers, artists, composers, soldiers, and civilians have imagined and understood how war shapes life and art. Beginning with the eighteenth-century and ending with the early twentieth-first century, we will study the literary and artistic representations of: patriotism and nationalism; justice and criminality; liberty and oppression; just wars and war crimes; free speech and propaganda; victory and defeat; heroism and cowardice; identity and gender; survival and death.

Luis Ramos

[TBD]

Fred Schwarzbach

In this class, we will explore some of the great works of art (broadly defined) of a number of the world's cultures. We will range in time roughly from the Eighteenth Century to our own time, and we will explore some important and long-lived cultural genres, like the novel, lyric poetry, and the feature-length film. Our readings will circle around two broad themes: first, the moments of contact when cultures meet each other (e.g. the European colonization of the Americas and Africa); and second, the development of global artistic forms and practices. As we pursue our studies, we will come to a deeper understanding of what makes the modern world distinctively modern. Students will gain new perspectives on the contemporary global arts.

Joseph Yearous-Algozin

Horrors of Modernity

The Modern era began with an emphasis on self-consciousness and rationality. As the industrial revolution fed into Fordism and, finally, the algorithmic network of our contemporary moment, production and growth have long been valorized as necessary components of social development. However, forced labor, political oppression and the threat of ecological collapse have largely formed the foundation for this evolution. Artists throughout this period have been skeptical of this pre-packaged good, pursuing the irrational and the negative as means to critique and resist these horrors of Modernity. As such, the question guiding this class is two fold: 1) What are the stakes for these artists in the terms that come to define the age: industrialization, globalization, colonization? 2) How does art both bring into focus the era in which it is made and, simultaneously, position itself as a means of resistance to that era?

This course is divided into four sections: 1) Beginning with Neoclassical Enlightenment, we quickly turn to Romanticism and the Sublime as a means of critiquing the growing dominance of rationality in science and industrialization. 2) As urban centers increase in density and Western empires expand their colonial reach, we look at art as a way of articulating violence and the harshness discovered at the foundation of living conditions as the radical change in what could

be termed the global comes to be defined. 3) Spanning the period between the World wars of the 20th Century, we look at the formal experimentation of the Avant-Garde in painting, music and theater, with an eye for how these artists radically questioned the role language, identity and consciousness play within the increasing violence of Modernity. 4) Finally, we turn our focus towards international art movements as a way of understanding the global reach of art practices as artists seek alternative models for articulating their place in the world.

Creative Writing

CREATIVE WRITING EXPERIMENTS

Tim Tomlinson

[Course Description TBA]

CREATIVE WRITING STUDIO

Montana Ray

[Course Description TBA]

Dean's Circle Research Seminar

Julie Mostov

Borders

Violence at borders across the globe signals the resurgence of nationalisms, authoritarian closure, and hard border politics filled with bleak predictions of on-going refugee crises, media messages encouraging fear and suspicion, gendered rhetoric of infiltration and contamination, and criminalization of migrants. These narratives and threats of closure are accompanied by expulsions of people from their homes, increasing numbers seeking asylum, climate disasters, and ongoing wars – tragedies of immobility and contradictory messages about border crossing. The practices of blaming economic and political hard times on others and, consequently developing elaborate narratives of otherness and necessary exclusion are not new. Periods of deep crises emerge as moments of closure. These are times in which to (re)ignite symbolic and physical border conflicts, reiterate who we are, name those “others” responsible, and focus on reclaiming “our” space.

At the same time, we are more aware than ever of the global interconnectedness of our histories of entanglement: from broad cultural legacies of centuries of border crossings and expansive trade to colonialisms, enslavement, genocide, and displacements of people; from supply chains and exploitation of land and labor to climate change. With persistent and new flows of ideas, information, cultural production, and people across borders, we are also poised to reconsider new notions of engagement, cooperation, and mobility; ways to increasingly soften and contest borders in our lives and institutional frameworks.

In this Dean's Circle, we will focus attention on issues of borders – hardening and softening - globally and locally. We will look at historical legacies, theoretical underpinnings, symbolic imaginaries of movement and closure, geopolitical and cultural expressions of crises, and the violence of forced mobility/immobility. We will also explore the legacies and on-going structures of colonialism and racism as well as resistance to frameworks of political and economic domination and the embrace of cross/soft border alternatives to political association. This is a year-long honors seminar (2 credits each semester, for 4 credits total). In the first semester, we do extensive reading for background and discussion; and in the second semester, we focus on student guided research projects. We will travel as a group to NYU Abu Dhabi during J-Term.

Environmental Studies

ENSTU-UF 101

Jerome Whittington

Through the application of fundamental physical and chemical processes, humans attempt to harness the environment for their particular needs. In examining this most significant dimension of modern life, this course emphasizes both its harmful and beneficial aspects and deals with such topics as air and water pollution, transportation, energy resources, and waste control. The political context in which these problems occur is also examined. This course satisfies the requirement in Life Science.

This semester we examine major ecological dimensions of settler colonialism, tropical deforestation and biodiversity loss, toxicity and climate change. Topical environmental issues are framed against scientific literature and a discussion of major ecological concepts such as hydrogeological and nutrient cycles, competition and symbiosis, and trophic levels. We read classic texts including *Silent Spring* (Rachel Carson, 1962) as well as contemporary works such as *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (Elizabeth Kolbert, 2015).

Global Cultures

EAST ASIAN GLOBAL CULTURES

Jeannine Chandler

Change and Continuity in Chinese History

This course introduces East Asian cultures, focusing to a greater or lesser extent on China, Japan, and/or Korea. Aspects of East Asia's traditional and modern culture are presented by study of some of the area's Great Books, as well as other literary, political, philosophical, religious and/or artistic works from the traditional, modern, or contemporary periods. Issues raised may include national or cultural identity in relation to colonialism/ imperialism, East-West tensions, modernism's clash with tradition, the persistence of tradition with the modern, the East Asian Diaspora, and the question of East Asian modernities.

Rohan Sikri

The Philosophical and Literary Heritage of China: Classical and Premodern Perspectives

This course introduces students to the philosophical and literary heritage of China, focusing primarily on the classical traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, and charting the development of intellectual history through the imperial eras. While emphasis is laid on the study of philosophical and literary texts, students also gain an important level of cultural literacy by reading primary material against the backdrop of wider social, political, and cultural trends in classical and premodern times.

INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Marian Thorpe

Since the 1950s, the world has witnessed the emergence of a global movement around the rights of Indigenous peoples. But how is it that groups of people from every populated continent have come to claim the same identity category? What exactly is Indigeneity, and what histories and experiences do these diverse populations share? Using examples from around the world and from our own neighborhoods, we will learn about the cultures, histories, and political dynamics of a range of Indigenous societies around the globe. We will also explore some of the human rights issues Indigenous movements seek to address, and the mobilization strategies these movements use. In addition, we will take a hard look at the role of non-Indigenous scholars and scientists in defining Indigenous peoples as an object of study, and explore how Indigenous peoples are bringing their own forms of knowledge and ways of knowing to bear on science and economic development. Finally, the course concludes with an examination of the concept of decolonization, asking how non-Indigenous settler colonists can listen to, learn from, and act in solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

LATIN AMERICAN GLOBAL CULTURES

Mario Cancel-Bigay

In this course we revisit some of the key moments in Latin American history from the period of colonization to the present. Making use of primary and secondary sources, students are exposed to the works of critical thinkers of the region, important cultural manifestations (songs, poetry, novels, plays) and turning points, such as the rebellions and revolutions that have impacted Latin America and the Caribbean. The course highlights as well the contributions of women, Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities and actors, and the diaspora. Without neglecting to address the cultural and historical specificities that make up the selected Latin American nations, and the particularities that lie within, the course emphasizes how global dynamics (such as imperialism, internationalism, colonialism, cultural exchanges, transnational and inter-ethnic acts of solidarity) have shaped the region and how the region, in turn, has shaped the world.

Patricio Navia

This course provides students with a general view of Latin American and the Caribbean. We study the region's history, culture, arts, society, economy and recent political developments. Prior knowledge of Latin America is not required. In fact, because of the diversity within the region, some students familiar with one country will learn plenty about other countries. Latin America and the Caribbean is a diverse region with a wealth of different cultures, societies, economies and political systems. By providing a historical overview of the region during the first weeks, the class will build on that foundation to quickly reach 20 th -century and 21 st -century Latin America. We will also discuss Latinos in the U.S. The focus is generally historical, sociological, political and economic, but culture and the arts are also widely discussed.

MIDDLE EASTERN GLOBAL CULTURES

Mona El-Ghobashy

Middle Eastern Global Cultures: Dynamics of Transformation

“The Middle East has become a geographical expression for countries whose current orientations show more diversity than unity.” -Nikki Keddie, *Is There a Middle East?*

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a region of 583 million people living in 22 countries straddling two continents, with diverse political systems, economies, ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic, and class groups. Our course will focus on this diversity across time, examining how the varieties of political structures emerging from the nineteenth century to the present, and the changing cultures of societies as they interacted with one another and with broader global trends. It is impossible to comprehensively cover every aspect of such a sprawling physical and social geography, so we will focus on some central themes that everyone needs to know to be able to make sense of some contemporary developments. These include the nature of the Ottoman Empire that governed much of the Middle East for 500 years; European colonial incursions into the region in the 19th and 20th centuries; the policies of independent states in the 1950s and 1960s; and the series of uprisings that began in 2010 and have come to be popularly known as the “Arab Spring.”

The course begins with these pro-democracy uprisings, explaining how they began in a small town in Tunisia's interior and mutated into a region-wide upheaval that continues to transform the Middle East, North Africa, and the wider world. We then move back in time, tracing how different forms of rule (Ottoman, colonial European, post-independence) interacted with diverse societies and economies. The last third of the course circles back to contemporary dynamics, now viewed in the light of the region's modern history reviewed in Part II of the course.

History of the Universe

HOU-UF 101

Statia Cook

This semester, we will explore the astonishing Universe we call home. Using observations, experiments, and quantitative reasoning, we will investigate how our species has progressed towards its current understanding of how our Universe came to be, and our own place within it. We will consider some of the biggest questions in the field, including Are we alone? and What is the fate of the Universe? and discuss key challenges and promising directions for addressing these big questions

Janet Harouse

Students in History of the Universe examine the nature of science as a way of looking at the world and study that world as revealed through the work of scientists over the years. They learn about the nature of matter and energy and about how the universe has changed over billions of years. Topics include the origin and development of stars, galaxies, planetary systems, and the universe itself, as well as study of the earth and the development of life on earth and its potential to exist elsewhere in the universe. The course begins with the development of scientific thought at multiple locations around the pre-modern world by reference to Babylonian and Chinese astronomy, Indian numerical systems, and the work of such scientists as Aristotle, Ptolemy, Al Sufi, Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo; it continues with discoveries by the likes of Newton, Darwin, Curie, Einstein and Hubble during the period of western scientific hegemony, and ends with the multinational world of present-day science. Students acquire an understanding not only of modern science, but also of its development and of the methods, strengths, and limitations of science and the scientific method.

Gerceida Jones

“History of the Universe” presents the astronomical phenomena of the Universe in the context of physical science and examines Newton’s laws governing force and motion, Kepler’s laws of Motion, the role of electromagnetism in nature, the atomic structure of matter, the birth and death of stars, our milky way galaxy, the Double Dark Theory, the Big Bang and the ultimate question; does life exist around other star systems? Each of these topics will be discussed in the context of current issues in planetary and space sciences.

Life Science

LISCI-UF 101

Nikolay Kukushkin

The Greatest Epic

Modern evolutionary theory is a grandiose explanation for both unity and diversity of life on Earth. Life’s unity stems from its origin in a single ancestor. Life’s diversity is a result of constant change that shapes it. In this course, we will use the theory of evolution to make sense of life on Earth. Starting at life’s origins 4 billion years ago, we will follow the footsteps of evolution to understand how atoms became genes, genes became animals, and animals became humans. We will examine both the philosophical and practical meaning of life’s major evolutionary milestones such as multicellularity or the development of language. We will specifically emphasize the role and place of humanity in the system of the natural world by focusing on how human culture arises naturally from the principles of evolution, physiology and neural sciences.

Talia Mota

Introduces the non-science major to intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting the human body. Topics include viruses and immunity, pandemics, climate change, genetic engineering, cancer, how the brain works, neuroplasticity, psychedelics in mental health, cutting edge medical technology, stigma related to disease, and racism inherent in both science and medicine.

Economics

Equivalent to CAS Introduction to Macroeconomics and Introduction to Microeconomics

PRINCIPLES OF MACROECONOMICS

David Lamoureux

This is part of a two-semester introductory sequence dealing with economic principles. The course introduces basic concepts of macroeconomic theory. Topics include unemployment; inflation; aggregate demand; income determination and stabilization policies; fiscal and monetary policies; and the Keynesian monetarist debate over stabilization policy. This course will be based primarily on textbook readings and lectures. Occasionally, additional articles or news stories on current events may be assigned as supplemental material.

Roxana Julia

This course will introduce the field of macroeconomic theory and analysis. It will cover the behavior of aggregate economies – national economies for the most part – and the core, mainstream topics of macroeconomic theory such as national income, inflation, unemployment, economic growth and economic fluctuations. It will also analyze related macroeconomic policies (such as fiscal and monetary policies) and examine how they might contribute to, or detract from, human well-being. Critical concerns of the 21st century – such as distributional equity, sustainability, and the quality of employment – will be discussed within their political, social and environmental context. The concepts will relate to current events to encourage students' engagement in the subject matter.

Ascension Mejorado

This course offers an analytical foundation to the most relevant principles of macroeconomics and their application to contemporary issues in the global economy. After a brief introduction to the production possibilities frontier and supply and demand analysis, major topics in macroeconomics will be examined including the difference between the Classical and the Keynesian schools regarding the causes of economic fluctuations and the role of the government in the economy. Economic growth, as well as the basic debates around inflation and unemployment will be extensively analyzed. The course will also explore the role of monetary and fiscal policies in preventing recessions and their effects on the macroeconomy. Finally, a general overview of trade balances and exchange rates will follow. The usual macroeconomic topics will be expanded to explain recent events when appropriate.

PRINCIPLES OF MICROECONOMICS

Guney Isikara

This is an introductory course to microeconomic theory, covering its core concepts and tools such as supply and demand, elasticity, consumer and producer surplus, and so on. We will also discuss the application of these concepts to consumer and firm behavior, and explore problems like the prisoners' dilemma, monopoly, asymmetric information, and so forth from a microeconomic perspective.

We will first take a brief look at the emergence of the current socio-economic system and understand its distinctive properties such as the guiding role of profits, division of labor and specialization, productivity increase and accumulation. Then, the method and vocabulary of microeconomic analysis will be gradually introduced from a pluralistic perspective, demonstrating to the students the fact that there are substantially different ways of approaching the same question. In every possible occasion, we will apply the emerging conceptual knowledge to real world examples in a critical manner so that students develop the skill of interpreting the world around them.

By the end of the semester, students will not only be familiarized with core microeconomic concepts, but at the same time relate these analytical tools to the complex of social relations and systemic tendencies, upon which everyday economic interactions and problems arise.

Johann Jaeckel

This course provides students with an introduction to microeconomic reasoning to better understand our current social system. The focus of the course lies with the analysis of supply, demand and market equilibrium. These concepts are the basis of the microeconomic approach to production, consumption, the case for and against government intervention, the relation between different factors of production, and the distribution of wealth and income.

Economics is a technical discipline with its own specialized vocabulary and methodology; it is also a body of conversations where informed positions tend to diverge widely. A major theme of the course is thus that economics is not simply a compendium of dry facts and bits of knowledge about the economy, but a set of tools and different perspectives that enable us to comprehend, interpret, and debate social and historical questions. By the end of the semester, students will be able to better analyze complex social problems and to critically evaluate economic policy.

Global Works and Society in a Changing World

GWC-UF 102

Erik Bormanis

The second semester of Social Foundations spans a thousand years, from the rise of Islam and the reunification of China under the Tang dynasty (in the 7th century C.E.) through the Scientific Revolution and the decline of the Mogul empire in India. This course invites students to consider great ideas that have often helped earlier peoples organize their lives--but which have also set them in conflict, sometimes with other communities, sometimes among themselves. Such ideas

have sparked movements for ethical and social reform, for conquest, for the recovery of lost classics, and for religious renewal.

Vast new empires appear during this period, but so do challenges to their rule. Religious conflicts lead to civil war, and modern science emerges as a challenge to traditional beliefs. Throughout, different conceptions of human nature emerge and collide. Oppression gives rise to new movements for greater equality and individual rights, and bitter struggles for power lead to the creation of large new colonial empires, whose effects linger to the present day. In addition, the world's different civilizations come into increasing contact through exploration and trade. Students are expected to consider these ideas and developments critically, with an eye to their philosophical, political and historical significance; and they are encouraged to explore the ways in which texts that have often been read in exclusively Western contexts yield new meaning when placed in non-Western settings.

In this course in particular, we will consider the role philosophy and critical reflection plays in times of social, political, and religious change. When the power structures that shape our lives become contested or break down, philosophy can help us to clarify and identify our own values in the face of such changing situations and can help to guide us through them in a thoughtful way. In this course, we will trace a course through the fall of the Roman Empire to European Enlightenment with an eye towards understanding major world-historical events and how philosophy helped to reconcile people to their changing situations, or how it might be implicated in facilitating such changes in the first place.

Pamela Brown

Mystics, Warriors, Sceptics

This course will examine a selection of religious, social, and philosophical texts from the 7th to the 18th Century in order to reconsider fundamental questions about the relation between the individual and society. Themes will include the nature and goals of the faith-based community, the conflict between the subject-self and the object-self, the question of political legitimacy, historicity and the other, the warrior code, and doubt and causality.

Texts will include selections from both the revealed and mystical traditions of Islam and Christianity (the Qur'an, Ibn Arabi's *The Universal Tree and the Four Birds*, Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* and St. John of the Cross's *Dark Night*); selections from the histories and guides to life produced by the warrior cultures of colonial Spain, Aztec Mexico, and Shogunate Japan (Diaz's *The Conquest of New Spain*, the *Cantares Mexicanos* and Yamamoto's *Hagakure*); and selections from the philosophical works of Montaigne, Descartes, Al-Ghazali and Hume.

Nalei Chen

This course covers a variety of moral, political, and religious ideas and events in diverse societies, roughly from 600 CE to 1700 CE. While students will consider these ideas and events critically and comparatively, they will also look at the historical conditions of these ideas and events, how they influenced earlier people's ways to organize social and political life, and how they continue to affect our contemporary world. To be more specific, in the first part, we will

focus on the Islamic world. We will discuss the Qur'an and the political thoughts of Ibn Khaldun. In the second part, we will focus on some of the most critical intellectual and historical movements in later Chinese history. In particular, we will discuss how Confucians in later Chinese history responded to the challenges imposed by their opponents (e.g., Buddhism) and developed new variants of Confucianism.

Moreover, we will focus on Medieval Europe and Early Modern Europe. We will analyze and evaluate Saint Thomas Aquinas' religious and political thought, Martin Luther's religious ideas that triggered the Reformation, and Machiavelli's "new" political philosophy. Then, we will discuss the beginning of European colonialism by reading the Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico. We will also discuss the feminist ideas of Sor Juana, a Mexican poet and philosopher during the colonial period. Finally, the course ends with a discussion of the different social contracts offered by Hobbes and Locke.

Garnet Kindervater

[TBD]

Johannes Lagerweij

From the Dark Ages to the Enlightenment

In this course we will examine major texts representing intellectual movements prominent in the world during the 11th to the 17th century. We will explore important ideas and questions that became urgent in that period and that are still relevant in our own society. One type of questions in this course concerns the nature and limits of knowledge. For example, how do you know, whether you are not dreaming while you are reading this? Other questions concern education. Most questions, however, will concern the foundations of a society in which people live decently together. For example, we will ask what kind of constitution and laws will keep the spirit of citizens high, that is, what will make citizens recognize that the common welfare and their own selfish interests overlap sufficiently, to justify the restraint and cooperation that society demands.

Farzad Mahootian

In this particular section of SF-2, we strive to understand the historical and conceptual relationships between philosophy, religion and science during this period of rapid transformation. We'll examine Islam's flowering as a cosmopolitan civilization and key episodes of cooperation, conflict and influence between Islamic, Christian and Indian cultures. Muslim scholars' creative synthesis of Greek, Indian, and Chinese themes resulted in new developments in philosophy, theology, science, mathematics, literature and art. The eventual ascendancy of orthodoxy and the decline of Islam's cosmopolitan enrichment coincided with a European explosive revival. The European Renaissance assimilated vast intellectual and cultural resources synthesized by Muslim scholars over the period of several centuries. Newly energized for the first time since the end of the Roman Empire, Europe's own unique and powerful synthesis of new ways of thinking resulted in scientific and technological breakthroughs that quickened the pace of progress. The subsequent ascendancy and expansion of European cultures proceeded at a rate that has been accelerating for over 400 years. In this course, students will study primary texts including selections from the Qur'an, Rumi (Masnavi), Erasmus (The Praise of Folly), Neo-Daoist classics (The Secret of the Golden Flower); Aquinas, Bacon, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant.

Eugene Ostashevsky
Varieties of Enlightenment

This course explores the intellectual history of the period that includes the Buddhist Enlightenment in East Asia, Sufi Enlightenment in the Muslim world, and the secular Enlightenment in Western Europe. (One of the first things we will learn is that the same word may mean completely different things in different contexts.) Our unifying broad theme is how people in different cultures interpret their lived experience, and how their interpretations recoil to affect the experience itself. The interpretations we'll be studying will be religious or secular, rationalist or mystical, but they always involve particular ways of thinking about and using language, whether with the ultimate goal of making true statements or else of abandoning language altogether. One theme will be the difference between binary and non-binary reasoning, another will be the effects of writing and printing technologies on language use. We will study aspects of Chan / Zen Buddhism in China and Japan, forms of metaphysical, skeptical and rationalist philosophy in the Islamic and Christian worlds, varieties of ecstatic practices (including Sufism), and attempts at autobiography and self-description by relative outsiders, including women who can't stop crying.

Azeta Kola

This course, the second of the Global Works and Society in a Changing World sequence, provides a global historical approach to some of the most fundamental and revolutionary ideas that emerged from the rise of Islam in the 7th century, to the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire, the West, the Medieval African Empires, World explorations and the discovery of the New World, to the Scientific Revolution in the 17th century and the Haitian revolution in the Caribbean. We will study classic texts written by St. Benedict of Nursia, Muhammad, Ferdowsi, Pico della Mirandola, Thomas Hobbes, Bartolomé de las Casas, and Galileo Galilei, placing them within the context of their own time, while testing their ideas from a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective. We will answer questions such as how did humans interact with one another and the physical environment in which they lived, what was their relationship to their society, government, kings and princess? What role did politics and the divine play in their lives? The students will become familiar with these major intellectual themes and concerns of past world civilizations stretching a millennia, as well as their influence in modern times.

Laura Samponaro

This course, which is comprised of medieval and pre-modern texts that are chosen for their debating value, treats substance and style as unified rather than separate entities. We shall examine not only what a particular argument is but also how that argument is presented. In order to examine conflicting, but often complementary points of view, we shall pair Machiavelli's Discourses with his Prince, Hobbes' On the Citizen with his Leviathan, and de Las Casas with de Sepúlveda. Similarly, we shall compare al-Ghazali with Aquinas after we read the Koran as a way to understand the varied ways of understanding the relationship between faith and reason. Students study both sides of various debates so that they can develop their own viewpoints and learn how to present these in speech and in writing.

Michael Shenefelt

This course spans a thousand years of moral and political thought, from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. to the beginnings of modern times at the close of the revolutionary seventeenth century. Topics include the demise of the classical world, the rise of Islam, the development of medieval philosophy, the social thought of the renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the ensuing ferocity of the wars of religion, the emergence of the modern nation-state, the beginnings of global colonial empires, the rise of modern science, and the foundations of the Bushido tradition in Japan. We aim at placing original texts in their historical setting and developing an appreciation of the merits and limitations of each. The emphasis is on critical analysis. Class discussion and analytical essays are crucial.

Luke Trusso

This is the second course in the Global Works sequence and continues to examine the historical currents of world civilizations through a political, social and philosophical lens. With the help of some key texts, you will learn to read, write, question, and criticize within a historically interpretive framework. You will also become familiar with the conceptual as well as material foundations in the history of ideas from the 7th century to the Renaissance: from the birth of Islam and the rise of monotheism in the Dark Ages, to the birth of the scientific method—from Cartesian Skepticism to the conquest of the Americas. The underlying concern of this class is to encourage thought and reflection— more importantly for you the student to think about yourself, your relationship to the world, and those other selves you encounter daily. We will focus specifically on the rise of subjectivity and intellectual autobiography, while exploring intercontinental definitions of selfhood as they evolved from the medieval period to early modernity.

Shohadaei

[TBD]

Yunus Tuncel

The Power of Religion and the Rise of Modernity

This class continues the examination of philosophic, religious, political, social, and historical ideas from the Middle Ages to the modern age. After reading from medieval Islamic and Christian philosophy and Chinese literature on Confucianism, we will explore the intellectual and cultural dynamics of the High Middle Ages of Europe and the developments in other parts of the world. The revival of Aristotle's works, philosophical debates on Plato's teachings, Jewish, Christian and Islamic mystical movements, the Holy Crusade, and the rise of the vernacular literature are some of the subjects we will cover. All of these will enable us to understand some of the important developments in this time period, which later became crucial for the rise of humanism and the Renaissance. We will then read Petrarch for humanism and Valla for Renaissance philosophy. Our next period will be the rise of modernity. Here we will first study More's *Utopia* and then explore Erasmus-Luther debate on theological issues, as we study some of the important issues of the Reformation. Our next topic will be explorers and the early modern scientific spirit (Kepler, Copernicus and Galileo). Our course will end with readings from

two important philosophical movements of the modern age: rationalism (Descartes) and empiricism (Locke). As we read from a variety of authors in this class, students are expected to further their critical thinking, analytical skills, techniques of textual interpretation and comparative textual analysis.

Peter Valenti

[TBD]

Heidi White

This course spans a thousand years of moral and political thought, from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. to the beginnings of modern times at the close of the revolutionary seventeenth century. Topics include the demise of the classical world, the rise of Islam, the development of medieval philosophy, the social thought of the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the ensuing violence of the wars of religion, the emergence of the modern nation-state, and the rise of modern science.

Keeping their historical context in mind, we will focus on philosophical questions that arise during the period, such as: What is happiness? What is the role of faith and reason? What is human nature? What is knowledge? And what is the proper exercise of power?

Global Works and Society: Modernity

GWM-UF 201

Cristina Dragomir

This course examines selected major intellectual, philosophical, and political understandings in the modern world - from the opening of the 18 th century down to the present. In doing so the course focuses on the development of the idea of social justice, and presents topics such as equality, race/racism, gender/sexism, castism, anti/post colonialism. Proceeding chronologically, the course has three connected units; unit one presents the outline of idea of social justice, unit two engages with the early critical engagements of the concept, and unit three explores its contemporary critical views. Some of the questions to be addressed are the following: What is social justice? How did it change across the years? Who are the groups privileged and who are excluded from specific concepts of social justice? Looking to our own lives, and the contemporary context, we will consider how we are living, and how just is our world, and consider the life we hope to lead.

We will explore diverse and interconnected philosophical, political, and religious/spiritual aspects, situating each work in its historical context and encouraging a critical assessment of representations of race, gender, and caste/class. Particular attention is given to developing students' critical thinking, textual analysis, presentation and writing skills, and to fostering class discussion. The class is primarily discussion-based, supplemented by lectures. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning.

Pamela Brown

[TBD]

Mario Cancel-Bigay

[TBD]

Francesca Ferrando

This course develops around the notion of the human, presenting it not as a static category, but as a process which is constantly evolving, in the time of the Anthropocene, climate change, advanced AI, bio-engineering and big data economy. In the first part of the course, we will explore key concepts such as: evolution and technology. In parallel, we will address the notion of the posthuman which, in the contemporary debate, has become a key term to cope with the urgency for an integral redefinition of the human. The philosophical landscape which has developed, includes several schools of thought such as: Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism and New Materialism. We will explore the differences between these movements, entering actively into the debate; following, we will analyze Philosophical and Existential Posthumanism, in relation to the core question: "Who Are We?".

In the second part of the course, we will address the deconstruction of the notion of the human, following different assets of socio-political constructions, based on: class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age and species, among others. Globally-diverse views on the future of humanity will be analyzed, developing an open conversation to envision desirable futures for humans and non humans alike.

The course will provide an interactive environment where students directly engage with the contemporary debate. In four workshops, we will discuss crucial topics such as human diversity (Politics), the "pros and cons" of human enhancement (Bioethics), eco-awareness (Sustainability Studies), and how to move towards an equal and just posthuman society (Ethics & Pragmatics). This course will enrich each participant in their intellectual, existential and social perspectives, realizing that we all have agency in the developments of our species.

Garnet Kindervater

This course traces late-modern thought from roughly the 18th century to the present. Sometimes referred to as the Age of Enlightenment, and sometimes referred to as the Secular Age, modernity represents most broadly the age in which human beings became detached from longstanding and entrenched forms of belief, economy, political order, and community. Modernity redoubled the philosophical emphasis on human reason, arguing that the self-determination of the species was not only possible, but already available. Achieving liberation from former modes of life meant great revolutions in thought, in belief systems, in economy, in science, and in politics.

Efforts to codify scientific method, the emergence of capitalist political economy, the advent of democratic politics were all pursued as a means by which human beings strove for freedom, emerging from forms of life they viewed as archaic, antiquated, or uncivil. And from these massive collective projects of becoming modern, the same social, political, economic, and philosophical pursuits came to organize and reinforce conceptions of human difference on the global stage.

In other words, while some civilizations announced universal freedoms for human beings wherever they are found, those same civilizations often engaged in massive global projects of colonialism, enslavement, and coercive servitude. This course explores the modern project as outlined by some of its greatest theorists. But we also consider some of its most strident critics, found both within the Global North, as well as in its colonies, and its various other vectors of marginality.

In so doing, we will ask the question of how human beings came to celebrate freedom above all else, while clearly not for all, not equally, and certainly not everywhere or all at once.

Farzad Mahootian

[TBD]

Beau Shaw

This course will examine the foundations of modern political thought, as well the critiques of that thought suggested within those foundations themselves. Themes that we will discuss include: the social contract as the basis of legitimate government; the people as the sovereign in the political state; why the decision of majorities bind minorities; the identification of individual freedom with the freedom to trade; the relationship between political equality and class divisions; and the relationship between democracy and religion. Authors will include Hobbes, Rousseau, Sieyès, Constant, Marx and Nietzsche.

Michael Shenefelt

Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions

This course examines major intellectual and political movements of the modern world—from the opening of the 18th century down to the present. Vast new international markets emerge during this period, and so do new political systems. Over all, the period is one of accelerating change. Topics include the Enlightenment, the expansion and disintegration of global colonial empires, the rise of representative democracy, the nature of American slavery, the dangers to personal privacy and individual freedom represented by mass opinion, the new, 19th-century idea of the unconscious mind, and new forms of social strife generated by industrialization. Class discussions are crucial.

Dina Siddiqi

This is the third and final in a sequence of courses that examines texts -- philosophical, political, social, and economic -- that laid the foundations of and shaped our contemporary world. The time period under consideration -- from the late 1700's to the middle of the twentieth century -- is significant for ushering in what we know as modernity. The universality of values -- of equality, individual freedom, and democracy are hallmarks of this liberal modernity. Conventional narratives cast such values as being birthed in Europe during the Enlightenment, subsequently traveling to the rest of the world. Among other things, this course will trouble and complicate this storyline.

We will do close readings of selected "classics" of the European Enlightenment, those considered foundational to contemporary liberal theory. These canonical texts are forward looking; they sometimes privilege radical rupture. They envision political and social

arrangements that would transcend and transform unjust and unequal hierarchies of the past, and produce conditions for individual freedom and prosperity. They also write out empire, race, and capitalism. European Enlightenment thought flourished alongside and through imperial expansion, and the rise of new capitalist forms of extraction. Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas were deeply, if asymmetrically, interconnected worlds. We will read into classic texts the global relations of power within which they were produced. Through close readings against the grain, we will trace the silences, fractures, and contradictions that are constitutive of modernity in our time. How was the construction of knowledge, especially of the “canon,” implicated in the imperatives of empire? What kind of Others did Enlightenment and colonial categories produce? What work did the civilizational framework of colonial discourse perform? How did discursive binaries such as savage: civilized, irrational: rational, backward: future-oriented – shape ideas of who could be properly human? What were the occlusions of power involved? These are some of the questions the course seeks to answer. In the second half of the semester, we will turn to conversations within “empire,” to the debates and concerns that animated the lives of men and women living in British India and the colonial Middle East, who not only spoke back to Empire but also had distinct views on modernity, equality, freedom and democracy. We will trace connections among texts across time and space. The course concludes with reflections on what makes a text “classic,” and/or global, and how to decolonize theory through reading texts globally.

Marian Thorpe

The concept of “equality” is both ever-current and ever-changing. From early democratic philosophers to third wave feminists, from economists to Indigenous activists, many thinkers across the world have grappled with the meaning of equality, and what steps oppressed peoples should take to gain and protect their freedom. In this course, we will explore how writers from the last three hundred years have defined equality, the historical and intellectual contexts that have shaped their understandings of the term, and how their insights shape emerging global concepts of equality and liberation today.

The first unit of the course explores freedom, equality, and government, examining how philosophers like Rousseau and Mill, and communities like the Haudenosaunee envisioned what governments could be like. In the second unit, we discuss the rise of global capitalism, and how thinkers like Adam Smith, Marx, and Engels have analyzed social and economic inequality under capitalist systems. In the third unit, with the writings of Gandhi, Fanon, Freire, and Martin Luther King, Jr., we will explore how colonized peoples from India, Africa, and North and South America have struggled for equality through anti-colonial, nationalist, and human rights movements. Finally, in the fourth unit, drawing on works by authors such as Beauvoir, Lorde, and Crenshaw, we will examine how the notion of equality has shaped divergent approaches to women’s liberation and movements for intersectional racial and gender justice.

By thinking locally and globally, historically and through their own individual experiences, students will leave the course with an understanding of how concepts of equality, liberation, and political autonomy emerged, and how they continue to shape today’s world.

Writing as Critical Inquiry

WRCI-UF 102

Shivers

[Course Description TBA]

Steinmetz

[Course Description TBA]

Danis Banks

Weirdos, Oddballs, and Outcasts

What makes someone "different" or strange, versus so-called "normal"? How much control do we have in fitting into dominant ways of being? In this section of Writing as Critical Inquiry, we'll analyze the notion of the normative versus the countercultural. WRCI introduces students to advanced reading, writing, thinking, and research, and emphasizes writing as a means of critical thinking, inquiry, and discovery, through drafting, feedback, and revision. Building on skills developed in Writing as Exploration, students will practice writing creative non-fiction or memoir, and academic prose. We'll read fiction by Haruki Murakami, Jamaica Kincaid, and Herman Melville, and non-fiction by bell hooks and Lucy Grealy, among others; students will write three formal essays, plus informal exercises, to further our understanding of the means by which a person might create a unique, original life. The final research project will be on a subculture, or a cultural practice outside of the mainstream.

Marie Buck

This section of Writing II focuses on the self and the social and on writing as a mode of connectivity. We will look at texts that address social justice movements, illness and death, popular culture, war, mass incarceration, and sexual violence. One of our main interests will be tracing the connections between personal experience and larger political structures—or, the ways that one's personal grief and unhappiness are inseparable from what is happening out there, to paraphrase John Edgar Wideman. We'll also think through how writing is able to do the work it so often does of linking people together. Readings include texts by Claudia Rankine, Amy Berkowitz, James Baldwin, and David Wojnarowicz. Your own writing projects will include research and personal narrative writing, with an emphasis on experimentation with genre.

Joseph Colonna

The Uncanny in Modern Life: What if Nothing Anymore Can Shock Us?

In her essay "On Photography," Susan Sontag states that the written word is a "less treacherous form of leaching out the world, of turning it into a mental object, than photographic images, which now provide most of the knowledge people have about the look of the past and the reach of the present." Though she was writing in the 1970s, some might say her statement applies more than ever to generations coming of age today. As citizens of the "information age"—as students who have grown up with shocking and violent images available at a click—how do we answer that question for ourselves? Do photographs bring the world closer to us, or "leach" it somehow, as Sontag suggests? Are we still "shockable"? How might the written word be "less treacherous" than images? How might the written word help cultivate our compassion and

empathy in a way that images can't? What can the written word do that the photographic image cannot, and vice versa? We will investigate ideas of what is "real" and "fake" in the public sphere, and how we make that determination, among many others.

Jonathan Corcoran

[Course Description TBA]

Sara Cordon

[Course Description TBA]

Michael Datcher

[Course Description TBA]

Lisa del Rosso

Writing New York

Writing New York (ed. Phillip Lopate) is divided into three parts: Immigration, Writers, and Landmarks. The readings, all NY centric, dovetail into the writing.

The main objective is to develop and refine the skills necessary for writing a university-level research paper. Whatever your current writing ability or background, this course increases your self-awareness as a writer, encourages your curiosity about research and sharpens your persuasive use of evidence. Reading and writing assignments are designed to focus upon these skills.

Writers: Choose an era that interests you and pick a corresponding writer who was either from New York or had a New York period. Analyze the writer and his work from a historical perspective. It is your job to discover the world in which they lived, immerse yourself in it, and parlay your research into a dazzling paper.

Immigration: Students research their family backgrounds, including personal interviews. Readings past and present describe the immigrant experience. For generations, immigrants have come to America looking for a better life. Why opt for New York City?

Landmarks: Students pick a landmark where a political, social, or historical event took place, combining the event with research of the landmark; visiting the landmark is mandatory.

Sean Eve

Finding an Expressive Identity:

Constructing an expressive alter ego through a broad range of research methodologies and formal explorations.

The purpose of this course is to help you develop your expressive skills, with a particular emphasis on incorporating a range of voices and ideas into a single extended piece of work. We will look at research as an outgrowth of the imagination confronted by direct and vicarious experience, the thoughts of others, and divisions within our own thinking. We will investigate the spaces opened up by things that we have not yet decided upon, by the omissions within other's reasoning, and most importantly the opportunities provided by the multivalent and often contradictory implications within language itself. Put simply, this course is an exploration of the habits and limits of language and other types of representation, with an emphasis on identifying those areas in our experience that often remain unexpressed and underexplored because of particular assumptions we carry as to what is and is not appropriate in a given context.

This semester, we are operating within the unique circumstances of months of quarantine brought on by Covid-19 across much of the world, and wide spread dislocations and delayed opportunities resulting from the virus and its impact on global travel and access. With these issues in mind, I have abbreviated the requirements of the course, put a greater focus on digital community exploration and development (particularly late in the semester), and I am asking you to create a game and supporting materials that take advantage of our emerging virtual selves, as these become an even more significant aspect of our professional and personal identities in the new pandemic influenced global age.

While there are any number of subjects on which to center your work, I'm not asking you to simply reiterate and rearrange what you find through bibliographic and online research. Instead, through the experiences you craft for yourself and the ways these are captured through your writing and other expressive mediums, I am hoping you will find a way to link the subject you are exploring and the ways this intersects with your emerging understanding of self, as both a person and social nexus of ideas and actions. It is the unspoken I'm hoping you will provide a space for over the next 15 weeks - those things unrecognized within ourselves and underappreciated within the subjects you are exploring. Finding ways to articulate out of these silences is a precondition of lateral thinking, novel ideation, and inventive problem solving. Giving voice to what we find in the spaces between what is recognized draws on aspects of ourselves that represent meaningful untapped, academic, professional and creative potential. It is this untapped potential the course is designed to help you uncover.

Ethan Fortuna

[Course Description TBA]

Grady Granros

"We travel, some of us forever, to seek other places, other lives, other souls." When Anais Nin wrote these oft-quoted words in the final volume of her diaries, she wasn't referring merely to the physical act of shipping out to a new destination—Bali in this case—but rather to a more elusive brand of seeking, both as a writer and as a person, which is never quite concluded or resolved by arrival. In this course, I'm inviting you to indulge in this special form of wanderlust. You will disembark from the familiar shores of the thesis-driven formal essay and venture out along a more personal, intuitive, unpredictable course. Following the written examples of more experienced wanderers, you will write inquisitively and insightfully about memory, place, identity, culture, impactful encounters, beliefs, and other enigmas. Along the way, you have permission to get lost, sample new flavors and styles, witness, question, contemplate, and hopefully rediscover yourself as a writer by the end of the course. If this all sounds a bit overwhelming at first, no worries. Wandering is like that. At the start you often feel unsure of yourself, but by putting one foot (reading) in front of the other (writing), you gain confidence, and before long you'll be saying to yourself, "I've got this." Your essays will be richer and more engaging for it. The thing is to start, and the rest will follow from there.

Amie Hartman

Know Your City

Whether NYC is your permanent home or temporary one, for the time being, it is the city in which you live- your city. How well do you know your city? With over 8 million people and 800 languages, we are living in the largest and most diverse city in America. This semester, our focus is on getting to know our city by reading, inquiring, researching, reflecting, and writing

about the people, places, communities, histories, narratives, controversies, legends and culture of New York City.

We will continue to develop and hone the critical thinking and writing skills you developed in Writing I- with the added emphasis on research and investigation.

We will write several short papers throughout the semester and two longer formal essays: One profile of a person or place in NYC, and one longer paper where you follow your own path of inquiry into a topic of your choosing related to NYC.

Erin Heiser

Representation, Resistance, and Revolution

Throughout the term we will consider the notion of “representation” (a much-debated topic in academia, politics, and pop culture) and ask questions about the importance of representation in the age of divisive politics, in a world of vast civil and human rights abuses, oppressive governments, and radical ideologies. We will interrogate the ways that racist and misogynist ideas are fed to us, daily, throughout the culture while we think deeply about how all oppressions are interconnected. We will discuss the ways that writers and other artists represent and resist oppression. And we will consider the meaning of the word “revolution” in relation to the word “resistance.” Together we will “read” and write about a range of texts including essays, a novel, paintings, films and pop songs as you engage in research and writing about your own responses to the ideas we encounter in the course.

Janet Hendrickson

[Course Description TBA]

Mary Helen Kolisnyk

Writing NYC

What makes New York the city we know, or believe, it to be? How do people find a place for themselves here? This course offers students opportunities to develop their writing and research skills as they get to know New York, and all of the forces that make it what it is. To do so, we will challenge our prevailing ideas about citizenship, ownership and work. The class will consider a variety of sources as we draft and revise 3 essays on the urban experience: they may include readings, films, site-specific observation and artworks. The course will appeal both to students who love writing, and those who could never imagine loving it!

Irina Langer

Investigating American Cultural Mythology

What do you think of when you hear the term American culture? Do you think of a certain food or music or works of art? What are the ideas about America that have brought people here from countries all over the world? Perhaps it is the public education that is believed to lead to economic and social empowerment. Or perhaps it is the American Dream, that notion of a better, bigger future for the children of immigrants that are born on American soil. This class will look into four basic cultural ideas that permeate American culture: the myth of the model family of the 1950s, the myth of empowerment through education, the myth of the American Dream, and the myth of Freedom in the post 9/11 world. We will examine these myths by looking at various texts including poems, plays, non-fiction, fiction and essays. We will also use visual

texts such as film and paintings to examine the validity of the myths in current day society. The course requires three essays, each of which is closely connected to one myth.

Cammie Kim Lin

Identity, Experience, and Coming-of-Age

The concepts of adolescence and coming-of-age are deeply embedded in the American consciousness. What defines coming-of-age? Is it a universal experience? To what extent might it be a cultural phenomenon? In this course, we will explore these core questions through reading, research, and intensive writing. Readings will include a wide range of nonfiction, from literary journalism to texts on adolescent psychology and queer theory, and literature by authors such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Alison Bechdel, Russell Banks, Chang-Rae Lee, Junot Díaz and Jhumpa Lahiri. The major writing assignments are designed to hone students' research and analysis skills while expanding notions of what is possible in academic writing. The three major essays are a thematic research analysis that entwines research with narrative, an interpretive textual analysis that is informed by outside research, and a piece of literary nonfiction that illustrates a distinct voice and mastery of writing conventions. Students should expect to engage deeply with the course theme, while honing the kind of skills that will prepare them for success in advanced liberal arts courses across the curriculum.

Matt Longabucco

In this course, we will engage in college-level writing by reading and writing essays that exhibit intellectual rigor as well as compelling creativity. Our work will take a global focus in its attention, not just to place and narrative, but also to questions of how we can approach stories we gather and sites we visit with mindfulness and a broad and informed sense of context and perspective. Through a process of observation, research, composition, and revision, students will arrive at complex ideas and consider their own agency as alert and artful writers in the world.

Carley Moore

Small Screens and the Politics of Looking

How do essayists write about visual texts like selfies, memes, and movies? What can we see when we stare into the screens of our phones? What are the politics of looking and how have essayists negotiated the complicated relationship between voyeurism and activism? How is the essay itself an act of seeing and knowing? In this course, we will immerse ourselves in two long-essay projects: a contextualized close-reading essay of a long-form television show and an essay in which we use theory and history to make meaning out of cultural/political moment. Along the way, we'll write sentences, aphorisms, blog posts, fiction, paragraphs, and poems. It's my job to challenge you and to push you far beyond what you learned to do as a writer in high school and in Writing as Exploration. But I also value that past work and, as often as I can, I will try to make explicit bridges between what you learned in the past and the work I'm asking you to do now. We will read and write a lot, and I guarantee that sometimes it will feel like too much. It's your job to come to class prepared and ready to talk, write, and think as an individual and a generous member of the group. Most importantly, it's your (taxing, vexing, enlightening, joyous) job to be a writer—to write rough drafts of sentences and essays, to revise radically, and to care deeply about images and words.

David Palmer

People, Places, and Their Pasts

Are liberal democracies compatible within today's global environment? Does the rising prominence of AI signal an unprecedented threat to the future of human labor? Does the composition of today's world require a new vocabulary and approach in how we advocate for justice? History can provide a useful tool in helping us better understand these and other complex questions about today's most pressing global issues. It could also help us better understand the lives of specific individuals: how they understand their daily lives; what they deem meaningful, possible, and impossible; and how they identify themselves and others in relationship to the specific social spaces they occupy. In this research-writing seminar, we will read and write historical narratives to document and better grasp how the material and imagined worlds of specific individuals illuminate some of the most pressing issues of their times—and ours. Seminar participants will learn and practice basic historical research methodology, including historiographical surveys and archival work.

James Polchin

Writing From Photographs

Everyday millions of photographs are captured, composed, uploaded and shared in ways that few could have imagined when the camera was first invented in the early 19th century. From its origins, one question has been consistent in the history of photography: "What is a photograph?"

This writing course engages this question in the contemporary moment to consider the social practices of photography today. We will explore ideas about the ethics of photojournalism, our desires to document so much of our everyday lives, and the limits of what a photograph can do as an image.

Assignments focus on a sequence of short-form writings meant to prompt ideas and give shape for two long-form essays (about 1500 words each) that combine research, lived experiences, and visual and textual evidence to explore questions about the nature of photography and photographic practices. Readings will include essays, short stories, and visual documentaries from a diversity of writers and thinkers.

Stephen Policoff

The Dream, The Journey, the Stranger

This course is rooted in an exploration of the late John Gardner's famous dictum—*There are only two stories in the world: I Went on a Journey and A Stranger Came to Town*. Using short stories, a study of dream lore, and an interview project, we will consider the Journey/Stranger archetype in art, the unconscious, and our own lives. Readings include stories by Kafka, Oates, O'Brien, Carver (among others), magazine interviews, and **The Dreamer's Companion**.

Writing assignments include an interview/profile project, a dream research project, and a final essay on short stories.

Montana Ray

[Course Description TBA]

Mary Roma

This is a fourteen week course, where assignments, classwork and discussions are scaffolds to writing two major papers. The purpose of this course is to continue to develop your analytical skills, support and depend on a community of writers in your peer group, increase your cultural literacy, harness your emotional intelligence, feed your curiosity about humankind, and enhance your stylistic and technical abilities in writing practices and research inquiries. And hopefully, by doing so, you will spread your joy and use your knowledge and talent to make the world a better place. Furthermore, during the coursework you will focus your questions on the subject of personal identity, with special attention paid to the surprising ways people's identities (including yours!) can be constructed and deconstructed, preserved or changed in the face of obstacles, opportunities or to benefit the needs of different audiences for which they care. In other words, you will analyze the specific actions of an individual and make a claim (subtly, through narrative and telling detail) about why they were so influential on a specific environment, community or place. Through close reading, class discussions, interviews and writing assignments, you will develop various methods of inquiry to investigate various timely "Identity Studies" and venture forth your ideas about their significance in our global society.

Chris Rzonca

The Smart City of New York

This writing section will focus on the meaning of the "smart city" and the ways this collection of technology affects New York City. Topics of student research will revolve around the Hudson Yards project as an example of the way New York is remaking itself for the 21st Century and will explore the impact of technology on the city in such areas as politics, architecture, city planning, connectivity, privacy, social life, the arts, and commerce.

Kaia Shivers

[TBD]

Kristi Steinmetz

In this first-year writing course, we will focus on inclusion, diversity, equity, and deepening our cross-cultural competence through reading and writing assignments that will include texts in a variety of multimodal forms, traditions, and voices. To support our language skills, we will use creative writing strategies and techniques to generate academic and expository essays. As we work through our four modular progressions, we will integrate increasingly advanced rhetorical and syntactic structures. Lessons will be transcultural in design and inclusive of English Language Learners (ELL). There will be an emphasis on informed discussion, peer workshoping, in-class writing, and collaborative projects. Students will emerge from this course with more confidence in the process of formulating, developing, and expressing ideas and with more confidence in all aspects of their reading, critical thinking, and writing.

Elayne Tobin

In this course, we will be examining how writers write, how we read, and how observing and transforming our own reading skills and attitudes about language can help us improve our own prose. We will be focusing specifically on autobiography and memoir. Why improve our own prose? Because it is the tool we use to make our way in the world; we write to explore, explain, complain, cry out, critique, commiserate, declare, decry, denounce, demystify...you get the idea. Writing is a way not only of recording thoughts and emotions, facts and fictions, but it is the process of using language that brings those elements of our lives into being in the first place. And if you are going to make your way through this messed-up, alienating, strange, and glorious

place called existence, you better hope you can talk and that people will listen. In turn, you need to understand how other people talk, so you, too, can listen. Otherwise, what's the whole point? That's why.

Jason Williamson

This section of Writing as Critical Inquiry springs from the idea that each person, place, and thing has a story—and that every story is inherently worthwhile.

From a Renaissance oil painting to a caricature on a bathroom wall, from the Washington Square Arch to a bodega doorway, from a Grammy winning singer to an unknown subway busker—everyone/place/thing sits at the intersection of a vast web of concerns and is worthy of deeper examination.

Spring Start Courses

Please note that descriptions are for reference only and are subject to change prior to the start of the semester.

All incoming Spring Start students are required to enroll in:

ACA-UF 101

GWA-UF 101

WREX-UF 101

ARTS AND CULTURES ACROSS ANTIQUITY

ACA-UF 101

REQUIRED FOR SPRING START STUDENTS

Ian Jones

In her book *Civilizing Climate*, environmental archaeologist Arlene Miller Rosen points out, “Archaeologists now understand that human perceptions of nature, environment, and climate change are very much a key to how societies adjust to the impact of environmental change ... This message has a resonance with our own current struggles to come to grips with the concept of global warming.” Studying the cultural products of past peoples can, therefore, provide us with insight into how they lived in and managed relationships with their environments, and in turn can help us consider how we currently understand ourselves and our place in the natural world. This course introduces the arts, broadly conceived, from their origins in the Paleolithic period to the end of antiquity, defined here by the roughly coincident dissolutions of the Gupta, Han, and Western Roman empires, focusing on how individuals, social relations, and human-environment relations are shaped in literature and the visual, plastic, and performing arts, as well as through music. This course will focus on conceptions of environment and how these coincide with conceptions of the divine, the heroic, power and disenfranchisement, beauty, love, and humor within the context of the art and literature of East and South Asia, West Asia and the Mediterranean world, and contiguous regions (such as Germania, Nubia, and Mesopotamia). Concepts of Arts and Cultures towards the Crossroads are introduced through the discussion of models by which cultural transmission occurred across these regions prior to the rise of Islam.

Michael Krimper

In this section of “Arts and Cultures across Antiquity,” we will return to the ancient past in order to think about what has disappeared, what we take for granted today, and what might still shape the future. While examining an array of archaic texts and objects, we will focus on stories, theories, techniques, practices, and arts of ecstasy in civilizations across Mesopotamia, the Mediterranean, and Asia. “Ecstasy” names an experience at the limits of human expression, desire, knowledge, and being, which has played a fundamental role throughout history in determining the place of the individual in relation to social life, divinity, and the cosmos. The concept of ek-stasis, in the Ancient Greek, designates more specifically an experience which moves you—which threatens to pull you dangerously into the unknown, destroy your sense of self, change you in such a way that you can no longer return to what you used to be. In this spirit, we will explore subjects in ecstasy from multiple vantage points, navigating between works of literature, philosophy, theology, mythology, religion, visual culture, and the performing arts, with an eye to the debates of the present.

Liora Brosh

Death, Divinity, And Heroism in The Cultures of The Ancient World

This course surveys the literature and art of diverse ancient civilizations. It focuses on how ideas about death, divinity, and power shaped life and art in the Near East, Egypt, Greece, and India. How did beliefs about death shape what writers saw as the purpose and meaning of life? Why did Greek art emphasize life while Egyptian art served the dead? Why are gods and kings, who hold power over the living, seen as tragically flawed by one people yet as perfect by another? We will gain insight into ancient views about the nature of civilized life under the shadow of imperfect rulers, powerful gods, and an inevitable death. The arts of antiquity will be studied in a cross-cultural context by reading texts as diverse as The Ramayana, Gilgamesh, the Hebrew bible, and Homer’s The Iliad, and by viewing sculpture, architecture, and painting.

Giovanni Braico

THE MONSTROUS AND THE DEMONIC

Monstrous and demonic creatures have pervaded human imagination and culture for millennia, and they still do - think, for example, about the zombies of The Walking Dead or the army of the undead in Game of Thrones. In this course we will investigate the roots of our fascination with these wondrous and horrendous beings, by critically considering the biological and socio-cultural factors which determine(d) and shape(d) their existence in the arts. After an initial exposure to the most updated academic approaches to monstrous and demonic artifacts, we will examine a wide array of ancient written and visual artworks from around the world, in order to explore how the distinctive conventions and traditions of these forms of representation develop(ed) across and between media and cultures, and in history. As we take into account the dynamic processes of transmedial, transcultural and transhistorical migration which underlie the crafting of monstrous and demonic images and conceptualizations, we will consider the ways in which various social and cultural issues, values and discourses - concerned, for instance, with religion, moral philosophy and imagination, gender and sexuality, and discrimination - have affected the representations of monsters and demons in the time periods and areas of the world under investigation. By the end of the course, we will be able to identify and discuss the biological, cultural and societal complexities behind the creation and interpretation of ancient monstrous and demonic

depictions, and relate them to issues, concerns, discourses and phenomena that are still relevant in the contemporary world.

Lindsay Davies
The Not-Heroes

In the ancient world, throughout its diverse cultures, humans made art to express, explain, and explore their experience. Cultural Foundations I introduces the arts from these ancient origins, focusing on how individuals and social relations are understood and shaped through literature, the visual, plastic and performing arts. We will study works from the ancient Near East, Egypt, China, India, Greece, and Rome, giving particular attention to gender, class, war, heroism, love, death and divinity. The sub-title of the course highlights an emphasis in our examination upon the marginal and ordinary aspects of cultural experience as well as the central and extraordinary. In other words, what can be learned from what is excluded, silenced or decentered in these cultural works? Our approach will be comparative and interrogative, examining the works of different cultures contiguously, as opposed to discretely, whenever possible. Additionally, the course will introduce major generic categories of literature (epic, lyric, drama, tragedy) and visual art (architecture, sculpture, and painting). Written work and class discussion will develop and hone our critical thinking skills and your ability to construct reasoned and well-supported arguments.

Anthony Reynolds

We may associate globalization with the recent global integration of our capital markets and the resulting environmental crises of the Anthropocene that are in fact world destroying. However, the verb “to globalize” suggests a process of “world making,” as Jean-Luc Nancy reminds us, that is as old as human culture itself. In this course we consider the role of the arts in the construction and development of early cultures around the world. We consider the ways in which early cultures developed and practiced the arts as primitive intellectual tools – as a means by which to project form and meaning onto the world. We consider the ways in which our earliest images, stories and poems are gradually formalized and consolidated over countless generations until “the story becomes a social heritage and possession,” to quote John Dewey. We consider the arts as the source of our early structures of belief (myth and religion) and of our later institutions of knowledge and inquiry (philosophy and science). In short, we consider the various ways the arts have contributed to the early processes of world making that have shaped our cultures, our institutions and our consciousness from prehistory through antiquity.

GLOBAL WORKS AND SOCIETY: ANTIQUITY
GWA-UF 101
REQUIRED FOR SPRING START STUDENTS

Alexander Altonji
[Course Description TBA]

Mansour Bonakdarian

This first sequence of *Global Works and Society* (“Antiquity”) examines a range of ancient societies and/or cultures prior to roughly 500s CE through the lens of certain texts they produced. We will ask not only what these texts indicate about the people who composed and/or compiled them, and the societies and cultures to which they belonged, but also how certain features of those texts may still have resonance and relevance in our own time. The narrow range of texts we will discuss during the semester is merely due to time constraints and the particular thematic organization of this class, and should not be misconstrued as privileging or trivializing particular societies or cultures, not to mention any intentional disregard of those societies and cultures that had not developed writing at the time, or whose scripts remain undeciphered or are as-of-yet still undiscovered — and not forgetting other forms of self and collective expressions, as in the case of oral traditions and non-textual visual representations, tool making, food, clothing, and so on.

The key questions we will ask and discuss in this class are those with relevance to our own lives. For the sake of a more focused conceptual approach to the course and cohesive discussions, we will explore certain main topics, namely: constructs of Self and Others, Rights, Justice, Duty, and Responsibility. In connection with our primary topics, we will also address such themes as foundations of authority and forms of social and cultural hierarchy in different settings, particular patterns of cultural innovations and intellectual developments and transformations, religious and philosophical ethical principles, perceptions of reality and human consciousness as formulated in these texts (e.g., how do we know the world), and the nature of existence (Being and Time). We will also routinely probe some basic points about all the texts we cover, among them: Do we know anything about who composed them? What do we know about the historical and cultural settings in which these texts were produced? What general messages do these texts convey and how are they structured? To whom were these texts addressed? What sort of ideas, aspirations, concerns, and/or anxieties, do these texts convey? Is there a single, or are there multiple, voice/s present in the texts? Whose voices do these texts resonate and whose voices are absent (i.e., “agency”)? I will explain all the concepts and terminology used in this course during our class discussions. You should always feel free to ask for further clarification and/or suggest possible alternative definitions and/or ways of engaging with the required texts.

Moreover, we will approach these texts intertextually. That is, we will engage with them in relation to one another. In addition, students are encouraged to adopt a self-reflexive approach when scrutinizing these texts and other assigned readings for this class, by continually asking themselves on what terms and through which sets of belief systems and values they engage with the course material and how their existing personal assumptions about the world and various related issues impacts their understanding and interpretation of the course material or of the opinions expressed by their classmates. For instance, do we approach and engage with texts differently based on whether they presumably “belong,” or do not belong, to our existing cultural, religious, philosophical, political, and/or other self-grounding or “heritage”? We also need to be careful not to read into these texts interpretive frameworks, historical developments and connections, etc., that were not known to the authors or compilers of the texts in question. Furthermore, we should keep in mind that we are reading and discussing these texts through particular modes of linguistic, cultural, and/or historical “translation,” in the manner of what Walter Benjamin called the “after life” and “reception” of texts.

Jacob Browning

The first semester of Global Works and Society (Antiquity) introduces students to the ancient world and ends with the dissolution of the Western Roman Empire, of the Gupta Empire in India, and of the Han Dynasty in China. This course takes a global perspective and uses an interdisciplinary approach, and part of its aim is to explore enduring questions such as the relation between the individual and society, between justice and power, and between humanity and the divine.

The ancient societies from which the texts emerged are as much objects of study as the ancient texts themselves. Students are expected to consider many ideas with which they might not agree. They ask how these earlier conceptions speak to their own lives and how these earlier ideas connect to the world today. Students are encouraged to distinguish between understanding a text in its historical setting and engaging in broad historical criticism. Accordingly, writing assignments strive to strike a balance between close reading and comparative assessment. In addition to drawing seminal texts from the Mediterranean world and the Middle East, instructors give extended attention to at least one non-Mediterranean/non-European culture.

Gerasimos Karavitis

Politics, Ethics, and Epistemology in Ancient Times

In this course, we will study some of the most renowned texts of ancient times. We will treat these texts as portals to the worldviews of the ancient civilizations in which they appeared. Our general goal in studying these texts will be to develop more robust perspectives on the human condition. Our course will transgress territorial, temporal, and disciplinary boundaries. We will search for common denominators among the worldviews of people who inhabited very distant regions of the planet, and, with equal energy, we will seek to grasp the intense differences that existed among these worldviews. And we will ask after the use that ancient ideas might have for us today, as we try to give form to our lives in a world vastly different from those inhabited by the ancients.

In studying our selected texts, we will focus on the ideas that ancient thinkers developed within three domains of thought: politics, ethics, and epistemology. With regard to politics, we will explore comments on the nature and value of different regime types, the relation between rulers and ruled, the institution of slavery, the phenomenon of war, the question of what makes a political order legitimate, the question of what makes rulers effective, and the problem of human freedom. In regard to ethics, we will explore comments that the ancients made on human happiness, filial piety, the distinction between virtue and vice, the notion of evil, and the tactics that one might employ in the struggle for self-mastery. As regards our epistemological inquiries, we will explore questions surrounding the definition of knowledge, the distinction between truth and opinion, the distinction between essence and appearance, and the idea of non-dualism, and we will also explore some of the insights that the ancients developed about the art of learning.

Gal Katz

In this class, we read texts from a range of ancient cultures, spanning the Mediterranean to East Asia. Although these texts were written more than 1,500 years ago, we will find they offer us tools to think about pressing contemporary issues, be they racial identity, sexual politics, or the rise of right-wing populism, among others. In his book *Republic*, the Greek philosopher Plato struggles with the idea that morality and justice reflect the interests of the most privileged parts of society, advocating for greater equality between men and women. The book of Exodus in the

Hebrew Bible warns against populist leaders, who are interested in power for the sake of power rather than in doing what is good or right. In his book *City of God*, the North African theologian Augustine invents the concept of sexual consent. These are just a few examples of ancient yet relevant texts that we will examine together.

One goal of this class is to introduce students to a number of philosophical traditions by way of comparing and contrasting them; another is to hone oral and written presentation skills. The most important goal, however, is recommended by Plato's teacher Socrates: Know yourself. These texts will facilitate a conversation about who we are, exploring political and ethical challenges we face as individuals and a society.

Yunus Tuncel

In this course, we will read texts from the classical period through the early part the Middle Ages within the context of history of ideas. The course will focus on some of the important questions of philosophical, political, social, historical, and religious discourses and explore a variety of topics such as: the question of origin, the relationship between mythology and reason (and human and divine), the connection between justice and power, the make-up of an ideal state, the origin of moral conduct, the value of meditation in human life, and the origin of evil. We will start with an exploration of the origin of Western philosophy in ancient Greek culture and study the ideas of different schools of thought that flourished in this period. After the phase of early Greek thought, we will read Plato and Aristotle. As we read from Chinese and Hindu texts, we will try to understand how Greek and Asian philosophies agree and disagree in their approaches to a variety of topics from politics to ethics. After examining some of the Roman schools and reading a book from the Bible, we will read some parts of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and move on to the medieval period. We will end our class with Augustine's *Confessions*. Students are expected to learn the tools of critical thinking, cultivate analytical skills for and techniques of textual interpretation and gradually learn comparative textual analysis.

Luke Trusso

This course begins the Global Works and Society sequence at NYU and examines the historical currents and social foundations of world civilizations through a philosophical, cultural, and social lens. The underlying concern of this class is to encourage thought and reflection— more importantly for you the student to think about yourself, your relationship to the world, and those other selves you encounter daily. Through a close reading of some key texts, you will learn to read, write, question, and criticize within a historically interpretive framework. You will also become familiar with the literature in the history of ideas examining questions such as: epistemology (the origin and production of knowledge systems) metaphysics, how do we define freedom, as well as ethics, gender roles, and politics and in the ancient world. While these questions may reflect specific branches of philosophy, they exemplify an inquisitive, Socratic appetite for the truth that embodies the spirit of the liberal arts. We will explore the conceptual foundations of ancient civilizations around the globe: from the evolution of democracy in the Greek polis to the collapse of the Roman Empire; from Plato's *Dialogues* to Taoism—primitive metaphysics to sophisticated schools of Stoicism. To fully grasp the present and project into an imaginary future, we first must know where we come from.

WRITING AS EXPLORATION

WREX-UF 101

REQUIRED FOR SPRING START STUDENTS

Danis Banks

Writing as Exploration is the first in the two-course series introducing students to the essay genre; it complicates our understanding of the essay's forms and functions. The course offers occasions to practice essay writing across disciplines and in several modes, including personal, critical, and academic. It exposes students to writing, reading, and critical thinking skills necessary for undergraduate work as well as writing beyond academic contexts, and introduces them to some of the interdisciplinary and theoretical bases for such practices. The course engages global issues and perspectives through its reading/writing assignments, and through experiential learning.

Writing as Exploration helps students develop an appreciation for the use of writing as a means of thought and inquiry. To ground this process, students practice narrating, contextualizing, and analyzing different types of evidence and concrete subject matter, including personal experiences, written and visual texts, and perhaps objects, public events, and/or social phenomena. Students become familiar with various ways of engaging other writers' ideas and content in their own writing. By the end of the semester, new understandings of essay writing—and new skills to reflect these understandings—give students a foundation for studying and practicing advanced approaches to reading, writing, and research they may do in Writing as Critical Inquiry.

Jill Dearman

In this course, we will engage in college-level writing by reading and writing essays that exhibit intellectual rigor as well as compelling creativity. Our work will take a global focus in its attention, not just to place and narrative, but also to questions of how we can approach stories we gather and sites we visit with mindfulness and a broad sense of context and perspective. Through a process of observation, research, composition, and revision, students will arrive at complex ideas and consider their own agency as alert and artful writers in the world. By the end of the semester you will be able to: Write a professional-level essay, critique a colleague's work, present your ideas and feedback verbally with clarity and ease.

Sarah Dohrmann

“The great thing about writing is that you always have the opportunity to improve as a thinker and as a communicator. I love that you are able to be flawed, but you can still say something.”

—Roxane Gay

“An essay is a thing of the imagination...it is the movement of a free mind at play.” —Cynthia Ozick

Writing is thinking.

You will be writing essays in this course. The word essay comes from the French verb *essayer*, which means to attempt or to try. In the essay, contrary to what has likely been taught to you before, one uses writing as a way to attempt or try to understand something, make sense of

something, testify to something, bear witness to something. To do this you must learn to really look at something, really see, and not just from your usual perspective.

Essays in this course will grapple with questions of a writer's place as well as place in general, culture, and society, both local and global. Students will compose three formal essays and a series of informal journal writings. One formal essay will question your role as a writer; one will combine narration and description methods of writing; and the third will utilize a variety of methods to create an extended definition of a term, phenomenon, or concept, etc. Informal journal-writing tasks and responses will serve as generative material for formal essays, as will in-class discussions and activities, outside reading of different types of texts, and experiences and excursions outside the classroom.

All of it—all of life—is fodder for writing and contemplation, which I hope you'll come to understand by the end of the semester.

Carol Lo

Ways of Reading

"Writing as Exploration: Ways of Reading" facilitates your entry into the intellectual and academic life at Liberal Studies and NYU by supporting your development of reading and writing skills—skills that lay the foundation for your college career. We will explore and interpret different kinds of texts (fiction, memoir, essays, etc.), engage with complex materials and difficult concepts, and, in turn, analyze and write about them. Through a combination of close, distant, and critical reading, and through you will develop as a thinker and a writer.

This course is divided into three main parts, culminating in three major assignments on three different rhetorical modes: (1) summary critique, (2) literary analysis, and (3) Op-Ed. Through these three rhetorical modes, you will practice strategies of summarizing, analyzing, critiquing, arguing, and synthesizing sources, all of which form the basis for most American college writing. There is great emphasis on feedback, revision, and reflection, which means that both the process and the product are equally important.

Holly Melgard

THE UNREMARKABLE

In what ways does language shape experience? And in what ways does language shape what we don't say and don't experience? Focusing on works surrounding the theme of "the unremarkable," this Writing as Exploration class uses the facility of writing to expand the thinkable by broadening the category of the mentionable. Here, we will aim to witness the unnoticed, speak the unsaid, and articulate the unsayable. Students will regularly produce thoughtful writing that engages insights born of their own personal experiences by communing with works by authors, philosophers and film makers from around the world. Key to achieving our learning goals this term will be to individually cultivate a daily writing practice that is stable and sustainable for each member of our course with expert instruction to guide you in this process. In this student-centered, workshop class, expect to read and write daily and connect with classmates and the instructor frequently. Together, we will interpret various forms and modes of literacy across a wide variety of disciplines, genres, and media by asking critical questions, finding unstated assumptions in the text/work, assessing arguments, offering original interpretations of primary works, identifying and integrating knowledge, methods, or conventions

of different fields of study. Informal writing activities and discussion prompts are designed to furnish parts of your three major assignments: Project #1 is a personal narrative essay about your “literacies,” Project #2 examines the bounds of modern day “propaganda” by analyzing “unremarkable” desires communicated in visual and pervasive forms of advertising, and Project #3 will be a final portfolio that chronicles your growth as a writer over the course of the term by showcasing and reflecting on highlights in your radical revision process. We will read many essays but also journal entries, tweets, and blogs as well as watch several films big and small, including works by Gloria Anzaldua, Etel Adnan, Claudia Rankine and Mark Fisher among others.

Juliana Roth

What is a disruption? Is it always devastating or might it lead to epiphany or a new way of seeing? Where do we inherit our conventions for identifying what is disruptive and what is the norm? Is beauty always pleasurable? Does sorrow have room? How do we preserve, grow, or respond to beauty? And, on the other side of this, what do we find objectionable? What are the ethics of our observation and how do we position ourselves to have integrity as we document? Is it possible? What else might be?

This semester, we will study disruption primarily through the lens of writing. You will craft three essays that will become maps of how your thinking on the idea of disruption evolves as we explore how other writers, filmmakers, artists, activists, scholars, and poets confront disruption through craft, subject, and style. You will think critically about power, relationship, and collaboration in self and communal expression. This class will encourage you to explore your own thinking, but also the world around us. We will document what calls to us and invite in those who can help us unpack our collective imagination.

Instead of beginning with judgment as we approach an idea, experience, or text, this class prepares you to come with questions. At a craft level, this course is an opportunity to study tone, word choice, pacing, structure, rhythm, visual design, research methods, and other technical elements of developing your voice and style as a writer. By heightening attention to these elements, you may begin to think of your writing as malleable and open yourself to revision as a way to let new discoveries emerge between drafts.

In our reading practices, we will explore the diverse beauty of life on our planet. By reading—as in looking closely at—a variety of texts, we will practice understanding the role of audience, rhetoric, and genre in cultural production and how attuning to your singular perspective enhances or modifies meaning. You will learn to approach texts in an inquisitive manner so as to build on what the creator is offering through their work. You will bring seemingly disparate texts together to form new ideas. I hope you may even be surprised in discovering how—and what—you think.

Completing this course will prepare you with a solid foundation for encountering difficult ideas, deepening your own writing practice, and conducting advanced research.

Judah Rubin

Poet, novelist, and scholar Nathaniel Mackey has written of the “long song” that it “...creates what I call fugitive time — time that really is a flight away from the ordinary, from quotidian time,

profane time.” In this course we will reckon with this idea of song, of sound, and of writing as a means of creating that “fugitive time”. By listening (in the broadest sense), we will follow writers, musicians, critics, and artists as they attempt to produce new worlds, or to investigate the world(s) that we/they are a part of. How does the framework or figure of music take up questions of national identity, conceptions of race, class, and/or gender? How can we use music to read our existential or ontological experience of the world?

This course is structured around the reading of grounding theoretical texts, engagement with music and music criticism, the reading of poetry and novelistic prose, as well as video art, and cultural history. Students are asked to engage these works through weekly response essays, evidence-based thesis-driven argumentation, group-based presentation, and a collaborative final project in which students together with a team of their classmates produce an annotated playlist/discography that engages with the course material.

Chris Rzonca

The Meaning of the University

Why do we go to college? What do we learn at the university? What does it mean to learn and what is the difference between high school and college learning, writing, and thinking? What have other students, professors, writers, and artists said about these issues? What can we learn from them? In this course, we will explore many aspects of learning and education in the broadest sense through the careful analysis of essays and films. Such analysis will form the basis of your own exploration that will include reflection on and analysis of your personal experience of what it feels like to be a student and a writer at New York University in 2021. While grappling with these issues and ideas, you will be developing your own skills of thinking and writing.

This course is designed to help you become more confident, skilled, and successful writers through an exploration of the essay form. Sustained work with the essay will allow us to develop and grow as writers ourselves and to become more familiar and fluent with idea, evidence, and reflection. Our work together this semester will also prepare you for other writing in the University.

In order to achieve these goals, you will write a lot, both in and out of class, and share your writing and thinking with your classmates. Informal writing and exercises will help you to identify ideas to explore in essays. In drafting and revising each essay, you will have the opportunity to pursue, shape, and present a central IDEA; to develop evidence that supports the IDEA; to consider effective ways to reach an audience; and to address technical and editorial concerns. Therefore substantial changes will occur between the first and final drafts in the revision process. I hope this class will allow you to begin to see yourselves as writers who are also a part of a larger community of writers, readers, and thinkers.

Cam Terwilliger

Writing as Exploration has two main objectives: first, to develop your self confidence and fluency by engaging you in the use of writing to express, explore, and develop ideas through a variety of forms, including both informal writing (free writing, journal writing, etc.) and formal writing (essays); and second, to engage you in practicing the same kinds of critical and analytical skills you'll use in other writing-intensive courses in the Liberal Studies Program. The class will make use of the workshop format, meaning you'll produce a wide range of writing, both in and out of

class, which will form the basis for classroom activities. All of your essays will go through multiple drafts, often with input from peers in addition to input from me.

The theme of this section of Writing I is “Literary Geographies.” This semester we’ll use writing to explore the concept of place—how do the places we live and visit shape us? How do we come to spend time in the places we do, who do we meet, what social and physical features define them? Next, we’ll think about the metaphor of “the essay as map,” a textual guide that leads the reader through unfamiliar terrain. We’ll consider the idea as readers. How does a good essay work as a map? How is a good essay, or map, made? We’ll consider the idea as writers. How can we craft an effective and compelling map for our readers to follow? How can an essay that begins without a map end up being a map? How can an essay have a map at the center of it? In short, we’ll frame our conversation about writing within a conversation about place/exploration/mapping/the-unmapped.

Nancy Woodruff

This course is thematic in nature, centering on notions of identity exploration as related to aspects such as family, culture, race, national origin, experience, place and gender. Essay assignments will ask you to explore your own experience of self while also looking at the way others have explored the concept. We will draw upon readings from diverse writers and artists in order to explore the identities that are assigned to us as well as those we choose.

The course will be taught as a combination seminar/workshop, with a great deal of class discussion, peer interaction, group work and individual attention from the instructor. The course is collaborative, and you will be a contributing member to our writing community.

Jen Zoble

We are all multilingual, whether in the conventional sense of knowing more than one language defined by its historical affiliation with a nation state or an ethnic community, or in the broader sense of knowing a variety of codes or discourses, such as the language of advertising, the language of school, or the language of a particular subculture (e.g. religions, sports, art forms, fandoms, online communities). In this course we’ll consider how the different languages we’ve acquired—whether through family, formal study, or casual affiliation—have shaped our individual and collective (hi)stories. We’ll engage with a selection of literary and journalistic texts that examine language gain and loss due to travel, study, migration, and marginalization, and we’ll undertake writing exercises that investigate the languages we’ve learned, invented, internalized, and struggled to understand. Course materials and writing assignments will include essays, poems, short fiction, articles, translations, exophonic works, films, and podcasts. Please note that this is not a linguistics course, and we will not be delving into language theories. Rather it’s a writing course that explores human experience through the lens of language, which is something we all share.