

Summer 2024 Spring Admissions Course Descriptions

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

ARTS AND CULTURES TOWARDS THE CROSSROADS

ACC-UF 102-001 (online)

Jared Simard

This course is an extension of my Arts and Cultures across Antiquity course. There, we examined a series of parallel myths and archetypes that permeated through nearly all of the ancient civilizations. ACC 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.

ACC-UF 102-002 (online)

Jared Simard

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ACC-UF 102-003 (online)

Brian Culver

Ancient v. Modern – Progress or Decline?

Do the arts progress? Can the very idea of progress, a concept we readily apply to scientific discovery and technological change, be relevant to the creation of such things as stories, paintings, and songs? By the middle of the 1st millennium CE, cultures of Europe, the Near East, South Asia, and China all had ancient pasts that each culture regarded as “classical”, and each culture 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 Majnun, 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 they thought it so important to do so.

ACC-UF 102-004 (online)

Eugene Ostashevsky

Poetry in Emotion

This course is an intensive reading seminar on world literature and art from Tang dynasty China to early modern Europe. Our authors will include Du Fu, Sei Shonagon, Nezami, Dante, Donne, and Shakespeare. Discussion of visual art will emphasize how to interpret Italian fifteenth- and sixteenth-century painting, especially Caravaggio. Our main thematic focus will be on emotional and aesthetic sensitivity as a social construct that changes from culture to culture and time period to time period. Students will learn parallelism, polysemy and other formal features of poetic language, as well as some basic formal aspects of visual art (mainly painting). They will practice close reading of difficult texts and works of visual art in order to draw out their local cultural values, i.e., to understand them historically.

ACC-UF 102-005 (online)

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ACC-UF 102-006 (online)

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ACC-UF 102-007 (In-person)

Anthony Reynolds

Global Humanities from Islam to the European Enlightenment

In Arts & Cultures I 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 & Cultures II, 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 & Cultures III.

ACC-UF 102-009 (In-person)

Anthony Reynolds

Global Humanities from Islam to the European Enlightenment

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ACC-UF 102-010 (in person)

Instructor TBA

ACC-UF 102-011 (in person)

Instructor TBA

GLOBAL WORKS AND SOCIETY IN A CHANGING WORLD

GWC-UF 102-001 (online)

James McBride

Religion and Politics in the Medieval World

This course is a ten-week remotely taught course which includes weekly readings and written assignments, as well as written papers due the third and seventh week and an in-class debate during the eighth week. The course introduces students to philosophies, religions, politics, and economies of late antiquity, the medieval world, the Reformation and Enlightenment. Students will read foundational texts in the late Roman, Byzantine, Muslim, and West European Christian cultures with particular

attention to the encounter of the West with Islam. Among the many topics to be explored are authority in medieval civil and ecclesial institutions, philosophical conceptions of God and the good, Islamic political and social ideals, theories of representative government and the politics of power. Among the historical characters to be encountered are Constantine, Theodoric the Ostrogoth, Boethius, the Byzantine Emperor and Empress Justinian and Theodora, Muhammad, Thomas Aquinas, Machiavelli, Erasmus, John Calvin, Martin Luther and John Locke.

This course will emphasize placing texts into their historical and geographical contexts. Students are expected to read the texts carefully and analyze historical worldviews as a looking glass into the lived experience of human beings who were both very different and yet very similar to ourselves. The course will be a success for any student who uses these texts to gain insight into the presuppositions, prejudices, hopes and dreams of our own contemporary cultures.

GWC-UF 102-002 (online)

James McBride

Religion and Politics in the Medieval World

This course is a ten-week remotely taught course which includes weekly readings and written assignments, as well as written papers due the third and seventh week and an in-class debate during the eighth week. The course introduces students to philosophies, religions, politics, and economies of late antiquity, the medieval world, the Reformation and Enlightenment. Students will read foundational texts in the late Roman, Byzantine, Muslim, and West European Christian cultures with particular attention to the encounter of the West with Islam. Among the many topics to be explored are authority in medieval civil and ecclesial institutions, philosophical conceptions of God and the good, Islamic political and social ideals, theories of representative government and the politics of power. Among the historical characters to be encountered are Constantine, Theodoric the Ostrogoth, Boethius, the Byzantine Emperor and Empress Justinian and Theodora, Muhammad, Thomas Aquinas, Machiavelli, Erasmus, John Calvin, Martin Luther and John Locke.

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GWC-UF 102-003 (in person)

Erik Bormanis

Philosophy in Times of Change

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, we will consider the role philosophy and critical reflection plays in times of social, political, and religious change. On the one hand, 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. On the other hand, philosophy itself can be a powerful call for social and political change. 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.

GWC-UF 102-004 (in person)

Nalei Chen

Philosophy from A Global Perspective: Interrogate the Past and Look to the Future

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 of organizing 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 feminist ideas of Sor Juana, a Mexican poet and philosopher during the colonial period. Finally, the course ends with discussing the different social contracts offered by Hobbes and Locke.

GWC-UF 102-005 (in person)

Nalei Chen

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GWC-UF 102-006 (In-person)

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GWC-UF 102-007 (online)

Hogan, Brendan

This is the second part of essentially a three-part course of study that focuses on key primary texts in history that have responded to fundamental human questions in theology, philosophy, and political science. By exploring the works of thinkers such as Avicenna, Aquinas, Descartes, Machiavelli, Luther, Erasmus, Locke, de Las Casas, and others we are invited to join a critical and necessary conversation if our lives are to have more than a merely superficial meaning. The line of questioning we

are engaging in follows a historical and geographical arc. These authors are located in their own specific tradition and contexts; their geographical, political, and historical locations diverge greatly. The core issues of this inquiry include, but are not limited to: matters concerning the relation of religion and politics, the nature of reality and justice in political and religious life, the legitimacy of human power and obligation with respect to ourselves and our communities, and the question of international expansion and empire. This course requires critical reading and thinking of a collection of the greatest minds' responses to these fundamental questions from diverse and variegated areas such as the middle east, Latin America, and what came to be known as 'Europe' up until the scientific revolution, the beginning of the 'age of discovery', modernity, and colonialism/imperialism. Though a variety of themes will necessarily come up in this course, the threads of religion and politics, human nature and power, and global political history will be developed and emphasized.

GWC-UF 102-008 (online)

Hogan, Brendan

This is the second part of essentially a three-part course of study that focuses on key primary texts in history that have responded to fundamental human questions in theology, philosophy, and political science. By exploring the works of thinkers such as Avicenna, Aquinas, Descartes, Machiavelli, Luther, Erasmus, Locke, de Las Casas, and others we are invited to join a critical and necessary conversation if our lives are to have more than a merely superficial meaning. The line of questioning we are engaging in follows a historical and geographical arc. These authors are located in their own specific tradition and contexts; their geographical, political, and historical locations diverge greatly. The core issues of this inquiry include, but are not limited to: matters concerning the relation of religion and politics, the nature of reality and justice in political and religious life, the legitimacy of human power and obligation with respect to ourselves and our communities, and the question of international expansion and empire. This course requires critical reading and thinking of a collection of the greatest minds' responses to these fundamental questions from diverse and variegated areas such as the middle east, Latin America, and what came to be known as 'Europe' up until the scientific revolution, the beginning of the 'age of discovery', modernity, and colonialism/imperialism. Though a variety of themes will necessarily come up in this course, the threads of religion and politics, human nature and power, and global political history will be developed and emphasized.

GWC-UF 102-009 (In-person)

Albert Piacente

The Fracturing of Agency

Using GWS Antiquity as our jump-off point, we will trace the birth and development of what has come to be known as "The Enlightenment" or the "Modern." We will do so with the express purpose of uncovering a fundamental contradiction that sits at the heart of the "The Enlightenment" or the "Modern"—the outlook that still holds sway over much of the globe politically, economically, morally and socially. This contradiction is between the centering of human agency (e.g. free will, consciousness, mind, intentionality, etc.) inside what we can term the "human" or "social" sciences, and the decentering of human agency inside the natural sciences.

To undertake this investigation, we will start by exploring themes from GWS Antiquity and their evolution across a diverse range of societies and cultures from around the world during the period roughly 500 CE to 1500 CE. With that investigation complete, we will then develop a "philosophy of history" through which to understand the world as those global civilizations encounter European

civilization via the trans-navigation of the world's oceans. It is here that we will explore how and why European civilization fell into its troubled relationship with human agency. Reading from seminal sources inside the burgeoning European philosophical as well as natural and social scientific literature, we will spend the rest of the semester seeing how the European and increasingly globalized world attempts to address this contradiction both theoretically and practically. We will finish by laying the groundwork for the coming crisis the Modern will encounter starting in the 19th century and blossoming in the 20th and 21st. Our technique throughout the class will be that of combining textual exegesis, lecture and discussion.

GWC-UF 102-010 (In-person)

Albert Piacente

The Fracturing of Agency

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WRITING AS CRITICAL INQUIRY

WRCI-UF 102-001 (online)

Jennifer Zoble

Encounters with Art

In this online course we'll read ekphrastic texts, write our own ekphrastic texts, and write critical and reflective responses to others' ekphrastic texts. So what does ekphrastic mean? Ekphrasis has historically referred to writing about visual art, but more recently the definition of this term has expanded to include writing about audio, film/TV, and performance. Ekphrastic writing can contain critical

elements (analysis, commentary, research), but it is distinct from art criticism in that its methods, goals, and effects are more varied. Ekphrastic poetry and prose also engage with their subjects through description, reflection, and imagination, illuminating not only the aesthetic character and historical context of the encountered artwork but also the experience of interaction and response it provokes in the viewer/listener. We might say that ekphrastic writing involves both critical thinking and critical feeling.

Like all Liberal Studies Writing classes, this is both a discussion-based seminar and a collaborative writing workshop. It is not a literature or art history lecture. Students should come to class having thoroughly and thoughtfully read and/or viewed assigned works and prepared to contribute to partner, small-group, and whole-class discussions. Participation is not optional, and consistent participation from everyone is even more crucial in the virtual environment. The only way to become more confident and comfortable with sharing one's ideas is to do it.

WRCI-UF 102-002 (online)

Jennifer Zoble

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WRCI-UF 102-003 (In-person)

Carley Moore

Research Methodologies: Big and Small Screens

In this course we will explore different modes and genres of writing as they connect to our own interests, outside research, and issues and experiments raised by the course and our collaborative work together.

Students will have the opportunity to read for pleasure, keep a writer's notebook, write and share work in a low-stakes way, read actively, facilitate discussions, create blog posts, and write a long-form essay on a movie and its related contexts. In addition to pleasure reading I will assign essays, podcasts, movies, and hybrid texts for us to read and discuss.

Students will also get comfortable with the conventions of the writing classroom—participation, facilitation, small and large group work, writing in community, freewriting and focused freewriting, drafting, revision, and large group workshopping.

We will write and read in class and for homework, working through writer's block and myths about writing and how writers actually work.

Ideally, we will develop a community of writers and readers.

WRCI-UF 102-004 (In-person)

Sean Eve

Collaborations with Disaster: Finding an effective self to survive our changing world by experimenting with polyphony and collaborative community engagement

The purpose of this course is to help you develop your analytical and 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 and other semiotic systems. 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. This course will provide you with opportunities across the city, internationally, and within the classroom to experiment with novel personal ideation. It will give you a chance to break the rules, reinvent yourself multiple times, and build social realities that have up to now only found a home in your imagination. It will also provide a supportive and non-punitive environment in which you can explore the stranger and more far-flung corners of your thinking.

WRCI-UF 102-005 (In-person)

Sean Eve

Collaborations with Disaster: Finding an effective self to survive our changing world by experimenting with polyphony and collaborative community engagement

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WRCI-UF 102-006 (In-person)**Sean Eve*****Collaborations with Disaster: Finding an effective self to survive our changing world by experimenting with polyphony and collaborative community engagement***

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WRCI-UF 102-007 (online)**James Polchin**

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. Yet, 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, and how photographic practices have shaped so much of our everyday lives.

Assignments focus on a sequence of short-form writings meant to prompt ideas and give shape for two long-form essays (about 2000 words each) that combine research, lived experiences, and visual and textual evidence to explore questions about the nature of our photographic practices. Readings will include essays, short stories, and visual documentaries from a diversity of writers and thinkers.

At the heart of this course is a concern for critical inquiry. Students will develop and explore their own questions throughout the semester that emerge from, and engage with, the course material.

WRCI-UF 102-008 (In-person)**Carol Lo*****Course Description TBA*****WRCI-UF 102-009 (online)****Michael Datcher*****The Politics of Truth***

Writing as Critical Inquiry: The Politics of Truth has two main objectives. The first objective is to practice critical and analytical skills. The second objective is to engage texts that can deepen these critical and analytical skills. This class will interrogate the intersection of truth, power, knowledge and

politics. Following Michel Foucault, the class will think and write about how regimes of truth are developed, how they are deployed and for what purpose.

WRCI-UF 102-011 (online)

Michael Datcher

The Politics of Truth

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WRCI-UF 102-012 (in person)

Ethan Fortuna

Spaces of Appearance: Acts of Bodily, Linguistic, & Visual Transformation

The phrase that appears above--spaces of appearance--is used by theorists Hannah Arendt & Judith Butler to describe sites of togetherness, presence, and care. I've chosen this title because many of the works we'll study in this course share a deep and urgent interest in understanding--and acting with care for--the interconnectedness of being. The works we'll study ask: What modes of thought, perception, and action can reveal and transform our senses of self and interconnection with the world? What creative practices can enable us to inhabit and sustain openness toward the complexities and contradictions of experience?

Throughout the semester, we will attempt to both critically inquire about and model our own writing after texts, performances, and artworks that make it their aim to search for and generate expansive accounts of interconnected being. And, we will deepen our considerations of how global movements around and creative responses to urgent issues, including environmental justice, racial equality, & LGBTQ+ rights facilitate thinking expansively about social being and responsibility. Further, we will discuss and practice cultivating granular modes of attention to the ways our senses of self and community are shaped by geography, language, history, visual representation, and other intersecting systems. As we analyze creative texts by contemporary writers--such as Juliana Spahr & Layli Long Solider--we will pay special attention to the strategies they use to transform and uncover spatial, embodied, and linguistic experience and connective potential.

Taking to heart the significance of inquiry as a critical mode, we will explore different styles of prose writing as a practice in asking research-oriented questions: of ourselves, our readings, experiences, and social worlds.

WRCI-UF 102-013 (in person)

Montana Ray

LIVES & ARCHIVES

The second in a two-semester writing course, Writing as Critical Inquiry is designed to teach you how to synthesize various research materials and incorporate the ideas of other thinkers into your writing. As in Writing as Exploration, we will continue to use writing as an intellectual refuge as not all stages of the essay writing process are for the public: we will keep writing journals and prioritize daily in-class creative prompts and metacognitive reflections which need not always be shared. However, this semester, you will also be assigned projects with an explicit emphasis on developing complex and

nuanced skills of inquiry. Students will complete two formal assignments: a close reading of a piece of life writing from the past century; and a deeply researched profile of a New York cultural figure, drawing on archival resources at NYU or elsewhere. Our theme this semester, “Lives and Archives,” is intended as an introduction to archival work and its questions. We will emphasize the important labor of archival and archivist work from “refashioning disfigured lives” undone or absented by records to holding corporations accountable in the documentation of illness and environmental disaster. In both its narrative and theoretical dimensions, this course embraces feminist, Black, Indigenous, fat, queer, Southern, and disabled texts as necessary perspectives for our collective development.

WRCI-UF 102-014 (in person)

Montana Ray

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WRCI-UF 102-015 (In-person)

Carley Moore

Research Methodologies: Big and Small Screens

In this course we will explore different modes and genres of writing as they connect to our own interests, outside research, and issues and experiments raised by the course and our collaborative work together.

Students will have the opportunity to read for pleasure, keep a writer’s notebook, write and share work in a low-stakes way, read actively, facilitate discussions, create blog posts, and write a long-form essay on a movie and its related contexts. In addition to pleasure reading I will assign essays, podcasts, movies, and hybrid texts for us to read and discuss.

Students will also get comfortable with the conventions of the writing classroom—participation, facilitation, small and large group work, writing in community, freewriting and focused freewriting, drafting, revision, and large group workshopping.

We will write and read in class and for homework, working through writer’s block and myths about writing and how writers actually work.

Ideally, we will develop a community of writers and readers.

WRCI-UF 102-016 (Online)
Elayne Tobin
Course Description TBA

WRCI-UF 102-017 (Online)
Tamaira Reid
Course Description TBA

WRCI-UF 102-018 (Online)
Tamaira Reid
Course Description TBA