

# Integrative Studies Guide

## What are Integrative Studies courses?

Otterbein's Integrative Studies (often referred to as IS or INST, for short) program is at the heart of the University's commitment to liberal learning and is the largest component of the general education curriculum. The IS program curriculum, which experts call the model they hope other schools follow, aims to prepare you for the challenges and complexity of a 21<sup>st</sup> century world. It teaches multiple skills, competencies and ways of knowing through an interdisciplinary approach.

The first requirement of the Integrative Studies program is your First Year Seminar. Included in this packet are the course descriptions for the FYS classes offered next year.

The second Integrative Studies requirement is an INST 1500 course. Foregrounding the study of literature and writing, INST 1500 courses explore the self in dynamic and critical terms. The unifying theme for INST 1500 classes is "Identity Projects." In this class you will be expected to read closely, think critically and further develop your writing skills. INST 1500 fulfills your first Writing Intensive requirement. All Otterbein students are required to complete an Identity Projects course.

Integrative Studies 1500 offerings are organized around three pivotal topics or course umbrellas:

- **INST 1501 Self Discoveries**
  - These courses explore how *personal* identities are expressed, created, transformed or complicated.
- **INST 1502 Situated Selves**
  - These courses explore *collective or cultural* identities in a rich range of local and global contexts.
- **INST 1503 Past Lives**
  - These courses examine *historical* expressions of identity, engaging a rich, fascinating and often alien past.

Each Integrative Studies 1500 course has a distinct sub theme—an animating interest area that drives the class content and assignments. We invite you to review the course descriptions on the next page and identify courses that reflect your own interests, passions and curiosities. When you complete the online registration survey you will be asked to indicate your interest in each course.

*(Students who have been invited into the Honors Program are asked to take the Honors (HNRS) sections of INST 1500. The descriptions are included in the list and indicated as an Honors section)*

# **INST/ Honors 1500 course descriptions Fall 2019**

## **IS 1501-03**

### **Home and Beyond**

In this course, we will engage in thorough self-reflection by breaking down and reexamining our concept of home. Through our study, we will consider a variety of homes, local and abroad, and the people that inhabit them. The goal is to strengthen our understanding of this concept and its influence on our ability to empathize with people who come from homes different than our own. To this end, we will study literature from a diverse group of authors in several genres – graphic narrative, stageplay, film, essay, and novel. We will also generate our own creative and analytical writing in response to these texts as well as the overall course theme. This course will help to develop writing and critical thinking skills.

## **IS 1502 – 01/02**

### **Family, More than Kin**

From King Lear to the Kardashians, we've been intrigued by stories of families. Writers celebrate their support, honor their achievements, deny their faults, and expose their frailties. Whether struggling to become independent from families of origin or thinking of starting families of our own, we understand the importance of family in our identities. In this course, we will read about the history of family, and we'll examine recent changes in families, locally and globally; we'll reflect on the topic of family both emotionally and intellectually. In our study of families, we'll identify problems families face and describe resources available to them. We will examine and produce texts in different formats, including traditional prose narratives and analyses and visual presentations.

## **IS 1503-05**

### **Attachment, Trauma, and Justice**

This course will begin by studying attachment theory—the idea that human beings are hard-wired for relationship and interdependence. We will explore the emerging psychology of trauma, toxic stress, and adverse childhood experiences. In reviewing powerful evidence that attachment is essential to human biology and psychology—and that trauma causes deep harm to both—we will ask how both things are related to injustice in our society (and our history). We'll apply these ideas to literary texts, to our own personal experiences, and to the larger forces that sustain inequality and injustice. The course will keep in mind advice that Equal Justice Initiative founder Bryan Stevenson gave at Otterbein a few years back: *get proximate* to people who are suffering; *change the narratives* that sustain inequality and injustice; *stay hopeful*; and *do uncomfortable things*. Readings may include: Thomas Lewis et al.'s *A General Theory of Love*; Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*; James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*; Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*; Nadine Burke Harris's *The Deepest Well*; and archival research in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers.

## IS 1503-02/03

### Past Lives in Literature and Film

This course explores how memory and imagination inform understanding of lives of the past and of one's personal life; considers to what extent fact and fiction can be separated; explores type and antitype (model and imitation of model) in such lives as Homer, Confucius, Socrates, Caesar, Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, and how such lives are variously remembered and imagined (and with what possible intentions) in mediums of history, literature, and film. The course involves intensive review of grammar skills in the writing of short essays on such subjects as utopianism, population, censorship, and Zen philosophy.

## IS 1503-06/07

### Nationalism and Racial Identity in the Modern Era

In 2008, the United States elected its first Black president. This event is a historical milestone, but its meaning is debatable. Does it mean that racial difference has been replaced as a form of "otherness" by cultural or religious difference? Does it signal the advent of a "post-racial" society in the near future? Why do a substantial portion of Americans continue to believe that Obama is Muslim, or that he is not an American citizen? It is difficult to make sense of this event, and much else that is happening in our world, without understanding the intertwined histories of race and modern nationalism.

We will begin by reading reflections on race by contemporary scholars from the fields of anthropology, history, and philosophy. We will then embark on the study of race and nationalism from the Renaissance into the twentieth century through the media of novels, essays, poems, short stories, and drama. Major texts will include Shakespeare's *Othello*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, poems by Coleridge, Poe's only novel, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. This course will emphasize expository, analytic, reflective, and persuasive writing.

## IS 1501-02/03

### The Comic Perspective

"Against the assault of Laughter, nothing can stand." --Mark Twain The comic perspective has been essential to our understanding of life from Lysistrata to the Lucy Show, from Shakespeare's comedies to the chaos of the Marx Brothers, from Voltaire, to Mark Twain, to modern 'mockumentaries'. Comedy provides us with a means of commenting on and correcting the vision of society. Whether it's scathing political satire, or simply the recognition (and ridicule) of human foolishness and vanity in its myriad forms, comic literature seeks the truth. It involves no less reflection on the human condition than tragedy, or works of more serious philosophical bent, but its catharsis is achieved through humor. While in some sense tragedy involves coming to terms with one's fate, comedy embodies active resistance – refusing to accept the social/political norms. Comedy is rebellion.

## IS 1503-01

### The Past Lives of Harry Potter

In this class we will start by reading the first volume of the Harry Potter series, and read the final volume about half of the way through the course. We will inquire together into the question of why this series became so popular. What kind of nerves does it hit? What deep cultural memories does it stir up? We will focus on the whole idea of a hero. What role do heroes play in our lives? How does Harry Potter compare with other heroes--whether real or fictional--who have influenced us and influence our society? Who is the hero? What do our heroes say about who we are and want to become? We will explore the many sources that Harry Potter has in the history of religion and literature, and also the many connections it has to what it means to grow up in the world today. Our additional texts will include *The Odyssey*, the story of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. Our aim will be both to develop understanding of literature as it relates to our lives and our society, and also to develop skills in composition.

### **Honors 1500: True Crime.**

This class will dive into the stories we tell about "true" crime and "true" criminals. We will explore crime narratives – across film, television, literature, and podcast media – that have captivated a mass audience. Narratives like *Serial*, *The Keepers*, *American Gangster*, *Columbine*, and more. We will grapple with questions like: what is so seductive – so fascinating – about the killer, the con artist, and the gangster? What do these stories reveal about the tangled relationships between crime and desire, power, and freedom? What can they teach us about the social injustices that make the crime or the criminal? What realities of gender, race, class, nation, and other facets of identity haunt these stories? Together, we will read, think, talk, and write the outlaw. This course will be offered in a format that combines classroom instruction with on-line pedagogies and projects.

### **Honors 1500. Educated: The Story of Students.**

In *Educated*, her electrifying memoir of growing up in a Mormon survivalist family in Idaho, Tara Westover remarks: "Everything I had worked for, all my years of study, had been to purchase for myself this one privilege: to see and experience more truths than those given to me by my father, and to use those truths to construct my own mind." As you begin your own 'higher education' (aka college), this course will ask you to reflect on the education you've received so far—on the influences of your community and family as well as your own decisions. Together we'll think about the freedom college promises to construct an education and create a new self, as well as the ambivalence of leaving home and past behind. We'll trace the histories of both high school and college education systems in the US, and we'll explore the persistent (in many cases increasing) inequality and racial segregation in American schools. Because this is a literature class, we'll primarily explore these dilemmas in fiction, poetry, and memoir across different historical eras.

Readings may include: Tara Westover, *Educated*; Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*; Kiese Laymon, *Heavy: An American Memoir*; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*; Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*; Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece: The Cambridge Childhood of Darwin's Granddaughter*.

