Course Registration Survey Supplement

When taking the Course Registration Survey, you will be asked to submit preferences on various course topics. This guide will help provide additional information to inform your selections. Keep in mind, while we do our best to honor your preferences, the ultimate course selection will be based on availability within your schedule.

First Year Seminar Options

FYS 1035 – Political Scandals: The Consequences of Temporary Gratification

Examines political scandals of the 20th and 21st century to evaluate why political officials and decision makers risk their political careers and personal lives for sex, money and power.

FYS 1080 – Life Place: Finding Your Place Within the World

This class will focus on semiotics as a tool for "reading the world" and how we are shaped by the signs societies offer us, but also how we interpret and shape those signs. The first-half readings will focus on ways of reading literature for clues to how this happens, and we will carry out a sequence of "short writing projects" to test out those insights within our own lives. We will close the second half of the semester by reading Transition Town’s founder Rob Hopkins' book, From What Is to What If; Unleashing the Power of Imagination to Create the Future We Want, as we seek positive change to the various crises facing humanity, from Covid to climate change to racial imbalances.

INST 1500 Selections

INST 1501-02 – Writing Memory, Writing Memoir

Joan Didion famously begins "The White Album," her essay-length memoir of the 1960s, "We tell ourselves stories in order to live." Together, we will critically consider the stories we tell ourselves, as well as the stories that have been told to us, and their impacts on our survival. We will read several examples of memoirs to explore the roles that memory and story-telling play in writers’ understandings
of the world and their roles in it. We’ll theorize about why some moments in our lives become go-tos for recalling entire relationships or eras of our lives, and how crucial it may be for us to forget others. Throughout it all, we’ll experiment with a variety of approaches to writing, speaking aloud, and otherwise making sense of our experiences for ourselves and for others.

**INST 1501-03 – Magical Mystery Tour**

From Beowulf to The Hobbit, from The Tempest to Harry Potter, literature that deals with the magical, the mysterious, or the idea of a quest has always fascinated us and satisfied something in the human spirit that requires heroes and adventure—and quite often, journeys to a netherworld. Whether it’s T.H. White’s take on Arthurian Legend, Charles Portis retooling the myth of the American West (is Mattie Ross the logical extension of Huckleberry Finn?), or Dashiell Hammett's iconic mystery novels, these texts give us insights into the mysteries of the human condition, archetypes of good and evil, and a geography of what we are capable of being. They show us who we are; in some ways, they map the human soul. We will be dealing with the literature of heroism and mystery (how can one be heroic without being a hero); how we can behave honorably and with integrity as we navigate through a world that is dangerous, perilous—and, often, improbably wonderful. In seeking a definition of who we are, we must reference the iconography of the magical, the mysterious, and the mythic. We’ll be exploring the past, the present, and the personal. This is the real adventure! The resulting journey will help us make sense of the 21st-century self.

**INST 1502-02 – Women’s Community**

Our readings are literary works crafted by women writers concerned with how gendered selves interact within varied inter-personal relationships. We carefully read-think-write about how women "sororize" (Atwood, The Handmaid’s Tale) in order to re-conceptualize, if not transform, both their individual and collective lives. Our course readings and research portfolios provides opportunities for us to consider the multiple ways women’s identities continue to be shaped through ideas about race and nationality, the parameters of economic class, expectations of motherhood and sexuality, and spiritual/religious practice. We think critically about women's engagements with each other. This themed course enriches our objective to build careful reading and writing proficiency skill sets. Readings
include In The Midst of Winter, Isabel Allende; The Handmaid’s Tale, Margaret Atwood; Beloved, Toni Morrison; Herland, Charlotte Perkins; Gilman, and selected readings.

**INST 1502-03 – 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.

**INST 1503-02 – Past Lives**

Foregrounding the studies of literature and writing, exploring historical expressions of identity, engaging a rich, fascinating and often alien past. Topics may trace the influence of earlier notions of identity on contemporary selfhood, recognizing some kinship between past and present. Or they may examine the particularity of identity as conceived by other historical periods. Subtopics may include “Epic Identities,” “Inventing Childhood,” “The Libertine,” “Flappers and Gangsters,” “Arthurian Subjects.” Reading novels, plays, memoirs, essays, poems, or short stories. Expository writing skills are nurtured, as well as reflective, persuasive, imaginative, or autobiographical writing skills, including at least two thesis essays.

**INST 1503-03 – National Rational 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? What does it mean that Trump began his
political career by publicly embracing and amplifying the "birther" movement (a conspiracy theory that Obama was not born in the United States)? It is difficult to make sense of these events, 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 The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, and Johnson's Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man. This course will emphasize expository, analytic, reflective, and persuasive writing.