

### **Integrative Studies 1500**

Otterbein's Integrative Studies (often referred to as 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 INST 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 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 the 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, unless you have completed it prior to coming to Otterbein.

Each Integrative Studies 1500 course has a distinct subtheme – an animating interest area that drives the class content and assignments. We invite you to review the course descriptions in this guide and identify courses that reflect your own interests, passions and curiosities.

**Note: Students who have been asked to join the Honors Program will take an Honors 1500**

## INST 1500 Course Descriptions

### **INST 1500: Attachment and Justice**

This course will begin by studying attachment theory—the idea that human beings are hard-wired for relationship and interdependence. We'll also explore the psychology of trauma, toxic stress, and adverse childhood experiences. As we consider the powerful benefits of attachment and interdependence, as well as the harm done by trauma, addiction, and violence, we will apply these models to literary texts and historical contexts. Together we will ask how attachment and community can promote multiple forms of justice: racial, economic, sexual, medical, ecological, and more. Authors may include Jesmyn Ward, Javier Zamora, Tommy Orange—and definitely a poetry anthology.

### **INST 1500: 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 1500: 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 of misunderstanding 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. Satire is challenging, subversive, and slippery. An ancient, yet eminently adaptable form, it shapes itself to the times, and requires a certain level of sophistication (intelligence) from its audience. As Horace Walpole said: “Life is a comedy to those who think, and a tragedy to those who feel.

### **INST 1500: National 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? What does it mean that Donald 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), tapping into America’s dark history of

racist ideologies of national belonging? It is difficult, if not impossible, to make sense of the contemporary world without understanding the history of race and racism. This course will trace a history of race and racism to our contemporary moment. We begin with the emergence of the modern world from the Renaissance, which marks the beginning of the invention of the modern ideologies of race, gender, and class, and finish in the mid-twentieth century. We will read reflections on race by contemporary scholars from the fields of biology, 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*.

### **INST 1500: 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 reunite with family, become independent of them, or hold on to the joy we share with family members, we understand the importance of family in our identities. In this course, we will read about the history of family, and we'll examine factors that impact families. We'll reflect on the topic of family both emotionally and intellectually. In our study, we'll identify problems families face and describe resources available to them. We will examine fiction, non-fiction, and film; we'll write about personal experiences and analyze literature; and we'll hear from guest speakers with their own family stories.

**Honors Sections** (open to students who have been invited into the Honors Program)

**HNRS 1500: The Critical Spirit: Power and Powerlessness**

HNRS 1500 builds a critical intellectual foundation and community for subsequent Honors program requirements. The course seeks to engage students in the work of thinking critically about the conflict between individuals and the societies/communities to which they belong. To deepen our sense of this conflict, we will read and discuss a set of texts that stage—and explore the complex and often corrosive consequences of—the collision between the powerful and the powerless. Because the title of this course is "The Critical Spirit," we shall try to be spirited, imaginative, and intrepid in our pursuit of the big questions and big ideas raised by the texts we read. Likely readings to include Frederick Douglass' Narrative (1845), Richard Wright's Native Son (1940), Ben Winters' Underground Airlines (2016), Sam Quinones' Dreamland (2015), Jessica Bruder's Nomadland (2017), and Gish Jen's The Resisters (2020).

*Courses are subject to change.*

*Refer to the link in your Course Registration Survey for the most accurate courses descriptions.*