

November 1, 2024

Spring, 2025

First-Year Seminar Course Descriptions by the Instructors

Catalog Course Descriptions May Be Found at

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PLEASE BE SURE TO LOOK FOR SPRING 2025 RATHER THAN FALL 2024

A NEW FIRST YEAR SEMINAR:

**INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (INTR-D 100G SECTION 1: PHILOSOPHY THROUGH FILM
PROF. MEREDITH GUNNING. TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 2:00-3:40. COURSE
NUMBER 10377.**

By using imagery from the medium of film, this course attempts to show how philosophy can interconnect themes and ideas presented by film directors. Film provides the opportunity to consider traditional philosophical problems, but in a manner more reflective of the mode of communication of the age. As an aid to class discussion, students read scholarly papers in conjunction with viewing and examining a film. Areas of philosophy that are involved include metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, ontology, aesthetics, ethics, and social and political philosophy. Central topics include knowledge, moral issues, personal identity, human freedom and the meaning of life.

**Africana Studies [AFRSTY] 115G: Black Consciousness. Prof. Tony Van Der Meer.
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 pm– 1:45 pm *and* Tuesdays 2:00 pm–2:50 pm. Course
Number 7639.**

Course Description: This course will examine the development of Black consciousness in the 20th century. The social, economic, cultural, and political implications of Black consciousness will be explored. The impact of Ida B. Wells, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, The Harlem Renaissance, The Civil Rights/Black Power movement, The Nation of Islam and The Black Arts Movement on the development of Black consciousness will also be examined.

American Studies [AMSTY] 110G: U. S. Society and Culture Since 1945. Prof. Anne Blaschke. Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm *and* Thursdays 1:45 pm –2:35 pm. Course Number 9351.

Course Description: This course examines the multiple, and often differing ways that Americans have lived, thought, and expressed themselves from World War II to the present. Much of our country's history has been defined by conflicts among ethnic

groups and social classes about rights to economic, social, and moral well-being and even the right to call oneself an “American.” To ponder these and similar problems, scholarship in American Studies draws on an interdisciplinary approach to thinking about life in this country. Starting with World War II, but with emphasis on the historical and the political context of American life since 1945, especially social class, ethnicity, race (most importantly, the African American struggle for civil rights), and work, we will use historical documents, literature, music, and movies to learn about the significant events and changes in American society since World War II and people’s responses to them.

Anthropology [ANTH] 113G: Food and Society. Prof. Rita Shepard.
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 am – 10:50 am and Wednesdays 11:00 am – 11:50 am. Course Number 7635.

Course Description: The focus of this 4 hour/4 credit seminar is food - a topic that is important to all of us. Throughout the semester we will explore how food is related to culture. Discussion topics include the origins of agriculture, modern agriculture and genetically modified foods, food taboos, food insecurity and hunger, festivals/feasting food, and more. The readings are structured around different aspects of these topics that will allow us to closely examine how food, society, and culture are interconnected, and I anticipate the discussions throughout the semester being quite lively and thought provoking. These class discussions will be facilitated by writing assignments and participation in group projects. In our study of food we will also learn aspects of critical thinking, careful reading, as well as how to do library and web-based research. Longer writing assignments and oral presentations will allow you to apply these skills to specific questions and data sets.

Business Administration [BUSADM] 120G. Beacon to Business: Opportunities and Challenges.

Section 2: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11: 30 am – 1:15 pm. Prof. John Scailoia. Course Number 10473.

Section 3: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30 pm – 3:15 pm. Prof. Kristen Callahan. Course Number 10474.

Section 5: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30 am – 1:15 pm. Prof. Charles Wlbiralske. Course Number 10476.

Section 6: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30 pm – 3:15pm. Staff. Course Number 10477.

Course Description: This course will be your guide to uncover the essential principles and basic challenges of the world of business. Over the course of two-week modules, we will delve into comprehending a new function of business and discover how these principles apply and become relevant in real-world business environments through an

integrated course project to which each student contributes: a social impact business plan. The social impact business plan is a strategic document that outlines how a business intends to address a social or environmental challenge, while maintaining financial viability. We add to these practical areas an understanding of the contexts in which business operates - law, government, society, rapidly changing technology, new risks, the changing nature of careers, increasingly diverse workforces, and the broad global reach of business. This course will develop your capabilities in reading and critical thinking, oral and written communication, working in teams, information technology, academic self-assessment, and professional etiquette.

Cinema Studies [CINE] 121G: Space, Place, and Cinema. Prof. Linda Ai-Yun Liu. Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 am – 12:15 pm and Thursdays 9:30 am - 10:45 am. Course Number 9265.

Course Description: This first-year seminar explores the many different ways in which space and place are represented in cinema, while also teaching students how to closely observe and critically analyze films. Drawing from cinema history and criticism, it examines how films instill spaces with meaning and transform them into distinctive places. Through screenings of a broad array of films, we will tour a variety of cinemas from throughout the world and investigate such topics as the role of settings in film narratives, and contemporary experiences of displacement and marginalization.

Classics [CLSICS] 125G: The Myth of the Hero.

Section 1: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 am – 10:50 am *and* Wednesdays 9:00 am – 9:50 am. Staff. Course number 8897.

Section 2: Staff. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 12:00 pm – 12:50 pm *and* Wednesdays 1:00 pm– 1: 50 pm. Staff. Course Number 10524.

Course Description: This course examines the image of the hero in ancient Greek literature, focusing particularly on epics and tragedies that present single heroes or heroines who must undertake a journey or confront enemies. In addition to assessing various constructions of the hero, the class will consider larger questions prompted by the struggles Greek heroes faced, with themes including fate, death, failure suffering, community values, honor, betrayal, redemption, and self-discovery.

Economics [ECON] 110G: Economic Ideas. Prof. Ellen Frank. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 am – 10: 45 am and Thursdays from 11:00 am – 11:50 am. Course Number 7178.

Course Description: This first-year seminar course presents basic economic concepts and tools of analysis in the context of current economic issues. Controversies over the distribution of income, the role of markets, pollution, or globalization are often

addressed, although topics vary with the instructor. Students may receive credit for only one of ECON 100, ECON 110G or ECON 112G.

English [ENGL] 125G: Defining Freedom.

Section 1: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 am – 9:50 am Wednesdays from 8:00 am – 8:50 am. Staff. Course Number 10421.

Section 2: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 am – 10:50 am and Mondays 11:00 am – 11:50 am. Staff. Course Number 10422.

Course Description: By examining the issues of race, class, and gender, participants look at what freedom has meant to different people in the United States. They are also asked to reflect on and write about their personal definitions of freedom, and to broaden and deepen the understanding they bring to their own historical situations.

English (ENGL) 126G: Aging and Wisdom. THIS SEMINAR IS RESERVED FOR ESL STUDENTS

Section 1: Staff. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:00 am– 11:50 am and Mondays 12:00 pm– 12:50 pm. Course Number 7742.

Section 2: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 pm– 3:40 pm.

We will examine varied historical, cross-cultural, and literary views on aging and wisdom. Through a wide range of texts and genres, a visit to a nursing home, and an interview with an octogenarian, we will take an in-depth look at the way individuals, societies and families deal with and view the elderly, death, and dying. We will analyze the causes and effects of these attitudes and how they relate to social and political expectations, policies, and changes. **Enrollment by Placement.**

English [ENGL] 127G: Food Matters. THIS SEMINAR IS RESERVED FOR ESL STUDENTS.

Section 1: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 am – 2:40. 7945.

Course Description: Why does food matter? In this class we will explore our relationship to food and the role we play in the complex food system. We will read a selection of texts from a variety of genres as we examine different views on the meaning of food, food consumption, production, and sustainability. With the help of the readings and class materials, we will reconsider the ways in which we think about food and the associations we have with food, and we will carefully reflect on the implications of our food choices and our responsibilities as consumers in the complex food system. We also conduct research, both using library resources and first-hand field research. The assignments in this course are designed to provide you with experience in the following seven capabilities: *careful reading, clear writing, critical thinking, use of information literacy, teamwork, oral presentation, and academic self-assessment.* **Enrollment by Placement.**

English [ENGL] 183G: Literature and Society. Prof. Kenneth Sunnerberg. Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 pm– 3:45 pm. Course Number 8797. This is not a “field trip” course connected with English 101.

John Lennon once famously wrote (and sang): “[They] keep you doped with religion and sex and TV/And you think you’re so clever and classless and free . . . A working-class hero is something to be.” In this course, we will be examining the lives of “ordinary” people in America in the 20th and 21st centuries, with a focus on issues of race, sexuality, and class. Though primarily focused on fiction, poetry and autobiographical writings, we may also consider other art forms like film and music. The course will emphasize class discussion and teamwork based on the work of Toni Morrison, Junot Diaz, Roxane Gay, UMB Prof. Jill McDonough, and others. There will be two papers, one text-based essay exam, an interview project, and one oral presentation. A number of guest speakers have been invited. No midterm or final exams.

As we consider the broader historical and cultural contexts of our texts, we will also focus on conducting close readings, carefully examining the language of the work in question. At the same time, we will investigate some of the elements that make up a literary work: point of view, structure, tone, dialogue, theme, narrative technique, and characterization. In the process of so doing, members of this class will develop their critical and communication skills as readers, as writers, and as students of literature. A major goal of this course is to practice the following habits of mind essential to university-level educational success: Careful reading; Clear writing; Critical thinking; Information literacy and technology; Working in teams; Oral presentation.

English [ENGL] 185G: Literature and Film. Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30 pm – 4:10 pm. Staff. Course Number 10395.

An introductory examination of the relationship between moving pictures and the written word. Students will study how filmmakers and writers construct narrative, and how stories have been adapted across media. Other topics may include the following: the different ways that literature and film have dealt with the problem of realism, the use of iconic and symbolic modes, and the political implications of film.

English [ENGL] 186G: Exploring Thompson Island: On the Ground and in the Archives. Prof. Brittanie Weatherbie-Greco. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 am - 10:50 am *and* Wednesdays 9:00 am – 9:50 am. Course Number 9802.

Visible from UMass Boston’s campus, Thompson Island is an extraordinary environment in which to explore a specific place and how it has evolved over time. Through readings, discussions, and boat trips guided by experts in relevant disciplines, this course explores

ways of seeing, investigating and “knowing.” Using a creative approach to history, the course engages with original documents and secondary sources to help answer the question: Why is Thompson Island worthy of our attention? The course reconstructs the Island’s historic and educational uses from the political, social, cultural, and scientific artifacts of the past, and hones the skills of making meaning from them as well as of developing good practices of environmental and archival stewardship.

Throughout the course, students will be asked to reflect on their own relationship with their physical surroundings and the role they want to play as stewards of Boston Harbor, its Islands, and UMass Boston. This course was developed through the “Living with the Urban Ocean” grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

English [ENGL] 187G. Schooled: Rethinking Education. Prof. Susan Field. Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00 am – 9:40 am. Course Number 946.

Schools seem to be institutions at odds with themselves: they are valued by society but never fully funded; they rely on ideas, theories, and structures from the past as a means of preparing students for their futures; and they claim to teach students how to think independently, but follow rigid rule systems, and standards. It’s no surprise that a system of education defined by such contradictions doesn’t ‘work’ for every student. In this class we will think about these contradictions, our own educational experiences, read literature about learning, and consider what experts, and theorists have to say about school. We will ask whether what we read can lead us to a deeper understanding of our own experiences and culture by examining themes such as race and racism, socioeconomics and poverty, literacy and language, and power. Our goal will be to understand and maybe even offer a solution to one of the many ‘issues’ in education. There are no tests or final exams in this class. There is classwork and homework at each class meeting.

Environmental Science [ENVSCI] 185GL: The Urban Ocean. Prof. Sara Bistany. Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 pm – 7:20 pm. Course number 8625.

Course Description: With the Atlantic Ocean on UMass-Boston's doorstep, this place-based course immerses students in the history, culture, and science of Boston Harbor and its Islands to understand the natural and anthropogenic factors shaping our waterfront. The impacts of anthropogenic development and climate change extend from the bustling city of Boston to the outer reaches of Boston Harbor Islands and the consequences of these impacts are shared across UMass-Boston's neighboring communities (e.g. Quincy, Dorchester, and East Boston) and abiotic and biotic communities. Thus, this course will investigate the evolving relationships between people, plants, and animals across this aquatic landscape from a transdisciplinary basis, the integration of knowledge systems to move beyond discipline specific problem-solving approaches. Students will learn how to conduct archival research and scientific experiments, participate in service-learning opportunities, and engage in roundtable

discussions with local indigenous communities, environmental organizations, and researchers. The culmination of these activities will introduce students to methods they can employ for their final project: a proposal on a research topic they would like to lead at the Living Laboratory on Rainsford Island, Boston Harbor Islands. Throughout the course, students will reflect on their own relationships with water and their surroundings and the role they want to play as stewards of Boston Harbor, its Islands, and UMass-Boston. This course was developed through the "Living with the Urban Ocean" grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Music [MUSIC] 105G: Music of the World. Prof. Frederick Stubbs. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 9:00 am – 9:50 am *and* Fridays 10:00 am – 10:50 am. Course Number 9064.

This course examines the power and function of music in pan-human context. Drawing on a wide variety of sounds and texts, students investigate the relationship between music and intellect, spirit, community, and environment. Special attention is given to how terms, concepts and values from various world musics illuminate and amplify our essential understanding of this human phenomenon. Please note: Students may receive credit either for this course or for MUSIC C110 (World Music), but not for both.

Philosophy [PHIL] 109G: Moral Debate in Society. Prof. Theodore Locke. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1:00 pm – 1:50 pm *and* Wednesdays 2:00 pm – 2: 50 pm. Course Number 8001.

This course will study some contemporary problems of social ethics, particularly our obligations to others in need, abortion, human reproductive cloning, animal rights, affirmative action, pornography, and capital punishment, as well as ethical issues associated with the use of force: torture, war, and terrorism.

We will study varied positions on these issues, and the justifications that have been offered to support those positions. The course will develop the ability of each student to clearly articulate her position in each of these controversies, and to defend it persuasively, both in speaking, and particularly in writing.

Philosophy [PHIL] 130G: Privacy. Prof. Brian Kiniry.

Section 1: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 8:00 am – 8:50 am *and* Mondays 9:00 am – 9: 50 am. Course Number 7009.

Section 2: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 am – 10:50 *and* Wednesdays from 11 am – 11:50 am. Course Number 10260.

This course examines the nature of privacy from a philosophical as well as legal perspective. To further this examination, we will be addressing some of the following

questions. What is privacy? Do we have a right to privacy? Are such rights ever properly overridden given considerations of the public good or safety and security concerns? While focusing primarily on informational privacy rights, we will also be considering such disparate issues as the privacy rights of children, the privacy rights of non-human animals, and the privacy rights of the dead.

Psychology 131G Personal & Social Determinants of Health: Disparity, Equity, & Health Promotion. Prof. Daria Boeninger. Mondays and Wednesdays, and Fridays 2:30 pm – 3:45 pm and Wednesdays 4:00 pm – 4:50 pm. Course Number 9446.

This course introduces a multi-disciplinary understanding of health and health-related interventions, with insights from the field of Health Psychology providing our dominant lens for viewing connections between the biological, psychological, and social influences on health. This course emphasizes consideration of disparities in health, building your understanding of how and why health disparities occur across the U.S. population, how to think about ethics related to both action and inaction in the face of health inequities, and what can be done to achieve health equity. We will explore questions such as, Why do Americans, on average, experience worse health and shorter lifespans than people in other developed countries? Why do some groups of Americans experience worse health and shorter lifespans than other groups? Is health and health care a “right”?—and does every American actually have the same ability to pursue health and wellness as their fellow citizens do? What can we as a society do to reduce health disparities and promote health for every person in our country? What can we as individuals do to make sure we experience the best physical and mental health we can?

Religious Studies [RELSTY] 115G Religion, Politics, Sex, and Violence. Prof. Christopher Dibona. Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm and Thursdays 2:00 pm - 2:50 pm. Course Number 9872.

This course covers three themes—religion and public life, violence and non-violence, sexes and sexualities. Students become familiar with a range of major religious thinkers and formulate their own constructive positions. This course may count toward completion of the Study of Religion Program.

SEMINAR 114G: Investigations Across the Curriculum

This course is offered in several sections and three different versions.

News Media and the War on Terror

Section 3: Prof. Meesh McCarthy. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm and Thursdays from 11:30 am – 12:20 pm. Course Number 7038.

Section 4: Prof. Jason Hinkley. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 pm – 3:45 pm. Course Number 7379.

Section 7: Jason Hinkley. Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 am – 10:45 am and Tuesdays 8:00 am – 9:15 am. Course Number 8894.

This course focuses on the ways in which news media frame events, using reporting on the 9/11/01 attacks and the "Global War on Terror" (GWOT) as key initial examples. As with other wars, the White House had to "sell" this to the public. The media played a pivotal role in the buying, selling, and rejecting of the GWOT "sales pitch".

To explore questions such as: How are news reports always somewhat distorted, but not always lies? If all representations by the news media are distorted, are some nevertheless "better" than others? In which contexts do government officials, journalists, and citizens unthinkingly frame news? we will explore news reports about 9/11/01 along with artistic and scholarly responses to them. We will then explore how other important events since 9/11/01 have been framed by the news media, artists, and scholars through interdisciplinary research.

Reality and the Americas

Section 2: Prof. Meesh McCarthy. Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 am – 10:45 am and Tuesdays 11:00 am – 11:50 am. Course Number 6835.

Section 8: Prof. Drinkwater. Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00 pm – 3:50 pm. Course Number 8895.

Section 9. Professor Drinkwater. Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 am – 10: 45 am and Tuesdays 11:00 am – 11:50 am. Course Number: 9313.

This course is an opportunity to examine the real world as a scholar. First, we will explore new ways of viewing the reality of the past. We will then investigate how new technology is reshaping what is considered to be accurate American history, how social networking is reshaping what we consider to be real connections with others, and how infotainment, technology, and advertisement have reconstructed what we think people in the Americas should and actually do. We will use materials drawn from various disciplines (such as history, psychology, and media-communication studies) to develop our definitions of reality, fact, truth, fiction, fantasy, myth, virtual space, and identity that apply to our academic and other experiences.

Court Cases

Section 1: Professor Bryan Williams. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 9:00 am – 9:50 am and Fridays 8:00 am – 8:50 am. Course Number 6834.

Section 5: Professor Drinkwater. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:00 am – 11:50 am and Mondays 12:00 pm – 12:50 pm. Course Number 7578.

Section 6: Staff. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:00 am-11:50 am and Mondays 10:00 am – 10:50 am. Course Number 8165.

This First Year Seminar is about arguments, in particular legal and related arguments that are used in courtrooms. We will study real criminal, civil, and constitutional cases, as documented on film and in courtroom transcripts, and academic and news articles. Via these documents, you will observe the words and actions of individual jurors, judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys.

These cases represent both just and unjust outcomes. In some cases, the criminal evidence for guilt may be ambiguous. In some, the judicial system may be inherently biased because of a particular judge or lawyer, or because of the constraints of the appeals process or the ways the justice system is funded. And in other cases, the system seems to protect our rights well. Come judge for yourself.

SEMINAR 120G Mind-Body Connection. Prof. Bryan Williams.

Section 1: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:00 am - 11:50 am *and* Wednesday 12:00 pm – 12:50 pm. Course Number 7939.

Section 2: Prof. Williams. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1:00 – 1:50 *and* Fridays 12:00 - 12:50. Course Number 8048.

How do the body and mind interact? We will investigate this question through observations of ourselves, through observations and interviews of others, and through the course's readings and library research. Along the way we will learn about how people deal with physical and emotional challenges and how some people seem more resilient while others may become more resilient. For assignments there will be journal entries, formal essays, and frequent presentations, often in groups. Meditation and/or physical exercise will be required as well. The exercises will be adaptable to short- or long-term physical limitations.

Sociology [SOCIO] 120G: Sociology of Popular Culture.

Section 1: Prof. Linda Liu. Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00 am – 9:15 am *and* Tuesdays 9:30 am – 9:45 am. Course Number 10368.

Section 2: Prof. Karla Odenwald. Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 pm – 4:45 pm. Course Number 10369.

Section 3: Prof. Daniel Finn. Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 am – 10:45 am *and* Thursdays 11:00 am – 11:50 am. Course Number 10370.

Section 4: Prof. Daniel Finn. Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm. Course Number 10371.

What is popular culture? How do mass media and popular culture help us to make sense of our world, identities, and relationships? Do we organize our lives around media or do media shape our lives? Do media technologies make us happier or better citizens in a democratic society? This course will address such questions by applying various theoretical lenses to artifacts and visual messages in media and popular culture, with a primary emphasis on developing a critical awareness of contemporary mass media (radio, film, photography, music, television, fashion, video games, the internet) and their impact on culture.

You will examine your own conceptions and consumption of media through (1) readings and group tasks that engage and challenge your perspective on our cultural landscape, (2) a service-learning project that integrates the local community with your understanding of course material, and (3) writing assignments that allow you to apply the theories and concepts you learn to your own analysis of popular culture. Access to a camera is required.

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies [WGS] 120G: Women and Men in Families.
Prof. Lynne Benson

Section 1: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 8:00 am – 8:50 am *and* Fridays 9:00 am – 9:50 am. Course Number 7537.

Section 2: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 am – 10:50 am *and* Wednesdays 9:00 am– 9:50 am. Class Number 9319.

Has feminism destroyed the traditional family? Would marriages last longer if women and men shared family responsibilities equally? Does society still need to make major changes if we want both women's rights and stable families? Participants read, discuss, debate, and make up their own minds on these issues. We will also discuss how families deal with various crises, such as death, divorce and shifts in their economic status, as well as the impact of the COVID pandemic. This course may count toward the major and the minor in Women's Studies.