

The following seminars will be offered during **Fall semester 2021**:

ART 151 Roots of the Modern World: Art – First Year Seminar

We are inundated with images on a daily basis – on our phones, in our homes, and in public space. Perhaps because of this image overload, we often take our visual environment for granted, failing to appreciate the choices that went into its design and production. This course teaches students how to analyze their visual environment by studying the history of Western Art, that is, by examining the paintings, sculptures, and buildings of past cultures as visual expressions of the social, political, religious, cultural, and commercial values of the individuals that created them. Moving between lectures, group discussions, and interactive technology workshops, students conduct case studies of works of art and architecture, from the Parthenon in ancient Greece to Andy Warhol's Marilyn Diptych, with an eye toward the relationship between visual form and historical context. The process involves learning not only the basic methods of Art History, but also how to express one's ideas in various types of art-historical writing, such as the exhibition review. Finally, the class will take advantage of the rich collections of New York City art museums as well as the art and architecture of Manhattan College with numerous group trips.

ENGL 151: Roots of the Modern Age: Literature: Making and Unmaking Monsters

Section 01: T-F: 11:00-12:15

Section 02: T-F: 2:00-3:15

This First-Year Seminar in literature will focus on reading and writing about monsters, the monstrous, and monstrosity. Humans have made and remade human identity and existence throughout history, often creating monsters in the process. As Judith Halberstam claims, "Monsters are meaning-making machines," condensing a multitude of fears and desires. Because of their otherness, monsters ask us to ponder the relationship between self and other, between the dominant culture and its margins, between comfort and alienation, between the human and the non-human. Monsters challenge us to consider—personally and culturally—the complexity of identity formation and to explore the limits of community and sympathy. They offer unique ways of being that can also be alternative ways of seeing, even opening the door to the possibilities of being posthuman. Readings most likely will include: Emil Ferris, *My Favorite Thing is Monsters*; Toni Morrison, *Beloved*; William Shakespeare, *Othello*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; and Stephen Graham Jones, *Mongrels*.

LLRN 151 FYS: Love and War in Ancient Greece: Classical Origins, Modern Retellings

Through close reading and intensive writing about literary texts from the Classical world, this course examines how cultural wars during the rise and fall of the Ancient Greek empire affected power relationships in the family and in society at large. By studying representations of gender and sexuality in literary, historical, philosophical, and political texts, we will examine the way in which cultural and political crises – such as the Trojan War, the Persian Wars, and the Peloponnesian Wars – are often explored through personal relationships between men and women. This course also investigates how and why the cultural and political themes of that period have stayed relevant enough to have been continuously retold in the modern era. In

addition to studying Classical pieces of literature that explore conceptions of gender, sexuality, heroism, and love—such as Homer’s *The Odyssey*, and Sophocles’s *Antigone*—we will explore how notions of patriarchy, orientalism, femininity, masculinity, and even “feminism,” have endured and evolved into the modern age. Classical texts will include works by Homer, Euripides, Aristotle, Plato, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, among others; Modern texts and films will include work by Charles Mee, Margaret Atwood, the Coen brothers, Frank Miller (Zach Snyder), Debra Granik, and Sarah Ruhl.

HIST 152-01: Nationalism and Empire

This course will examine the ways Europeans created and justified their empires, as well as how the empires shaped and contributed to Europe. At the core of our exploration of history will be thinking about how and why things happened the way they did and how people understood what they did at the time. We’ll look at the messiness of history that complicates the simple stories we’re often told about the past. One particular focus will be how European ideals that justified imperialism also worked to undermine it, especially with the rise of various nationalisms in the nineteenth century. We’ll end the semester by looking at the processes of decolonization after World War II and the end of the European empires. You will also learn to do close reading of historical documents and how to analyze and write about them as historians do.

HIST 152-02: Race and Revolution

How and why did race emerge as a social construct? In this class, we will study the relationship between racism, colonialism and capitalism from the fifteenth century to the present. We will explore how different communities across the world have resisted racial oppression and how this resistance has changed over time. We will also examine the role of revolutions and revolutionary thinking in the struggle for liberation, paying particular attention to slave revolts, indigenous resistance, anti-colonial movements, and Black liberation movements.

PHIL 152-01: Roots of the Modern Age

Few of us have the time in our daily lives to ponder deep philosophical questions such as: “What makes me who I am?” “Is there such a thing as Free will?” “What if my life is all a dream?” “Could a robot ever be conscious?” “How can I be a good person?” “What is the meaning of life?” However, without realizing it most of us encounter profound philosophical questions such as these the moment we sign into Netflix. For good reason, some of the most compelling films and television series are driven by philosophical questions and concerns. In this course, we will use both film and television both as a starting point for philosophical discussion and as material for philosophical analysis. In this course, you will be introduced not only to important classic and contemporary philosophical theories, but you will learn how to do philosophy. You will learn how to recognize philosophical issues as they arise in film, in text, and in life. You will also learn how to extract an argument from a text or a film, and to critically evaluate it in a rigorous way. Additionally, you will learn how to clearly and effectively communicate philosophical ideas in writing.

PHIL 152-02 Roots: Philosophy (FYS) Philosophy and Literature

Two fundamental assumptions guide this course: first, all great literary works are inherently philosophical; second, great works of literature and great works of philosophy can complement one another in a way that deepens our understanding of both. By comparing and contrasting literary works, e.g., Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, and Rebecca Roanhorse's "Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience," with philosophical ones, e.g., Plato's *Apology*, Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, and Simone de Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity*, we will explore fundamental philosophical themes such as self-knowledge, virtue, authenticity, and freedom.

RELS 152: First Year Seminar on The Nature and Experience of Religion Wilderness as a Window into Understanding Religion

Whether one is "religious" or not, religion matters. Some may have parents from different religious backgrounds, while others may be faced with individuals from different religions in their dorms, classes, or at the grocery store. What's more, violence in the name of religious ideology seems to permeate everyday life. Discussing religious issues in an informed manner requires understanding of the subject matter. This semester we will focus on scripture, doctrines, and issues within three world religions: Buddhism, Daoism, and Christianity. Wilderness is the lens through which we will discuss issues in each religious tradition. Buddha wanders into the forest in search of spiritual freedom and becomes enlightened under the Bodhi tree. Jesus is shown to be baptized by John in the wilderness. He is also portrayed as sojourning into the wilderness for a period of 40 days and nights, overcoming temptation and in preparation for his final days on earth. These are just a couple of the connections between wilderness and spirituality. An individual's faith journey could also be conceptualized as a foray into the wild. All these examples and more will be analyzed this semester. Moreover, each student will be encouraged to explore the existential wilderness of their everyday life through class discussion and writing assignments.

PSYC 153- The Evolution of Empathy

Frans de Waal, in his book *The Age of Empathy*, argues that "Greed is out, empathy is in." Although evolutionary principles are often used to explain the selfish nature of society, group collaboration and empathy also have evolutionary origins and are in fact necessary for survival. In this First Year Seminar, we will read *The Age of Empathy*, as well as empirical research articles in order to examine how the capacity for empathy and other related cognitive abilities evolved in humans and other species. We will also learn about research methods used in the field of psychology to study such behavior. Be prepared to see humans and animals in a new light, and be challenged to think about reasons why we act the way we do.

PSYC 153:02 (FYS): The Psychology of Me

Did you know there's a neuron in your brain devoted to recognizing Jennifer Aniston? Or that needing 8 hours of sleep is likely a myth? Or that studying brain disorders like schizophrenia and Alzheimer's can help us unlock the secrets of the mind? In this course, we will explore the

functions of the human brain. We will delve into what the psychological study of a mind gone wrong can tell us about normal brain functioning. We will learn about emerging research that links disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and autism. We will investigate whether the brain is a forgetting machine or a remembering machine, and why we devote a whole neuron to Jennifer Aniston! Finally, we will look at the current research on sleep and how important sleep is to proper brain function. (And that caffeine habit you've developed? Keeping you alert in the short-term may be doing more harm to you in the long-term than you realize.) You will read cutting edge research by Nobel prize winners and top scholars in psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience.

POSC 153: Mass Media and American Politics

This course will provide students with analytical tools to understand the role of the media in American politics and the impact it has on policymaking, campaigning, and most importantly, recent elections. First, we will examine the structure of news media as a political and economic institution. This will include the historical evolution of media and how it is being transformed by the internet today. Next, we will explore the ways in which political actors, both inside and outside of government, try to shape the messages broadcast through media toward policy or electoral goals. During this part of the course we will pay particular attention to how various politicians, organizations, and campaigns try to influence, circumvent, or critique the media, and the status of the press in American politics. Finally, we will examine the effects that the media has on citizens, and the role the public is playing in political media in the internet era.

SOC 153-01: Gender & Nature

This writing seminar examines gender in the context of natural resource management. What makes Boy Scouts so different from Girl Scouts? Why is a lumberjack usually a man? Why does the duty of collecting water in many countries fall to women? Masculinity and femininity, as social constructs, have dictated human relationships with their environment all over the world. Gender is now a critical topic in climate change research, especially in developing countries, due to disproportionate impacts that climate-induced events have on women. To add complexity, gender is only one of many axes of difference that intersect in places, spaces, and humans to form experiences of nature and global change. This course delves into the complexities of gender as it intermingles with humans and their relationship with the environment.