**A Dog’s Life: Lessons on a Life Worth Living**
Seminar led by Professor Kate Johnston

From the well-trained search and rescue dog, to the couch surfing family pet, canines are our best friends. They are empathetic, curious, adaptable, loving, enthusiastic, inclusive, and loyal animals. Simply put, dogs teach us how to live well. In this course, we will explore the variety of roles that dogs play in teaching us how to be better humans. Discover these key lessons through your study of novels, films, comics, academic articles and research, and a variety of guest speakers. Expect to think critically and curiously while engaging with the campus and local community. Get ready to incorporate your own series of inquiries to better understand the relationships formed between humans and dogs. At the end of the course, you will create a culminating project representing a blend of content knowledge, skills, and inquiry to showcase your learning to your peers.

**Champions and Chumps: Issues and Culture of Competitive and Outdoor Sports**
Seminar led by Professor Hank Nuwer

This course examines sport and outdoor cultures primarily in North America but also internationally through a close reading and class discussion of sports literature and journalism. The literary selections include fiction, nonfiction, sports journalism, two films and one play. Increasingly, from 1960 to the present, writing by novelists, essayists, nonfiction authors, screen writers and playwrights uses the arena of sport for artistic and intellectual entertainment. The course reaches students with a wide background in sports but also serves students with less than rudimentary familiarity with competitive or outdoor sports. The course examines the values and beliefs of authors, athletes and outdoor enthusiasts. Class discussions treat diversity, gender and ethical issues concerning sports. Guest speakers include authors, magazine writers/editors and executives from the NCAA and National Federation of High Schools.

**Fake News, Real Data**
Seminar led by Dr. Dan Callon

You find accusations of fake news everywhere online, throughout social media, and shouted in political demonstrations in recent months. This course is centered around the idea of using reliable information sources to determine what the truth is about controversial topics such as the safety of commonly-used vaccines and genetically-modified foods, the pervasiveness of poverty and homelessness, the merits of different approaches to gun control, and the impact of human activities on the environment. Prepare to challenge your own beliefs and those of others as you learn how to get to the real truth about issues important to all of us.
From Crosswords to Escape Rooms: Puzzles in Pop Culture
Seminar instructed by Stacy Hoehn

The human fascination with puzzles goes back to ancient times, but what about puzzles makes them an enduring part of the human experience? Are they just a fun way to pass time, or is there something more to their appeal? In this course, we will explore the history of puzzles and get hands-on experience solving specific puzzles, such as crosswords, Sudoku, Rubik’s Cubes, escape rooms, and more, to investigate the question of what makes puzzles popular across the ages. In addition, we will examine the unique interplay that exists between puzzles and the culture of the times during which they are developed that leads to an ever-evolving landscape of mind-bending challenges.

Justice for All? How Young Adult Literature Promotes Social Change
Seminar led by Professor Kellie Schmidt

What social justice lessons can we learn from Katniss Everdeen, Harry Potter, and Starr Carter? How is young adult (YA) fiction uniquely able to tell these powerful narratives of social justice? What is it about these stories that appeal to adolescents and adults alike? Throughout the course, we will work together to answer these questions by reading YA literature and exploring topics such as power, racism, diversity, and class. We will analyze the ways in which YA literature allows us to examine our own lives and beliefs and increases our capacity to think critically and historically about social justice, social identities, and structures of power. Furthermore, we will have the opportunity to serve in the community, partnering with the Peace Learning Center to deliver peace education lessons to local elementary school students in order to actively promote social justice. We will connect our real-world experiences to the fictional depictions we read about in class and explore the value of young adult literature in shaping our capacity to think critically about structures of power, privilege, and oppression.

Life Examined: In Pursuit of Your Best Self
Seminar led by Dr. Jason Jimerson

“The unexamined life is not worth living” said Socrates, which implies “an examined life is worth living.” But, how does a person examine his or her life to create a life worth living, instead of just making a living? This is the question we will ponder in this seminar. We will review and discuss a variety of texts that ask, “What constitutes a good life?” We will contemplate answers from philosophers, social scientists, motivational speakers, and others. We will also interview people about their lives and ask them how they answered these questions. We will examine our own lives by keeping diaries and assessing key experiences. In the end, each student will present “life lessons” derived from his or her investigations. Students will post their answer the question – “How will he or she examine his or her life and, thereby, create a life worth living?”
Marijuana: A Blunt High Dive into the Weeds of a Budding Industry
Seminar led by Professor Emily Jones

In 2012, history was made when residents of Colorado and Washington voted in favor of legalizing recreational marijuana. Fast forward a short six years later and there are now 33 states with laws allowing legal use of marijuana in some form (recreational or medical). How did this become such a hot topic? And, where do we go from here? In this course we will examine the interdisciplinary nature of marijuana legalization, from a botany lesson in understanding the plant Cannabis sativa and its history to the medical, neuroscience, and psychological study of the impact of the drug on the human body, including potential health risks. We will also consider marijuana legalization through the lens of business when considering regulatory, insurance, legal, and economic impacts. You should expect to engage in readings that present a variety of perspectives, interact with music and history to find the underlying influence of the public perception of the drug, and view documentaries that bring the issue to light. We will conclude the course with a look internationally to compare the trend in other jurisdictions to the progress in the United States.

Men or Monsters? Psychopaths and Serial Killers in Contemporary US Culture
Seminar led Dr. Jarrod Brown

Psychopaths are out there. The media and popular culture portray them as sadistic serial killers, school shooters, terrorists, and criminal masterminds. But is that always the case? What does it really mean to be a psychopath? Are they always violent? Are they evil? How does one become a psychopath? Are all serial killers psychopaths? In our scholarly exploration of psychopaths and serial killers, we will pursue the answers to these questions and many more. We will read not only specific case studies, but we will also explore their representation in fiction, TV, and film. Concepts that we will explore include empathy, moral responsibility, guilt, and the nature of the self.

Myths, Magic, and Marvel: Exploring Religion Through the Marvel Universe
Seminar led by Professor Jim Alexander

Over the last decade, the Marvel cinematic universe has inspired a new generation of fans devoted to the stories of marvelous heroes and their villains. However, in this ever-expanding journey through films, Marvel Comics has also encouraged fans to ponder the power of mythology, the mystery of magic, masks, prophecy, apocalyptic beliefs, and evil, all important themes within the field known as the anthropology of religion. We will study how these elements of religion are represented in cultures around the world and how these ideas are reflected in pop culture though the films and comics of the Avengers, Black Panther, Thor, Dr. Strange, and more. Excelsior!
Psy-Fi: Exploring Psychology Through Science Fiction
Seminar led by Dr. Bill Eiler

Did Darth Vader suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or borderline personality disorder? Was Luke Skywalker just an angsty teen or was he exhibiting symptoms of schizophrenia? Is Major Tom experiencing a sense of escapism or isolation in David Bowie’s “Space Oddity”? Was Frankenstein’s monster really the personification of Dr. Frankenstein’s id? Did the eugenics portrayed in the movie GATTACA really improve society? The principles of psychology really are as pervasive in the alien tableaus of science fiction as they are in our everyday life. In this first-year seminar, we will explore psychology through the lens of science fiction as students critically examine various psychological concepts in a variety of works of science fiction including novels, film, poetry, and music that span the last two centuries.

Sitcoms: A Binge-Watcher’s Guide
Seminar led by Professor Robin Roberts

So, you’ve just watched that one episode of The Office (or Friends or Big Bang Theory or How I Met Your Mother or It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia or Will & Grace or Frasier) for the fifth time. You know all the lines and all the jokes, yet you still enjoy it and laugh just as much as you did the first time you saw it. Ever wonder how it started? When were sitcoms created—and why—and how have they changed over the years? In this course we examine the history and evolution of one of TV’s most popular and enduring genres as well as the different types of sitcoms—family, workplace, and gang. We’ll read articles, essays, and reviews as well as biographical sketches of some of sitcom’s great innovators. And we’ll also watch a few episodes. “Pivot!” “That’s what she said.”

Sounds from the Silver Screen: Film Music of Hollywood
Seminar led by Professor Gabe Fadale

Music in movies can be as memorable as our favorite scenes and lines. It can have a powerful effect on the audience and our emotions. Throughout the semester, we will explore the techniques employed by composers as they collaborate with directors as well as the functions of music in Hollywood narrative film. You will gain a basic knowledge of film history and film music and develop an awareness of the variety of musical style in works composed for film. Further, our goal will be to study film music in context of historically significant and beloved films and to discover what purposes music serves in an art that is by nature collaborative. No prior knowledge or background in music or film studies necessary to enroll or succeed in this class.
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**The Study of Expertise: Talent, Hard Work, or Luck?**  
Seminar led by Professor Mark Britner

Have you ever wondered if you could become the next Lebron James? Mark Zuckerberg? Jay-Z? How did these people reach the top of their field? Was it natural talent? Something they were born with? Working harder or practicing longer than anyone else? Or just plain luck – being in the right place at the right time? In this course, you will examine current research and best practices on achieving expertise. You will self-assess your own strengths, weaknesses and motivational style and connect how that impacts attaining expertise. By applying the concepts of deliberate practice and developing a growth mindset, the goal of the course is to help put you on the path to achieving expertise in whatever area of interest you may have.

**“This Is America”: A Viral Hit in Context**  
Seminar led by Dr. Jenny Smith

In the spring of 2018, Donald Glover, the actor, hosted *Saturday Night Live*; that same night, Childish Gambino, the musician, released “This is America.” As of writing this course description, the electrifying, allusion-filled video had 354 million views on YouTube. In this course, we will study race in America through the lens of this viral sensation, first by doing a close analysis of the video and then reading internet responses, including features on the Japanese American director, Hiro Murai, and Rwandan choreographer, Sherrie Silver. From there, we will contextualize Gambino’s song by reading selections from Toni Morrison and Ta-Nehisi Coates. We will study the ubiquity of minstrel shows in eighteenth and nineteenth century America and trace their lasting influence on popular culture through a screening of Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled*. We will examine the lives of two young men, whose deaths were emblazoned in poetry: Emmett Till and Trayvon Martin. Finally, we will listen to and analyze Janelle Monae’s *Dirty Computer* (2018), an album that takes up the same themes but through the lens of black womanhood. By analyzing texts from popular culture, literature, history, and cultural theory—published in print and on the web—students will learn how to decipher, interpret, discuss, and ask questions about representations of blackness in America.

**College Life: Fact or Fiction?**  
Seminar led by Dr. Dan Alsop

Being a newly minted college student can be simultaneously exhilarating and intimidating. Now that you’ve actually made it, how does this whole college thing work? And what exactly is the point of it? We will delve into precisely these questions by enjoying and analyzing a variety of texts – including feature films and readings (both fiction and non-fiction) about college life. We will discuss issues including race, gender, politics, relationships, mental health, personal growth, intellectual growth, and the values of higher education. We will trace the intersection of the movies, fictional texts, non-fictional texts, and your college experience. Welcome to college. Be prepared to think critically, discuss civilly, and have fun in the process!