

## First Year Seminars

Fall 2021

As of 6/10/21

### FYS 100-01 (10711) MW 8-9:50 **Just for Laughs [in person]**

(Blasdell)

Did you know that utilizing your sense of humor effectively can help you excel at any job, diffuse tense situations, and even help you achieve your life-long goals? We will discuss all these areas and you will begin to learn how to implement your own sense of humor in handling different situations. In addition, we will discover how humor has been effective through scientific research.

### FYS 100-02 (11194) MW 4-5:50 **Raid the Collections: Making Discoveries in Rhode Island College Collections [hybrid]**

(Barlow)

This course invites you to examine an array of fascinating materials, such as artifacts, art objects, and digital archives, from the collections of the James P. Adams Library. Together we will conduct original research and develop fresh perspectives on selected items for exhibition on campus and online. You will explore what it means to collect and curate, and will discuss issues surrounding cultural property.

### FYS 100-03 (10701) MTh 12-1:50 **Shock Therapy: Drama as Action [in person]**

(Abbotson)

Throughout history, rulers have viewed the communal opportunity offered by theater as a dangerous form of communication, and have striven to censor anything perceived as threatening the social order. Students will explore socio-cultural boundaries enforced and broken by drama from the Greeks to contemporary works, as playwrights provoked attention toward a variety of inequities and wrongs. Protest drama is by its very nature shocking, but can it go too far, does it still work, and can we create some of our own?

### FYS 100-04 (11511) TTh 2-3:50 **Welcoming the Elephant into the Room: Learning How to Engage in Courageous Conversations [hybrid]**

(Endress)

A courageous conversation is a discussion between two or more people where stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong. Often, these conversations are about the world in which we live and revolve around issues of race, power, privilege, and social justice. This seminar is designed for students who have a deep interest in developing their leadership skills by learning how to engage in these essential conversations. We will use the classroom as our learning lab and together we will create a guide that will help us and others on campus to conduct and participate in courageous conversations. Along the way, we will document through discussion posts, essay writing, and classroom interaction those practices that led us to success as well as those that produced less than desirable results. We will also explore what it means to be an inclusive leader and an engaged citizen, as well as how we might put our skills into action right here inside our own campus community.

### FYS 100-05 (10702) MW 2-3:50 **Estudios Contemporáneos de Marcadores de Identidad Cultural de Latinxs en los Estados Unidos [online synchronous]**

**TAUGHT IN SPANISH**

(Contemporary Studies of Cultural Identity Markers of Latinxs in the United States)

(Basile)

¿Qué significa ser Latinx en EE. UU.? ¿Todos nos vemos iguales en América Latina? ¿Es el spanglish un idioma, o es inglés mal hablado? ¿Cuáles son las lenguas de lxs latinxs? Estas son algunas de las principales cuestiones que vamos a discutir en este seminario. El curso está estructurado en torno a tres temas: la cultura latinx, el idioma de los latinxs y la identidad latinx. Examinaremos una variedad de películas e historias de la vida real sobre las comunidades latinxs en los EE. UU. Se alentará a los estudiantes a investigar su propia herencia y discutir temas que son parte de su historia como latinxs viviendo en los Estados Unidos.

[What does it mean to be a Latinx in the US? Do we all look the same in Latin America? Is Spanglish a language or is it bad English? What are the languages of Latinxs? These are some of the main questions discussed in this seminar. The course is structured around three topics: Latinx culture, Latinx language, and Latinx identity. We will examine a variety of real-life stories and films about Latinx communities in the US. Students will be encouraged to research their own heritage and to discuss issues that are part of their history as Latinxs living in the United States.]

**FYS 100-06 (11195) MW 6-7:50 Performance in the First Person: This is ME! [in person]**

(Pennell)

This class will explore a variety of methods of research, personal narrative/memoir writing, and story telling. It will include theatrical exercises and methods for presentation tapping into your creativity and confidence building. The course will culminate in a final in-class presentation.

**FYS 100-07 (10703) TF 12-1:50 FYS 100: Sex Rights, Sex Wrongs [in person]**

Edelman

When it comes to sex, sexuality, and even gender, how do we know what is 'right' versus what is 'wrong'? The legal system, our families, schools, and our communities all have a hand in telling us what we are to think about or do with our bodies. In this course we explore how gender, sex and sexuality-specific ideologies shift and morph over time, as well as how they broadly impact and structure our lives in important ways. We will explore these complex topics through a diverse selection of theoretical and ethnographic texts as well as through films, zines, and graphic novels.

**FYS 100-08 (11196) TTh 8-9:50 Technological Design and Innovation [hybrid]**

(McLaughlin)

Technology! We are surrounded by it, but do we understand it? Technology is one of the greatest liberating forces in human history. We are consumers of technology without equal, but we have a certain lack of knowledge about the materials and processes used to make the things we use on a daily basis. During this seminar, we will research historical technological design and innovations that make our lives better. The class activities will require us to explore the processes of innovation and invention, design, building, and producing simple products. This course will contribute to our understanding of technology.

**FYS 100-09 (11512) TTh 2-3:50 Philosophy of Mind and Mental Disorder [hybrid]**

(Duncan)

In this course, we will explore various philosophical questions about the mind and its relationship to the body. These questions include: What is the nature of consciousness? Is it purely physical? Or is it something more--something beyond physical processes in the brain? In the second half of the semester, we will focus on *mental disorder*. We will consider the nature of mental disorder generally and also what specific mental disorders can teach us about the mind.

**FYS 100-10 (11513) TTh 10-11:50 Sun, wind, and earth: the green buzz [in person]**

(Padmanabhan)

Our home, the blue planet. This course will walk you through the concepts of energy consumption, its connection to economic progress and the environmental consequences. We will explore green technologies such as solar, wind and geothermal energies as viable sources to meet global energy demand. You will work with your peers to formulate relevant questions, analyze data, understand numbers and engage in the process of developing solutions.

**FYS 100-11 (107004) MTh 12-1:50 Class Matters [in person]**

(Schuster)

This course explores how social class shapes our opportunities, values, and life chances. While Americans are talking more about race and gender, we seem unwilling to recognize social class as a system that also shapes

experiences, mobility and perspective. This course will examine the different social classes, the impact of class in our world, and suggest that differences between people are not just a matter of taste and choice. We only need to think about the people around us (your neighbors, the immigrant woman who collects aluminum cans in the PC neighborhood, Donald Trump) to see that social class plays a role in our options and our interactions.

**FYS 100-12 (10705) MW 4-5:50 pm Global Perspectives on Health [in person]**  
(Pfeiffer)

Human experiences of health, illness, and disease are often taken for granted. However, ideas about and embodied experiences of health and illness, as well as explanations of causes and cures vary radically across time and space. In this seminar, students will explore the diverse range of contexts—cultural, geopolitical, historical, and socioeconomic—through which experiences of health, wellness, and bodily disarray are distinctly shaped and reshaped in our globalized world. We will also reflect on our own experiences, values, and assumptions about health and illness through a series of projects. In so doing we will consider questions related to issues of global health equity, illness, and healing in our own communities, countries, and the world.

**FYS 100-13 (10706) MW 8-9:50 am Self, Mind, Heart in Eastern Philosophies [in person]**  
(Shogenji)

There are deep differences between Eastern and Western understandings of self and related concepts such as mind and heart. This course examines how self, mind, and heart are viewed in Eastern philosophies, and explores implications of these views in goals of life, moral conducts, and social relations. Eastern philosophies to be examined include Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, and the concepts in these philosophical systems are studied in comparison with their Western counterparts

**FYS 100-14 (10707) MW 2-3:50 The Rhetoric of Toxic Masculinity [in person]**  
(Michaud)

Toxic masculinity has been defined as a set of behaviors exhibited by men but really it's an outcome—it's the self that emerges in boys and men after years of being taught that emotions like fear or sadness must be suppressed, that one must maintain an appearance of stoicism and strength at all times, and that violence signifies power. One need look no further than former President Donald Trump to find a vivid illustration of this concept as it manifests in the early years of the twenty-first century. The fact that Trump was able to get elected and that he maintains support especially among white men is a sign of the health and endurance of toxic masculinity. In this class we'll examine the rhetoric of toxic masculinity through film, literature, and cultural history as we work to imagine, enact, and expect better and saner versions of masculinity for and from boys and men.

**FYS 100-15 (11617) TTh 10-11:50 Ancient Heroes and Modern Humans: between Gods and Beasts [in person]**  
(Rawson)

Are the earliest stories from ancient Greece as powerful and meaningful as people say? The original heroes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are called divine, but often they act like beasts, and in fact they're just as human as we are. While they entertain us with magic and super-human powers, these surprisingly subtle epics portray intense anger and fear and love, cruelty and sympathy, arrogance and reverence. So, let's test the wisdom of these legends in the light of our own human struggles with the same. We'll work both individually and in teams, with lots of reading, writing, discussion, and presentations.

**FYS 100-16 (11618) TF 12-1:50 Exploring Cultural Landscapes: Placing Power, Symbolism, and Identity [in person]**  
(Dixon)

They say a picture is worth a thousand words; the same visual literacy that is used to understand, analyze, and critique pictures is needed as we examine places. Places manifest power, symbolism and identity. We will

evaluate what the cultural landscape that a society creates says about it, and how public spaces are used to shape communal identities. In this course, students will explore symbolism and meaning embedded in cultural landscapes, both everyday places close to home and internationally iconic landscapes.

**FYS 100-17 (11626) TTh 2-3:50 Bill Nye the Science Guy, Norman Lear, Sesame Street, EE and Me [in person]**

Galvez

We know that learning is a complex process that takes many shapes and forms throughout our lifetime. This class will explore both what we learn from, and what we are taught by popular media. Some lessons are unintended and others mindfully constructed to reach specific audiences. Join us as we dissect the messages we receive through the media and discuss our own personal media experiences.

**FYS 100-18 (11663) MW 10-11:50 “¿Dónde está mi gente?” Latinx Culture in the U.S. [hybrid]**

(Ramirez)

This seminar is an invitation to explore, celebrate, question, and reimagine Latinx culture in the U.S. We will discuss novels and songs, films and *telenovelas*, works of art and memes. We will read and debate about what it means to be Latina/o. Or is it Hispanic? Or Latinx? We will also learn some history. How did Latinx people arrive in the U.S.? Did they arrive? We will tell stories, hear stories, and reflect on the powers and limits of storytelling. Finally, we will talk about the future, about the challenges and opportunities lying ahead for *la comunidad latina*. (*Writing assignments may be completed in English or in Spanish*)

**FYS 100-19 (116664) MW 10-11:50 Leadership Study Through the Biography [in person]**

(Kunkel)

This course will look at the dimensions of leadership primarily through the study of biographies and biographical portraits. The class will explore qualities of various leaders through online sources, print and media. For final projects, students will conduct research as well as read a biography of their choice and share portraits of their subject based on their original research.

**FYS 100-20 (11665) TTh 8-9:50 Native American Arts [in person]**

(Lawrence)

This course explores expressions of indigeneity through arts such as storytelling, literature, films, images, dance performance and objects, including the impact of climate change on Indigenous cultures in a contemporary society.

**FYS 100-21 (12080) MW 10-11:50 Picturing the Self [in person]**

(Seaman)

In this seminar, we will seek to understand the complexities and varieties of self-portraits in visual art. By looking closely at examples of self-portraits, both famous and obscure, and examining concepts both of the artist and of the self, we will investigate self-depictions over time and around the world to discover the power and possibility of these works.

**FYS 100-22 (12237) MW 6-7:50 pm “Where is everybody?”: Searching for Little Green Men and other aliens [in person]**

(Gullapalli)

Are we alone in the universe? The fact that we live in a vast universe with many planets has led to speculations about the possible existence of aliens. There is ongoing exploration of our solar system for indications of life, while others have claimed that alien intervention in human societies has already happened. In this course we

tackle the question of alien life in three ways. We will explore the ways that alien life has been imagined; we will analyze and evaluate the evidence for past and current visitations by aliens; and we will become familiar with what current explorations of the solar system and beyond reveal about the possibility of alien life. We end the class with a better understanding of both the scientific evidence for and our fascination with aliens.