

2018 First Year Seminars

Art of the Social Imagination: Defining, Identifying and Building Community

Instructor: Leila Bandar



Art of the Social Imagination begins with the idea that before we can share our creativity with others, we will want to learn more about ourselves. Cultivating skills to work with others is built on a foundation of personal self-awareness. In the beginning of this course, students are provided with materials for artwork and opportunities to increase self-knowledge. Art has the power to enhance social movements, create political action, evoke insight, and invite collaboration. In this course, students learn about living artists such as Ai Wei Wei, Anish Kapoor, and Andy Goldsworthy to see art-making as a way of sharing space for social connection and individual reflection. This course is designed to facilitate self-discovery and community involvement. We casually study meditation and learn to harness collective energy of a group to go deeper into our projects. No formal art background is needed!

If I Can't Dance – Keep Your Revolution

Instructor: Maris Wolff



History is not just about important revolutions, battles, politicians and changing borders. It is also about everyday people, and what is important in their everyday lives. This course is a multicultural exploration

of the simple things that give people pleasure: their dance, games, social activities, cuisine; some of the things that make a nation's culture. We see how geography, climate, work, religion/ritual, gender, and age all have their impact on a country's customs. This course investigates the similarities and differences between the various cultures of people around the globe. This course celebrates what Emma Goldman called everybody's right to beautiful, radiant things".

Parental Advisory: 20th Century American Censorship

Instructor: Jeff Bickerstaff

This class explores pivotal censorship battles from the history of American popular culture, particularly film, comic books, stand-up comedy, and music. In addition to analyzing provocative works of art,

students will learn how to contextualize specific free speech controversies within the history of American culture, with an emphasis on recognizing recurring patterns of behavior, and examining the ongoing clash between America's Puritanical tradition and the freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment. This course will also take up evolving standards of decency and popular tastes, the role of the government and courts in protecting and limiting free speech, and the history of "self-regulation" by segments of the culture industry.



DYSTOPIA:

Cautionary Tales of a Nightmarish Future

Instructor: Tyrone Shaw

As opposed to the utopian vision of a more perfect world, dystopian literature and film depict the worst of all possible worlds. Probing basic questions of human nature and society, they reveal anxieties that remain chillingly applicable today. In this course, we will explore such issues as the self, alienation, freedom, complicity, citizenship, love, faith, sex, technology and happiness through a variety of novels and films.



Globalize It!

Instructor: Henrique Cezar

Do you know how long it takes to make the shoes you are wearing? Do you have an idea how many countries are involved in the process of making your t-shirt?

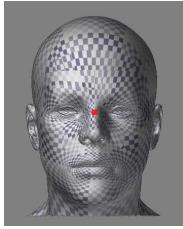
This FYS will explain that, and other important concepts involved in producing and trading in a global world. Concepts such as globalization, international trade and cultural differences will be explored in this course.

Students taking this FYS will go on a day trip to Montreal.



iMe: Reinventing Yourself in the Digital Age

Instructor: Sean Clute



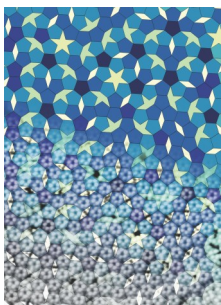
Have you ever uploaded a photo to Facebook, viewed cats from around the world on Youtube, or conquered a video game with online team-mates? Digital technology is making it easier than ever to express yourself and communicate on a global scale. With the advent of virtual

realities like Second Life, you can reach beyond globalism and enter the realm of total imagination. With all of these exciting changes, how do you navigate this new world? In this seminar we will explore technology's role in our lives. Through an interdisciplinary approach we will examine science, art and literature's take on topics including Web 2.0, cybernetics, and virtual reality. We will look at how these topics have influenced robotics, viral videos and most importantly, you.

Dreams, Freedom, and Wonder

Instructor: Russ Weis

You're not like my other teachers, Professor Tripp. You're not like my other students, James. With that exchange, the two main characters of the film "Wonder Boys" begin a relationship that leads each of them to discover parts of themselves they never really knew existed. This course hopes to do the same for you. You will view, discuss, and then write about a number of engaging American films from the past quarter century, each of which deals with the themes of writing, dreaming, and discovering one's truest self. Along the way, your horizons will broaden, your insights will multiply, your thinking will expand, and your critical reading and writing skills will improve. Guest speakers from the worlds of film and literature will enhance the classroom experience, as will field trips to an arts cinema and a local film festival.



Mathematical Puzzles

Through History

Instructor: Greg Petrics

What is the essence of mathematics? To a large extent, math is not about "numbers" at all. Mathematics is a discipline about thinking. It is an art form that has a rich history stretching literally

thousands of years; a history not only of solving puzzles, but of deciding which puzzles were worth the attention of the many scholars who attempted to solve them. A historical study of mathematics can be viewed, in part, as a study of an intellectual development of the human mind. This course seeks to examine some of the greatest "puzzles" of mathematics while putting them into a historical context. We will study some of the greatest ideas put forth by the human mind, without getting bogged down (too much) with arithmetical detail.

Songwriting for Beginners:

Finding Your Inner Dylan

Instructor: Steve Blair

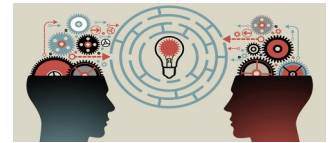
This course will give you a pathway to gain the ability to write original songs of various types. A wide spectrum of topics will include fundamental aspects of music, basics in writing skills, and a historical perspective on successful songwriters from the distant past to today. An extensive use of YouTube will allow you to observe, listen, and analyze songs directly performed by master songwriters. You will write and perform at least three complete songs during the semester, along with many exercises during the process. Each song will be recorded, and at the end of the semester, a CD recording will be produced. There will be a final performance of each student's best works.



Critical Thinking in an Age of Media Confusion

Instructor: Richard Shanley

This seminar will explore the various ways people think and learn, and provide opportunities to examine your own learning styles, as well as develop an understanding of how others think and learn. Are you a visual learner, an auditory learner, a hands on learner, or something else? How can you maximize your learning strengths, while building up your weaker areas, to get the most out of your college experience? What does it mean to think critically? How can your thinking style help or hinder your success in life? What do you need to know to make the best possible decisions? These are some of the questions we will explore, as you learn techniques and strategies to become a better thinker and learner - skills that will apply to your college classes, as well as your life.



A Call to Action

Instructor: Gregory Stefanski

In a world that continues to grow in size and complexity, the challenges that face society can seem overwhelming and insurmountable. Although we often leave problem-solving to elected officials and larger social systems, some of the most important and meaningful responses come from the community level. Using Johnson State's campus, Detroit, and other sites as examples, this course gives students an opportunity to examine how they define community, to discover which communities they are part of (i.e. hometown, residence hall, interest

groups, clubs, social media venues, etc.) and to explore how communities can affect social change. Throughout the semester students will participate in community-building initiatives with local non-profits, culminating with the creation and implementation of an original community building project.

