Herndon Human Rights Initiative Seminar
CRN 15438
Tuesday -- Thursday  11:00 – 12:15
Dr. Sarah Cook, Psychology

Successful social change movements are dynamic and multi-disciplinary. Dynamic because they require strategy to build an organizational structure based on assessing, planning, executing and evaluating to adapt to a shifting social and political environment. Multi-disciplinary as they utilize traditional and new media, rhetoric, music, visual and performing arts as tools to move hearts and minds. This seminar explores how everyday folks use both artist expression and critical thinking to advance and sustain social change movements. Using the content and learnings of the course, students will shape their own multi-disciplinary social change movement that is relevant in today’s dissonant society. The course will explore 50 years of social movements in the United States

1960  Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee’s (SNCC) leadership styles, music and self-expression
1970  Black Power Movement – strategies, rhetoric and visual arts
1980  Women’s Reproductive Justice Movement – organizing principles, mind, body and spiritual expression
2000  Child Sexual Exploitation – multi-ethnic movement building, story-telling, and media arts
2017  Immigration Rights – social media campaigns, artistic expressions

Drug Use and Abuse: A Worldview
CRN 14371
Friday 9:00 – 11:30
Dr. Jan Ligon, Social Work

This course will explore drug use and abuse as a complex national and international issue. It will examine the comprehensive systemic set of conditions that have social, legal, economic, political, moral, and national security implications. It will analyze how drug use and abuse intersects every aspect of modern life and as such, must be understood and approached from an interdisciplinary perspective. Appreciating the full national and international dimension of drug use and abuse will enhance students’ role as informed citizens.

Civic Engagement and Writing for Social Change
CRN 19635
Thursday  9:00 – 11:30
Dr. Ashley Holmes, English

In this interdisciplinary seminar, students will discuss and debate what it means to be an academic citizen and what civic responsibilities we have as educated members of our local and global communities. In particular, students will learn strategies for how to use writing and rhetorical persuasion to move toward social change on public issues. This course offering will coincide with the state of Georgia’s 2018 General Assembly legislative session, and students will use the majority of the course to research and track bills that are being debated and voted on during the legislative session. Through a mix of academic research and public/civic writing assignments, students will write for different audiences (e.g., state representatives, local citizens, researchers, peers, family members) and purposes (e.g., to inform, to persuade, to call to action), and they will write in genres ranging from traditional business letters and editorials to blog posts and social media formats. Several course sessions will be organized around group visits to the General Assembly (located just up the street from Georgia State University) for students to watch legislative sessions and to meet with their representatives in person to discuss the bills they are following. While the emphasis of this course will be the public and civic duties we have as academic citizens, students will also acquire and hone verbal and written communication skills that will be useful to them in their professional lives beyond the university.
It Takes a Village to Train a Scientist
CRN 19635
Thursday  1:00 – 3:30
Dr. Natalie King, Science Education

This interdisciplinary honors seminar will introduce undergraduate scholars to programs and organizations at Georgia State University and the greater Atlanta area who are committed to youth education in formal and informal settings. Scholars will network within their communities and develop action plans for how different entities can collaborate to provide comprehensive experiences for K-12 students. Scholars will also explore how schools, businesses, and institutions of higher education can work with parents to effectively prepare their children to be productive and informed citizens in society. This experiential learning seminar will engage scholars in field trips, guest speaker presentations, readings, reflections, and service learning projects to develop authentic community-based partnerships that can effectively prepare the next generation of scientists and scientifically literate citizens.

Seventies Feminist Art in the United States; or, Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?
CRN 21995
Monday – Wednesday 12:00 – 1:15
Dr. Susan Richmond, Art History

In conjunction with Georgia State University's “YEAR OF THE ARTS” celebration, this seminar serves as an introduction to U.S. feminist art of the 1970s. After an initial introduction to the key terms, we will spend several weeks on Judy Chicago's iconic art installation, The Dinner Party, and the circumstances informing its making and reception. Now on permanent display at the Brooklyn Museum, Chicago’s multi-media project was conceived during the height of second-wave feminism as a celebration of female unity and achievement. It has been both praised and denounced since its debut in 1979 and, as such, provides a lens through which to consider the history and impact of seventies feminist art more broadly. In the second half of the semester, we will consider additional artists and artworks in depth, using them to assess the ways in which female artists also used art to explore the politics of sexual, racial, and class identities. Our readings will consist of interviews, contemporaneous accounts, and art historical assessments.

This course does not require prior art historical or women, gender, and sexuality studies coursework, but I do expect students to bring an open mind to the discussion of challenging art. Weekly seminar discussions will be supplemented with required attendance at artists’ talks.

Polarized Democracies Around the World
CRN 21994
Tuesday  1:00 – 3:30
Dr. Jennifer McCoy, Political Science

This course studies the causes, consequences, and solutions to severely divided or polarized democracies around the world. It draws on political science and psychology to understand how democratic societies can move from pluralism (multiple groups with different interests and identities) to polarization. In deeply polarized societies, citizens divide into two camps in which the “Other” is perceived in such negative and threatening terms that a normal political adversary is transformed into an enemy to be vanquished.

We will study causes of polarization from Political Science that include big-picture structural conditions like inequality and institutional factors such as constitutional design and electoral rules. From moral, social and political Psychology, we learn how people form in-groups and out-groups, the role of moral values, and what leads individuals to accept false information or reject factual information. We look at the role of empathy and community interventions, as well as changes in political rules and dialogue practices to search for solutions to deep polarization.

Students will learn from and participate in an international project on Political and Societal Polarization led by the professor. We will read case studies of individual countries prepared by an international team of scholars, and research other cases. Students will use existing international surveys to develop indicators and identify patterns of polarization over time for their chosen country of research. Finally, students will help design and run an experimental survey to test theories of communication and information in the formation of in-groups and out-groups, running the experiments with other GSU students through the GSU Political Science Research Lab (SONA).