



## Honors 1000 Seminar Past Course Descriptions (*one credit hour*)

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### **Schools in the City: Urban Teaching and Learning**

Dr. Caroline Sullivan, Professor of Middle-Secondary and Instructional Technology

This course focuses on the examination of the historical and contemporary understandings of urban education and the analysis of critical sociocultural and policy-related factors in conjunction with teaching and learning in urban contexts. The student will undertake an interdisciplinary approach to defining, analyzing, and evaluating topics relevant to urban school systems and its students, teachers, and community members. Atlanta and other large cities (Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, etc.) serve as examples; special attention will be paid to the local context. Students will select a topic related to Urban Education (such as health issues, nutrition, high stakes testing, etc.) and create an annotated bibliography, and will receive guided instruction and support on library use/searching for and selecting material/as well as in the writing of the bibliography.

### **Product Safety: Legal, Ethical and Economic Issues**

Dr. Susan L. Willey, Professor of Risk Management and Insurance

Product liability lawsuits cost companies millions of dollars in litigation expenses, settlements, and awards to consumers injured by defective products, but do they make us any safer? Are increased expenditures for product development and testing to achieve higher levels of safety necessarily desirable, economically efficient, and ultimately in the consumer's best interest? Or do they stifle innovation and lead some companies to cease production altogether? Are there some "unavoidably unsafe" products whose benefits outweigh their risks? Have tort reform initiatives such as limits on non-economic damages and punitive damages been effective in reducing the number of frivolous lawsuits or, conversely, have they limited manufacturer accountability for injuries caused by their defective products? To help answer these questions, students will examine several classic product liability cases – the Ford Pinto, McDonald's "hot coffee," the Tylenol tampering incident, and the class action suits against Merck over Vioxx – from legal, ethical and economic perspectives. Each student will choose a recent defective product example to research via Lexis/Nexis, Factiva, and other databases, and will write a three to five page paper analyzing the legal, ethical and economic issues in their case study and present their paper to the seminar.

### **Communication in the University, in the Professions, and in Life**

Dr. Michael Bruner, Professor of Communication

This seminar will introduce students to the field of Communication and the sub-field of rhetoric as well as research in public speaking and persuasion. Students will receive weekly handouts on public speaking, argumentation, debate, journalism and mass media studies, new media studies, and rhetorical studies, and will write a multi-draft five page paper on a topic of their choosing from among the class topics, or a five page paper applying concepts from class to any student group or community activity in which they are engaged. Students will explore goal-setting and how different goals and careers relate to the discipline of Communication, and how the strongest possible writing and speaking skills are critical for future career success.

## Mapping Atlanta: Citizen Science, Community Mapping, and Geospatial Storytelling

Dr. Timothy Hawthorne, Professor of Geosciences & Dr. Brennan Collins, Professor of English

This interdisciplinary seminar uses Atlanta-based projects to introduce undergraduate students to emerging mapping technologies that have potential applications across many fields, and combines academic and professional knowledge with real-world learning outside of the formal classroom setting in collaboration with community members in nearby Atlanta neighborhoods. Students will explore urban research questions through projects involving citizen science, community mapping, and geospatial storytelling. The emphasis in this course will be on fieldwork opportunities where students can explore multiple case studies of Community Geography and Geographic Information Systems, while critiquing the opportunities for and challenges to such community-based ventures. Students will spend the majority of their time in the field, working with local communities to map and understand urban issues. Techniques will include learning how to: frame a community-based research question; engage in community-based data collection with GPS, GIS and sketch mapping; visualize and analyze geographic datasets collected with communities, and present such results in both academic and non-academic formats.

## What is a Good Political Leader?

Dr. Mario Feit, Professor of Political Science

Political thinkers have been arguing about how to construct an ideal political community since ancient Greece. While it is clear that good institutions contribute to good governance, the character of political leaders makes a key difference. What makes for good political leaders? What character traits do they possess? What should be their moral compass? This seminar will examine a wide range of Western political thinkers ranging from Plato to Martin Luther King, Jr. While not all of the readings favor democratic leadership, the hope is that they can nevertheless teach us something about the kinds of leaders we should turn to in democratic politics. Readings will include Sophocles' *Antigone*, Plato's *Republic*, Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies*, Machiavelli's *Prince*, W.E.B. DuBois's *Souls of Black Folk*, as well as DuBois's essay on "The Talented Tenth," and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham City Jail." All course readings will be available for free – either from online sources or from library reserves. Two essay exams considering competing views on political leadership discussed in the seminar will be required, and perhaps a visit to either the King Center or the Carter Center might substitute for one class meeting.

## Literature and Architecture: "The House of Fiction"

Dr. Jody Brooks, Professor of English

Writer Henry James, in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, referred to point of view and structure as "the house of fiction" which has "not one window, but a million." Architect Christopher Alexander, in the introduction to *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, describes architectural design elements as words which can be combined to form an "infinite variety of sentences." Words are the building blocks of literature; building blocks are the words of architecture. This seminar will explore connections between architecture and literature and the ways in which similar craft theories manifest themselves through the tangible and the intangible. Beginning with Aristotle's *Poetics* alongside the Acropolis of Athens, and ending with the postmodern play of Italo Calvino and Frank Gehry, the course will examine 18<sup>th</sup> century Gothic Revival next to the horror and awe of Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Haiku, the Alhambra, Popul Vuh, Naguib Mafouz – all will be evaluated, along futuristic Googie design next to 1950s science fiction. Students will be asked to research, create handouts, and present information on one architect and one writer, to create an artistic collage which blends a poem with the architectural elements of its day, and to complete a short paper explaining the ways in which they went about capturing their blend of ideas in a cohesive whole.

## **Intergenerational Relationships**

Dr. Jaynette L. Atkinson, Professor of Communications

Society is heavily age-segregated whether in academic, sport, religious, or other environments – yet intergenerational relationships do exist among family and non-family members. This course will emphasize the intergenerational research from communication, gerontology, sociology, and psychology. Specifically, the seminar will introduce students to perceptions of age groups (e.g., stereotypes of young, middle-aged, and older adults), explore familial relationships (parent-child, grandparent-grandchild), explore non-familial relationships (i.e., voluntary relationships such as spouses and in-laws, friends), and media portrayals of intergenerational relationships. Most of the readings for the course will be academic journal articles, which students will summarize and discuss. Students will also be required to create an annotated bibliography or a literature review, and keep a “personal response” journal.

## **US Identity and World Issues in Graphic Narratives**

Dr. Hector D. Fernandez, Professor of Modern and Classical Languages

This seminar will introduce students to issues of national identity in the overall context of world politics. In the present century, as the US faces great challenges to its role as a world power, it is crucial that our students explore their political and economic context with an open mind, gaining a better grasp of world issues. Through the analysis of seven contemporary graphic novels, students will be exposed to and learn basic notions of theory of identity, and develop a critical view of US nationality and its relation to political issues at the other end of the world. Along the way, students will improve the skills necessary to engage information with a critical disposition and recognize the potential of these abilities in their daily context. On a bi-weekly basis, students will alternate class discussion of a civilization with a corresponding graphic novel. In all, the graphic novels selected are oriented towards the problematization of nationality at different stages of its articulation, seeking to offer students a more revealing portrayal of the interaction between nation (the imagined community) and state (the physical consequence of the idea of nation).

## **Genetics and Ancestry**

Dr. Peter Roberts, Archivist and Professor, University Library

This seminar will introduce students to the fundamentals of human DNA inheritance (mtDNA, autosomal DNA, X and Y chromosomes), and will demonstrate how that information is used by: genealogists to find family connections, anthropologists to map historical migration patterns and ancient origins, physicians to identify inherited diseases; and forensic scientists to help identify remains. Students may volunteer to take a Y chromosome, autosomal DNA, or mtDNA test at the start of the seminar, and the results should be ready by week eight. This class will provide students with a thorough understanding of how to conduct ancestral research (historical, genealogical, and genetic) using library and archival resources. Weekly reflections and a class presentation will determine 50% of the students' grades, respectively.

## **Earth's Processes and Sustainability**

Dr. Paulo J. Hidalgo, Professor of Geosciences

Earth's processes broadly defined, i.e., how the earth works in its entirety, encompasses all human knowledge. This course will be limited to the processes of the solid earth and their effects on its atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere (Earth's spheres). For the purpose of this course “sustainability” is defined broadly as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This course will generate an understanding of sustainability, plate tectonics, volcanic exhalation, weathering processes including biodegradation, sedimentary processes, origin of fossil fuels, and sudden disruption of Earth's processes.

## **Inflammatory Diseases for Modern Society**

Dr. Yuan Liu, Professor of Biology

The seminar covers the mechanisms, symptom and current research of major modern diseases, including acute and chronic inflammation, key bacterial and viral infections and host responses, cancer (initiation and progression), type I and II diabetes, obesity and insulin resistance, atherosclerosis and other cardiovascular problems (heart attack and stroke), rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), inflammatory lung/kidney diseases, sepsis, and organ transplantation research. Strategies of treatment will also be addressed. Students will research literature of each disease, options of current treatment, and ideas of new therapeutic strategies, and prepare a short writing assignment discussing one designated disease, mechanism of etiology, and improved treatments.

## **Spanish in the United States**

Dr. Carmen Schlig, Professor of Modern and Classical Languages

This course will examine the subject of Spanish spoken in the United States from a linguistic, sociological, historical and political perspective. The course aims to heighten language awareness of diverse geographical and social Spanish dialects in this country. The students will have the opportunity to critically read texts that analyze the extralinguistic variables that motivate linguistic change in a bilingual environment. Topics include bilingualism, pidginization and creolization, the so-called "Spanglish," diglossia, language loyalty, language affiliation, and attitudes toward heritage speakers of Spanish. Students will work on several papers that will research a specific community, specific linguistic features within the Atlanta Hispanic community, or social categories such as gender, race, class, identity and their influence in the perception of Spanish and its speakers. No knowledge of Spanish is required; the literature is written in English, and the professor will provide translations as needed.

## **What is Science, Really?**

Dr. Nadine Kabengi, Professor of Geosciences

A great scientist once said "Science is a way of trying not to fool yourself." This seminar will teach you how to utilize scientific thinking so you won't be fooled. It will also teach you what science is and is not, how it works, how scientists operate individually and collectively and how society simultaneously influences and reacts to science. Ultimately students will 1) learn what makes science different from other ways of knowing, including philosophy or religion; 2) distinguish between genuine science and pseudoscience; and 3) understand how science affects their lives and how ordinary people use science every day.

The seminar will include guided discussions and activities about: what does it mean to learn science (bloom taxonomy); the importance of being good observers (the basketball video); why guessing is not enough and data collection is important (stereotypes); pseudosciences and their general widespread (Apollo hoax, homeopathy, astrology and psychics); as well as other assigned readings and videos about specific situations in which science is used to solve societal issues (drug trials and the FDA) and other general misconceptions about science and its real day-to-day meaning. Additionally, we will host two scientists and chat with them about how they do their science. Each student will be required to take an in-class assessment questionnaire at the beginning and end of the seminar and write a one page final essay on a class related topic.

## **Global Literature in English: The Politics of Fear**

Dr. Melissa McLeod, Professor of English

This seminar will explore the role of politics and ideology in creating fear in a citizenry or in individuals through the study of global literature in English (mostly Anglo-Indian and Anglo-African). While the seminar will examine ideology and fear through fiction, this focus will introduce students to questions posed in other disciplines such as political science, history, psychology, and sociology. Readings will include works from J.M. Coetzee, Leila Aboulela, Marjane Satrapi, Salman Rushdie, and Vikram Chandra, as well as a selection of critical and periodical articles on current world events. Students will conduct micro-research assignments that ask them to identify pivotal historical events in various regions or countries that the seminar focuses on, and to find two periodical articles, two peer-reviewed articles, and two books on topics of their choice. Library instruction, a library tour, and guest speakers from other disciplines will also be included.

## **How do People Learn?**

Dr. Karen Zabucky, Professor of Education

This seminar will explore how people learn in a variety of real world contexts. Each week or two we will examine a unique aspect of learning (from simple to complex), focus on how a variety of factors can impede learning, and discuss research findings that clearly demonstrate how learning can be improved. Readings will consist largely of articles and chapters that help to highlight learning from the unique perspective of one or more psychologists. Readings will be one component of many that will allow different psychologists' unique perspectives to be heard. Students will also learn how to use appropriate databases (through library instruction) to examine a learning topic of their interest, and will explore this topic in depth.

## **Investing for the Long Run**

Dr. Craig Ruff, Professor of Finance

The U.S. is facing a retirement crisis. Very large segments of the U.S. population nearing retirement age have not saved the necessary wealth to ensure a reasonable standard of living in retirement. The young have a chance not to repeat the mistakes of their elders. This course will look at the key elements of investing – such as the distinctions between stocks and bonds – with an eye toward building the wealth needed for a comfortable retirement. The course is not about “picking stocks” or “beating the market.” Instead, it is about putting sufficient money aside (and the barriers to doing so) in investments that over the long-haul should ensure that one’s retirement years are comfortable. Throughout the course, the various roles that employers, government, and individuals play in ensuring a comfortable retirement will be discussed and evaluated. Students will examine research on the current state of retirement wealth in the US and the major factors that led us there. Grading will be split between class participation and completion of a project based on the student’s use of Mint.com, a sophisticated, free on-line money and expense management system.

This course will look at:

- Academic research on the current state of retirement wealth in the U.S. and the major factors that led us there
- Simple future value of money mathematics
- Academic and practitioner research on the role of asset allocation in determining retirement wealth
- The key points: Stocks versus bonds, mutual funds, 401(k) plans, taxable accounts
- Making the Big Decisions

## **Drug Use and Abuse**

Dr. Jan Ligon, Professor of Social Work

Following an historical overview of substance use, this seminar will look at methods of research that are used to generate our knowledge base about international drug trends, supply, demand, treatment, economics, crime and policy. We will also look closely at the relationship between the criminal justice system and the distribution and use of drugs. Guest speakers will cover such topics as treatment and recovery, and students will have the opportunity to visit a treatment program. Students will then select a specific topic of interest, investigate the scholarly literature on each topic, and prepare and present a one-page summary of findings.

## **The Future of Learning**

Dr. Jaclyn Werner, Science Librarian & Dr. Denise Dimsdale, Education Librarian

The world of higher education is in a state of change. Online learning, gamification, and Massive Open Online Courses are becoming more popular, and some are saying that this is the future of education. Is the way we learn changing as well? Students will complete two types of assignments: weekly discussion questions, and a final project requiring students to create a “digital artifact” such as a video, ebook, Prezi presentation, or any other creative and multimodal artifact. Students will have the option of taking an outside MOOC for at least a week and reporting on their experiences. Guest speakers will include education professors, experts on open access and copyright, and professors who have taught MOOCs.

## **Choosing the Right Career**

Dr. Peter Swanson, Professor of Modern and Classical Languages

The selection of a college major and professional career can be stressful to undergraduates; however, it does not have to be a source of anxiety. As Super advises adolescents, “[Y]ou don’t need to know now what you should be when you grow up. What you need to know now is what you need to do so that as each new kind of decision has to be made you will be ready for it” (Freeman, 1993). Research supports the notion that people make successive approximations toward occupational selection, and that personal and environmental characteristics lead to satisfying career decisions, involvement, and achievement. This seminar will examine the relationship between one’s occupational interests and the workplace, one’s sense of self-efficacy, and how different variables such as gender, age, and personality are related to career selection and occupational satisfaction. Students will be assessed by self-administering research instruments and interpreting results with respect to the seminar’s goals of self-examination of vocational aspirations, vocational interests, self-efficacy, and even humor as well as other constructs in order to help them make successive approximations toward career happiness. Students will conduct individual research on vocational interests and will participate in an occupational field experience. Additionally, students will have first-hand experience in the research process as they work closely with the instructor on a national study of language teachers.

## **Online Career Management: Get Real to Get a Job**

Jan Robin Costello, Instructor, Business Communications Program, Department of Marketing

Linda Willis, Instructor, Business Communications Program, Department of Marketing

This course will guide students in the professional use of social media to get jobs and advance in their careers. It will include hands-on use of professional networking sites. Students will develop tools for evaluating which site is best for their career purposes. They will explore ways to use the site to enhance their professional brand. They will learn how to transition from digital networking to face-to-face relationships.