Fall 2020 Bridge Course Descriptions

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| **CORE** |
| STEP 1101-01MWF 12:00-12:50CRN 16240Alyssa Canepa | **Difficult Conversations: An RPG Adventure**Do you ever wish you had the words: to convince someone, or to talk through a conflict with dignity? Have you struggled to broach a topic? Poet-activist Audre Lorde insists, “Your silence will not protect you...” But how do you know when to boldly speak up and when to stay quiet? Is dialogue always possible? This class is about difficult, important conversations: historic and current, interpersonal and global. In a history role playing game, students will have the opportunity to try on different styles of communication without fear of judgment. In research, students will explore strategies people have used to connect across differences, drawing on fields ranging from communication to psychology to international studies. We’ll build conversation skills as we practice changing history, and consider what dialogue can do to change the future. |
| STEP 1101-02MWF 12:00-12:50CRN 16241Alyssa Konesko | **Academic and Career Success**Why do you want to go to college? What do you want to do with your life? What can you do now to help you achieve your dreams? If you find yourself asking or being asked questions like this, this course is for you! This course is designed to prepare you for a new way of thinking and learning, using critical thinking and research skills that you will need throughout your college experience. It is also designed to help you learn about yourself through critical reflection so you can understand your role as a college student. In addition, the course is designed to expose you to success strategies that can greatly benefit you in college. |
| STEP 1101-03MWF 11:00-11:50CRN 16242Joyce Stewart | **What is Adulthood?**What does it mean to be "grown up"? What does it mean to be an adult today? This class asks students to critically examine what it means to be an adult in the 21st century in America (and beyond). This course will ask the following questions: How is adulthood marked and/or celebrated? What defines adulthood and how might these definitions differ when one considers gender, race, sexuality, socioeconomic status, etc.? Currently, young people are often accused of having an extended adolescence. The reasons for this prolonged process of maturation is often linked to parental influence, affluence, rising cost of college tuition, the decline in service-based jobs, etc. Perhaps those facing adulthood are reshaping the very definition of what it means to be “grown up” in innovative and meaningful ways. Assignments for this course include paired presentations, an archival multi-modal project, several short reflections papers and an analysis project. |
| STEP 1101-04MWF 11:00-11:50CRN 16243Shelby Hutson | **The Stories We Tell: Exploring How Stories Shape our Economic Lives**Have you ever considered a story to be infectious? Have you thought of a narrative as a parasite of your subconscious? In this course, we will explore how stories form our psyches, and in turn, our world. From Bitcoin to the Great Recession, let’s learn more about how our economy is not just based on the objectivity of numbers, but also the subjectivity of humanity’s most base mode: storytelling. Together we will read, listen to, and watch a diverse selection of media including: Narrative Economics, by Robert Shiller, to Adam McKay’s film, The Big Short. Our semester will culminate in a creative final research project that will allow you to explore video and audio editing. Consider this course especially if you are planning to major in: Business, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, or Exploratory Studies. |
| STEP 1101-05MWF 9:00-9:50CRN 16244Allison Gernant | **America in 1913 and America Today**Just what was America like, in 1913? What were the biggest social problems of the day, and which social problems still haunt us today? In this class, students will play a historically based role-playing game (RPG) that puts them in the places of individuals in 1913. Throughout the semester, we will practice critical thinking, use active discussions, and conduct research to achieve our First Year Seminar learning outcomes that will help you succeed in college, and throughout your life. We will explore past and present social problems in America, such as women’s roles, workers’ rights, and African American and immigrant issues. If you have interest in American culture, history, role-playing games (RPGs), sociology, women’s studies, or political science, this class is for you. |
| STEP 1101-06MWF 9:00-9:50CRN 16245Catherine Johnson | **What Are you Working For?: Examining Popular Ideas About College and Professional Work**What are your long term goals? How do the things you do each day build toward those goals? Messages about work and success are all around us, so why is it hard for so many people to answer the question, "What are you working for?" In this class, we will test common assumptions about work against credible, accurate, and reliable sources in order to better understand how principles about work and success operate in our lives. We will use critical reading, discussion, and a multi-week research project to examine these questions and build useful skills for the rest of your time at UW and beyond. Students who are career-focused or undecided about a major could get a lot out of this class. |
| STEP 1101-07MWF 10:00-10:50CRN 16246Hosanna Krienke | **It's Just a Movie: Inspecting the Impact of Film and Popular Culture on Life and Society**Very often, people watch TV and movies to enjoy down time or to relax at the end of the day, but what if the things we do in our "down time" actually have profound impact on how our lives and society are shaped? In "It's Just a Movie," we will challenge common ideas about the ways that film and other pop culture artifacts work in our world by reading and discussing credible, accurate, and reliable sources on the topic. Each student will also develop a self-directed research project on the important roles that pop culture can play. If you are interested in film or have thought about majoring in English, History, Sociology, Psychology, or related fields, please consider "It's Just a Movie." |
| STEP 1101-08MWF 10:00-10:50CRN 16247Seth Swanner | **Rise of the Antihero**More and more often, modern storytellers are shifting their attention away from those we consider to be the “good guys” and focusing on the “bad guys,” turning them from simple villains into the heroes of their own dark narratives. Antiheroes like Breaking Bad’s Walter White, Game of Throne’s Sandor Clegane, and rapper/producer Kanye West have become fixtures of American pop culture consciousness. As an audience, what attracts us to these characters? How do their stories differ from those of their traditionally heroic counterparts? And what does the recent proliferation of antihero stories have to say about the fabric of American culture? In this class, we will use readings, films, discussions, self-directed research, and creative work to investigate these questions and to gain a better understanding of the villains among us. |
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| **SEMINAR** |
| STEP 1101-09TR 9:35-10:50CRN 16248Carl Mehta | **Sports and Society**How does the 1969 Wyoming Cowboys football team connect to the protests made by today's athletes? How do college and professional athletics reflect the social issues we see on a national and global level? How do sports impact our culture and how does our culture impact sports? This course will answer these questions and examine some of the different ways that sports and society influence one another. In this course, students will rely on critical reading and college-level research in order to form innovative viewpoints about sports while developing college skills that will help them succeed at the University of Wyoming and beyond. |
| STEP 1101-10MWF 12:00-12:50CRN 16249Hosanna Krienke | **It's Just a Movie: Inspecting the Impact of Film and Popular Culture on Life and Society**Very often, people watch TV and movies to enjoy down time or to relax at the end of the day, but what if the things we do in our "down time" actually have profound impact on how our lives and society are shaped? In "It's Just a Movie," we will challenge common ideas about the ways that film and other pop culture artifacts work in our world by reading and discussing credible, accurate, and reliable sources on the topic. Each student will also develop a self-directed research project on the important roles that pop culture can play. If you are interested in film or have thought about majoring in English, History, Sociology, Psychology, or related fields, please consider "It's Just a Movie." |
| STEP 1101-11MWF 12:00-12:50CRN 16250Mollie Hand | **Language of Food**How does culture influence eating habits? What can the language used in advertising, reviews, and menus tell us about the intended consumer? Why do macaroni and macaroons sound so alike but have such different ingredients? This hands-on class blends topics of food studies and linguistics to explore the language of food. Learn how and why food both unites and divides individuals. Through studies of word origins, cultures, and food systems, you will gain diverse perspectives on culinary habits. With recipe trials, international conversation partners, collaborative group work, and a class-sponsored fundraiser, the focus is on learning through experience. The class serves up critical thinking, cultural & global literacy and community outreach in a way that appeals to majors in psychology, business, languages, family & consumer sciences, and health. |
| STEP 1101-12MWF 1:10-2:00CRN 16251Catherine Johnson | **What Is Creativity?**Forbes magazine recently declared creativity “the skill of the future.” But what exactly is creativity? Where does creative inspiration come from? Are only certain people born with creative “genius”? Or is it a skill that can be learned and developed like any other? In this class we will explore answers to these questions and test common cultural assumptions about who can be creative and what that means. We will use texts from a variety of genres (film, comics, podcasts, essays, visual arts, etc.), discussion, collaborative presentations, and a self-directed research project to investigate this topic, practice critical thinking, and build useful skills for your life inside and outside of the UW classroom. Students who are considering a career in the arts or sciences—or simply want to bring more creative energy to any part of their life!—are encouraged to register. |
| STEP 1101-13MWF 11:00-11:50CRN 16252Kirk Thiemann | **Finding Your Purpose: Connecting Purpose to the Academic Journey**What cause(s) do you believe in? What do you want to give to the world? What is most important to you in life? Overall, what is your purpose in life? This course helps students answer these questions and more. Students of any major, or even without a major, will find ways to connect their sense of purpose to their life, career, and academics. Some of the major assignments in the course require that students examine research, theoretical articles, media sources, and other texts on finding life purpose, write reflections to clarify their purpose, work in groups in a debate format to analyze information and conclusions, and finalize the semester with a paper that reflects their current beliefs on their life, career, and academic direction. |
| STEP 1101-14TR 9:35-10:50CRN 16253Karen Ventura-Kalen | **It's Just a Movie: Inspecting the Impact of Film and Popular Culture on Life and Society**Very often, people watch TV and movies to enjoy down time or to relax at the end of the day, but what if the things we do in our "down time" actually have profound impact on how our lives and society are shaped? In "It's Just a Movie," we will challenge common ideas about the ways that film and other pop culture artifacts work in our world by reading and discussing credible, accurate, and reliable sources on the topic. Each student will also develop a self-directed research project on the important roles that pop culture can play. If you are interested in film or have thought about majoring in English, History, Sociology, Psychology, or related fields, please consider "It's Just a Movie." |
| STEP 1101-15MWF 10:00-10:50CRN 16254Catherine Johnson | **What Are you Working For?: Examining Popular Ideas About College and Professional Work**What are your long term goals? How do the things you do each day build toward those goals? Messages about work and success are all around us, so why is it hard for so many people to answer the question, "What are you working for?" In this class, we will test common assumptions about work against credible, accurate, and reliable sources in order to better understand how principles about work and success operate in our lives. We will use critical reading, discussion, and a multi-week research project to examine these questions and build useful skills for the rest of your time at UW and beyond. Students who are career-focused or undecided about a major could get a lot out of this class. |
| STEP 1101-16TR 1:20-2:35CRN 16255Jason Thompson | **Exploring Video Games and Theory**We live within a global video game culture, one in which AAA titles can be previewed for free, downloaded to our accounts, and literally played in perpetual game spaces. In previous years our parents may have bonded over television culture or film culture, but today's global culture--its dominant storytelling force--is video games. Given the pressure of this force, how can we make sense not just of what video games are, but of how they are made, how they are circulated, and how they are consumed? How can modern video games be examined to reveal political, religious, and even educational messages to multiple and overlapping global audiences? How can we as players escape the circular debates within fan communities and instead discover how what we play contributes to what we believe? |
| STEP 1101-17TR 11:00-12:15CRN 16256Jason Thompson | **Exploring Video Games and Theory**We live within a global video game culture, one in which AAA titles can be previewed for free, downloaded to our accounts, and literally played in perpetual game spaces. In previous years our parents may have bonded over television culture or film culture, but today's global culture--its dominant storytelling force--is video games. Given the pressure of this force, how can we make sense not just of what video games are, but of how they are made, how they are circulated, and how they are consumed? How can modern video games be examined to reveal political, religious, and even educational messages to multiple and overlapping global audiences? How can we as players escape the circular debates within fan communities and instead discover how what we play contributes to what we believe? |
| STEP 1101-18MWF 9:00-9:50CRN 16257Alyssa Canepa | **Difficult Conversations: An RPG Adventure**Do you ever wish you had the words: to convince someone, or to talk through a conflict with dignity? Have you struggled to broach a topic? Poet-activist Audre Lorde insists, “Your silence will not protect you...” But how do you know when to boldly speak up and when to stay quiet? Is dialogue always possible? This class is about difficult, important conversations: historic and current, interpersonal and global. In a history role playing game, students will have the opportunity to try on different styles of communication without fear of judgment. In research, students will explore strategies people have used to connect across differences, drawing on fields ranging from communication to psychology to international studies. We’ll build conversation skills as we practice changing history, and consider what dialogue can do to change the future. |
| STEP 1101-19MWF 1:10-2:00CRN 16258Shelby Hutson | **Everyday Activism and Individual Change**Ever wanted to make a change but felt too small? In this class, we will study how to transform the world around you, even if all you have access to is an iPhone and a laptop. Whatever your concern is – labor laws, water rights, equal workplace pay, nuclear energy, food security, political financing, university policy – you can find a place for it in Everyday Activism and Individual Change. The course will begin with a survey of persuasive methods, then transition into units focusing on influential speech, such as Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream,” composition, such as successful letters to senators, and multimedia art, such as Patagonia’s documentary Damnation. Students will begin each unit by analyzing an example of activism and conclude the unit by producing their own activist piece in line with the unit’s genre. This class will be meaningful to anyone who has a cause to which they would like to contribute. |
| STEP 1101-20TR 9:35-10:50CRN 16259Seth Swanner | **Dark and Stormy**The horror genre has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years, and amidst this spooky Renaissance, psychologists, anthropologists, and literary critics are working to explain the various ways in which we frighten ourselves. Alongside these researchers, students in this course will analyze horror literature, scary movies, and even amateur online copypastas to explore the functions—biological, psychological, and cultural—of fear. We will trace the history of American horror, beginning in 1798 with the very first American horror novel, leading through the career of the gothic master Edgar Allan Poe, and ending with Shirley Jackson’s The Haunting of Hill House (as well as its recent Netflix adaptation). In so doing, we will examine how horror reflects or critiques America’s greatest fears in its most anxious moments. After all, the best way to conquer our fears is to face them. |
| STEP 1101-21MWF 1:10-2:00CRN 16260 | Course description coming soon! |
| STEP 1101-22MWF 9:00-9:50CRN 16313Shelby Hutson | **The Stories We Tell: Exploring How Stories Shape our Economic Lives**Have you ever considered a story to be infectious? Have you thought of a narrative as a parasite of your subconscious? In this course, we will explore how stories form our psyches, and in turn, our world. From Bitcoin to the Great Recession, let’s learn more about how our economy is not just based on the objectivity of numbers, but also the subjectivity of humanity’s most base mode: storytelling. Together we will read, listen to, and watch a diverse selection of media including: Narrative Economics, by Robert Shiller, to Adam McKay’s film, The Big Short. Our semester will culminate in a creative final research project that will allow you to explore video and audio editing. Consider this course especially if you are planning to major in: Business, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, or Exploratory Studies. |
| STEP 1101-23TR 11:00-12:!5CRN 16314Megan Candelaria | **Everyday Science and Science Every Day**Science is all around us; prevalent on the news and in social media. However, while science is an essential part of our daily lives, inaccurate and/or incomplete communication of science is also extremely prevalent.  How do we separate fact from fiction? This course will delve into the science of everyday life, both by exploring and experimenting with the science that surrounds us as well as taking a critical look at the science information that inundates us every day. We will look at – and try to verify or debunk – some common science ‘facts’ from social media – for example can you really only stand a broom on its end on February 10th?  We will explore the question of when is it important for us to highly regard the scientific advice of real scientists and medical experts, and perhaps disregard (or be cautious about) the advice of those without expertise. In addition, we will also explore how science can impact our everyday life through our own enlightening experiments and science communication practice. |