Pathway 2: Take A Full-Semester Course

Instead of taking two half-semester mini courses, students may choose to take the full-semester course, **76-101: Interpretation and Argument**.

Please continue reading to learn about the specific course topics, schedules, and faculty information for each of the 76-101 courses being offered this semester.

Full-Semester Course Schedules and Descriptions

76-101 At A Glance

76-101, Interpretation and Argument, is a foundational, inquiry-driven writing course that introduces students to a variety of strategies for making compositional decisions in writing and communication. Within the course, students learn genre-based skills applicable to a variety of different fields. Students use a comparative genre analysis method to learn how to use models to take on new writing tasks, including an academic research proposal and a research article that contributes to an ongoing academic conversation. Faculty who teach 76-101 typically select texts—ranging from scholarly texts, journalism, and film—about an issue so that students can identify interesting questions for their own research projects. Students should expect explicit, research-based instruction, practice, and reflection to build knowledge in controlling their writing processes and writing clear, well-supported, reader-oriented arguments. Because the course emphasizes the real stakes of communicating with readers and listeners, students share with their peers both low- and high-stakes written work within an interactive and collaborative classroom environment.

76-101 Course Topics and Schedule

Instructor Name	Course Topic	Section Number	Days and Timeslots	Course Modality
Julie Pal-Agrawal	***Becoming and Unbecoming Ourselves on Social Media***	A AA BB	MWF 8:00-8:50AM MWF 9:05-9:55AM MWF 10:10-11:00AM	In-Person In-Person In-Person
Ben Williams	***Borders and Bordering Practices***	B	MWF 9:05-9:55AM	In-Person
Meg Feller	***Are We Simply Monstrous?: Medievalism in Mass Culture***	C D II	MWF 10:10-11:00AM MWF 11:15-12:05PM MWF 1:25-2:15PM	In-Person
Courtney Novosat	***Nevertheless Belief Persists: Denialism in Modern America***	EE	MWF 1:25-2:15PM	In-Person
Don Holmes	***Black Social Justice Rhetoric: Past and Futures***	CC DD	MWF 11:15-12:05PM MWF 12:20-1:10PM	In-Person
Nisha Shanmugaraj	***Asian American Experiences and Identities***	E	MWF 12:20-1:10PM	In-Person
Rebecca Wigginton	***Politics and Ideology in the Marvel***	F FF	MWF 1:25-2:15PM MWF 2:30-3:20PM	In-Person
Janine Carlock	***Virtue or Violence: Choosing a Response to Conflict***	G H	MWF 2:30-3:20PM MWF 3:35-4:25PM	In-Person
Craig Stamm	***Video Games and Society***	I HH	MWF 2:30-3:20PM MWF: 4:40-5:30PM	In-Person
Tadd Adcox	***Hoaxes, Fakes, and Con-Artists***	KK NN	TR 3:05-4:25PM TR 4:40-6:00PM	In-Person
Sarah Hancock	***The Brand and Brew of Caffeine Addiction***	K	TR 10:10-11:30AM	In-Person
TBD	***TBD***	L	TR 10:10-11:30AM	In-Person

Megan Heise	***Crossing Borders: Forced Migration and Transnationalism***	LL N	TR 1:25-2:45PM TR 4:40-6:00PM	In-person
Peter Mayshle	***The Rhetoric of Place***	M MM	TR 1:25-2:45PM TR 3:05-4:25PM	In-Person

76-101 Section Course Descriptions

Becoming and Unbecoming Ourselves on Social Media *(Pal-Agrawal: Sections A, AA, BB)*

Social media has become a play space for exploring new identities. Users have reveled in the opportunity to play a seemingly endless array of roles on multiple stages for global audiences. Sherry Turkle talks about the potential of leaving behind a solid, unitary identity and exploring more fluid identities online. For scholars like Annette Markham and Hugo Liu, home pages, avatars, chat rooms, blank webpages, etc. are theatrical spaces where users can try out new identities and therefore invest in their own self-making. Conversely, others like Bernie Hogan and Danah Boyd have claimed that online spaces are not free and in fact maintain sensitivities to social indicators like race, class and gender. Instead of a place of fantasy where people play with multiple roles, people use their social media to craft self-images that are flat, safe and unidimensional. Taking this one step further, theorists like Eli Pariser have argued that our identities are becoming products of a variety of coercive and disciplinary online processes. According to him, we are not expressing ourselves through technological tools. Instead, tools like predictive engines, news filters and algorithms shape us and thereby curtail our opportunities online for self-exploration and growth.

This class seeks to understand the vexed relationship between using the Internet as a place of self-creation, while having to assimilate into existing systems of networked and coded identities. We will answer questions like: Can the Internet propagate genuinely new selves, and to what extent are these selfhoods products of the culture at large? How does the technology we use shape our behavior, and how can the constraints of technology be taken up and reworked by individuals in diverse ways? How are our social media presences wishful imaginings while also contributing to an emerging monoculture? Our class objectives include synthesizing and evaluating a variety of perspectives, organizing persuasive and well-structured arguments and communicating these ideas in clear and effective prose. We will study a variety of genres such as opinion pieces, academic articles, clips from TV series like *Black Mirror,* etc., to craft nuanced arguments on the degrees to which trying to become someone in cyberspace can lead to one's self-assimilation and eventual "un-becoming."

Borders and Bordering Practices *(Williams Section: B)*

Borders are everywhere. The U.S.-Mexico border alone extends over more than two thousand miles, sprawls through twenty-eight U.S. counties, spans across four states, and fissures two nations in a disruptive and imposing way. Some find that borders' material outgrowths, walls and biometric security, are theatrical attempts to maintain border control, while others view these as a sign of declining national sovereignty. Regardless of what they symbolize or show about state power, borders' militarized spaces dramatically impact how people live, work, move, and relate to each other. This course engages with the constructions of borders and bordering practices that affect our lives and movement internationally and in the U.S. Drawing on insights from theorists in critical border studies like Gloria Anzaldua, Wendy Brown, Peter Andreas, and Ayelet Schacher; writers like Valeria Luiselli; and media representations like documentaries, podcasts, and photography, we will engage with the following questions: How do borders constrain the way we understand self and

other? How are notions like native, migrant, and citizen constituted? What does an emancipatory or ethical view of the border look like? We will read arguments about these issues in order to craft an academic research proposal and argument related to the present-day circumstances of borders, migration, and state power.

Are we simply monstrous?: Medievalism in Mass Culture (*Feller: Sections C, D, II*)

Are we becoming more medieval in the way we think? Superstitions abound on the web, as do comparisons between Covid-19 and the Black Death, and increasingly, popular culture reflects a growing interest in depictions of the medieval world. Medievalisms, or how we reach back to the medieval past from another time period, speak to their own cultural moments. For instance, medievalisms of the 1960s differ greatly from the medievalisms found in HBO's "Game of Thrones" of the early 2010s. In recent decades, our medievalisms have become a great deal more monstrous.

This course engages students with academic research genres in the context of readings that invites students to interrogate the function of medievalized media and whether 21st century medievalism tends to produce overly simplistic narratives. Does medievalism make monsters out of anyone who doesn't fit the norm? Does it cast our global cultural imagination into a binary of good versus evil? Primitive versus advanced? After analyzing and synthesizing a variety of texts, students will develop a research question to engage in an academic conversation about the function of medievalism in culture, eventually producing a researched contribution on how medievalism in mass culture reflects a host of cultural and political tensions in today's world. Moreover, as students become more mindful of their rhetorical moves, they will leave this course with composition skills that serve them throughout their professional careers.

Nevertheless Belief Persists: Denialism in Modern America (*Novosat: Section EE)*

In *Proper Studies* (1927) acclaimed novelist and philosopher Aldous Huxley writes "facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored." Though we might easily understand how Huxley's truism easily accounts for scientific facts such as the speed of light or the boiling point of water, we might wonder about the fate of oft-ignored facts like climate change, the certainty that systemic racism persists in the 21st century, or the research verifying that wearing masks reduces the risk of contracting COVID-19. In a historical moment rife with dog-whistle terms like "alternative facts" or "fake news" and specious arguments that ignore evidence, scholars from a range of disciplines have begun to study why we tend to flee from facts that contradict our beliefs and to theorize about how deniers might better negotiate uncomfortable truths and recover fact.

Drawing on debates in cognitive psychology, racial and cultural studies, and contemporary political discourse, this course centrally asks: why are appeals to beliefs that ignore evidence so compelling in an age we like to believe is driven by fact? As we explore this overarching question, we will necessarily engage with arguments of definition (What constitutes a fact?; What makes an argument un/ethical?), of causality (How are so many of us compelled by rhetorics of fear or anger or tribalism?; Has the false dichotomy between reason and emotion become a self-fulfilling prophecy?), and of value (How are we, as a society, adversely affected by cultural narratives tainted by half-truths, lies, and conspiracy theories?). Through discussion board posts, informal presentations, and three major writing assignments, students will participate in an ongoing academic

conversation about the dynamics and reach of denialism in modern America.

Black Social Justice Rhetoric: Past and Futures *(Holmes: Sections CC and DD)*

In her 1980 MLA panel remarks, Audre Lorde noted that her "silences had not protected [her]. Your silence will not protect you." Lorde's remarks encourage us to "break the silence" that immobilizes us, challenging what we know and to learn about what we do not as we seek to make our society equitable. Throughout the Black lived experience, Black American speakers and writers have been seeking to "break the silence" that has compelled our society to remain silent in the face of both anti-Black and anti-democratic practices in the United States. The response to these injustices follow in the long tradition of Black literary and rhetorical resistance in the United States. Instead of simply relying on classical rhetoric devices, such as *ethos, pathos,* and *logos*, this course will explore and recognize critiques to dominant ideologies and political and social hegemonies that has traditionally marginalized Black people in our society. Our class on Black rhetorical resistance will explore the myriad rhetorical forms and expressions Black speakers and writers have historically and contemporaneously used to stake their claims to American society.

In this course, students will read both primary and academic documents to gain a deeper understanding of both the African American experience and their collective response to anti-Black racism. Students will also critically assess the Black lived experience, call and response, repetition, and other rhetorical forms of persuasions in Black literature, speeches and essays, musical art forms, and short films and documentaries. To develop skills of critical reading and academic writing, students will analyze arguments and genres, synthesize perspectives, write an academic proposal, and contribute to the conversation with a research project in the form of a contribution paper.

Asian American Experiences and Identities *(Shanmugaraj: Section E)*

A rise in anti-Asian racism in the United States has shed light on the experience of being Asian in America. In this class, we will identify contemporary issues, challenges, and possibilities facing Asian American individuals and communities. We enter our exploration with the knowledge that, despite reductive stereotypes, Asians in America (citizen and non-citizen) have complex, multitudinous, and evolving lived experiences. Using a blend of academic and popular texts, we will identify key themes and tensions that emerge when studying and representing Asian Americans, including: ethnic positionality within conversations about race and immigration; political promises and challenges of activism and coalition-building; social identity and stereotypes, including the feminizing "model minority" myth; national belonging and assimilation; and more!

This First Year Writing class offers a space for undergraduate students of all racial and disciplinary backgrounds to better understand the diverse social, cultural, and political experiences of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the contemporary United States. In doing so, we will strengthen our skills in critical reading, rhetorical analysis, and argumentation. Over the course of the semester, students will learn how to strategically analyze arguments, synthesize multiple perspectives, and ultimately contribute to ongoing conversations about Asian American identities and experiences through a final research proposal and paper. Students will leave with more finely tuned communication skills, as well as a keener awareness of the social factors that shape their own reality.

Politics and Ideology in the Marvel Cinematic Universe *(Wigginton: Sections F and FF)*

Since the success of Iron Man in 2008, the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has expanded to include 23 films, including 2019's *Avengers: Endgame*, the highest-grossing film of all time. This extensive commercial success has spawned media discussion of the artistic and generic merits of the films, but also varied and rich scholarly and popular debate on the films' relationships to such ideological issues as democracy, surveillance, heroism and authoritarianism, and representations of racial minorities and gender. Building on theoretical work in rhetoric, pop culture studies, and political science, we will examine the role of the superhero film in contemporary society. Why are Marvel films so popular, and what does this popularity say about 21st century America? What is the relationship between pop culture and cultural values and ideals, especially those that are politically or intellectually driven? Students are not required to have any prior knowledge or experience in this area, although the course assignments will include some film watching outside of class in order to highlight and deepen topics from the readings.

As we read both academic and popular press articles addressing these issues in and around the MCU, students will develop skills in the fundamental practices of critical reading and academic writing, and apply them to completing assignments in which they will analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, write an academic research proposal based upon those syntheses, and finally contribute their own research-based arguments to the debates surrounding the place the MCU holds in the current cultural imagination.

Virtue or Violence: Choosing a Response to Conflict (*Carlock: Sections G and H*)

Are virtues such as kindness, honesty, compassion, and a shared sense of responsibility a viable response to conflict? An automatic reply for most people would be, "yes"; however, even a quick news or social media investigation of national and local response to current conflicts suggests that coercion, manipulation, and violence are at least common first reactions. Arguments have been made that specific acts of violence can lessen future acts of violence, perhaps the most extreme being the use of the atomic bomb in World War II. Despite the prevalence of violence as a response to situations, there is ample evidence that people who choose nonviolent, enacted virtue can make a significant difference in social policy and behavior in the public sphere (e.g., Gandhi, King, Mother Teresa, Nightingale, E. Roosevelt, Chief Joseph, Schindler, Parks, Carter, Mandela, Thoreau). This course will explore the efficacy of virtue as a viable, nonviolent response to conflict and the value in considering an alternative to violence and selfish individualism when dealing with conflict and disagreement. We will consider questions about shared responsibility in communities, historical perspectives on virtue in civic life, and the influence of virtue outside social relations in fields such as economics, science, and technology. The class is not about praising virtue per se but about investigating where it is valued and what are its effects on outcomes in different fields while still engaging respectfully with others in our community who believe that violent ways of meeting conflict are more efficacious or perhaps simply inevitable.

Throughout the semester, we will consider texts from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including rhetoric, philosophy, psychology, technology, and political science. This work will inform research,

analysis, and synthesis of current conversations about enacted virtues and give students a starting point to begin their own research proposals. Student writing will culminate in an academic contribution paper that resolves an issue posed by the questions we encounter.

Video Games and Society *(Stamm: Section HH &I)*

In 2014, a series of events now referred to as Gamergate revealed widespread misogyny throughout the larger male-dominated gaming community. Initially debating the ethics of video game journalists, the conversation became loaded with violent threats and the defamation of female video game developers. While the outcome of Gamergate is still hotly debated in relation to the parties involved, one thing was made clear: video games are no longer a niche interest. With over half of the American population reported to play video games, they now outsell the global box office, making video games a new dominant form of media. The virtual societies of video games enable us to participate in experiences difficult to capture through other means, while also paralleling real world power structures and prejudices. How can we understand video games as tools for social change? How does a post-Gamergate gaming community move forward without abandoning the work of the past? How do we define video games? In terms of goals, interaction, or technology?

The goal of this class is to investigate these questions surrounding video games, while also considering issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation in relation to the history of video games. The course requires no previous knowledge of or experience with video games, and some assignments will include playing relevant games that highlight the issues we'll be discussing in our readings. We will read various articles addressing the sociological issues of games, and students will be asked to write their own papers analyzing, critiquing, and synthesizing these perspectives, leading to a final paper where they will craft their own contribution on how we can understand video games as tools for sociological reflection and progress.

Hoaxes, Fakes, and Con-Artists *(Adcox: Sections KK and NN)*

In 1835, the New York *Sun* reported that life had been discovered on the moon: men with bat wings, moon-bison, and a species of large, bipedal beaver. Sales of the *Sun* soared. In 1938, radio reports of a Martian invasion caused panic throughout the country—a (perhaps unintentional) hoax that helped establish Orson Welles as one of the greatest dramatists of the twentieth century. In 2009, people watched breathlessly as authorities tracked a homemade weather balloon, supposedly carrying a scared six-year-old boy (who later told reporters that his parents had staged the whole thing to get on TV). That same year, Bernie Madoff pled guilty to operating the largest pyramid scam in history.

Though the hoaxer is by no means a character restricted to the United States, the U.S. has always had a particular affinity (and, arguably, has been a particularly good breeding-ground) for what showman P.T. Barnum referred to as "humbug." In this class we will explore hoaxers and con-artists as they have appeared in popular culture, literature, and real life, investigating how these characters, real and fictitious, exert such fascination over both victims and audiences. Why are we attracted to stories about con-artists? Why do we often find them more sympathetic, and even more heroic, than other sorts of criminal? And what does this attraction tell us about ourselves and the society around us?

Over the course of the semester you will engage analytically with a variety of sources, including theoretical texts such as David Shields's *Reality Hunger* and Kevin Young's *Bunk*, longform journalism such as Maria Konnikova's *The Confidence Game*, literary representations of con-artists, and hoax memoirs by James Frey and Margaret Seltzer. You will summarize and respond to arguments about the nature and meaning of hoaxes, and propose and develop an original research question which you will use to write your own, research-based essay contributing to the course's conversation.

The Brand and Brew of Caffeine Addiction (*Hancock: Section K*)

How do you take your coffee? A shot of espresso? Lots of milk and sugar? Fair-trade only? Do you like to drink your coffee in the shop that features local art? Perhaps the one with the comfy couches? In cities, coffee shops are around every corner, offering a warm beverage, usually a WiFi connection, and hopefully a seat. These public spaces are often referred to as "third spaces," a place that is neither home nor work, but is still a place where we spend a lot of our time. Why do we choose to spend our time in particular coffee shops? Does it matter that we prefer to drink our coffee in a certain way? This course will explore the necessity of interrogating our seemingly simple, everyday choices as coffee consumers. We will investigate questions about our personal taste for our coffee drink, the space where we drink it, and the land and people who provide that product for our consumption. These questions will help us to consider our coffee choices outside of the mindlessness of routine.

Throughout the semester, we will read and analyze articles from popular, academic and empirical research journals in order to propose a question to enter research-driven conversations about coffee culture. By engaging with these articles, we will be able to examine the consequences of our choices on a personal, a local, and a global scale. Over the semester, we will synthesize many authors and debates in order to form our own arguments about the implications of our coffee preferences and the necessity of understanding the weight of our coffee choices.

Crossing Borders: Forced Migration and Transnationalism in the 21st Century (*Heise: Sections LL and N*)

For some, the COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharp relief the presence of national and regional boundaries, as many of us were unable to travel outside our countries, states, provinces, or territories due to local, regional, and national travel restrictions. For many others, though, the pandemic was not the first time a border held real, tangible significance. As a global society we are currently witnessing record numbers of people experiencing forced migration, including refugees, internally-displaced people, asylum seekers, and others. With this rising need for viable integration and resettlement options has also come increased calls for border walls, travel bans, and refugee admissions caps. In this context, our course will consider the very real, embodied impacts of borders, national and otherwise: What is the role of borders in regulating the flow of bodies and capital around the world? Who determines borders and to what ends? What options are available for those who cross borders, or for those who dwell in between places, what Gloria Anzaldúa, drawing on the Nahuatl word, refers to as nepantla spaces? How do we as writers, scholars, and humans in the 21st century cross and/or dwell in borders in our everyday academic, professional, social, and personal lives?

Across languages and locales, our class will work through a comparative genre analysis of writing from nepantla spaces and build to a research proposal and argument contribution on a topic of students' choosing related to migration, displacement, language, transnationalism, and/or travel. We will engage with selected texts composed predominantly by transnational, immigrant, and refugee writers, in understanding the role of borders and border crossings in the lives of writers who have come before us, as well as the ways their writing clarifies, muddles, or transgresses borders -- between countries, between languages, between genres.

The Rhetoric of Place (*Mayshle: Sections M and MM*)

Places "speak" because places have meaning. How places embody and convey their meanings is the subject of this course. Building on theoretical work in cultural studies and postmodern geography, we will consider how ideas about space and place inform rhetoric, literacy, difference, and public memory. How do the spaces and places in which we learn inform and shape how we learn? What are the relationships between space/place and gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, or other categories of social identification or social experience? How does the way we experience built environments, particularly ones fraught with memory, inform the meaning-making that occurs at these sites? In short, this course will explore the question: how is space and place rhetorical? And because this is a foundational writing course, you will practice what it means to write for, within, and beyond the academy, as you develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize various perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation on rhetorical space and innovation.

76102 Course Description and Schedule

Advanced First-Year Writing courses are designed for students who have demonstrated an understanding of academic writing that most incoming freshmen have not. Because of the students' level of preparedness, the Writing & Communication Program provides intensive, advanced courses for students to work closely with senior faculty within the English department. Advanced courses assume that students have established strong reading and synthesizing skills, as well as a demonstrated interest in writing and communication, prior to entering Carnegie Mellon. The course topics shift each semester. Students enroll and are admitted through an application process that takes place before the Fall semester of each year.

Stylish Academic Writing

76-102 B: MWF 11:15AM-12:05PM
Professor: Kevin Haworth
Modality: In-Person

This course takes its inspiration from Helen Sword's 2012 book *Stylish Academic Writing* (Harvard University Press), which argues that "elegant ideas deserve elegant expression" and that "intellectual curiosity thrives best in an atmosphere of experimentation." In this course, we will learn how to stretch the boundaries of academic writing by incorporating storytelling, self-reflection, and interdisciplinary approaches. Too often, writers feel like they can either inform or delight, but not both. However, in a multimodal, social media world, we need to be versatile communicators who use all the writing tools at our disposal, including our personalities, voices, and our own common sense of what makes for good reading. We also need to be able to reflect on ourselves as learners, so that we can share our intellectual passions and priorities. Our guiding principles will be communication, craft, and creativity. Truly successful writers, inside and outside academia, use narrative, humor, visuals, and concrete language to attract and keep readers. This class will supercharge your writing so that your work gets noticed, ultimately making you a more successful student, applicant, and member of our scholarly community.