

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

<i>76-101 At A Glance</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>76-101 Course Topics and Schedule.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>76-101 Full Course Descriptions</i>	<i>5</i>

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
Rochel Gasson	<i>Generative AI</i>	A B C	MWF 8:00-5:50AM MWF 11-11:50 AM MWF 12-12:50PM
Janine Carlock	<i>Community: What is It and Why Should We Care?</i>	FF	MWF 9:00-9:50AM
Chad Szalkowki-Ference	<i>AI and Art: Can Machines Tell Our Stories?</i>	AA BB D	MWF 10:00-10:50PM MWF 11:00-11:50AM MWF 1:00-1:50PM
Laura Deluca	<i>Cleopatra's Cultural Afterlife: Representations of Ancient Egypt in Popular Discourse</i>	CC	MWF 12:00-12:50PM
Suzanne Meyer	<i>Unions in a Modern Context</i>	DD	MWF 1:00-1:50PM
Kat Myers	<i>Social Media and Identity</i>	E	MWF 2:00-2:50PM
Robyn Rowley	<i>(Dis)Ability and American Identity</i>	EE LL	MWF 2:00-2:50PM MWF 11:00-11:50AM
Seth Strickland	<i>Hunger: The Politics and Philosophy of Pangs</i>	F KK	MWF 4:00-4:50PM MWF 3:00-3:30PM
Jamie Watson	<i>Selling Self-Care</i>	AB AD M	MWF 9:00-9:50AM MWF 10:00-10:50AM MWF 12:00-12:50PM
Peter Mayshle	<i>Sites of Innovation: Past, Present, and Future</i>	GG K	TR 8:00-9:20AM TR 12:30-1:50PM
Ben Williams	<i>The Politics of the Senses</i>	H	TR 9:30-10:50AM

Julia Salehzadeh	<i>Virtue or Violence: Choosing a Response to Conflict</i>	HH II	TR 2:00-3:20PM TR 3:30-4:50PM
Julie Pal-Agrawal	<i>Becoming and Unbecoming Ourselves on Social Media</i>	I O	TR 2:00-3:20PM TR 9:30-10:50AM
Andrea Comiskey	<i>Engaging with TV & Movie Characters</i>	J MM	MWF 3:00-3:50PM MWF 4:00-4:50PM
Nicole Tanquary	<i>Reckoning with Me Too</i>	JJ	TR 12:30-1:50PM
Elizabeth Dieterich	<i>At Home</i>	N	TR 11:00-11:50AM

76-101 Section Course Descriptions

Generative AI (Gasson: Sections A, B, C)

Recent surges in “machine learning” put us face-to-face with new notions of what is “real” and “authentic.” Advancements in AI and GAI have us questioning how to perceive the “real” to decipher what is truly “authentic” in academic spaces. Moreover, the relationship between the expressive nature of humanity and high-tech innovation compels exciting new lines of discourse around the thinking and writing process. While creativity “provides the impetus for any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain or discipline into a new entity” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), technology is playing an important role in the (re)designing of our world.

In this course we will consider the history of the relationship between machines and the creative process by delving into literature, film, and digital media to explore how qualitative and quantitative outlets merge, impacting our perceptions of reality and authenticity. Exploring questions such as: How has technology historically redefined the act of creation and creativity? How have modes of storytelling and creativity evolved with technological advancement? How can images and information (re)produced by technology be considered real and/or authentic? We will consider how generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Dall-E 2, are altering the way we consume, process and create today. Through this issue, we will produce three foundational academic tasks, including a Comparative Genre Analysis and a Research Proposal, which students will extend into a fully developed Research Contribution.

Community: What is It and Why Should We Care? (Carlock: Section F)

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, the communities all around us – the classroom, campus, the neighborhoods we grew up in, the sports teams or clubs we participated in – became inaccessible. The social isolation experienced worldwide resulted in ongoing negative physical and mental health impacts for many. Quarantining during the Covid 19 pandemic, by depriving us of our ability to interact in our usual ways with our communities, demonstrated the value that a sense of community has in terms of the well-being of individuals and communities themselves. In this course we will look at the conversation around how we can define community to better understand not only what it is but how it can be fostered. This conversation is important because these definitions facilitate our personal, social, and political engagements.

In this section of 76101, we will look at readings that explore questions such as: What makes a community? How do we ‘belong’ to a community? How do online communities complicate the definition of community – does it even matter whether communities are virtual or face-to-face? Do various groups conceive of community differently—such as various disciplines in health care, engineering, or the arts? And in the end, how does our understanding of community, and that of institutions, organizations or governments impact actions? The texts that we will read offer several perspectives that you will synthesize in order to write a research proposal that pursues an original research question about community. You will then extend that proposal into a formal

research paper that you might connect to your future area of study or civic contexts that interest you, making your own unique contribution to how students today might define, shape, and engage community for our future.

AI and Art: Can Machines Tell Our Stories? (*Szalkowski-Ference: Sections AA, BB, D*)

A man receives a direct message from his dead friend, who has become fully reanimated in the present, ChatGPT-style. Unknown to the judges, an AI-generated submission won a prestigious photography award. These situations come from contemporary literature and the art world, highlighting how artists are integrating algorithms and AI into creative texts. In this course, we will track debates on the ethics and aesthetics of machine learning in the creative arts. Much like scholars at Oxford, who have concluded that “human/[machine learning] complementarity in the arts is a rich and ongoing process,” we will temper enthusiasm by exploring issues such as access, originality, ownership, and the degree to which art exceeds the generation of grammar, syntax, and/or images through algorithms to include a deeper meaning rooted in human consciousness and interaction with others and the world.

Through three major writing assignments that include a proposal and academic paper, we will learn to read critically, synthesize productively, and apply theoretical lenses to texts to participate in an ongoing critical conversation. The emerging critical conversation we will enter centers on ethics, aesthetics, narrative/literary theory, and AI, which itself melds a range of disciplines from computer science to biology. Because the work we will be doing is interdisciplinary, students will be able to gravitate toward areas of the arts that interest them most and draw from research related to the academic disciplines they are pursuing at CMU, all culminating in an insightful contribution to the conversation taking place at the crossroads of technology and art.

Cleopatra’s Cultural Afterlife: Representations of Ancient Egypt in Popular Discourse (DeLuca: Section CC)

How do representations of the past influence our understanding of the present, and what is at stake in retelling ancient histories? What narratives get prioritized or silenced in the retelling of historical events and figures, and what impact does that have on cultural memory? This course explores the ongoing Western fascination with ancient Egypt—a civilization that has long symbolized power, mythology, and allure—and examines how figures like Cleopatra and narratives of ancient Egypt have appeared in literature, film, and art from 1 A.D. to the present. What do the narratives surrounding Cleopatra reveal about contemporary views on femininity and power? How do ancient Egyptian artifacts, such as those housed in the British Museum, challenge our understanding of cultural heritage and ethics? Through these questions, we will uncover how portrayals of ancient Egypt have shaped and reflected evolving perceptions of representation and authority.

Throughout the course, students will develop their skills in genre-based analysis and collaborative discussion, deepening their understanding of how cultural biases influence the politics of

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representation. As the course progresses, students will identify a unique research gap within these discussions and compose a formal research proposal that articulates the significance of the gap that their research aims to fill. This proposal will serve as the foundation for a final academic paper, in which students craft a well-supported argument about the stakes of representation in popular discourse.

A Modern Take on Unionization (*Meyer: Sections DD*)

Organized labor has a long history in the industrialized US, but by the end of the 20th century, unionization was on the decline, the impact of unions on the workplace seemingly relegated to pages in a history book. However, within the past decade, union membership and the creation of new unions have been on the increase.

This section of 76-101 will examine the origins of American unionization in texts about the millworkers of Lowell, MA, the Pullman sleeping car boycott, and the steel workers strike in McKees Rock, PA, for example, to determine gains attributed to organized labor as well as the bases for resistance to unionization. Through this context, more recent movements for unionization will be explored to consider why some have failed (e.g., Volkswagen) where others succeeded (e.g., Starbucks), how new sectors of the workforce are considering unionization (e.g., tech), and how resistance to unionization has – or hasn't – changed.

In conjunction with text analysis, you will compare texts on the labor movement for different audiences. Additionally, you will propose an area for research for the revitalized union movement, for example, exploring what has prompted the return to organized labor or how current efforts build on or differ from previous union efforts, contributing to your understanding of issues that you may face in the modern workforce.

Social Media & Identity (*Myers: Section E*)

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, social media hosts theatrical spaces where users can try out new identities and invest in their 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 multiple roles, people use social media to craft flat, safe, and unidimensional self-images.

This class seeks to understand the vexed relationship between using social media 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 use of social media create and shape genuinely new selves, and to what extent are these selfhoods products of the communities we engage in?”; “How does the technology we use shape our behavior?”; “How are our social media presences wishful imaginings while also contributing to major shifts in culture?”

Our class objectives include synthesizing and evaluating various 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, Ted Talks etc., to craft nuanced arguments on the degree to which trying to create and maintain an identity on social media can influence our behaviors, communities, and realities.

(Dis)Ability and American Identity (Rowley: Sections EE & LL)

At the 2020 Superbowl, deaf woman of color and artist Christine Sun Kim was invited to perform the national anthem and America the Beautiful in American Sign Language alongside singers Demi Lovato and Yolanda Adams. But while her performance was broadcast on the jumbotron in the stadium, it was not part of the live stream of the game, instead cutting to views of the players, and Kim only appeared on television for a few seconds. In the *New York Times*, Kim opined, “Why have a sign language performance that is not accessible to anyone who would like to see it?” The failure of representation captured in this moment is reflective of how we understand and make space for difference and disability: attempts at inclusion and recognition, while well-intentioned, often reveal the lack of understanding and awareness of the experience of the very people they seek to include and speak for. Such misunderstandings are the result of the longer story of American identity, social power, and the co-construction of difference and normalcy, which we will investigate during this course.

As we work to historicize the history of disability in America, we will elaborate, understand, and define concepts of disability and the ways in which they inflect our understanding of American identity. Students will work to build a critical vocabulary of terms and concepts that inform and shape legal texts and public policies, cultural practices, and notions of the citizen. We will use this vocabulary to help us interrogate debates surrounding disability in the domains of education, medical arts, architecture and design, cultural production and more. We will read diverse texts like literature, op-eds, academic writings, supreme court cases and public policies and more to help students analyze arguments and identify features and variations of genre. They will learn to synthesize perspectives, write an academic proposal, and contribute to the conversation with a research project in the form of a contribution paper on the broad topic of (dis)ability and American identity.

Hunger: The Politics and Philosophy of Pangs (Strickland: Sections F & KK)

Is hunger a feeling? Is it a physical state? How much of our human activity is oriented around preventing hunger? How does hunger also reveal inequality? How do desire and appetite relate to hunger? Is hunger a positive state or a lack of food? We’ll discuss how hunger plays an important role in our lives, in our communities, and how we can develop a coherent approach to questions of hunger and how developing such an approach can transform the way we interact with our goals, our communities, and even parts of ourselves. As early as the middle ages, poets divided society into ‘winners,’ i.e. producers and ‘wasters,’ i.e. consumers. In recent years, hunger provides a locus for social commentary in Tommy Pico’s poetry and Roxanne Gay’s memoirs. And the problem is local, too: Pittsburgh has the highest levels of food insecurity among similarly-sized

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cities. Nearly 1 in 5 residents of Pittsburgh live in food insecurity – a much higher rate than national rates. In this ‘foodie city’ in one of the most stupendously wealthy countries in the world, why are people going hungry? In this course, students will begin to answer these questions through a variety of individual and collaborative research projects. Students will learn to analyze texts for their arguments, synthesize their ideas, and learn the skills needed to participate in a scholarly conversation. After reading and analyzing a variety of arguments on this issue, students will write a formal research proposal and paper by drawing upon their knowledge from this class and their own disciplines.

Selling Self-Care (*Watson: Section AB, AD & M*)

What is self-care, and who is it for? When you hear the phrase “self-care,” you might imagine wealthy white women in spa attire pampering themselves. Alternatively, you may think of self-help books. But how else might we define, name, and understand self-care?

In this section of 76-101, we will examine texts about the history and rhetorical impact of “self-care” as a concept and evolving conversation. In class, we will discuss different conceptualizations of self-care relating to capitalism, medical practice, racial justice, gender expression, disability studies, and other avenues of inquiry.

Students will hone critical thinking and communication skills in this context, analyzing and synthesizing arguments about self-care. Beyond self-care, this class encourages students to question the practices and commodities that are sold to them daily. Then, students will propose and develop an original research question within the conversation, ultimately leading to a unique contribution to this intellectual discourse for their final project. Students will leave with skills in argumentation and rhetorical analysis to critique the mental health discourses to which they are often exposed.

(Note: This course examines the discourses around this topic, both their cultural and rhetorical functions. The course is not meant to offer advice on mental health or serve as a psychological resource. Students interested in counseling support should reach out to [CaPS, the university's Counseling and Psychological Services](#).)

Sites of Innovation: Past, Present, and Future (*Mayshle: Section GG & K*)

...space is a practiced place. -Michel de Certeau- What does *innovation* mean at Carnegie Mellon? This introductory writing course looks at the rhetoric/s of innovation and asks, how is innovation conceived, perceived, and lived in Carnegie Mellon? Drawing on work in rhetoric and discourse studies and postmodern geography, students shall examine how Carnegie Mellon represents, embodies, and communicates innovation in various sites around campus: “past” sites could include memorials to Mao Yisheng, Judith Resnik, the Randy Pausch bridge, the *CMU@50: For the Founders* celebration, and the like; “present” sites could include the places and practices of their own majors/disciplines/schools, multiple changing exhibits across campus, invited campus speakers, university events, and the like; “future” sites could include newly created spaces such as the Gates and Hillman Centers, the Tepper Building, the \$20M Classroom and Learning Spaces Project, and the like. And because this is a foundational writing course, you will practice what it

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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.

The Politics of the Senses (*Williams: Section H*)

From the blare of car horns echoing through city streets to the glow of bright lights in a museum, the nostalgic feel of a Polaroid photograph to the familiar scents of our childhood homes, our senses shape how we connect with the world. But how do we learn to listen, see, smell, taste, or feel? What senses are deemed less precise or important? This course will explore how sensation and perception have long been important themes in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences by thinking about their relationship to culture. We will pay particular attention to central concerns in the study of sensation and media. Drawing on insights from theorists like Amber Jamilla Musser, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Hsuan Hsu, Erica Fretwell, Nicholas Mirzoeff, and Laura U. Marks and media representations like film, podcasts, visual art, and photography, we will think critically through key debates related to senses and politics, economics, technology, and power. Throughout the class, we will develop critical reading practices to engage with academic arguments, synthesize various perspectives to craft a research proposal, and develop a research-based argument related to sensory perception.

Virtue or Violence: Choosing a Response to Conflict (*Salehzadeh: Sections HH and II*)

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

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in an academic contribution paper that resolves an issue posed by the questions we encounter.

Becoming and Un-Becoming Ourselves on Social Media (Pal-Agrawal: Sections I & O)

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. Conversely, others have claimed that our opportunities to explore our identities on social media are narrowing as we are increasingly subjected to more forms of power, regulation, and control. 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.

To investigate this potential contradiction, we will study the works of various scholars. Annette Markham and Hugo Liu have described social media as a theatrical space where users can try out new identities and invest in their self-making. Henry Jenkins and Abigail De Kosnik have discussed how participation in online communities has led to both individual empowerment and meaningful moments of societal change. In sharp relief, others have argued that our identities are becoming products of various coercive and disciplinary online processes. Eli Pariser argues that predictive engines work first to create theories of who we are and then control the information we see, thereby hindering opportunities for self-exploration and growth. Lisa Nakamura has found that online games and chat rooms often force players to embody negative stereotypes of women and minorities.

These and related topics will serve as the focus for this 76-101 course. We will study a variety of genres, such as opinion pieces, academic articles and influencer interviews to craft nuanced arguments on the degrees to which trying to become someone on social media can lead to self-assimilation and eventual “unbecoming.” Our class objectives include synthesizing and evaluating various perspectives, organizing persuasive and well-structured arguments, and communicating these ideas in clear and compelling prose.

Film & Media Style (Comiskey: Sections J & MM)

What gives *Dune* a different look and feel from *Furiosa*? What distinguishes a YouTube explainer from a TikTok reel? One key component is *style*—how these works use the tools of their mediums to create unique audiovisual experiences. The fundamentals of style in modern moving-image media are camerawork, staging, editing, and sound, and these elements can be explored using a wide range of disciplinary perspectives (e.g. art-historical, psychological, philosophical) and methods (qualitative and quantitative). Drawing on this range of approaches, this class will address questions like: how and why does style change over time and across cultures? How and why do we judge a style as “good” or “bad”? To what extent does style interact with meaning and shape interpretation—or, is there a politics of style? In the process, we’ll find that style—which is all too often dismissed as insubstantial—is in fact essential to appreciating the media we consume. This is a writing course, and no previous training in film or media studies is necessary. Because we need some shared examples to which we can apply key concepts, the course will require occasional out-of-class film and TV viewing.

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Students will read academic writing on this topic as well as pieces intended for wider, non-specialist audiences. In the process, they'll analyze how different authors present information and construct arguments. This will establish a foundation for writing a project proposal that identifies a researchable problem or question in the field. Then, they'll develop their own contributions to the intellectual conversation on audiovisual style.

Reckoning with Me Too (Tanquary: Section JJ)

In late 2017, a tweet by actress Alyssa Milano--"If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet"--went viral with millions of replies. After that, "Me Too" became shorthand for an internationally-recognized public awareness surrounding acts of sexual violence. Nearly seven years later, this course asks: *How should we understand Me Too and its aftermath?* And, by extension, *What comes next?*

Together, we will discuss Me Too as a case study in the activist world and assess its value, impacts, and ongoing problematics, as well as consider the stakes of entering into such arguments. What should we make, for instance, of the popular erasures of women of color (such as Tarana Burke) who began Me Too in the US in 2006, but were supplanted by white, affluent Hollywood actresses in the viral moment of #metoo? And what of effects *beyond* the US? In the wider scope of things, does Me Too even count as a coherent "movement"? This course will offer opportunity to explore such questions via engagement with readings drawn from a range of disciplinary focuses, including feminist studies, media studies, racial criticism, and more. These readings will allow us to consider Me Too's multifaceted impact on everything from politics, to courtrooms, to college campuses.

In the process of reckoning with Me Too, students will hone their rhetorical skills, learning how to compare, interpret, and synthesize texts from a variety of genres that together constitute public and academic conversations about the movement. The final project will ask students to propose, and then undertake, a research paper that supports an argument about the effects and/or limitations of Me Too, from a subject angle that interests them.

At Home (Dieterich: Section N)

Most of what we learn about history and culture is about events that occur on a grand scale, such as wars, conquests, elections—sweeping events featuring larger-than-life players. But the truth is that the majority of human history has actually happened “offscreen,” in the houses and private lives of everyday people. Stepping back from the grand arc of history, our class will focus on the private, domestic spaces of the past and present through engaging with texts and media that examine concepts of domesticity and the physical space of the home. We will reflect on how the notion of “home” can signify safety and security for some, yet "home" is a dangerous place for others, representing forced labor, insecurity, or lack. How does architecture inform our ideas of what happens in the home? To whom does the home belong? Who is responsible for establishing and maintaining the home? Why do people across the US (in cities like Pittsburgh) and other wealthy nations struggle to find a place to call home? What did we, as a society, learn about the home from spending a few recent pandemic years during which we were encouraged to “stay home”? How has recent technology such as Zoom and social media enhanced, warped, or shattered our concept of what “home” should be?

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To dig into these questions and more, we will read a wide array of texts including creative works, historical accounts, academic writing, and op-eds as well as watch documentaries and films, which will all interrogate, complicate, or disrupt the concepts of dwelling, domesticity, and neighborhoods. All of this content will help students identify features and variations of genre, synthesize perspectives, and respond to arguments. Over the course of the term, students should expect to complete regular low-stakes discussion posts and journal writing that will lead up to a comparative genre analysis, a research proposal, and a final project that contributes to the conversation on the topic of “home.”