Option 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**.

A second full-semester course option is **76-102: Advanced First-Year Writing**. Students may only enroll in 76-102 by application/invitation only. We have reached capacity for Fall 2019 and are no longer accepting applications.

Please continue reading to learn about the specific course topics, schedules, and faculty information for each of the 76-101 and 76-102 courses being offered in Fall 2019.

Full-Semester Course Schedules and Descriptions

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*This version of the document was updated on 7/15/2019 and is subject to change.*
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 76101 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

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<td>C: MWF 11:30-12:20</td>
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<td>Andrew Gordon</td>
<td><em>Boycotts, Bullets, Bits? Political Resistance and Forms of Protest</em></td>
<td>AA</td>
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<td>Calvin Pollak</td>
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<td>Jamie Smith</td>
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<td>D: MWF 12:30-1:20</td>
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<td>Julie Pal-Agrawal</td>
<td><em>Becoming and Un-Becoming Ourselves on Social Media</em></td>
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<td>E: MWF 1:30-2:20</td>
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<td>Craig Stamm</td>
<td><em>Video Games in Contemporary Culture</em></td>
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<td>Rachel Kravetz</td>
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<td>Tadd Adcox</td>
<td><em>Hoaxes, Fakes, and Con-Artists</em></td>
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<td>Nicholas Huber</td>
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<td>N: TR 4:30-5:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Hancock</td>
<td><em>Coffee Culture: The Brand and Brew of Caffeine Addiction</em></td>
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<td>Emily DeJeu</td>
<td><em>What is College For? Exploring the Purposes of Higher Education</em></td>
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Sites of Innovation: Past, Present, and Future (Mayshle)

If Carnegie Mellon represents innovation, how does the university convey it? 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 Quad, the $20M Classroom and Learning Spaces Project, and the like. 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.

Boycotts, Bullets, Bits? Political Resistance and Forms of Protest (Gordon)

“Disobedience,” according to Henry David Thoreau, “is the true foundation of liberty.” If we assume Thoreau is right that political resistance is necessary to preserve political freedom, then it raises the question: protest how? With marches? With armed resistance? With digital tools like Low Orbital Ion Cannons? This course engages with historical and contemporary questions about the legitimacy, value, and efficacy of different forms of political dissent and resistance and their role in political systems. We analyze political theories regarding civil disobedience and freedom of speech, and consider how protest in specific contexts may challenge, update, or extend those arguments. Students may pursue inquiry into issues such as the value of different expressions of dissent, the legitimacy of hacktivism, and the value of digital media for social movements. In an era marked by patterns of resistance that range from the Arab Spring, to #occupy, to Operation Ferguson, addressing these questions helps us reflect on both our own cultural and political histories as well as our roles as global citizens. Interrogating the value of historical and contemporary forms of protest means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop analytical skills to identify features—some more flexible and some less flexible—within different academic genres. You will then use those skills to engage in academic inquiry, from research proposal to the research article or contribution essay that adds to the conversation about political resistance.

*This version of the document was updated on 7/15/2019 and is subject to change.*
Is Information Power? Transparency, Secrecy, and Democracy (Pollak)

According to journalist Glenn Greenwald, “a society in which people can be monitored at all times breeds conformity and obedience and submission.” Today, our data is being collected on an unprecedented scale by government institutions like the National Security Agency (NSA) and technology companies such as Google and Facebook. Is our society thus beginning to reflect Greenwald's nightmare vision? Or is data surveillance relatively benign, even beneficial, as security officials and CEOs of tech companies often claim? If our national security benefits from surveillance policies, should we even consider their costs to individuals' privacy? (Does our national security in fact benefit from surveillance?) If surveillance constrains whistle-blowers, journalists, and activists, how might our political debates suffer?

To answer these questions, we'll engage with academic, journalistic, and political texts written before and after the disclosures of classified NSA documents by former contractor Edward Snowden. We'll also examine more recent scandals surrounding Facebook's collection of user data and other social media exploitation by state actors such as Russia and Israel, along with private security firms. Engaging with these issues effectively requires understanding how material (economic) and symbolic (linguistic and rhetorical) power operate in social contexts; thus, students in this course will develop practices of critical academic reading, analysis, and writing. By the end of the semester, students will be able to break down and interpret arguments according to their material and symbolic characteristics, and craft rigorous, well-researched writing about the present-day circumstances of personal privacy and state power.

Approaching Conflict: Ethical Engagement in a Globalized World (Ganoe)

Prior to WWII, the world-renowned Japanese martial artist Morihei Ueshiba (1883 – 1969), grew to oppose militarism. He declined to participate in Japan’s war efforts, moving to a barn in the countryside rather than helping to train soldiers. While opting out of the war effort, he codified a new non-violent approach to martial arts.

Such acts of political and artistic resistance are the inspiration for this class. We will consider the work of scholars like Stephen Duncombe, Jocelyn Hollander, and James C. Scott, whose surveys of political and cultural resistance have focused on people’s creative responses to their politically situated, everyday lives. While these scholars agree on the importance of analyzing relationships between personal and political agency, they differ in methodological approach. The interdisciplinary engagement of history, anthropology, linguistics, performance studies, economics, and area studies enables rich scholarly debates regarding questions such as: In what spaces might resistance thrive? Have new technological developments ushered in an age of democratized access to information? If so, must political and economic systems necessarily follow suit? Under what circumstances are ideas of resistance used in support of nefarious purposes? How do the dynamic actors in historical and contemporary social movements clarify conceptions of justice, violence, and nonviolence?
Students will describe a contemporary cultural conflict from at least three perspectives, outline past attempts to address that conflict, analyze successes and challenges of past interventions, and contribute an original potential solution.

Never Tickle a Sleeping Dragon: Harry Potter and Popular Culture (Smith)

In 1997, J.K. Rowling first published *Harry Potter and Philosopher’s Stone*. Since then, the *Harry Potter* series has been the most widely sold book franchise to date. It has been translated into 67 languages, made into eight blockbuster films, excessively commercialized and even built into a theme park. With all of this excitement, the main question our 76-101 course will explore is: are the *Harry Potter* books “good”? Why or why not? What has made *Harry Potter* so popular in our culture, and is this popularity deserved? We will consider issues related to *Harry Potter* and education; for instance, how do we reconcile the novels’ current status in popular culture with a more formal literary tradition? Additionally, we will interrogate the economic status of the *Harry Potter* series: is the formidable franchise merely a money-making game? Or are technological and social media like Pottermore revolutionizing the way we read and consider literary culture? Finally, we will explore how literary critics (both inside and outside of academia) view the novels from an ethical standpoint; namely, are the *Harry Potter* books harmless entertainment, or do they promote potentially dangerous ideologies for children?

In this course, we will look at a collection of articles, excerpts and film that explore these very questions. As a class, we will converse around all of the *Harry Potter* novels, though students need not have read the series previously. Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze and synthesize the arguments around perspectives on *Harry Potter* in popular culture. At the end of the course, students will have the opportunity to develop their own contributions to the ongoing discussion regarding *Harry Potter*’s place in culture, academia, and the marketplace.

Becoming and Un-Becoming Ourselves on Social Media (Pal-Agrawal)

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 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 a variety of scholars. Annette Markham and Hugo Liu have described social media as a theatrical space where users can try out new identities and therefore invest in their own self-making. Henry Jenkins and Abigail De Kosnik have discussed the ways that 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 a variety of coercive and disciplinary online processes. Eli Pariser argues that predictive engines work to first 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 into embodying existing negative stereotypes of women and minorities.

These and other related topics will serve as the focus for this 76-101 course. 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 on social media can lead to one’s self-assimilation and eventual “un-becoming.”

**Video Games in Contemporary Culture (Stamm)**

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 community move forward without abandoning the work of the past? How do we define video games? In terms of goals, interaction, or technology? This class will 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. 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.

**Crafts Movements (Kravetz)**

The word “technology” derives from a Greek word, techne, for craft, in the sense of “skill.” Our understanding of crafts as handmade comes from the nineteenth century, when, in response to industrialization, strong voices championed the handcrafted over the machine-made as a cure for social ills. This class will first establish the foundations and stakes of our contemporary concept of craft by reading primary texts from this earlier era. We will then read a set of academic essays on topics related to craft in art and science in order to examine—and eventually practice—their scholarly methods. These readings will bring us into the present day, where we can look for craft
not only in Pittsburgh’s pervasive do-it-yourself culture, with its commitment to the original, specially made item, but also in the laboratories and workshops of CMU. After developing particular academic genre knowledge, and exploring various methods and compositional structures, you will develop and pursue your own research question on historical or contemporary craft that leads to both a research proposal and an original research-based argument. Since, as we will find, the concept of craft is relevant to nearly any kind of work, you will be free to consider it within your chosen context.

**Hoaxes, Fakes, and Con-Artists (Adcox)**

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 US 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.

**In the Work (Huber)**

This class, inspired by Carnegie Mellon’s motto, is about work. What is it? Why do we do so much of it when everything from the automatic dishwasher to the smart phone is supposedly designed to save us from working?

Some people want work and can’t get it, some have work but hate it, and some love their work but still struggle to make ends meet. Why is this unavoidable and evidently necessary aspect of
our lives so fiercely contested—why are our hearts so “in the work”? How does our work shape who we are, what we want, and what we can imagine? What does it mean to be a worker, employed, productive? What does it mean to not be a worker in the conventional sense—to be unemployed, or unproductive, or just lazy? And what, finally, might happen to our understanding of what it means to be human if work as we know it was automated out of existence?

To address questions like these, students will first be introduced to classical theories of work which have influenced the modern world (Locke, Smith, Marx). We will pay particular attention to the ways in which these conceptions are in tension or outright contradiction: for instance, is a division of work into increasingly specialized tasks both economically and socially desirable, or do such divisions and specializations alienate us from others, ourselves, and the products of our work? To gain an understanding of how far “work” has moved beyond these classical conceptions, we will analyze texts on contemporary forms of work such as emotional labor (Hochschild) and internships (Perlin) as well as the expansion of the working day into leisure and sleep time (Marçal, Crary). We will also look to sociological accounts of the worksites of global employers such as Amazon and Starbucks. Finally, students will examine some possible futures of work by discussing the political and economic challenges of technological unemployment and the possibilities of automation (Benanav, Mather).

By the end of the semester, students will build on these readings and on class discussions to develop an argument that makes an original contribution to conversations about working life. Along the way, students will be invited to examine their own experiences at work and to reflect on their pasts, presents, and futures as workers.

**Coffee Culture: The Brand and Brew of Caffeine Addiction (Hancock)**

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.
What is College For? Exploring the Purposes of Higher Education (DeJeu)

In 2015, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker quietly attempted to change the University of Wisconsin’s mission statement, replacing the objectives “search for truth” and “improve the human condition” with “meet the state’s workforce needs”. The backlash was furious, and ultimately, the University’s mission statement remained intact. However, this incident raises a pressing question: what’s the purpose of education, anyway? Is it, as Plato argued, to turn one’s soul to the light? Is it, as John Dewey posited, to make one a better democratic citizen? Is education, as Paulo Freire and bell hooks contend, a practice of liberating the oppressed? Or is education really about vocational training?

In this section of 76-101, we will engage with a variety of philosophical perspectives on education. Students will focus in particular on one of three sub-issues: the problem of student debt and the promise of free and open education, the presence of activism and protest in higher education, and the role of the humanities in an increasingly vocationally-oriented college landscape. In the context of this course, students will propose an original research project that identifies and fills a gap in the existing academic conversation related to the purpose of education. Then, as a final project, students will author their own academic arguments that offer new perspectives on the purpose of a college education.
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 First-Year Writing 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 through special invitation. Class size for 76102 is capped at 18 and students are accepted by application/invitation only.

Below, please find the specific descriptions for the two 76-102 sections being offered in Fall 2019.

Section A: The Gothic Imagination
MWF 11:30-12:20
Professor Rebecca Wigginton

In this section of Advanced First-Year Writing we will explore the Gothic as an artistic representation—in whatever form—of the oppressive shadow of the unknown, or even the unknowable, that dogs the human race. It is both seductive and threatening, existing at the intersection of realism and fantasy. We will read closely a range of Gothic fictions to consider what it means for a text to be “Gothic,” and investigate how this literary mode has evolved since its “invention” in the 1760s. Students will also read and analyze secondary literary and cultural essays to understand and make use of a variety of theoretical lenses, such as feminist criticism, New Historicism, Marxist criticism, digital humanities, postcolonial criticism, and film studies.

Gothic novels often engage with and represent social and political matters such as sexuality, nation, race, war, religion, and class. We will consider how the fantastical rendition of these important issues is related to the historical and cultural circumstances in which gothic fictions are written and read. Students will be presented with additional contextual materials—such as visual art, music, and historical articles/reviews—to enhance their understanding of “the Gothic imagination” across time.

As a first-year writing seminar, the course will focus on the development of academic and professional communication skills. Assignments will include short analyses, a theoretical lens paper, a research proposal, and a research essay that makes an original contribution to the ongoing academic conversation concerning Gothic literature.
Section B: Dreaming in the 21st Century
MWF 10:30-11:20
Professor Colby Gillette

Around ten percent of our lives is spent dreaming, a state which is as likely to produce great scientific discoveries and artistic inspiration as the everyday bafflement we all feel upon waking and remembering a particularly strange dream. Since Freud’s pronouncement that dreams are “the royal road to the unconscious,” dreams have been a subject of renewed interest in Western culture; this abiding interest has led to dreams becoming an area of study within the fields of psychology and anthropology while Freud and Jung’s early writings on dreams were a foundational influence on Surrealism, which has played a significant role in shaping contemporary literature, film, theater, and art. In this course we will examine some of the significant contributions to the field of dream research and deepen our understanding of how this research has impacted the literature, film, theater and art of the 20th and 21st centuries. Throughout the course we will attempt to answer the basic question, What is Dreaming?, by studying some of the major theories put forth since Freud. The varying answers to this question will allow us to see how dream studies can present new perspectives on issues such as the nature of cognition, gender and sexuality, cultural reality, religion and literary theory. In this way, we will try to understand how dreams can contribute to our personal, creative, professional and academic lives. Assignments will include short theoretical “lens” papers, a research proposal and a research paper.