First-Year Writing Program

Spring 2014

Course Descriptions

General Description of 76-100, Reading and Writing in an Academic Context  9 units
76-100 is an academic reading and writing course for multilingual students, especially those who are not native speakers of English or who consider English to be their weaker language. The course, designed as a prerequisite for 76-101 and for college writing in general, emphasizes reading comprehension strategies for reading a variety of text types in English (e.g., journalism, textbook selections, popular press arguments, and academic journal articles). Throughout the semester, students use these sources to write summaries and short position papers. The course introduces students to readers’ expectations for North American rhetorical style at the sentence, paragraph, and whole text or genre levels. Within the course, we discuss explicit genre and linguistic norms for writing in academic English so that writers can connect with their readers, and we help students develop mastery over their literate processes for effective, advanced reading and writing in English. Students who take this course qualify through an online placement test that is administered through the university prior to the fall semester. (All sections are offered MWF.)

Each 76-100 course is structured by the reading and writing objectives of the course as well as a vocabulary for writing in English, but some courses present different themes (or content) in their readings. These themes and their related questions are posted below so that students can select a topic that interests them.

Section A
G. Canale
MWF 12:30-1:20
You Are What You Buy

What does it mean when we choose to buy something? What does it mean when we notice some advertisements over others, and why do some persuade us when others do not? In this section of 76-100, we will read a variety of different texts that discuss to what extent our consumption choices (or, what we choose to buy, consume, or use) shape our identities and our perspectives about the world. Throughout our reading, we will find authors who argue for a wide range of perspectives about the benefits and drawbacks of living a life that is shaped by advertising and branding. We will then use these readings to build reader-centered, advanced academic English literacy practices for writing academic papers. Throughout the semester, we will summarize, compare, and respond to individual texts before writing our own positions about what one author, Tom Vanderbilt, has called our “advertised lives.” By the end of the course, students will submit a portfolio of their semester’s work, including their own texts about the course theme and their reflections about their own writing processes and error patterns in academic English.
**General Description of 76-101, Interpretation and Argument**

Gen Ed: Fulfills Category 1: Communicating requirement for H&SS and a designated writing course for other colleges. (All sections are offered MWF).

76-101 introduces students to an advanced, inductive process for writing an argument from sources. Because the course is based upon empirical research about professional academic writers, students can expect to learn expert practices that will translate into other academic writing tasks beyond this course. Because reading and writing are inseparable practices for academic writing, students will read a variety of texts so that they can explore and critically evaluate a single issue from multiple perspectives and from different genres. They can expect to learn methods for summarizing, synthesizing, and analyzing arguments so that they can author their own arguments.

The course is also geared toward helping students understand the requirements of advanced college-level writing. Since our students are typically very accomplished readers and writers, Interpretation and Argument has been designed to push their accomplishments toward greater rhetorical sophistication. For this purpose, students will build upon their composing knowledge by thinking strategically as they plan, write, and revise their own texts. Ultimately, they will develop critical reading, rhetorical and linguistic practices for analyzing and producing texts within this course and others.

Each section of 76-101 is structured by the same objectives and core assignments. There is a core vocabulary and set of heuristics that all sections teach. However, students may find particular issues more interesting or appealing than others—we do encourage students to pursue their interests, but we also ask that they engage any 76-101 course with intellectual curiosity. Due to the limits of our schedule, we are unable to meet each student’s individual preferences for course topics, but we do offer a wide variety from which to choose.

**Section A**
S. Seibert
MWF 8:30-9:20

*Art and Society: Imitation, Reflection, or Catalyst*

Ernst Fischer argued art “must show the world as changeable and help to change it.” His claim raises the question, what is art? What should or can art make us do, think, and feel? Is art an appropriate and effective forum for social criticism? What is the social value of art? Does art have the power to shape individuals or change the world in which we live? In this section of 76-101, we will explore these questions related to the role of art in society by interrogating a range of text including critical essays, poetry, prose fiction, painting, photography, and film.

In this writing course, students will first produce an insightful, focused analysis of one author’s argument on the role of art. In the second assignment, students will synthesize and analyze several sources into one coherent and cohesive description of the debate concerning art’s place...
within our society. Finally, in the contribution essay, students contribute to the discourse with their own carefully crafted argument on the relationship between art and society.

Section AA
S. Tanner
MWF 8:30-9:20
By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication. How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.

Section B
L. Callahan
MWF 9:30-10:20
The Huddled Masses: Poverty in America

According to the US Census, in 2011 the official poverty rate for the United States was 15.0 %, meaning 46.2 million people live in poverty. More than one fifth of children fall into that category. What does it mean to be poor in America? In this class, we will examine the legal definitions of poverty and the consequences of those definitions, as well as the underlying assumptions of those definitions. We will look at newspaper articles, scholarly journals, and first-hand accounts of poverty to develop a broad view of the issue, taking into account the potential divides of age, gender, education, class, race, and geography. We will examine the ways that different understandings of poverty shape policy and perception, the complicated path of upward mobility, and the living standards of people living at or below the official poverty line. In the class, we will read Dale Maharidge and Michael Williamson’s Someplace Like America: Tales from the New Great Depression and watch an episode of Raising Hope to compare journalistic accounts with media representations, tying both into the political arguments that shape policy.

In this class, you will analyze arguments in this conversation, synthesize perspectives on central issues, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation, using concepts and methods for critical reading and academic writing. As you utilize rhetorical tools to critically analyze and compose arguments with an understanding of how they have been shaped within communities toward specific audiences and purposes, you will develop skills that can be transferred to context beyond our course.
Section BB
J. Reineke
MWF 9:30-10:20
Fandom or Fan Dumb?

This course explores fan culture and its influence on literary and cultural production, and we examine the arguments for and against fandom’s growing influence on creative works. Through looking at a variety of topics related to fandom, like fan fiction and subgenres like slash fan fiction, consumerism of media-related goods such as action figures and costumes, Live Action Role-Playing (aka LARPing), and even Comic-cons, we examine the effects of fandom and the blurry line separating fandom from fan dumb. In this section, students will analyze arguments regarding the interplay of fans and creators as well as issues regarding ownership and copyright laws. Students will synthesize one of the major debates that we cover in the class as a way to discuss arguments as texts in conversation with other authors’ work, and they will also contribute to these debates by researching their own unique topic related to fan culture.

Section C
S. Seibert
MWF 9:30-10:20
Art and Society: Imitation, Reflection, or Catalyst

Ernst Fischer argued art “must show the world as changeable and help to change it.” His claim raises the question, what is art? What should or can art make us do, think, and feel? Is art an appropriate and effective forum for social criticism? What is the social value of art? Does art have the power to shape individuals or change the world in which we live? In this section of 76-101, we will explore these questions related to the role of art in society by interrogating a range of text including critical essays, poetry, prose fiction, painting, photography, and film.

In this writing course, students will first produce an insightful, focused analysis of one author’s argument on the role of art. In the second assignment, students will synthesize and analyze several sources into one coherent and cohesive description of the debate concerning art’s place within our society. Finally, in the contribution essay, students contribute to the discourse with their own carefully crafted argument on the relationship between art and society.

Section CC
A. Potter
MWF 9:30-10:20
By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication. How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and
academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.

Section D
D. Markowicz
MWF 9:30-10:20

Agriculture and the Politics of Sustainability

There has been a recent shift in the politics of agriculture to supporting more sustainable and local system of food production. Even mainstream culture and media seem to favor more sustainable agricultural practices as a replacement to the ravages of industrial style “agribusiness.” But what does it mean to be truly sustainable? Can sustainability achieve harmony with the profit motive? This class will explore the ramifications of such questions, both regionally and globally. Issues we will attend to include environmental conditions of agricultural production, commercial conditions of agricultural distribution, food quality and access to quality foods, working conditions of agricultural labor, and the ideological conditions of both commercially driven agricultural practices and “green” social movements. We will also look at and question the motives of federal legislation concerning such topics and land rights and organic certification.

This writing course will provide students with an entry into contemporary arguments concerning issues of agriculture and politics using texts that demonstrate a wide array of disciplinary styles—including cultural analysis, testimonials, fiction and film. Students will interrogate these texts through a sequence of assignments (argument analysis, issue synthesis, and contribution) that will allow them to critically examine issue involving agricultural production.

Section DD
J. Harrell
MWF 9:30-10:20

How to Live with Others: Etiquette in the 21st century

Is it polite to talk on your cell phone when you’re on an elevator? Should you open the door for a woman? For a man? When may you leave your seat at a baseball game? We might dismiss these questions as mere quirks of etiquette—the purview of Miss Manners and a relic of close-minded times—but deeper inquiry suggests neither their answers nor etiquette’s meaning is simple. So how do we make sense of civility when new technologies disrupt social traditions, gender norms change rapidly, and diverse cultural settings become more and more common? How, in short, do we peaceably work and live with others?

In this version of 76-101, we will consider how classical philosophers, media columnists, and academic scholars approach the problem of life lived among others. To enter this discussion we will read works from multiple genres, eras, and cultures, all of which have bearing on our 21st Century lives. As a writer you will analyze individual arguments and synthesize multiple perspectives around a question you choose. Ultimately you will develop your own stance on etiquette and write an academic contribution essay which persuasively argues for it. Throughout the class you will thinking critically and creatively about how you and others understand etiquette and its significance to personal character, professional work, and the social fabric as a whole.
**Section E**

**D. Haeselin**

**MWF 10:30-11:20**

*Digital Humanity? The Prospect of a Posthuman Future*

We are no longer *just* human. Once only the domain of science fiction, this preposterous projection has become increasingly accepted in a variety of academic discourses. Putting a particular emphasis on media, this course will examine the ways in which uses of technology – in our everyday lives and in the classroom – destabilize classic understandings of humanity’s relationship to its environment. Much like Marshall McLuhan prophesized the end of “typographic man” in the early 1960s, we will examine the futures of humanity and humanism during the eclipse of the stand-alone printed word.

Throughout the semester students will learn ways to interrogate the political and intellectual agendas of these provocative - and possibly dangerous - speculations by decoding and criticizing arguments from a wide range of disciplines. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with strategies to analyze texts, put conflicting viewpoints into conversation, and construct well-informed, thoroughly researched arguments so that they can enter the debate themselves. Alongside readings, students will engage film, fiction, and a variety of digital media in order to contextualize the representations and realities of this supposed post-humanity.

**Section EE**

**D. Wetzel**

**MWF 10:30-11:20**

*By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media*

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication. How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.

**Section F**

**M. Lambert**

**MWF 10:30-11:20**

*Nature and the Environment*

Global warming. GMOs. Water and air pollution. These are some of the major issues concerning today’s local, national, and international world. Scientists, environmentalists, politicians, and entrepreneurs are scrambling to pose answers to the problems associated with these issues. Electric and hybrid cars, solar and wind energy, recycling, organic local farms, and
a carbon tax have all been offered as alternatives to the status quo and rest on different conceptions of humanity’s relationship to nature.

But what do we mean by nature? And how do different conceptions of nature effect how people make decisions about these issues? The term itself seems to mean different things to different groups with different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. In this course, we will investigate nature’s range of meanings by examining the assumptions that undergird those meanings and the ways those meanings are put into practice by various social groups to understand and solve today’s environmental issues. In order to achieve a better understanding of nature as a concept, we will historically trace the changes in the term’s meaning, particularly over the last two centuries. We will also trace the rise of and changes in environmental thought over the last half of the Twentieth Century as expressed through figures like Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson. Finally, we will examine debates on some of today’s major environmental problems, particularly those occurring in and around Western Pennsylvania like “clean coal” and natural gas “fracking.” After learning to analyze, synthesize, and respond to the major arguments concerning the meaning of nature and its relationship to humanity, students will craft their own argument on a pressing environmental problem of their choice.

Section FF
A. Berardi
MWF 10:30-11:20

Motivating the Millennials: Definitions of Civic Engagement in the 21st Century

Education scholar, Thomas Ehrlich defines civic engagement as “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference.” Recent studies have claimed that the “Millennial” generation, which includes individuals born after 1980, is less interested in civic engagement and less invested in political participation. Is it true that young people today are less interested in making a difference than young people in the past? What could be the cause of this lack of interest? In this course, we will question how our definitions of civic engagement have changed throughout the past and explore the ways that younger generations participate in their communities. For example, we will consider how volunteerism, service learning, and military service constitute civic engagement. We will also question to what extent technology is enhancing, or perhaps inhibiting, opportunities for civic involvement. Does posting a Youtube video in response to public policy or current events count as civic activism? How does your understanding of community engagement evolve when you question whether Facebook serves as a space for civic deliberation or rather a distraction from pertinent community issues? In addition to addressing questions of definition, we will also reflect on contemporary challenges to community involvement including the civic achievement gap between race and class in America.

Students will address these key questions by engaging with a variety of texts across disciplines. From Alexis de Tocqueville’s nineteenth century work Democracy in America to Robert D. Putnam’s contemporary critique Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, course texts address the central question: what does it mean to be civically engaged in the 21st century? Students will return to this key dilemma throughout the semester in order to analyze single arguments, synthesize a variety of arguments addressing the course topic, and ultimately author their own arguments on issues of civic engagement and the Millennial generation. Students’ decisions to either engage or disengage with local and global communities will remain relevant during and after college. This course prepares students to make informed
decisions about community involvement by developing definitions of civic engagement that are unique to their own generation and reflecting upon the challenges that young people face in becoming engaged with communities beyond the university.

Section G
A. Teagarden
MWF 10:30-11:20

How to Live with Others: Etiquette in the 21st century

Is it polite to talk on your cell phone when you’re on an elevator? Should you open the door for a woman? For a man? When may you leave your seat at a baseball game? We might dismiss these questions as mere quirks of etiquette—the purview of Miss Manners and a relic of close-minded times—but deeper inquiry suggests neither their answers nor etiquette’s meaning is simple. So how do we make sense of civility when new technologies disrupt social traditions, gender norms change rapidly, and diverse cultural settings become more and more common? How, in short, do we peaceably work and live with others?

In this version of 76-101, we will consider how classical philosophers, media columnists, and academic scholars approach the problem of life lived among others. To enter this discussion we will read works from multiple genres, eras, and cultures, all of which have bearing on our 21st Century lives. As a writer you will analyze individual arguments and synthesize multiple perspectives around a question you choose. Ultimately you will develop your own stance on etiquette and write an academic contribution essay which persuasively argues for it. Throughout the class you will thinking critically and creatively about how you and others understand etiquette and its significance to personal character, professional work, and the social fabric as a whole.

Section GG
J. Harrell
MWF 11:30-12:20

How to Live with Others: Etiquette in the 21st century

Is it polite to talk on your cell phone when you’re on an elevator? Should you open the door for a woman? For a man? When may you leave your seat at a baseball game? We might dismiss these questions as mere quirks of etiquette—the purview of Miss Manners and a relic of close-minded times—but deeper inquiry suggests neither their answers nor etiquette’s meaning is simple. So how do we make sense of civility when new technologies disrupt social traditions, gender norms change rapidly, and diverse cultural settings become more and more common? How, in short, do we peaceably work and live with others?

In this version of 76-101, we will consider how classical philosophers, media columnists, and academic scholars approach the problem of life lived among others. To enter this discussion we will read works from multiple genres, eras, and cultures, all of which have bearing on our 21st Century lives. As a writer you will analyze individual arguments and synthesize multiple perspectives around a question you choose. Ultimately you will develop your own stance on etiquette and write an academic contribution essay which persuasively argues for it. Throughout the class you will thinking critically and creatively about how you and others understand etiquette and its significance to personal character, professional work, and the social fabric as a whole.
Section H
D. Dickson-LaPrade
MWF 11:30-12:20
Evil in America

In this section of 76-101, students will examine a variety of political and religious arguments regarding the nature and causes of evil, as well as how the world’s evils should be remedied. Students will analyze these arguments using a variety of conceptual tools, describe how these varying arguments work against and inform one another, and finally enter the argument themselves in a contribution assignment. In addition to learning what different authors have to say about the nature, causes, and remedies for evil, students will also gain experience with the argumentative strategies which authors use to make opposing positions seem despicable, irrational, and dangerous, and to make their own seem desirable, reasonable, and saintly. Students will also gain practice in understanding the underlying values and political positions which inform such discourses on the nature, origin, and amelioration of evil.

Section HH
S. Gotzler
MWF 11:30-12:20
By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication. How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.

Section I
P. Williams
MWF 11:30-12:20
By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication. How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and
academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.

Section II
J. Wilton
MWF 11:30-12:20

From Independent to “Indie”: Assessing a (Sub?)-Cultural Phenomenon

Calling movies, music, and other cultural products “independent” used to mean these products were made by small, non-major studios or labels. But recently, as critic Michael Z. Newman proclaims, “‘indie’ has become a buzzword, a term whose meanings—alternative, hip, edgy, uncompromising—far exceed the literal designation of media products that are made independently of major firms.” Indie groups like The Arcade Fire can now win Grammy Awards, most Oscar nominated films have some Indie status, and PBR-toting, flannel and skinny-jean clad hipsters have overrun every major city. Indie now seems less descriptive of a subculture than a mainstream style choice. Has Indie culture run its course? If so, what did it once represent and why has it become what it is today? What was, or is, its social, political, and commercial value?

These (and other) questions will serve as the focus for this 76-101 course. We will use academic and popular criticism, film, music, and more to explore Indie culture. Students will write essays that analyze the arguments and issues surrounding Indie culture, culminating an essay in which they make a contribution to our contemporary knowledge of this cultural phenomenon.

Section J
S. Liming
MWF 11:30-12:20

Living Social in the Age of Social Media

“Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter.” These phrases have become very familiar to us – almost to the point of obsolescence. But it isn’t just “friends” we seek through social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter (not to mention Instagram, YouTube, Tumblr … the list goes on). Online social media platforms offer us the ability to build human networks, to participate in the workings of democracy, and to voice and broadcast our opinions. But, according to a growing body of research, they also isolate us, allow us to bully and terrorize each other, and limit our abilities to live and act socially.

This section of 76-101 develops the stakes of living socially in an age – and a world – dominated by social media. In it, we will chart the controversies associated with social media participation on a global scale, from Twitter’s role in the Arab Spring, to Facebook’s function in moments of national tragedy. We will collectively examine this debate using an array of texts, including academic and journalistic writing in conjunction with blogs, television, and film. Students will hone critical thinking and communication skills in this context, analyzing and synthesizing arguments about social media and human interaction while developing their own ideas and opinions on the subject.
Section JJ
H. Steffen
MWF 12:30-1:20

What Should Universities Be Now?

Student debt, skyrocketing tuition, adjunct faculty, competition for scarce funding, online learning, an encroaching for-profit sector: United States universities have entered the twenty-first century amid a barrage of challenges and threats to their traditional missions and organizational structures. This section of 76-101 will focus on ongoing debates about American higher education and the issues it faces, and it will highlight how these debates are relevant to you, its students, and to your education and futures. Not only introducing you to academic essays, this course will also equip you to critique and interpret arguments made by journalists, activists, politicians, and philosophers. You will reflect on your position as students and workers in the university and will consider the powers and responsibilities that come with it. Throughout the semester, you will learn advanced literacy practices for understanding and evaluating scholarly writing by participating in a variety of in-class activities based on the course readings. These activities and the three core 76-101 writing assignments (argument analysis, synthesis, and contribution) will scaffold you toward becoming clearer academic writers and craftspeople of convincing arguments.

Section K
G. Stack
MWF 12:30-1:20

Dude, is that a three-eyed fish? Humanity, Technology, and the Environment

From bottle caps to the homes we live in, everything we touch comes at a price. As science and technology continue the rapid progression spurred by industrialization, we are finding ourselves in an increasingly complex society. Part of this complexion is the interconnectivity between ourselves, our progress, and the natural world that we live. But what is the cost of our progress? How do we understand the environment that we live in? How can we harmonize this understanding with our ever-increasing technological advances? This course will examine these issues and perspectives surrounding the role of humanity and our relationship with the natural environment. To do so, we will read a complex and multifaceted set of arguments from a variety of perspectives and eras in order to get a notion of the “big picture” of humanity, technology, and the environment. The course will begin with the industrial revolution and early visionaries like Andrew Carnegie, tackle environmentalists from John Muir to Bill McKibben, and encounter modern social and technological issues ranging from the amazing advances made by Bill Gates and Steve Jobs to the dystopian visions of the future presented in the movie Wall-E and the novel Feed. In doing so, this course will focus on the points of tension that exist between technological advancement and environmental awareness, and the problem spaces that arise from issues of progress versus conservation and the role of the consumer.

By examining a variety of opinions and arguments, articulated in a variety of ways (newspaper articles, essays, fiction, academic journals, and film), we will be able to reach some conclusions about our complex relationship with the earth, and how technology can both benefit and impair the future of people and the planet. Over the course of the semester, we will analyze and synthesize the arguments of a number of experts in order to formulate our own opinions, resulting in an effort to make a unique contribution to this field of study. As we progress from our studies...
and transition into the world-at-large, it will be up to us shape future policy and progress; this course will give us a place to start.

Section KK
M. Zebrowski
MWF 12:30-1:20
Food for Thought

In this section of 76-101, we will be focusing on the social and environmental impacts of food production and consumption. We will think about what it means to eat a particular way, as an individual and as a society, focusing our discussion on American food culture. We will also explore some of the unintended consequences of modern agribusiness and think about some important related issues like animal and food worker rights and fad diets.

We will consider these topics and more as we practice valuable skills necessary for successful academic argumentation and analysis of public rhetoric, and by the end of the semester, you will have researched and produced an argument of your own creation about food culture. Our goal in this course is to use our discussions about food to model academic discourse at large and hone the skills necessary to analyze and synthesize arguments about any topic.

Section L
B. Vukoder
MWF 12:30-1:20
A Seat in the Dark: Why Do We Watch Movies?

As the story goes, when the French film pioneers Auguste and Louis Lumière premiered their brief 1895 film “The Arrival of a Train a La Ciotat Station,” the crowd of spectators jumped up from their seats in a fit of fear, believing the train was charging directly towards them. They were certain it was real. Seven years later, another Frenchman George Méliès’ debuted the whimsical and bizarre tale of A Trip to the Moon, invoking a sense of wonder and possibility in the audience. Cinema from thereon became many things, offering viewers a spectrum of experiences teetering between reality and fantasy, representation and imagination.

Even amidst the rise of television and the Internet, movies today are still a tremendously popular medium. Tickets sales are on the rise, and viewers now have instantaneous access to a seemingly endless library of films via Netflix, Amazon, or On-Demand. Prolific and pervasive, movies have become such a staple of modern culture that we rarely step back and ask why we watch them. In what ways can cinema tell us who we are or what we should be? Is it possible to express ourselves from a seat in the theater? Can cinema make or reinforce communities? To what extent can movies enlighten or trivialize? Why do they entertain us?

These and other questions will serve as the focus for this 76-101 course. In exploring the connection between the spectator and cinema, we will learn and apply analytical methods for engaging academic and popular criticism, feature-length films and clips, other primary artifacts, and more. Students will write essays that analyze arguments and synthesize perspectives surrounding this topic, culminating to a final essay in which they make a contribution to our contemporary knowledge that will in part answer the question of why we watch movies.
Who gets to decide what it means to be religious – or not? In this section, students will develop and practice skills of interpretation and argumentation by considering various perspectives on religious faith, practice, and belonging. Is religious faith primarily defined by assenting to a set of doctrines? Is there any room for doubt in religion? Is it possible to challenge religious authorities while remaining committed to a religious community? Do atheists or religious outsiders have standing to judge religious beliefs and practices? Course material will cover a variety of perspectives from both religious and secular sources, including scholarly writing, journalism, and film. Emphasis will be placed on accurately and precisely representing others’ arguments, a challenging yet crucial first step when responding to arguments about religion. Over the course of the semester, students will practice summarizing individual arguments and synthesizing differing perspectives in order to responsibly contribute their own views to an ongoing conversation about religious legitimacy.

Only three years after the Sex Pistols emerged as representatives of a new social movement known as “punk rock,” the British group Crass had already declared that “Punk [was] Dead” by comparing it to other pop culture trends emerging at the time. Yet, since this declaration, the label of “punk” has been used to refer to anything from underground musical styles, fashions, and even attitudes, to social groups and political movements. This course will use punk as a lens to discuss the dynamic relationship between popular or “mainstream” culture and individual or “resistant” subcultures. For example, what makes something mainstream, and why or how would an “alternative” or “sub”-culture wish to resist the mainstream? For that matter, can subcultures effectively remain “resistant” once they are incorporated into mainstream or mass culture? Additionally, in what ways do subcultures respond to and represent race, gender, and class in opposition to the "social" dominance of the mainstream?

This course will draw from cultural theory to define concepts of mass or “dominant” culture and subcultures. We will explore the history, influence, and controversies of punk and other subcultures through text, figures, music, and film (for example: figures like Kathleen Hanna – a feminist icon of riot grrrl punk and Punk Attitude, a film that concentrates on the use of style in various “scenes” of the punk movement.). Using methods of critical reading and academic writing, students will engage responsibly with the controversial topic of cultural resistance and discuss how effective that resistance can be. Students will analyze arguments as part of an overall conversation of alternative or subcultural practices, synthesize perspectives on central issues within that topic, and finally contribute to the overall discussion, considering to what extent and why alternative or subcultures can or would wish to resist mainstream or mass culture.
Scribbling someone’s name in the margin of your notebook during lecture, volunteering your time to take care of abandoned kittens, or just calling your Mom to let her know you’re okay in your new dormitory digs… all of these can be expressions of love. Most of us learn about love implicitly – we don’t take a college course to get it right. But how exactly did we learn to love? What informs our definitions of love and how do these definitions shape how we relate to others? And, honestly, can we get better at it? More specifically, is there such a thing as unconditional love? If so, is it spontaneous, innately felt for certain objects (like babies and kittens), or can we learn it and apply it to any person or object we choose? Can romantic love be unconditional? How about friendship? If not, what are the conditions and how do we fulfill them?

In this 76-101 course will examine a wide array of definitions of love, from current thinkers and ancient scriptures, through contemporary and classic films, and through personal, real-life accounts. This course leads students through three major writing projects: 1) summarizing a single argument, 2) synthesizing and analyzing multiple arguments in relation to one another, 3) based upon the arguments of others, presenting an informed, creative, and well-composed personal contribution to an ongoing discussion of… luv.

How Can We Understand Self and Place in a Global Age?

Watching the war on Afghanistan on CNN, while enjoying a Chinese take-out dinner is a routine experience of modern life in an age of globalization. However, despite its appearance of mundaneness, globalization seems to have a profound transformative impact on our lives and experiences by creating a complex network of interconnections and interdependencies. This ‘complex connectivity’ changes the very ways in which we define self and place. In this section of 76-101, we will examine the issue of "how do we understand self and place in an era of 'complex connectivity'?" We will focus on a range of critical responses to the effects of globalization on self/identity, culture, education, and work. While some critics argue that the transformations brought about by globalization are liberatory, enabling us to routinely imagine the possibility of studying, working, and living in different parts of the globe, others regard it as a highly uneven process that posits a threat to our sense of identity and culture.

We will read a range of academic essays, magazine articles, interviews and documentary film that address these different views regarding the experience of globalization. We will also analyze and synthesize a range of arguments within these texts and, finally, develop our own contribution to the discussion on how can we understand our selves, others and place within a global context.
“Respect the Tech”: Cyborgs and Humanity

It would sound strange to say that using an iPhone makes me a different kind of human than my grandfather, but throughout history people have linked humanity with technology. For instance, disillusioned with technology and society, Henry David Thoreau argued back in 1854, “But lo! men have become the tools of their tools.” Today we have even more tools: phones, laptops, GPS – even contact lenses assist us in dealing with the world. Have tools like these been reducing us as humans, as Thoreau suggests? Or can they make us into new superhuman cyborgs? In this section of 76-101, we explore these questions, asking, How does technology affect the way we see ourselves as humans? We go beyond magazine clichés about Facebook by keeping an eye on history, analyzing ancient arguments, like Plato’s critique of the technology of writing, as well as modern arguments, such as Blade Runner’s portrayal of robots becoming humans (with Android commercials, cyborg manifestos, academic papers and more along the way).

We also use these texts to practice a new set of interpretive and argumentative techniques applicable across disciplines. We start by learning reading strategies to delve into authors’ claims. Then we write three essays through the semester, structured in increasing complexity. First is an analysis of a single text. Next is a synthesis paper, in which students draw together disparate arguments around a question of their choosing. Finally, students enter into the conversation with a researched contribution argument of their own about the impacts of some technology on our conception of humanity. In this era of rapidly shifting technology, this section equips students to deal with the difficult question of who we are.

By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication. How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.
Never Tickle a Sleeping Dragon: Harry Potter and Popular Culture

In 1997, J.K. Rowling first published *Harry Potter and the 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, commercialized excessively 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 role 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) question whether the Harry Potter books are harmless entertainment or whether they promote potentially dangerous ideologies for children.

In this course, we will look at a collection of articles, excerpts and film that explore these 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 write their own papers that analyze and synthesize perspectives on Harry Potter in popular culture. At the end of the course, students will write their own contributions to the ongoing discussion regarding Harry Potter’s place in culture, academia, and the marketplace.

Is Technology Overrated?

We often use the phrase “technological progress” automatically and without really thinking about it. After all, technology moves us forward and makes our lives better. Or, does it? Recently, a number of high-profile news stories have called our attention to the dilemmas that accompany our “high tech” lifestyles. Whether we’re talking about drones, disappointing new Apple products, or ways in which our favorite internet companies are complicit with the NSA’s invasion of our privacy, we’re increasingly being confronted with the idea that maybe “technological progress” isn’t so progressive after all.

In this course we’re going to assess technology critically by reading and dealing with arguments that approach technology from a number of different perspectives. Although we will cover a few significant technological issues from decades past, most of our focus will be on the last two generations or so. And of course, “technology” can’t mean anything and everything: our scope will be broad but not limitless, including such diverse topics as the emergence of the interstate highway system in the US, dilemmas that come with advances in health care, and the extent to which Silicon Valley is being a “good neighbor.” These are some of the subjects we’ll be encountering while we practice 101’s general goal of dealing with arguments: both in the classroom and in writing, students will assess, analyze, synthesize, and respond to arguments about the impact and role of technology in our lives. At the end of the course, students will contribute to the discussion with their own argument. This course intends to help students deal
with arguments and think critically by questioning something that we often take for granted: the ultimate goodness of technological progress – or, perhaps we should say, technological change.

Section P
A. Cooke
MWF 2:30-3:20
By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication. How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.

Section Q
K. Tremeryn
MWF 2:30-3:20
The Devout and the Fallen

Who gets to decide what it means to be religious – or not? In this section, students will develop and practice skills of interpretation and argumentation by considering various perspectives on religious faith, practice, and belonging. Is religious faith primarily defined by assenting to a set of doctrines? Is there any room for doubt in religion? Is it possible to challenge religious authorities while remaining committed to a religious community? Do atheists or religious outsiders have standing to judge religious beliefs and practices? Course material will cover a variety of perspectives from both religious and secular sources, including scholarly writing, journalism, and film. Emphasis will be placed on accurately and precisely representing others’ arguments, a challenging yet crucial first step when responding to arguments about religion. Over the course of the semester, students will practice summarizing individual arguments and synthesizing differing perspectives in order to responsibly contribute their own views to an ongoing conversation about religious legitimacy.

Section QQ
E. Ferris
MWF 2:30-3:20
By the People, For the People? News, New Voices, and New Media

Media scholar Jay Rosen claims that the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies have given “the people formerly known as the audience” new opportunities to contribute to public discourse – as citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media users. Many debate the value and effect of this shift from a one-to-many to many-to-many model of media distribution and public communication.
How does this shift affect news and public discourse? What’s valuable about the contributions of “amateurs” as compared to those of “professionals”? What role does social media play in political change and democracy? These questions have significance not only for public policy, but also for how we as individuals negotiate our roles as consumers and producers of networked public discourse. Engaging with the issues and problems surrounding the rise of participatory media means entering a conversation; in this course, you will develop skills in critical reading and academic writing and apply them to analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation.

Section R
J. Goessling
MWF 2:30-3:20
The Meanings of Subculture

Only three years after bands like the Sex Pistols and the Clash initiated a new social movement known as “punk rock,” the British group Crass had already declared that “Punk [was] Dead” by comparing it to other new consumer trends that were popular at the time. Since the emergence of punk, it has been considered just one example of a subculture that claims to “resist” mainstream culture. This course will use primarily punk as an interpretive lens to discuss the dynamic relationship between mainstream or “mass” culture and alternative subcultures. For example, what makes something mainstream, and why or how would a subculture wish to resist the mainstream? For that matter, can one even speak of a mainstream culture?

This course will draw from the field of Cultural Studies to define and elaborate concepts of mass culture and subcultures. We will explore the history, influence, and controversies of punk and other subcultures through texts that analyze the political nature of subcultures (e.g., Dick Hebdige’s Subculture: The Meaning of Style) and films which document how individuals participate in subcultures (e.g., Afro-Punk). Using methods of critical reading and academic writing, students will engage responsibly with the controversial topic of resistance in subcultures. Students will analyze arguments as part of an overall conversation of subcultural practices, synthesize perspectives on central issues within that topic, and finally contribute their own arguments to the discussion of the meanings of subcultures.

Section RR
A. Karlin
MWF 3:30-4:20

Scribbling someone’s name in the margin of your notebook during lecture, volunteering your time to take care of abandoned kittens, or just calling your Mom to let her know you’re okay in your new dormitory digs… all of these can be expressions of love. Most of us learn about love implicitly – we don’t take a college course to get it right. But how exactly did we learn to love? What informs our definitions of love and how do these definitions shape how we relate to others? And, honestly, can we get better at it? More specifically, is there such a thing as unconditional love? If so, is it spontaneous, innately felt for certain objects (like babies and kittens), or can we learn it and apply it to any person or object we choose? Can romantic love be unconditional? How about friendship? If not, what are the conditions and how do we fulfill them?
In this 76-101 course will examine a wide array of definitions of love, from current thinkers and ancient scriptures, through contemporary and classic films, and through personal, real-life accounts. This course leads students through three major writing projects: 1) summarizing a single argument, 2) synthesizing and analyzing multiple arguments in relation to one another, 3) based upon the arguments of others, presenting an informed, creative, and well-composed personal contribution to an ongoing discussion of... luv.

Section S
J. Smith
MWF 3:30-4:20
Never Tickle a Sleeping Dragon: Harry Potter and Popular Culture

In 1997, J.K. Rowling first published *Harry Potter and the 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, commercialized excessively 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 role 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) question whether the Harry Potter books are harmless entertainment or whether they promote potentially dangerous ideologies for children.

In this course, we will look at a collection of articles, excerpts and film that explore these 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 write their own papers that analyze and synthesize perspectives on Harry Potter in popular culture. At the end of the course, students will write their own contributions to the ongoing discussion regarding Harry Potter’s place in culture, academia, and the marketplace.

Section T
M. Nelson
MWF 3:30-4:20
Where are you from?: Space, Place and Identity

"You cannot know who you are without knowing where you are." - Paul Shepard

Where are you from? is a common and casual question often asked when we meet someone for the first time. It indicates the way identity and place are inextricably intertwined. We don’t often think about it, but how we come to know and learn about each other and ourselves is often by movement in space and attachment to place. Focusing primarily on the United States – within a global context – the class will focus on the controversies involved in defining space and place and the extent to which these definitions shape individual and collective identity. Some questions concerning this issue we will be addressing are: Why do we create spatial boundaries? What happens when advances in communications and transportation technology disrupt these boundaries? How do our definitions of space and place affect policy issues like citizenship and
immigration? We will look at a variety of sources including academic articles, news articles, documentaries, music, and fictional texts that grapple with these questions from competing perspectives.

Students will address these issues and questions by summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing the different arguments occurring in these texts. Once students have grasped a coherent understanding of the current debates, they will then carve out a space to insert their own contribution into the academic discussion on the relationship between space, place, and identity.

Section TT
H. Steffen
MWF 3:30-4:20
What Should Universities Be Now?

Student debt, skyrocketing tuition, adjunct faculty, competition for scarce funding, online learning, an encroaching for-profit sector: United States universities have entered the twenty-first century amid a barrage of challenges and threats to their traditional missions and organizational structures. This section of 76-101 will focus on ongoing debates about American higher education and the issues it faces, and it will highlight how these debates are relevant to you, its students, and to your education and futures. Not only introducing you to academic essays, this course will also equip you to critique and interpret arguments made by journalists, activists, politicians, and philosophers. You will reflect on your position as students and workers in the university and will consider the powers and responsibilities that come with it. Throughout the semester, you will learn advanced literacy practices for understanding and evaluating scholarly writing by participating in a variety of in-class activities based on the course readings. These activities and the three core 76-101 writing assignments (argument analysis, synthesis, and contribution) will scaffold you toward becoming clearer academic writers and craftspeople of convincing arguments.

Section UU
J. Mando
MWF 3:30-4:20
Reading the City

As we climb out of the recent recession, cities and their citizens have the opportunity to reassess and rebuild. Before we take up our hammers and nails, we should consider the deep, and often overlooked, influence that the built environment has on its inhabitants. In this class, we will explore various answers to the question: What can cities tell us about the people who live within them? We will focus on answers to this question that deal with different concepts of urban planning, issues of community identity, the challenge of public space in city life, and controversies over preservation versus revitalization and gentrification. No matter which of these perspectives we use to interpret the city, we will find insights and arguments that aim to better our lives. It will take a critical analysis of these often contrary arguments to decide where it is best to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

We will ground our theoretical readings in studies of actual cities like Pittsburgh, Detroit, Durban, and Dubai. One of our major goals will be to examine communities from both an American and a global perspective by using rhetorical reading strategies to gain a strong understanding of the ongoing conversations regarding this topic. This engagement will allow
students to analyze one argument in detail, synthesize a collection of articles answering a common research question and contribute in writing to an academic conversation. Though this class is focused on interpreting and writing arguments from a humanities perspective, the skills that we develop in this class are intended to be highly applicable to a variety disciplines.

**Section V**
R. Goodmanson
TR 12:00-1:20

*Reading After Katrina: A National Response*

When disaster strikes, how do we respond? And as we respond as a nation, in what ways do our responses teach us about our identity and values? This course examines one particular natural disaster—Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast in late August of 2005. This disaster, the costliest and one of the most deadly in American history, shocked a nation, and in its aftermath, our responses as a country revealed a great deal about American values and history. In this course, we will look at numerous public and private facets and artifacts of the community affected by the hurricane—communities of education, crime and criminalization, arts and culture, race, and gender, among others—and examine how responses to Katrina and subsequent policies have shaped our broader national identity.

This course will examine popular news media, academic and scholarly articles, the television show *Treme*, and the graphic novel *A.D.: After the Deluge* by Josh Neufeld in order to consider our course question: “What can we learn from our national response to natural disaster?” We will focus our discourse community on the affects of Katrina within the city of New Orleans, the hardest-hit city by the hurricane. As we study responses to Katrina, students will first demonstrate their understanding of arguments by writing an argument analysis of a single author’s perspective on the issue. The synthesis assignment will provide students with the chance to discuss multiple perspectives on Katrina’s impact on the city of New Orleans, considering numerous possible facets ranging from education to public health to artistic reactions to the disaster to governmental responses, among others. In the contribution assignment, students will develop their own argument to contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding our national response to natural disasters.

**Section VV**
R. Goodmanson
TR 1:30-2:50

*Reading After Katrina: A National Response*

When disaster strikes, how do we respond? And as we respond as a nation, in what ways do our responses teach us about our identity and values? This course examines one particular natural disaster—Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast in late August of 2005. This disaster, the costliest and one of the most deadly in American history, shocked a nation, and in its aftermath, our responses as a country revealed a great deal about American values and history. In this course, we will look at numerous public and private facets and artifacts of the community affected by the hurricane—communities of education, crime and criminalization, arts and culture, race, and gender, among others—and examine how responses to Katrina and subsequent policies have shaped our broader national identity.
This course will examine popular news media, academic and scholarly articles, the television show *Treme*, and the graphic novel *A.D.: After the Deluge* by Josh Neufeld in order to consider our course question: “What can we learn from our national response to natural disaster?” We will focus our discourse community on the affects of Katrina within the city of New Orleans, the hardest-hit city by the hurricane. As we study responses to Katrina, students will first demonstrate their understanding of arguments by writing an argument analysis of a single author’s perspective on the issue. The synthesis assignment will provide students with the chance to discuss multiple perspectives on Katrina’s impact on the city of New Orleans, considering numerous possible facets ranging from education to public health to artistic reactions to the disaster to governmental responses, among others. In the contribution assignment, students will develop their own argument to contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding our national response to natural disasters.