First-Year Seminars - Spring 2024

FYS 100-01 T/Th 10-11:50 am **Humanity and the Machine: AI from the Silver Screen to the Classroom**. Zornado

This seminar introduces students to the history of Artificial Intelligence as represented in film and various media over the last century. Our work will explore how AI has been imagined, dreamed of, and warned about since it first appeared in movies almost one hundred years ago. We will also explore the practical applications of AI available today to consider the ongoing disruption it poses to our understanding of literacy, research, writing, and academic integrity.  Students will practice evaluating AI generated information critically.

FYS 100-02 MW 8–9:50 am **Leadership Study Through the Biography** (with just a touch of fantasy) (Kunkel)

This course will look at the dimensions of leadership primarily through the study of biographies and biographical portraits. The class will explore the qualities of various leaders though online sources, print and media. For final projects, students will conduct research as well as read a biography of their choice and share portraits of their subject based on their original research.

FYS 100-03 T/Th 8-9:50 am **Leaving a trail where there is no path: *Anyone* can lead!** (Urda)

Leaders are mostly thought of as political and business heads. But everyone has the potential to lead, regardless of their official status. Anyone may benefit from learning what makes leaders effective and how they can do it, too. Leadership is used in captaining sports teams, presiding over student groups, running meetings, heading families, guiding religious followers, and teaching students. Topics include current leadership theories, personality, emotional intelligence, sources of power, ethical use of power and authority, and other managerial topics that have both personal and professional applications.

FYS 100-04 M/Th 10-11:50 am **Introduction to Mindfulness** (Hesson)

How are you feeling going into college? Are you excited? Curious? Overwhelmed? Anxious? Too busy to think about how you’re feeling? You’re not alone! Life gets so busy for all of us, and in those moments it can be hard to figure out how to get everything done while maintaining a sense of calm and inner peace. That’s where this class comes in! In this practical course, we will learn about (and try out!) mindfulness practices. We will read and listen to others to learn how they have incorporated mindfulness practices into their own lives. The goal of this course is to develop mindfulness practices that will take you through the journey of everyday life (including your first year of college!) with greater awareness, calm, peace, and joy.

FYS 100-05 M/W 10-11:50 am **Critical Issues in American Education** (Kunkel)

This seminar provides an overview of critical issues in 21st century public school education policy. Current issues include: vouchers, gender, equity in school finance, reading, integration, affirmative action, critical thinking, multicultural education, national curriculum, values, business, testing, teacher empowerment, mainstreaming, academic freedom, unions, private schooling, and school violence.

FYS 100-06 TTH 10–11:50 am **Exploring Wellness + Building Community at RIC** (Pepin)

Wait. You’re telling me eating pizza at midnight and going to bed at 3am are not recommended in college?! We live in an age where health and wellness trends are broadcast daily - but we usually make choices on our own. This seminar is designed to investigate concepts of wellness and the culture of wellness at college. Through course readings, reflection, and class dialogue, students will jointly explore these ideas and co-construct a model of wellness to guide their college experience.

FYS 100-07 T/Th 10-11:50 am **Latina/o Art and Culture** (Quintana-Vallejo)

Who are Latina/os? Are we immigrants? Indigenous? Citizens? Did we cross the border or did the border cross us? Do we speak Spanish, Portuguese, English, Creole, Nahuatl, Quechua? This First Year Seminar will provide answers to such crucial questions by centering the art and cultural production of Latina/os in the United States. To answer, we will analyze plastic art, music, films, and a graphic novel by and for Latina/o artists. Students will leave with a nuanced understanding of who we are and our complex history.

FYS 100-08 T/Th 10-11:50 am **Sweet Success**  (Stilwell)

So you want to be successful?!  Is success being like Taylor Swift or Beyonce, or a parent or family member?  This course will explore what success means to you.  We will also investigate the big-picture questions:  What does it take to be successful and how do we get there?  We will take an in-depth look at “successful people”, broadly defined, and investigate what made them successful and how they got there.  Finally, we will apply some of this information to set a range of goals and expectations for ourselves.

FYS 100-09 MW 10-11:50 am **Sweet Success**  (Stilwell)

So you want to be successful?!  Is success being like Taylor Swift or Beyonce, or a parent or family member?  This course will explore what success means to you.  We will also investigate the big-picture questions:  What does it take to be successful and how do we get there?  We will take an in-depth look at “successful people”, broadly defined, and investigate what made them successful and how they got there.  Finally, we will apply some of this information to set a range of goals and expectations for ourselves.

FYS 100-10 MW 2–3:50 pm **Language and Gender** (Basile) **ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS**

This course will explore the concept of gender as a social construct, and how men and women use language to reflect cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity. Students will analyze a variety of materials that illustrate how we perform our gendered identity through language, and provide a critical discussion of theories of this interdisciplinary field of study.

FYS 100-13 T/TH 2-3:50 pm **Languages in U.S. Education: Whose Matter?** (Papa)

Whose languages matter? Whose bilingualism is most valued? Meu bilinguismo é valorizado? Wird meine Zweisprachigkeit geschätzt?¿Se valora mi bilingüismo? 我的语言文化受到社会大众的认可吗？What is it like to be a bilingual student in U.S. schools and at RIC? Is speaking only English making us illiterate to the world? We will examine policies affecting bilingualism/multilingualism and language education and efforts by communities to maintain home languages. Additionally, we will investigate multilingualism locally, at RIC and our surrounding community, reflect on our own experiences, and develop proposals for

community-led responses, using all languages of our community!

FYS 100-14 MW 8–9:50 am **Technological Design and Innovation** (McLaughlin)

Technology! We are surrounded by it, but do we understand it? Technology is one of the greatest liberating forces in human history.  We are consumers of technology without equal, but we have a certain lack of knowledge about the materials and processes used to make the things we use on a daily basis. During this seminar, we will research historical technological design and innovations that make our lives better.  The class activities will require us to explore the processes of innovation and invention, designing, prototyping, and building simple products. This course will contribute to our understanding of technology.

FYS 100-15 T/F 10-11:50 **The Art and History of Chinese Writing** (Kim)

How and why did ancient people in East Asia start writing? What did they record on animal bones, bronze vessels, and bamboo slips? How can we read and decipher the messages from ancient East Asians? In this seminar, students will examine the origin of characters in East Asia, learn the evolution of characters and writing methods, decipher ancient records, and practice Chinese calligraphy with brush and ink to fully understand the history and art of Chinese writing.

FYS 100-16 M/Th 12-1:50 pm **Building a “Balance of Stories:” Meaning Making from What we Carry** (Donaldson)

Every day we move between people and places in our lives, carrying belongings and stories as we go: our phones full of photos; our fears down deep; our favorite talismans inked in skin. This seminar will explore the “things” we carry and how, where, and why we carry them. It will employ literary and media arts (writing, photography, audio production, and film making) to consider these ideas as they relate to the stories we know, tell, and are told. It will root this inquiry in a larger body of work that spans multiple disciplines (including literature, history, cultural anthropology, visual art, social work, and sociology) while consistently drawing on stories, storytelling, and the central metaphor of what we carry.

FYS 100- 17 **From Star Trek to Star Wars: Understanding your World through Science Fiction** (Allard)

Who doesn’t like a good sci-fi show, movie or book? Yet science fiction can be much more than entertainment: through utopian or dystopian visions of humanity, science fiction often offers a social commentary on human nature, culture, history, as well as current issues. In this first year seminar, we will explore how various science-fiction media (books, tv shows, movies) tackle and reimagine contemporary issues such as the construction of difference through the concept of ‘aliens,’ climate change, identity politics (class, gender, race), religion, immigration and more. Through this topic, you will engage with various college-level modes of learning: you will read key science fiction works (book chapters and short stories), engage in research, learn to think critically about media, engage in small-group discussions, complete in-class activities, and ultimately spark your creativity by creating your own alien world and culture. You do not need to be a sci-fi fan to take this course, but it will help if you are familiar with, and interested in, the genre.

FYS 100-20 T/Th 2-3:50 pm **Black Cinema** (Bery)

In this course we explore Black films across multiple genres, including narrative fiction, horror, Afrofuturism, comedy, musicals, and documentaries. Black Cinema explores Black life from multiple different perspectives. These cinematic representations foreground what is silenced and made invisible by dominant mainstream cinema. Through creativity and imagination Black films create new ways of seeing and knowing. Our weekly screenings, discussions and collaborative work will be guided by interviews with Black filmmakers, critical film reviews, and readings on the Black experience.

FYS 100-21 T/Th 2-3:50 **Bill Nye the Science Guy, Norman Lear, Sesame Street, Elementary Education and Me.** (Galvez)

An exploration of how we learn, and what we learn through popular television and film. Students will discuss the impact of media on how and what we learn. Dominant themes associated with early childhood development, health communication, and social justice, as portrayed by popular media, will be examined.

FYS 100-22 MW 6-7:50 pm **Performance in First Person: This is Me!** (Pennell)

You are a Primary Resource! Your life stories and experiences are unique, interesting and exciting. This class will explore a variety of methods of journaling, personal narrative/memoire writing and storytelling. It will also involve theatre exercises and methods for presentation. No text required.

FYS 100-24 MW 2-3:50 pm **Coffee – Why do we love it?!** (Ender)

What is it about the smell of coffee in the morning? What is it about the power of coffee at night? In fact, recent studies show that nearly 2/3 of people living in the US drink coffee on a daily basis. Beyond the US, over 2 billion cups are consumed every day. This seminar will examine cultural, historical, economic, and social perspectives into the popularity of coffee. Students will also have opportunities to interact with local community members who work with coffee. You do not have to be a coffee drinker; but if you are, this will be a course to be in!

FYS 100-25 T/Fr 12-1:50 pm. **Health Communications** (Bouchard)

This is a fun, interactive course designed to help students understand health communications today and recognize the impact of communication on the success and failure of health care in society. This seminar will provide you with tools for success in creative ways. You will become familiar with healthcare initiatives and learn to use scholarly resources to research, assess, critically analyze, create, and communicate information to different target groups.

FYS 100-26 MW 10-11:50 am **Make Music from Trash** (Sumerlin)

Explore the sound potential of discarded objects or materials. Bang on a can?  Strum a window blind? See what others are doing with junk that can sound like alternative music, and then find and make your own. No written music or experience required: only play by ear what your own instrument can do. Then join with your classmates in small groups and work out how to play together. The final is a concert.

FYS 100-27 T TH 12-1:50 pm. **In Talkies and More: The Social Context of Cinema** Chaudhuri

We look at how recent Hollywood films and their storytelling is relevant to an American way of life in 2024. Based on a select list of films, concepts including but not limited to race, gender, social class, crime and deviance, globalization (among other themes) will be addressed in this First Year Seminar. In the process we try to figure whether films are pure entertainment or a medium that plays an important role in how we perceive society.

FYS 100-28 MW 8-9:50 am **Coffee – Why do we love it?!** (Ender)

What is it about the smell of coffee in the morning? What is it about the power of coffee at night? In fact, recent studies show that nearly 2/3 of people living in the US drink coffee on a daily basis. Beyond the US, over 2 billion cups are consumed every day. This seminar will examine cultural, historical, economic, and social perspectives into the popularity of coffee. Students will also have opportunities to interact with local community members who work with coffee. You do not have to be a coffee drinker; but if you are, this will be a course to be in!

FYS 100-29 T/Th 10-11:50 **What our zip codes can inform us about our health?** (Mukherjee)

It does not sound fair that *where* we live will impact *how long* we live, right? Yet, that is the reality. This course will focus on how health is shaped by our physical environment, including the air we breathe in, the water we drink, the food we eat, the climate/weather patterns, the neighborhood, as well as our social, economic, cultural and political environments. We will discuss what being healthy means, and how health is determined by conditions under which we live from our birth throughout life. We will explore case studies and relate with our experiences. The course will also seek answers to: How can we improve our collective health and be healthy as a population or a community?