

UNIV 1784 Course Descriptions: Fall 2017

001 **The Pursuit of Happiness: Explorations in Positive Psychology**

Suzanne LaFleur

What leads to happiness, contentment, and life satisfaction? What can psychological science tell us about well-being and joy? Traditionally psychology has focused on problems and treatment. Positive psychology examines how people can flourish, thrive, and be happy. In this course, we will examine the psychological research on positive emotions and fulfilling lives. We will explore topics like joy, life satisfaction, compassion, gratitude, mindfulness, humor, and optimism. We'll examine pop culture and societal influences and think critically about the methods used to study happiness. We will also consider the ways we can bring joy to our own lives. Join us as we strive to be happy and explore and reflect on the positive.

002 **New Worlds of Geographic Information Science and Technology**

Ken Foote

GPS, web-based maps, location-based services, phone-based navigation systems, LiDAR, and data gathered by satellites are revolutionizing the way we travel, communicate, shop, and live. The whole world is now literally at our finger tips on our smart phones. This course will allow you to dive into this broad field of Geographic Information Science and Technology (GIS&T). You'll gain hands-on experience with a variety of these technologies and learn how they are being used for cutting-edge research and innovation in the sciences and humanities, in business and commerce, and across all levels of government.

003 **Issues and Controversies in Nutrition and Human Health**

Stacey Mobley

This course will review the science to explore the risk, benefits, and efficacy of several nutrition-related issues and controversies in human nutrition such as: using genetically modified organisms in the world food supply; consuming organic foods over conventional foods; taking dietary and herbal supplements to prevent chronic diseases; and implementing nutrigenomics for personalized nutrition.

004 **The Thrill of Victory, the Agony of Defeat: The Experience of Being a Sports Fan**

Kari Adamsons

As the name suggests, in this course we will explore the experience of being a sports fan. Those who are passionate fans of a particular sports team often come to integrate their team(s) into their personal identities and sense of self, with interesting implications for behavior (both their own and others), relationships, and physical and psychological well-being. A variety of sports as well as levels of sport (professional, college, Olympic, etc.) will be examined and discussed.

005 **Developing Personal Creativity for STEM Majors**

Jaclyn Chancey

We tend to associate creativity with the arts, but high levels of achievement in any field—including the sciences—require creativity. Research publications, patents, solutions to engineering problems, and all other forms of innovation rely on your ability to go beyond what is already known: to CREATE. Psychological research has shown that creativity is not an innate trait. Join us as we develop the habits of creative people and see how they are applied in STEM fields. You may get a little messy in the process.

006 **Why Read?**

Jason Courtmanche

This course will explore the value we place upon reading and the role reading—especially reading literary fiction—should have in our lives. In particular, I want you all to be thinking about the role reading will have in your lives when you become engineers and mathematicians and business people. Will you continue to read literary texts? And if so, why?

We will focus on literary fiction that explores books, reading, and censorship. Each book we will read examines societies in which reading has been eliminated or severely curtailed, though for different reasons and through different means. I will ask you to consider if you see some of the forces in these books as being operative today in our world. (No surprise, but I think they are).

Required texts are *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, and *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink.

007 **STEM and Public Policy**

Daniel Burkey

Scientists, engineers, and technologists are often engaged in the development of products, projects, or processes that can have significant societal impacts as well as influence on public policy. Due to the technical nature of their work and the specialized knowledge that it usually entails, communicating the benefits, drawbacks, and risks associated with their work can be challenging for STEM practitioners, and also challenging for non-STEM audiences to evaluate critically.

In this class, we will consider a variety of STEM-focused topics and what their societal impacts have been, as well as what influence they have had on public policy (either extant or proposed). Examples topics include Global Warming and Climate Policy, Genetically Engineered Organisms in the Food Supply, The Flint, Michigan Water Crisis and Water Resources, and others. The class will be discussion driven, and we will typically explore a different topic each week. Course assignments will include readings, short opinion papers, and a final presentation on a topic of interest related to the course topic.

008 **The Art of College - Films, Fictions, and Facts**

Jennifer Lease Butts

National Lampoon's Animal House is a landmark 1978 film that arguably created the genre of the "college movie." More recent examples like *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* (2002), *Old School* (2003), *Accepted* (2006), *The House Bunny* (2008), *Pitch Perfect* (2012) and the sequel (2015), and *Monster's University* (2013), among many others, follow in similar footsteps. What do all of these films have in common? They are telling a story about college and the college experience. Most of us know that these portrayals of college life are not the full picture of college life, or part of it, or perhaps not it at all. So what is the college experience? In this course we will examine representations of college life in a variety of films and deconstruct film themes. As we do this, we will discuss the college you are coming to know as a new student here at UConn and encourage you to construct your own narrative about your college experience. Assignments include short papers, a presentation, and a creative project. In addition, we will cover basic aspects of film criticism to aid you as you work with these films and their subject matter.

009 **Law, Lawyers & Society**

Peter Kochenburger

THIS COURSE IS REQUIRED FOR AND OPEN ONLY TO STUDENTS IN THE SPECIAL PROGRAM IN LAW.

Law shapes society and lawyers help shape the law; they are not neutral actors in its development and application. Laws and legal systems are often authoritative expressions of social values negotiated and then put into practice. They can, for example, protect unpopular opinions— even those most obnoxious to the majority – or serve as instruments of suppression and oppression. Most legal systems do both, including ours. We will explore how lawyers influence and utilize the legal system and what it means to be a lawyer in different settings and areas of law, including human rights, criminal law and representing or regulating businesses. The practice of law is described as a “profession,” but what does that really mean and how do lawyers embody this ideal? Students will play an important role in shaping this course and selecting some of the topics and issues we will discuss.

010 **Resist, Build, Unite!: History and Praxis of Social Justice Organizing**

Mark Overmyer-Velazquez

Melina Pappademos

In this interdisciplinary seminar, Resist, Build, Unite!: History and Praxis of Social Justice Organizing, students learn and work alongside other UConn students as they examine the history of social justice organizing in the United States and gain practical skills in community organizing and political advocacy. Co-facilitated by the directors of the Africana Studies Institute and the Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean & Latin American Studies, student practitioners gain familiarity with the theories, strategies, and practice of social justice and community organizing movements, such as immigration, legal, labor, and socioeconomic rights and self-determination; and black and brown power. Potential service learning objectives include working with local/Hartford-area community centers and social justice organizations.

011 **A Path of Papers**

Olivier Morand

Students will read a set of seminal papers and works following a path through demography, economics, cosmology, art history, literature, poetry, physics (and more), and discuss their relevance to everyday life. Readings will include “The Anthropoc Principle” (Scientific American, 1981), *The Tragedy of the Commons* by G. Harding, “On the Origin of Religion” (Science, 2009), and extracts from Basho’s poetry.

012 **Digital Political Communication**

David Atkin

In an interview last May, Hillary Clinton lamented that the 2016 election was marked by the “weaponization” of emerging online communication channels (e.g., “Fake News”). Donald Trump is heralded as the first candidate to master the Twitter medium, following in the footsteps of Kennedy (Television) and FDR (Radio) in decades past. Sunstein writes about digital “information silos” that contribute to a coarsening of public discourse, which Susan Herbst terms “rude democracy.” These and other balkanizing trends are now seen as a threat to democracy. This course examines the theory and research underpinning the study of digital political communication. In particular, we address political implications of emerging digital “echo chambers” on the content and effects of political communication. The class encompasses contexts ranging from ongoing policy debates to empirical surveys of technology influence in the realms of politics, journalism and public opinion.

013 **Special Program in Pharmacy I**

Robert McCarthy

THIS COURSE IS REQUIRED FOR AND OPEN ONLY TO STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE SPECIAL PROGRAM IN PHARMACY.

The course is designed for first-year pre-pharmacy students who have been admitted to the Special Program in Pharmacy through the university Honors program. In addition to orienting students to UConn and the Honors Program, including research opportunities in pharmacy practice and the pharmaceutical sciences, the course will introduce students to the profession of pharmacy including professional tracks, study abroad opportunities, pharmacy organizations, and pharmacy careers.

014 **Foundations of Medicine and Dental Medicine**

Keat Sanford

THIS COURSE IS REQUIRED FOR AND OPEN ONLY TO STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE SPECIAL PROGRAM IN MEDICINE/DENTAL MEDICINE.

This course provides a broad survey of premedical and predental studies, the preparation for medical and dental school, residence and the professions. The class will address admissions requirements and procedures, academic coursework at the undergraduate and professional school levels, residency training, typical routines of medical and dental practice, and issues affecting the training of physicians and dentists in the United States. The course will follow the chronological sequence of a traditional student and examine how academic, experiential, interpersonal and social skills and professionalism attributes play an integral role in the development of a skilled health professional.

015 **Sex and the Campus**

Amanda Denes

Sexual activity is a part of many people's college experience. And yet, sex is often considered a taboo topic and communication about sex and sexuality can be difficult. This course will discuss a range of topics related to sex and sexual communication. We will explore topics such as the effect of hook-up culture on sexual pleasure, communication about sexual likes and dislikes, friends with benefits relationships, pillow talk, and communication about safe sex. Class meetings will involve open and honest dialogue about sex and sexuality as it pertains to readings, documentaries, and popular media presented throughout the course. Assignments will include written reflections, student-led presentations, and a final project. Students who do not feel comfortable discussing material that is sexual in nature should not enroll in this course.

016 **Reproducibility, Open Science, and You: How Can We Address the Replication Crisis in Science?**

Rachel Theodore

In the halls of academia and in the popular press, it's been argued that modern-day science is facing a replication crisis that threatens to undermine the established knowledge base. In this seminar, we will explore issues of replication with an eye towards individual and institutional factors that may contribute to a replication crisis, the role of the internet and social media in bringing this crisis to light, and new best practices for fostering reproducibility as outlined in the Open Science Framework.

017 **Time Travel and the Movies**

James C. Kaufman

Paul Joseph Barnett

Time travel is a convention that has been used in film almost as long as there have been motion pictures. The first example of time travel was in the 1921 silent film *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* which was made into a talkie in 1931 and a musical in 1949. It has crossed every genre from science fiction to comedy to drama to romantic comedy. Countless movies have attempted to incorporate the concept of time travel into their narrative with varying levels of success and failure. This class will address some of the more common ways in which time is represented in film, some of the most fundamental concepts of time, the various possible structures of time, and the paradoxes and complications that could result from time travel. Films such as *Somewhere in Time*, *12 Monkeys*, *Looper*, and *Frequently Asked Questions About Time Travel* will be the main focus, but there will be brief discussions of the manipulation of time in films such as *Groundhog Day* and *Field of Dreams*.

018 **Science and Human Service**

Keat Sanford

As you embrace the challenge of the undergraduate collegiate experience, you will find it is all about careful observation, experience, honesty, perseverance, reflection, and your wired and learned habits of character and mind. The purpose of this seminar is to orient you to the college experience, to get your feet on the ground, and to start you running with your interests, ambitions, goals, and promises to yourself. We will discuss biographies of exceptional people who pursued careers in the health professions. We will consider historical and inspirational figures such as Hippocrates, Galen, Vesalius, Harvey, Hunter, Laennec, Semmelweis, Virchow, Blackwell, Montessori, Taussig, Farmer and others.

020 **Environmental Sustainability**

Richard A. Miller

Sarah Munro

"Environmental Sustainability" refers to individual lifestyle choices and institutional practices that meet the needs of the present without compromising the Earth's ability to sustain future generations. This course will cover general concepts of environmental sustainability in the context of UConn programs and initiatives, including student engagement, and outreach to the entire University community, for influencing behavioral change and promoting best practices. Using the UConn campus as a "living laboratory," we will explore ways that the University is reducing its carbon footprint, incorporating and promoting clean technologies, and strengthening community resilience to the effects of climate change. We'll also discuss UConn's progress with other measures of environmental responsibility, such as energy efficiency, alternative transportation, water quality, waste recycling and diversion, green building, land and water conservation, and sustainable food. During the course, students will reflect on several green campus tours and guest speakers, and conduct a final group project on the theme of solutions to campus sustainability gaps and challenges.

021 **When School Policies Backfire: What Can Be Learned from Education Policies Gone Wrong?**

Shaun Dougherty

In this course we will use the new book, "When School Policies Backfire How Well-Intended Measures Can Harm Our Most Vulnerable Students" (which will be provided to students free of charge) to discuss core elements of how education policies are designed, and how and why they can go wrong. Chapters in this book will be used as case studies and springboards to discussion of what we can learn when policies produce unexpected outcomes. Students will be asked to reflect on their own K12 experiences, as well as their college experiences, to inform their understanding of the case studies. Class sessions will focus largely on defining the policies, understanding intended outcomes, and discussing how and why they went wrong. Students will then be asked to reflect both in class and through online forums on these policies as well as others in the news. In addition to reflective postings students will be expected to draft a 500-750 word memo that outlines a policy problem, offers two potential policy solutions, and considers the way in which such solutions could fail.

022 **Have iPhone Will Photograph**

Janet Pritchard

(iPhone and some app purchases required.)

Now that you have a kick-ass little camera in your pocket what are you going to do with it? That is the question that frames this course. Looking at cellphone photography within the context of fine art and documentary photography I challenge each of you to expand your horizons and reconsider your throw away photographs as part of a larger tradition of image making. What will you do with that knowledge?

023 **Designing the Great Campus Space**

John Alexopoulos

Students will be introduced to the landscape design process and explore what makes an outdoor space memorable. In teams, the students will design a significant campus space, one that is part of the current master plan. No experience in drawing is necessary.

024 **Human Rights, Media and Visual Culture**

Michael Orwicz

Human rights and humanitarianism have long relied on the power of images--from prints and photography, film, television and video, to social networking platforms like Twitter and Facebook--to sustain the claim that all humans are holders of universal rights. Today, more than ever, most humanitarian action is itself constituted by various forms of media, and banks its success on the circulation of images. This course explores how visual culture has shaped the landscape in which a politics of human rights can be envisioned, articulated, and sustained.

025 **Scientists Are Human Too**

Tom Seery

Society has benefited greatly from advances in science. But science is done by human beings and the human factor enters into the process at almost every point. Although the process of science is intended to be self-correcting, sometimes that takes longer than we would like. It took some time to uncover the true nature of such historical "discoveries" as N-Rays, Polywater, and Cold Fusion. But the persistence of skeptics eventually won out. Science is used in our courtrooms and to guide public policy – How do we apply standards to complex and highly technical topics when laymen must sit in judgement? In this course we will talk about some of the monumental failures of science as well as some of the more controversial ways in which science enters the public domain through the use of expert witness testimony, contributions to public policy and government regulation. Students in the course will work in groups to develop case studies and present their findings to the class.

026 **It's Not Easy Being Green: The Wizard of Oz, Wicked & Other (World) Tales**

Susanna Cowan

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum is one of the most familiar and popular children's books ever. First published in 1900, it has been the inspiration of a million [sic] translations, rip-offs, and adaptations. Case in point: the so-famous-as-to-be-a-cliché 1939 film, the Wizard of Oz, starring Judy Garland. Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West, Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel, is a rather more literary adaptation of Baum's short book and is famous enough in its own right to have its own adaptations—namely the 2003 Broadway musical originally starring Idina Menzel (forever to be remembered as the voice of Frozen's Elsa).

I don't want to say too much up front, as I'm hoping we'll come up with our own ideas about these books and adaptations in the course of our semester together. I will suggest these books should easily propel us into discussions that range from politics (historical and contemporary) to gender/race/class issues to "literary" issues—to name just the low-hanging fruit. Whenever possible, we will let the themes of these books offer us occasions to intentionally get lost on tangents and side-paths and, I'll go ahead and say it, yellow brick roads (with luck we'll avoid the hostile woods and the soporific poppies). I hope you will take any and all such occasions as opportunities to bring into the course what interests you. And now, without further ado: over the rainbow (and behind the curtain) we go.

Assignments will include regular short writing assignments, a midterm presentation, and a final analytical and/or creative project of your own devising. There will be plenty of room for imaginative reflection in this course. Be ready to work steadily, but also to have fun. Beware ruby slippers (they come with a price).

027 **The Gender Cosmos: Pink, Blue, and the Rest of Us**

Barbara Gurr

Transgender identities have become increasingly visible due to pop culture figures such as Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner and ongoing political discussions over legal discrimination, but gender identity and expression encompasses far more than transgender and cisgender. This course will introduce students to basic vocabulary as well as legal and human rights frameworks around gender identity and expression at UConn, in Connecticut, and nationally, as well as focusing on pop culture and local, national, and international activism.

028 **Documenting the First-Year Experience**

Daniel Buttrey

In this course, you'll learn about digital photography while documenting your first semester at UConn. Topics covered will be an introduction to camera operations, compositional techniques, image editing, and documentary theory. Students are required to have a digital camera (preferred) or a good quality phone camera to complete this course.

029 **The Life and Times of Charles Darwin and Their Impacts on Today**

Kenneth Noll

Charles Darwin lived in socially and scientifically tumultuous times. He and his family and associates were at the center of so many trends that shaped the present. We will read about Darwin's life and examine his world and those he encountered there. We'll follow the developments of his contributions as well as those of the other important people of his times.

030 **What Happened to the Equal Rights Amendment?**

Virginia Hettinger

“Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

Twenty-two words. Still not a part of the U.S. Constitution

We will explore the history of the Equal Rights Amendment from its first introduction to Congress shortly after women gained the right to vote, through its adoption in both houses of Congress, and its failed ratification in the states. By exploring who supported the amendment and the emergence of a well-organized opponent, we will learn how much politics in America has changed over the past 40 years. Along the way we will cover the current status of women under the Constitution and the law, the role of interest groups, and how power of the states complicates policy making in the U.S.