FACULTY First-Year Seminars (FFYS)
Spring 2013 – revised November 15, 2012

Search on Spire FFYS “begins with” 197

Fast Fiction
Jung Yun, Center for Teaching & Faculty Development, jungy@acad.umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

This is a seminar for students with an interest in developing their abilities as fiction writers. Each week, students will read and discuss brief excerpts of published fiction that highlight a particular element of craft, such as character, setting, dialogue, and voice. Students will then have an opportunity to develop their writing skills in relation to the weekly topic through in-class writing exercise, discussion, and peer review of written work. Fast Fiction is for students with little to no experience as fiction writers who wish to explore the fundamentals of craft, produce brief pieces that can later be developed into short stories or longer works, and engage in constructive conversation about writing with their peers. The semester will conclude with students doing brief readings of/ presentations on their favorite writing sample from the course.

“Who are You?” : An Anthropological Analysis of Identity
Jean Forward, Anthropology, jforward@anthro.umass.edu
Letter grading w/option of P/F

In this seminar we will examine the construction of identity from a holistic perspective. Students will examine the Construction of identity – both individual and community. Factors to be considered are both cultural and Biological, ascribed and achieved traits. Identity is a dynamic process, constructed, but always changing and the Interactions of this process on many levels will be discussed.

Introduction to Design Drawing
Stephen Schreiber, Art, Architecture, and Art History, schreiber@art.umass.edu
Letter grading w/option of P/F

This course will introduce students to fundamental "design thinking" and graphic communication skills in architecture. Students will gain an understanding of drawing as a vital means to see, analyze, and represent essential aspects of the visual environment. Emphasis will be placed on freehand drawing and sketching, using UMass buildings as case studies.

New England Wildlife and Conservation
Peter W. Houlihan, Biology, peteh@bio.umass.edu
Letter grading with option of Pass/Fail

This seminar will explore the natural history and conservation biology of New England vertebrate wildlife. We will learn about the historical ecology of the New England landscape from the end of the last ice age to the present. This historical perspective will focus on how the natural landscape has changed due to both natural and human caused mechanisms. In response to changes in the landscape came changes in the populations of wildlife. In addition to landscape changes, wildlife has also responded to many human caused stressors (over-exploitation, pesticides, habitat degradation). We will explore how different species responded to these stressors and what steps humans have taken to try and conserve the landscape and the species inhabiting it.
Nuclear Chemistry and Medicine
Michael Knapp, Chemistry, mknapp@chem.umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

Ever wonder what energy, medical imaging, and war have in common? Come learn about nuclear chemistry! We will discuss energy production, health, and environmental impacts of nuclear chemistry.

How Much Arsenic Do We Eat?
Julian Tyson, Chemistry, Tyson@chem.umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

Is it safe? An introduction to the ideas that we need protect ourselves from naturally occurring toxic chemical substances in our environment, and to deal responsibly with those chemical substances we deliberately distribute into the environment. We will look at the details of what arsenic compounds are in our food, how they got there and whether they are potentially harmful. We will discuss (a) the current regulations concerning arsenic in drinking water, and (b) the reasons why consumer advocacy groups are calling for regulations governing the concentrations of arsenic in food and in rice in particular. The key role of chemical analysis in providing reliable information for the various sciences involved in such studies will be examined, and the current capabilities of chemical measurement technologies will be critically evaluated. Members of the class will make specific recommendations for “arsenic in food” regulations.

Pompeii. A Brief Introduction to Archaeology, Classics, and Classical Archaeology
Eric Poehler, Classics, epoehler@classics.umass.edu
Letter grading w/option of P/F

This course is intended to introduce incoming students to the world of ancient studies (classics and classical archaeology, specifically) through the world famous archaeological site of Pompeii, Italy. Seminars will cover a range of topics, from how classical archaeology differs from anthropological archaeology, what the body casts of Pompeii really are, and how to build an ancient city. Implicit within the syllabus, but explicit by the end of the course, is the goal of helping students gain familiarity with two things: where their own interests lie and how exciting academic research can be.

Network Fever
Briankle Chang, Communication, bchang@comm.umass.edu
Letter grading w/option of P/F

Are you willing to let go of your smart phone or laptop for a week, a month, a year, perhaps even longer? What if you were not even permitted to use the telephone or to write letters? If not, why not? What do you think you might lose in these situations? What would your life be like? Would it be better or worse and why? It seems clear that we now live in what is called network society: we live in networks; we work hard to network with one another; and perhaps we have become networks in some way. More than that, we are also surrounded by talks about networks. I call this condition Network Fever. In this course, we will reflect on this condition, starting with our experiences of networking. A set of brief readings will be provided to establish our topics of discussion. And I encourage you to suggest readings or topics for discussion as well. Network fever is here to stay. Let us see if we should cool down or raise the temperature. Or is the temperature just where it should be?
Ready, Set, Write: Fiction Writer’s Workshop for Beginners
Sally Galman, TECS- School of Education, sally@educ.umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

Are you interested in fiction writing but don’t know where to start? In this seminar, students will participate in a professional-grade writer’s workshop geared for beginners. With the guidance of the instructor, an award-winning graphic novelist and ethnographic writer, they will read seminal short fiction and instructive texts and participate in group and individual writing exercises. Students will learn to talk about and analyze short fiction and will develop their own pieces through formal work shopping with peers and consultation with the instructor. The course goal is for each student to 1) develop writerly habits, 2) workshop and produce one polished, edited short piece (8-10 pages) by the end of the semester and 3) write short self-assessments about the piece, the writing process and the writer’s life.

The Social Impacts of Gasoline Prices and Transportation Costs
Michael Knodler, Civil & Environmental Engineering, mknodler@ecs.umass.edu
Letter grading w/option of P/F

This seminar encourages thought about the societal benefits and detriments associated with increased gas prices and transportation costs. During the seminar students will investigate the actual impacts of fluctuating gas prices. For example, higher gas usually means fewer traffic fatalities.

Getting Medieval: University Life in the Middle Ages
Jen Adams, English, jadams@english.umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

How and what did students learn in the Middle Ages? Did they have a syllabus? Where did they obtain their books? What exactly did they read, and how did they read it? Did they pull all-nighters before exams? “Getting Medieval” will ask twenty-first century students to take a look at their medieval predecessors with an eye to the aspects they do and don’t share with us. The highlight of the course will be a recreation of a medieval classroom.

Planning and Maintaining the Urban Forest
Brian Kane, Environmental Conservation, bkane@eco.umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

In urban and suburban areas, trees provide many important benefits such as reducing energy use, intercepting water runoff, cleaning the air, and creating wildlife habitats. To maximize these benefits, proper selection of appropriate species, as well as choosing tree characteristics for a given site is critical in order to establish sustainable landscapes. In order for trees to survive, one must properly plant trees, maintain them and manage them for insect and disease pests. The course will utilize newly developed modeling tools for examination of the structure, function and economic value of trees in the urban and suburban landscapes. The i-Tree software suite of data analysis tools, developed by the US Forest Service will be highlighted in the class sessions. This course will introduce these topics of critical importance, as over 75% of the world’s residents presently live in urban areas. Student participation will be encouraged through participatory learning class format, and a hands-on project will be completed.
Soccer History USA  
Brian D. Bunk, History, bunk@history.umass.edu  
Letter grading w/option of P/F  

This class is devoted to studying the history of soccer in the United States while introducing the students to the methods and theories of historical study. The course also provides students with an introduction to the use of digital technology in the production and dissemination of historical knowledge. Students will research and produce a digital exhibit on a topic that will be published on a specially designed website called www.SoccerHistoryUSA.org. The site has been created as part of CHFA visioning Grant awarded to me and my colleague Jon Olsen. Part of the site’s purpose is to give undergraduate students an opportunity to produce original research and to see it used in a meaningful way.

Technology Today: Present YourSelf the Web 2.0 Way!  
Gail Cruise, ISOM Business Communication Program, gcruiise@isenberg.umass.edu  
Letter grading w/option of P/F  

This Technology Today: Present YourSelf the Web 2.0 Way Seminar introduces you to current technology issues and popular applications used today. You will explore such issues as: the use of networking technologies, web 2.0 and communication, ethics and the internet, security and protection of information, communication privacy and monitoring, and big data and IPO trends. You will utilize technology applications including a Wiki, Prezi (a zooming presentation editor), Storify, Pinterest, Infographics, Instagram, and current visualization methods for PowerPoint. Also, Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Sound Cloud, and the Internet will be visited to understand how technology is used to communicate and, at the end, to create a resume infographic. At the end of the seminar, students will gain knowledge of the complexity of information technology issues today and gain experience in applying these technologies to present themselves the Web 2.0 way.

Cultural Economy/Pioneer-Valley  
N. C. Christopher Couch, Languages, Literature and Culture, nccouch@complit.umass.edu  
Pass/Fail only  

The UMass area has attracted visitors and residents since the 19th century with its cultural riches, including nature mediated through art and culture. The seminar will look at history and contemporary artists, writers, businesses, and institutions that foster and contribute to this, beginning with 19th century tourism and extending to the fine and popular arts and artists today and in recent decades. The course will include consideration of painting and sculpture, writing including fantasy and children’s literature, illustration, nonfiction writing, and animation. The course may include guest speakers, and one or more field trips, if possible.

Why the Arts?  
Laszlo Dienes, Languages, Literature and Culture, dienes@complit.umass.edu  
Pass/Fail only  

The goal of this seminar is to alert our incoming students to the essential role(s) the arts play in the world, and to the value of becoming familiar with and studying those arts as one of the best ways to become a cultured, informed, educated citizen. The method of this seminar is an open-ended, freewheeling discussion of what the arts are, how they differ, how they can (and should) be looked at and evaluated, and why (or if) they are important for society and in human life. We will use the internet in class for constant illustration both of the different arts themselves (introducing students to great examples of the visual and performing arts, of music, architecture, film, poetry, etc.), and of the vastly different possible ways of analyzing and interpreting them (by looking at famous excerpts, quotations, and definitions from well-known articles, essays, or books by a wide variety of thinkers from Aristotle to Dienes...).
An Exploration of Medicinal Plants and Human Health
Lyle E. Craker, Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences, craker@pssci.umass.edu
Letter grading with option of Pass/Fail

In this seminar, we will explore the use of plant materials in conventional and alternative medicine systems to gain an understanding of the importance of these plant materials in human health.

When People Get Together: The Good, The Bad, and The Funny
Rommel Salvador, Hospitality and Tourism Management, rsalvador@isenberg.umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

Through games and experiential exercises, students in this seminar will be provided the opportunity to reexamine assumptions about interpersonal relations and human behavior in organizations. Topics will include social perception, group dynamics, managing conflict, and celebrating diversity. The application of concepts and topics covered to careers in the field of business, especially hospitality and tourism management, will be explored.

Climate Change: Biological Effects of Global Warming
William J. Manning, Stockbridge School of Agriculture, wmanning@umass.edu
Letter grading w/option of P/F

An introduction to climate and weather followed by consideration of the cause(s) of global warming and air pollutants, such as ozone and sulfate aerosol. Biological effects of global warming and air pollution on humans, animals and plants and major ecosystems will be considered in depth. The Goal is to gain a basic understanding of how global warming affects you and the world around you.

Horticulture and Health
Allen V. Barker, Stockbridge School of Agriculture, barker@umass.edu
Pass/Fail only

A large portion of the dietary needs of humans are met through foods derived from horticultural crops. The nutritional value of these foods may be altered by plant genetics (species, varieties) and by crop and soil management. This course will address the changes in food composition that may develop in response to selection of plants and management of food crop production, concentrating on the kinds of plant-derived foods that provide a particular nutrient for humans. Topics of the course will include minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, organically grown foods, genetically engineered food crops, and other issues that deal with food composition or production in relation to human health. Each week, students will conduct research and will participate in discussions as a group with two students rotating in leading the group with 10-minute seminars on the topics.