

FYS 110: First Year Seminar I (4 credit hours) MWF 10:40-11:50

These courses are designed to develop students' abilities in writing, critical thinking, and information literacy through critical inquiry on a specific topic. FYS 110 courses also include an orientation component to help students adjust to Augustana and learn about resources and opportunities that are available.

Fall 2019 First Year Seminar Course Descriptions

FYS 110A Forming a More Perfect Union: Designing and Debating the Constitution

Joel Johnson (Government)

This course is an introduction to the framing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution. We will review the events leading up to the Philadelphia Convention of 1787, discuss the issues that arose during drafting, and immerse ourselves in the debate over ratification. We will see how the Federalists powerfully argued in favor of the new political order, while the Anti-Federalists offered shrewd warnings about the dangers of centralizing power. By engaging some of the most insightful political thought of the modern era, students will better understand not only the fundamentals of government, but also the characteristics of effective written and oral argumentation.

FYS 110B Fecal Matters: A Critical History of our Global Sanitation Crisis

Daniel Gerling (English)

2.4 billion people worldwide have no access to a toilet; meanwhile, Americans flush more than 2 trillion gallons of drinking water down the toilet annually. Neither of these trends is sustainable, and we are at a moment of significant change. In this course, we critically analyze the social and environmental consequences of the way our culture and others treat excrement. Using essays, field trips, and interviews with engineers, authors, and activists, we examine various cultures at key historical moments when the role of excrement shifted—for example, from a commodity to a waste. We also consider the future of sanitation technologies and cultures.

FYS 110C War and Memory

Patrick Hicks (English)

Is there such a thing as “war literature” or would it be more correct to talk about literature that focuses on warfare? Are these narratives of violence, at their core, really just subversive “anti-war” statements that yearn for peace? In this class we’ll discuss what it means to go to war, what it means to cope with PTSD, and how writing can help with the healing process. What does it mean to be a veteran? What can a nation demand of its citizens? We will read novels and poems from various wars over the last 100 years, and in so doing we will explore the common (in)humanity among all soldiers—friend and foe alike.

FYS 110D Sherlocked: Reading the Detective

Darcie Rives-East (English)

Sherlock Holmes remains one of the most famous characters in literature and popular culture. First created in 1888 by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the great detective lives on in film, television, and print, and has inspired countless imitators, from House to CSI. What is the appeal of Sherlock Holmes, and why has he endured for over 100 years? This course will explore this question by returning to the original Doyle stories, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. We will see how critical thinking, the focus of FYS 110, is essential to Holmes’s allure in print and on screen.

FYS 110 E For Tradition's Sake

Ann Kolbrek (English)

Our world of progress offers all the modern conveniences one can imagine – from cars that govern themselves to cell phone control of our household appliances. But in this world of innovation, where does tradition fit? Companies like *Ancestry.com* remind us that knowing one's heritage is back in fashion. Following trend, this course examines diverse traditions (e.g. familial, cultural, educational) and determines where is tradition's place in a modern world. The works we read will help inform us of our own traditions and invite us to reflect on this peculiar space we occupy between remembering the past and embracing the future.

FYS 110F The Rise and Fall of Nations

Cory Conover (History)

What makes a country great? What factors cause the decay or even collapse of societies? To understand the dynamics of creation and destruction, this class analyzes examples drawn from history--including the Greeks, Romans, the British Empire, and Nazi Germany. We will think broadly to consider culture, economy, military, politics, and natural resources. With these lessons, we examine the present to assess the fates of nations today.

FYS 110G Hacking the Human Genome: past, present, and future of designer babies

Cecelia Miles (Biology)

Science is closer than ever to producing genetically modified human beings, GM babies. Cutting-edge biotech discoveries have made this a real possibility. Should they do it? While the technological breakthroughs are brand new, ideas about manipulation of human genetics are not. We will examine the past, present, and future of “designer babies” by reading, discussing, writing, and constructing arguments to challenge each other on this controversial topic. What does the future hold for engineering the “perfect baby”?

FYS 110H Cat Massacres, Ritual Hangings, and Social Protest

Michael Mullin (History)

History is filled with episodes of social protest. In the 18th century apprentice printers hanged cats to protest their unhappiness, while working-class residents of Boston hanged effigies of the royal governor and others to express their unwillingness to pay a stamp tax. In the 19th century abolitionists and temperance advocates took to the streets to make their voices heard. More recently, Civil Rights protestors and Black Lives Matter proponents used street protests and social media to make their voices heard. What do these advocates of social protest all share? They share a desire to alter the existing political and/or economic system. In some cases their protests led to revolution and change. In other cases, the promised social change was either temporary, or not as far-reaching as proponents envisioned. This course looks at social protests over the course of time, and tries to understand what social change might mean for those seeking a different type of world.

FYS 110I Cuba and the Superpowers

Pilar Cabrera (Spanish)

When Americans think of Cuba, they usually recall the Missile Crisis. And understandably so, since in those days of October of 1962 this seemingly insignificant island was the reason for a conflict that led the world to the brink of nuclear war. Cuba is a small Caribbean nation whose history has been shaped by several world superpowers: Spain, the U.S., and the U.S.S.R. A fourth superpower in Cuban history is its African heritage. This course explores Cuban history and culture in light of those forces, and ponders possible futures for the socialist island.

FYS 110J Get Lost: The Art of Wandering

Beth Boyens (English)

Wandering in the unknown has occupied minds of explorers, philosophers, artists, and writers for centuries, yet we are often expected to know exactly where we are going and how we will get there. In this course, we will consider connotations and social constructions of wandering, being lost, and purposeful traveling; orientation and disorientation; crossable borders and impenetrable barriers. Examining the writings of those who brave the wilderness, map the unreadable, lose themselves in the unfamiliar, and wander the landscape of the mind, we will ultimately explore what wandering and getting lost have to do with vocation, education, inquiry, and discovery.

FYS 110K Keep Calm and Solve for x

Martha Gregg (Mathematics)

Math: what has it done for you lately? Math is essential to many of the technological advances that make our modern lives longer, better, and richer. We'll learn about some of those advances and the mathematical engines that drive them – how game theory saves lives by optimizing kidney exchanges, how graph theory makes your internet searches more efficient, why understanding conditional probability is important to making decisions about medical treatment. Disclaimer: this is not a math class; there is no mathematical prerequisite, and no computational work will be graded (although we may actually compute a few things)!

FYS 110L TITLE

Reynold Nesiba (Economics)

Description

FYS 110M A Passage into India: a History of the Making of British India

Margaret Preston (History)

In 1877 Queen Victoria became empress of India, making it the jewel in the crown of the British Colonial Empire. India was important to Britain in many ways including militarily, economically and socially. This course will introduce students to India and focus on how the sub-continent became essential to the British Empire. In addition to understanding the story of India's colonization, the course will look into how Indians responded to Britain's increasing political control of their nation.

FYS 110N Lost Tribes and Buried Cities

Kristen Carlson (Anthropology)

This course provides an introduction to Archaeology and the deep history of humankind. Providing a world tour through time, we travel from our early origins in Africa through the cognitive development that emerges in the rock art caves of France. The course then travels through the development of agriculture in the Middle East to the emergence of complex societies throughout prehistory. Explore the exciting sites of Egypt, the Southwest of North America, and Stonehenge all while learning about the development of humankind.

FYS 110O Nevertheless, She Persisted

Heather Bart (Communications)

“She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted.” Senator McConnell’s rebuke of Senator Elizabeth Warren ended with her official silencing. These words could just have easily been spoken to many women in the early days of the United States. This course examines the history of women’s rights movements from the middle 1800s to 1920 (suffrage). We will explore themes, rights sought, arguments for and against rights, and speeches from women in the movements. In other words, we study women who persisted. At the end of the semester, we relate elements of history to contemporary women’s rights issues.

FYS 110P Rhetoric, Life Experience, and the Social Fabric

John Bart (Communications)

Human experience often calls forth public rhetoric. We will examine rhetoric’s role in creating the American social fabric. Examining Commencement Addresses, Eulogies, Declarations of War, and other rhetorical situations will allow us to discover common themes and values. We will look at rhetoric, how to critique it, create it, and learn from it. As you begin your educational journey, we will think about that journey’s purpose.

FYS 110Q Sasquatch Meets Science

Michael Nitz (Communications)

For centuries, countless people have “seen” a huge manlike creature in the woods of North America. Scientists dismiss these reports as nonsense and folklore. Nonetheless, a unique pop culture around Sasquatch has continued to flourish. Rejecting reflexive debunking and credulous belief alike, this course will develop strong intellectual practices in critical thinking, effective communication and information literacy as we study the practice of science communication surrounding this “mythical” beast.

FYS 110R HA! Laughter, Humor, Comedy

Richard Bowman (Religion)

Jokes, sketch comedy, stand-up comedy, late night comics, sit-coms, rom-coms. Comedy is an integral part of human life. Comedy can amuse and entertain but still offend. Laughter can wound as well as heal, condemn as well as commend. Humor can instruct, critique, and transform society. View, read, and think about comedy and comedians. Ha! FYS doesn’t get any better than this!!

FYS 110S What Does it Mean to be Human?

Stephen Minister (Philosophy)

This course will explore some of the fundamental questions of life with philosophers from Plato to the present day. What does it mean to be human? Why are we here? What matters in life? What’s our relationship to others, to society, and to the world? How should we live? We will study a variety of answers to these questions as we think through them deeply for ourselves.

FYS 110T Making Monsters out of the ‘Other’: Philosophical Investigations of Inhumanity

Julie Swantstrom (Religion)

What does it mean to be not quite human, to be a monster? Philosophers have long discussed the boundaries between humanity and inhumanity. Understanding the strategies used to deem people sub-human is crucial to recognizing and resisting such determinations today. Students follow philosophers’ footsteps, tracing shifts in defining monstrosity. Moving from the ancient period to the modern day, students explore the ways in which certain types of people—women, for example—have been described as monstrous; assignments and projects give students the chance to critique and respond to the methods used to determine the monstrous.

FYS 110U The Curies, a Remarkable Family

Amy Engebretson (Physics)

Members of the Curie family were awarded a total of three Nobel Prizes in nuclear physics and chemistry. In addition to their scientific research, the Curies were very engaged in the world around them. They felt a deep civic responsibility to France and Marie’s native Poland. As we trace this remarkable family’s history, we will discuss the responsibility of scientists for the uses of their research, the effect of honors on research, the challenges faced by women scientists, the strength gained through family ties and other topics. We will also discuss the science behind the many discoveries of the Curies.

FYS 110V Put Me in, Coach: The Reality of Disability in Our Society

Matthew Johnson (Education)

This course will introduce students to a variety of readings and activities to promote the development of perspective-taking, critical thinking, and constructive discussion skills necessary to analyze the experiences of children and adults with varying abilities (e.g., autism, Down syndrome, and others). The focus will be on the process of formulating thoughtful, intellectually appropriate responses to difficult questions. This course will also help students develop their ability to use written and oral communication as tools of thought, analysis, and argumentation.

FYS 110W Myth in Movies

Rocki Wentzel (Classics)

This course will examine the way in which Greco-Roman myths, such as those of Pygmalion, Demeter and Persephone, and Orpheus, permeate film. We will begin with the hero’s journey in Star Wars and then look at direct adaptations of myths, such as Hercules and Clash of the Titans. We will finish with more subtle appearances of myth in films and TV, including Ex Machina, Room, and Stranger Things.

FYS 110X Verdier: The Ideals by which We Wish to Live Our Lives

JJ Gohl (English)

Responsibility. Courage. Compassion. Honesty. Friendship. Faith. Persistence. As students begin their educational journey at Augustana, we will delve into the virtues and values that have guided individuals and communities throughout history. This seminar will highlight writings from Thomas Aquinas, William J. Bennett, the Dalai Lama, Krista Tippett, Henry David Thoreau, and Tim O'Brien. We will analyze how traits of good character fit with Augustana's five core values: Christian, Liberal Arts, Excellence, Community, and Service. We will discuss how these values build a sturdy foundation and become a compass for the way we wish to live our lives.

FYS Y Prairie Roots: Discovering Heritage

Monica Lhotzky (Modern Foreign Languages)

The book *Giants in the Earth* will serve as the cornerstone of an inquiry into the prairie experience of our ancestors and into how that experience informs and influences the Midwestern identity. Students will research family ethnic identity and heritage as well as the geography of self.

FYS 110Z Staging the Future

Jayna Gearhart Fitzsimmons (Theater)

Have you ever wished for the ability to see into the future? Contemporary playwrights imagine the future in a variety of ways—from sci-fi crime thrillers to dystopian dark comedies—and use drama to pose complex questions about our relationship to technology, our responsibility to our communities, our treatment of natural resources, and the way we define home, love, freedom, and personhood. By exploring new performance texts like *Speed of Light*, *Mr. Burns: a post-electric play*, *Urinetown: The Musical*, and *The Nether*, we will think together about how staging the future might impact the way we live today.