FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

Overview and Contact Information
The First-Year Seminar Program welcomes students to Mount Holyoke College, inviting them to join in the pleasure of an intellectually adventurous education in the liberal arts. In these small, discussion-based seminars, students work with faculty to achieve the first Learning Goal of the Mount Holyoke curriculum, which will form the foundation for their education here: the ability to think analytically and critically by questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and articulating well-reasoned arguments. All First-Year Seminars are writing-intensive.

All entering first-year students must complete a First-Year Seminar in their first semester at Mount Holyoke. Transfer students and Frances Perkins Scholars who enter with sophomore or junior standing are exempt from this requirement, although encouraged to take a First-Year Seminar.

First-year seminars do not meet other graduation requirements and must be approved courses at Mount Holyoke.

All first-year seminars share the same FYSEM subject designation, but they are taught by faculty from departments across the College.

Contact Information
Jennifer Jacoby, Director of the First-Year Seminar Program

https://offices.mtholyoke.edu/academicdeans/firstyear/seminars
(https://offices.mtholyoke.edu/academicdeans/firstyear/seminars/)

Learning Goals

- Students will develop their ability to think analytically and critically by questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and articulating well-reasoned arguments.
- Students will develop their writing skills. All first-year seminar courses are "writing-intensive." This designation means that the process of writing in English is a significant focus of the course. There are frequent opportunities for writing (usually at least 15 pages over the course of the semester in at least four assignments or stages of a larger project). Students have opportunities to draft, receive comments, and revise writing, as well as opportunities to reflect on their writing process and progress. Finally, students meet individually with their professor or SAW mentor — ideally both — for further discussion of their development as writers.

Course Offerings
FYSEM-110 First-Year Seminar

FYSEM-110AC African Cinema
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This seminar will explore the genesis, evolution, and different themes of African cinema. We will also discuss the current issues and challenges facing the production, distribution, and critique of films made by Africans in Africa and about Africa. Lectures will be coupled with screening of films.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
S. Gadjigo
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110AM Art and Words
Fall. Credits: 4
True, a picture is worth a thousand words, but how do we know which words to use exactly? In this seminar, we will focus on the work of language in relation to the visual arts, and learn to distinguish between different kinds of writing, including art history, art criticism, poetry and fiction. We will visit the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum and the Skinner Museum, and develop provocative ideas about original works of art. We will practice critical thinking and writing on our own, and work collaboratively on various projects. We will find a deeper relationship between words and the arts by expanding our definition of writing to include speaking thoughtfully, listening actively, and cultivating leadership skills by striking idea-driven discussions on the arts.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. Sinha
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110AS Art and Society
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course explores the interconnections between art and society using a sociological lens. We will examine topics such as the social construction of cultural authenticity, the relationship between cultural capital and group boundaries; and the legitimation of art forms.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
P. Banks
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110AV Women, Politics, and Activism in U.S. History
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
From the founding of the United States to the present, how have women taken the lead to act on their visions of a just, righteous, or sustainable world? Where have they planted their feet on colonized ground and insisted on their own sovereignty, freedom, or citizenship? When have they agitated successfully for fundamental change, whether from homes, fields, and factory floors, or from the halls of power? This course addresses conflicting perspectives within women's politics, with attention to histories of racism, radicalism, feminism, and conservatism.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
M. Renda
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110BD Rooted Movements: Black Dance Culture
Fall. Credits: 4
In this course, we will look at movement as a dance form and as political activism. This will be a literary, media-based, and technical exploration of the history and influence of Black Dance culture. This class will concentrate on understanding the roots, influences, and Africanist presence in American dance culture. Students will be required to think critically and analytically while articulating their thoughts about the material orally and in writing. The classroom experience will seek to understand and appreciate the historical, political, cultural, and social contexts that influenced the creation of Black Dance culture.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
S. Barron
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110BT Talking Robots
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
Have you ever wondered why Siri or Alexa doesn't understand things you say? Or wondered if actual robots can understand language as well as the ones we see in movies? In this seminar we will learn about social robots and what it takes for robots to converse with humans. We will read research conducted by computer scientists, linguists, and psychologists, as well as investigate representations of social robots in popular media and literature.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
H. Pon-Barry
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110BX Where Are the Brain's Limits?
Spring. Credits: 4
How does the brain enable otherwise ordinary people to display extraordinary abilities? This course will challenge our understanding of ourselves and each other by using a collection of stories, peer-reviewed research, and podcasts to compare popular media's portrayal of these individuals against science's current understanding of the brain.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. White
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CA Cleopatra and Rome: Gender, Power, and Politics in the Ancient World
Spring. Credits: 4
Cleopatra, last of the dynasty that ruled ancient Egypt for three centuries, was renowned for her learning and wit, her beauty and ambition, and for being both the mistress of Julius Caesar and wife of Marc Antony. A controversial figure in antiquity, Cleopatra has enjoyed a remarkable afterlife in modern literature, drama, and cinema. In this course we will attempt to recover the historical Cleopatra by placing her in the social and political context of her time, including the role of women in ancient societies and the political power struggles at the end of the Roman Republic, and then by analyzing her portrayal in ancient literature and art, culminating in a discussion of Cleopatra's image today.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
G. Sumi
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CB Cinema and the Brain
Fall. Credits: 4
Cinema is a form of art that uniquely captures and portrays the human mind. In this course we will explore how mental experience is encoded in the brain, using film as our object of study. Students will, through movies, analyze major topics in psychology and neuroscience such as memory, mental time travel, addiction, and empathy. Course readings and class discussion will further offer students the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills in order to better understand the multiple layers of cognitive processes and behaviors depicted in movies.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
M. Sabariego
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CE College
Fall. Credits: 4
In this course, we will study college from a variety of perspectives. What is a college? What is the history of college? Why do individuals go to college? What are the economic and social returns to attending college? What is the financial model of a college? What are revenues and costs? How does a college determine what price to charge (tuition, aid: need based and merit)? How does college admissions work (early decision, affirmative action, SAT scores, and need blind admissions)? Who is admitted and why? How is a college run? What does the administration do? What determines the curriculum and majors? What are the challenges facing colleges?
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
M. Robinson
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CL Representative Works of Modern Chinese Literature
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
The twentieth century started with the downfall of the Chinese monarchy, numerous humiliations at the hands of Western countries, and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. In the spirit of reform and renaissance, a group of young writers, educated in both China and the West, spearheaded a new direction in Chinese literature. This group of writers abandoned the classical Chinese language, was keenly interested in social development and betterment, attacked Confucian tradition, and adopted Western ideals. The class will read representative works of these writers and try to understand their sociopolitical impact, while appreciating the artistic qualities of these writings.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
Y. Wang
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CM Coming of Age on Screen
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
In this course we will trace the representation of teenage girls in television and film from the 1950s to the present as a way to better understand how moving images shape culture. We will look closely at the notion of "entertainment" and at the ways in which moving image texts create ways of seeing and meaning.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
R. Blaetz
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CP What's to Be Done About Capitalism?
Fall. Credits: 4
From the writings of Adam Smith in the 18th century to present-day arguments by Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the benefits and costs of capitalism in human society have been hotly debated. Do the benefits of capitalism outweigh the costs? Is it possible or desirable to "tame" markets to maintain their good elements while minimizing the harm? How has a debate dominated by Europeans and North Americans considered or overlooked perspectives from the rest of the world? In exploring these questions, we will engage with some of the key thinkers on capitalism from Adam Smith and Karl Marx through major thinkers in both the developed and developing world to the present day.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
C. Mitchell
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110CU Introduction to Latin American Cultures
Fall. Credits: 4
Examines the confrontation, assimilation, and transformation of Indigenous, African, and European cultures in Latin America from the sixteenth century to the present. Focuses on the processes in which distinctive self-images emerged in the region and how these images have been challenged and changed over time. Uses films, literature, and folk traditions to complement scholarly analysis of the emergence of a New World mentality.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
A. Pitetta
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CW Goodbye, Conventional Wisdom
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
One of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education is to draw on a broad base of knowledge in order to interrogate common assumptions. No one exemplifies this critical approach better than French philosopher Michel Foucault. One of the most influential thinkers of recent times, Foucault revolutionized several academic disciplines and even questioned the very notion of a discipline itself. He did so by revealing the history and transformations of ideas now viewed as self-evident. This first-year seminar invites students to develop similar analytical skills. Following Foucault’s lead, the course pays special attention to preconceptions about government, freedom, identity, and sexuality.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
J. Crumbaugh
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CX Climate Change: Myth or Reality
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
Described by some as “...the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people,” and “the most important environmental issue of our time” by others, climate change has become a significant polarizing issue in our society. This course examines the science of climate change. How does the climate system work, what do we know about past (geologic) climate change and what is the evidence that humans are warming the planet? What are the implications of a warmer world?
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. Werner
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110CZ C.S. Lewis
Fall. Credits: 4
A professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at both Cambridge and Oxford, C.S. Lewis was one of the most famous public intellectuals in the 20th century. He is best known for his children’s books (The Chronicles of Narnia) and his Christian apologetics (Mere Christianity), but he also wrote widely, examining things like literary criticism (An Experiment in Criticism), the existence of a universal moral code (The Abolition of Man), the nature of physical laws (Miracles), and the types of love (The Four Loves). This seminar features a lot of reading, exploring how these works, other essays, and Lewis’ autobiography (Surprised By Joy) become a means of thinking through questions of perennial interest.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
J. Hartley
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110DC Chinese Diasporic Communities Around the World: History, Identity, and Race
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
How does a study of the Chinese diasporic communities in Southeast Asia, the U.S., and other parts of the world help us rethink concepts of 'Chinese-ness'? We seek to answer the question in this introductory history seminar on the Chinese diaspora. Coverage spans from the 1500s to the present. Readings focus on the question of Chinese-ness as constructed and negotiated by different groups and individuals. Themes include imperialism, race, ethnicity, gender, nationalism, transnationalism, orientalism, hegemony, and globalization.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
R. Chu
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110DM The Mathematics of Perspective Drawing
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
How do we calculate the optimal viewing distance of a painting? If we are drawing a building, how do we decide which lines are parallel and which intersect? Renaissance artists answered both questions using the idea of linear perspective. We will use the mathematics of perspective drawing to solve visual puzzles, create drawings, and analyze works from the collection of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. Readings and writings will invite students to think about the nature of perception and how we describe the world around us.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
J. Sidman
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110DR American Dreams
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
In this First Year Seminar, students will focus on their critical thinking and writing skills by exploring the meaning of the American Dream. For many people, the United States signifies possibility and individual freedom — indeed, these might be the very ideas and aspirations that bring students to Mount Holyoke! We will spend the semester exploring the history of this idea, thinking alongside classic works like The Autobiography of Ben Franklin and Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, as well as more contemporary texts like Slouching Toward Bethlehem by Joan Didion and Drear America by Jose Antonio Vargas. Students will have an opportunity to examine their own assumptions about the "American Dream," to learn to interpret and critically evaluate texts, and to formulate their own reasoned arguments in essay form.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
L. Markovits
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
Fall. Credits: 4
Advances in computing allow entities in business and government to gather and analyze data in increasingly large quantities. We will try to understand what data science is, why it matters, and what knowledge is needed by consumers and practitioners of data science. We will look at case studies drawn from science, industry, and government and use these to discuss the societal impacts and ethical issues that should be on the minds of data scientists.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
J. Sidman
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110DY Freedom Dreams and Historical Memory
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
How do the stories we tell about the past shape our connection to one another and our ability to imagine emancipatory futures? This course will consider how people in -- and in relation to -- the United States have envisioned more just and inclusive communities, launched democratic initiatives, and reached for solidarity in the context of ongoing histories of harm. We will explore ways to mobilize such visions and struggles even as we work to reveal the histories of injustice obscured by celebratory nationalist narratives. What can we learn about the possibilities for achieving and sustaining democracy by reflecting on African American, Indigenous, and working-class histories and cultures?
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
M. Renda
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110EL Politics of the Self
Fall. Credits: 4
In an era where Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are ubiquitous, self-presentation is a constant concern and practice. What are the politics of self-presentation and -cultivation, if any? Do the choices we make about diet, how to dress, where to shop, and our friends have any political valence? To what extent can these choices be thought of as a form of resistance to popular culture in an era where rebellion is marketed to us? This course will probe these questions by considering the connections among self, appearances, discipline, and the way these are dependent upon the recognition of others. Readings will include the Stoics, American transcendentalists, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Foucault.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. Aslam
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110EQ Disaster Science: Earthquakes, Floods, and Volcanoes
Fall. Credits: 4
This course explores the sometimes catastrophic intersection of geology with people's lives. Earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods are geologic events; they are also natural hazards that pose significant challenges to communities in high risk areas. Where are these risky areas? Why? Is it possible to predict when and where catastrophic geologic events will occur? How do we assess geological risks? Using case studies from around the world, we explore these three natural hazards in the context of evolving geologic research on plate tectonics and climate change.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
M. Markley
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110FE The Science of Food and Cooking
Fall. Credits: 4
This course is rooted in hands-on exploration (including a lab experience) of the science of food and cooking. After being introduced to the key chemical and biochemical molecules that comprise food, we will discover how to manipulate these molecules during cooking. The topics that we will discuss include taste, baking, fermentation, whips, and foams. Related cultural and historical approaches to food and cooking will be discussed throughout the course. Readings will complement our hands-on explorations and lab work. Be prepared to taste/eat food and work in small groups throughout the semester and to experiment in the kitchen!
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
K. McMenimen
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110FJ Celebrated Science: Fluorescent Jellyfish, River Blindness, and CRISPR
Fall. Credits: 4
What do the Nobel Prizes have to do with everyday life? Are Nobel Laureates extraordinary scientists, or singled out from others equally worthy? During the semester you will read autobiographies, essays, short fiction, and scientific papers, and try many styles of writing. When the 2022 Nobel Prizes are announced in October, we will study press coverage to analyze how scientific discoveries are reported. You will each become an expert on a Nobel laureate, placing scientific achievements in historical context. Our semester will end at the time of the awards ceremonies in Stockholm with our own celebratory banquet.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
R. Fink
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110GF God, Free Will, and Morality
Fall. Credits: 4
This first year seminar is a critical thinking boot camp. Students will learn to charitably interpret, logically reconstruct, and critically evaluate arguments. The arguments come from classic and contemporary readings in philosophy about God, free will, and morality. We will focus on questions such as: Does God exist? Is it rational to believe in God? What should I do if I want to do the right thing? When is it ok to criticize other cultures? How much do I owe to others? Do we have free will? Can we ever be held responsible for anything? Students will come out of the class better thinkers, better writers, and better equipped to tackle difficult questions like these with rigor and care.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
K. Vavova
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110GP Gender and Power in the History of Mount Holyoke College

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Mary Lyon, founder in 1837 of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, held out to her students the possibility that they might transform the world around them—a tall order for young women who were excluded from proper citizenship and political power. Duty, discipline, and economy would make it possible. What transformations ensued? And what can we learn from them about the complexities of gender and power in worlds shaped by racism, colonialism, capitalist development, national aspirations, Protestant dominance, and normative regimes of gender, sexuality, and bodily comportment? This course will introduce students to the richness of the College Archives and the possibilities of historical thinking.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

M. Renda

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110GR Greek Tragedy, American Drama, and Film

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

The Greeks, beginning with Homer, saw the world from an essentially tragic perspective. The searing question of why human societies and the human psyche repeatedly break down in tragic ruin and loss, particularly in the conflicts of war and in the betrayal of personal bonds of love and friendship, fascinated them as it still does us. The most consistent themes that emerged from such examination are the tragedy of self-knowledge and illusion, the tragedy of desire, the tragedy of crime and redemption, and tragedy as a protest against social injustice. This course examines the critical influence of the three most important Athenian dramatists, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, on the works of Nobel winner Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and important filmmakers, who have tried to recreate the powerful atmosphere and impact of the Greek tragic theater or reworked the tragic themes of classical myth for their own purposes in the modern age.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

B. Arnold

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110HD Childhood

Fall. Credits: 4

Did you really learn everything you needed to know in kindergarten? In this course we will explore how children's development, with a focus on early childhood (ages 0-8), is shaped by the family, school, community, cultural, and policy contexts in which they participate and live. We will read research conducted by psychologists, sociologists, and education researchers, as well as investigate representations of childhood in popular media and literature.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

J. Jacoby

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110HP Happiness and the Good Life

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

This course introduces the skills needed to navigate college, with a focus on philosophical writing, analysis and argument. Our topic is happiness and 'the good life.' Happiness is something we all want but often struggle to define. We will look at what philosophers have said about the nature and importance of happiness in our lives, as well as recent positive psychology literature on what makes us happy and why. While we draw from multiple disciplines the emphasis of the class is on philosophical analysis and argument. Students will learn to integrate campus resources, such as LITS and the SAW Center, into their coursework, as they hone skills in clear, rigorously argued, analytic writing.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

L. Sizer

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110HT Herstory: Writing Your History

Fall. Credits: 4

This course invites students to think about their place in this historic institution. Given Mount Holyoke's unique place as a learning space for women, students will have the opportunity to explore the institution's history. Students will also reflect on how they are a part of the institution's history and the multiple histories they live through and create as individuals who are part of a broader community.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

A. Mandal

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110HY Hybrid Identities: Latin America, Latinx Communities, and Spain

Fall and Spring. Credits: 4

With a historical and transnational approach, this course will explore bi/multicultural identities and communities in the Spanish-speaking world, primarily of the 20th and 21st centuries. Mestizos, Cuban-Americans, Chinese-Argentinians, Afro-Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Moroccans and West Africans in Spanish cities...Is Catalonia Spain? Through literary, visual, and theoretical texts, we will put a wide range of ethnic and linguistic encounters in dialogue with one another and examine how hybrid communities and identities, particularly in an era of global homogenization, reclaim rights and space, are represented, aspired to, separated, and often slip away when we try to define them.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

M. Saltzman

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110ID Shapeshifting and the Idea of Change

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

How do we change? What happens when we cannot change and want to, or change when we would rather not? How can we induce changes, individually, collectively, environmentally to occur? This seminar examines the figure of shapeshifting – bodies and beings that change their shape(s) – to think about how we alter our material reality and language, or how it alters us. Special attention will be given to fiction and creative nonfiction narratives of transition, illness/disability, environmental disaster, and afro-futurism.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

K. Singer

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110IP Gender and Nation in Irish Poetry

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

In this first-year seminar, we will read Irish poetry from 1798 to the contemporary moment, examining how a variety of poets engage with urgent questions of gender and nation as well as the gendered tropes of nationalism. We will pay particular attention to interventions by feminist and queer poets and Irish poets of color who resist and in some cases revolutionize dominant poetic traditions and forms. Poets will include Jane Wilde, James Clarence Mangan, W.B. Yeats, Oscar Wilde, Seamus Heaney, Eavan Boland, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, Mary Dorsey, Doireann Ni Ghriofa, Nyaradzo Masunda, and Sinead Morrissey.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

A. Martin

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110LG Slang: Community/Power/Language

Fall. Credits: 4

Language is a living system. It grows and changes, despite efforts to preserve it. This course examines how slang participates in these changes. What separates slang from standard language, and who sets the standard? Through readings in linguistics and literature, this course examines how we use language to connect, create, and control.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

M. Shea

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110LR Language as a Source of Identity

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Have you ever wondered how a language's socio-historical and political context shape our everyday language? Would you like to explore how a language or linguistic variation may have shaped experiences in your life and the lives of the ones around you? In this course, we will explore how language ideologies, at different historical times and places, have an impact on our current language identities and community belonging.

We will first focus on Spanish in contact with indigenous languages, then Spanish in the U.S., and we will finish by exploring your own language experience.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive

E. García Frazier

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110MG Myth, Magic, and Vibration: Exploring the Human Bond to the Natural World

Fall. Credits: 4

Humans could simply view nature as a repository of material resources for our use. Many would argue that this is the primary perspective of modern society. And yet mythology, history, and science show that there is a much deeper connection to the natural world—one that provides spiritual and psychological sustenance as well as multiple forms of physical support. In this first-year seminar, we will explore the human bond to nature through readings from a wide variety of sources and disciplines, and also through short field trips out into the local landscape.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

T. Farnham

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110MK Race in the Marketplace

Fall. Credits: 4

This course looks at the central concerns of consumer culture through the lens of race and ethnicity. Through exploring issues such as multicultural marketing and advertising, discrimination in e-commerce, consumer boycotts, and urban food deserts, students will gain theoretical and empirical insight on the ways that racial and ethnic boundaries shape, and are shaped by, consumption.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

P. Banks

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110ML U.S. Multiethnic Literatures: Refracting America

Fall. Credits: 4

This course examines African American, Asian American, Chicana/o-Latina/o, and Native American literature and cultural politics. Examining the historical intersection of race, gender, and sexuality, we will explore themes of cultural identity, segregation and community formation, citizenship, labor, class, and family. Authors may include Toni Morrison, Danzy Senna, Josefina López, Sherman Alexie, Junot Díaz, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Joy Kogawa.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

I. Day

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110MM Women and Music: Sounding Community

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

This course surveys music in a range of women’s, and womxn’s, communities and ensembles—from medieval convents and “all-girl” swing bands to Cuba’s Iubbo Okun and the Transcendence Gospel Choir. While the focus will be on Western art music, we will also encounter music from Afghanistan and the First Nations, working songs and playground songs, and rock/pop groups and DJ collectives. Performers will visit the class, and we will learn about the history of music ensembles at Mount Holyoke College. You do not need to be a musician or know how to read music; listening across cultures and genres, we will contemplate the opportunities and challenges of womxn-only spaces for music in the twenty-first century.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

A. Mueller

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110ND Nomads!

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

In this first year seminar, we will learn how to use primary textual and visual sources to critically analyze everyday life of the nomadic communities living in Central Eurasian and Inner Asia steppes, such as the Mongols and the Scythians; and of the Lakota and the Comanche peoples in the Great Plains in North America. Their histories are often told against the rise of their rival powers, mostly sedentary ones. Students will listen to interviews, speak with leading historians on these subjects, study art, and read accounts by and about these nomads. Taken together, we study how certain communities came to be represented and misrepresented in the history and contemporary imagination of others.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

L. Wu

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110NN The Nonhuman
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course will examine representations of figures not considered human, focusing on the nonhuman animal, with attention to the monster and the machine. We will analyze the literary and visual techniques with which these figures are depicted, the social and political concerns they address, and the tenuous boundary between human and nonhuman. Authors and filmmakers may include Cronenberg, Fowler, Hitchcock, Hurston, Kafka, London, Martel, Poe, Reichardt, Sewell, Spiegelman, Wells, and Woolf.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
E. Young
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110NP New American Opera
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
Since 1980 more than 300 operas have been premiered in the United States. These works collectively represent a major change in creative direction, creating new opportunities for hitherto unrepresented and underrepresented voices. New development processes have allowed the art form to be newly responsive to the issues of our time. We will attend at least one performance of a new opera during the course, practice critical thinking and writing on our own, and work collaboratively on various projects thus exploring this new and rapidly evolving scene, listening deeply, and exploring texts that are shaping a brave new world of music.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
T. Ng
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PC Op-ed: Writing on Politics, Culture, and the Arts
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
We will read and discuss current writing on politics, culture and the arts. Drawn from a variety of print and online sources (including The New Yorker, Arts and Letters Daily, and Bomb), subjects will range from literature, cinema, and art to international politics, crime, and celebrity culture. Using strategies and techniques learned from the readings, students will write essays and articles of their own.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
P. Scotto
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PD The Politics of Disruption
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
Uber, Twitter, Facebook, Google – smart technologies have transformed our world, disrupting old patterns of life, communication, work, and politics. As new technologies push us into an uncertain future, thinking critically about the positive and the negative effects of disruption has never been more important. Using a variety of materials, ranging from political philosophy and historical case studies to popular articles, podcasts, television and film, this course will help students develop their college-level critical thinking skills through exploratory and argumentative writing, personal reflection, engaged learning, and analytical discussion.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. Hilton
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PE Performing the Self
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
How do we represent ourselves as we document our lives and communicate with others? In this seminar we will move beyond critiques of selfie culture, instead analyzing self-representation as an important avenue for forming identities. We will study forms of self-representation across history and will focus on visual and new media as platforms for performing selfhood. Students will discuss the politics and aesthetics of self-fashioning across these media forms, and will execute multiple forms of self-expression, including the argumentative essay, the op-ed, the blog post, and the tweet.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
H. Goodwin
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PK Pharmocracy: Humans, Animals, Power and Knowledge in the Pharmaceutical Era
Fall. Credits: 4
Since the 1950s, the pharmaceutical industry, one of the world's largest economic sectors and a core constituent of globalized corporate power today, has built a transnational empire that affects not only health and food chains, science, politics, stock markets, and the private/public distinction, but has completely changed what it means to be human or animal. We will study several key examples of these transformations, and how Pharma produces knowledge on the backs of impoverished humans and animals as trial subjects. This course will also help students develop their composition skills which, through content and form, can decompose the structures that sustain corporate power.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
C. Gundermann
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PQ Politics of Inequality: Social Movements in the U.S.
Fall. Credits: 4
The course explores comparative racial and ethnic politics in the U.S. during the twentieth century. We will analyze the creation and maintenance of structural inequalities through laws and policies targeted at persons of color in the areas of healthcare, transportation, immigration, labor, racial segregation, and education. Through readings, lectures and films, we will discuss critical histories of community struggle against social inequality, registering the central impact that race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship have had on efforts toward social justice.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
D. Hernández
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110PS Self-Portraiture
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
How do we represent ourselves? How can the self -- that is to say, subjective experience, private life, identity, consciousness -- be translated into written form? How, in turn, does writing fashion and construct the self? Throughout history, authors and thinkers have engaged these questions in countless texts and textual forms -- in essays, confessions, autobiographies, and poetry. This seminar will sample influential and innovative works of literary self-portrayal from around the world, exploring how a wide variety of writers have rendered themselves in language, narrative, and text. Authors may include Augustine, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Joyce, Nabokov, and Plath.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
S. Roychoudhury
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PT Politics and Truth
Fall. Credits: 4
What is the relationship between truth and politics? Does democracy require truth or pervert it? Can truth thrive in any type of government? What’s really at stake here? In this course, we will explore a variety of classic texts, ranging from such authors as Plato to Karl Marx to Hannah Arendt to Martin Luther King, Jr. to contemporary feminist theorists. We will focus on developing the ability to reflect on your own beliefs, analyze authors’ arguments, and to articulate and defend your own perspective.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
R. Darrow
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
Advisory: for students in their first two semesters at the College only

FYSEM-110PX Philosophy Through Science Fiction
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course introduces the skills needed to navigate college, with a focus on philosophical writing, analysis, and argument. We will pair classical and contemporary readings in philosophy with science fiction films and short stories in order to explore philosophical issues such as the nature of reality, free will, personal identity, artificial intelligence and the nature of mind. While science fiction will be used to animate and explore these issues, the emphasis of the class is on philosophical analysis and argument. Students will learn to integrate campus resources, such as LITS and the SAW Center, into their coursework, as they hone skills in clear, rigorously argued, analytic writing.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
L. Sizer
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PY Anthropology of Play
Spring. Credits: 4
We associate play with childhood, a time of spontaneous and creative activity, in contrast to the boring routine of adult responsibilities. And yet play is more than just fun and games. It is through play that children develop lasting cognitive and social skills. For adults too, there can be serious play--play that has real consequence--play that shapes the intimate lives of individuals, as well as entire social formations. In this course, we will explore play cross culturally, from the Balinese cockfight to American football, from gambling to role playing. We will design games based on the anthropological readings in order to appreciate the game-like qualities of many domains of life.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
J. Roth
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110PZ Interweaving Themes in Physics and Art
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
Physics and art represent the world in seemingly different ways. They share, however, many common themes: the guiding role of symmetry, the tension between order and disorder, and the emergence of structure from many simple constituents. We will explore some of the big ideas in physics, including quantum mechanics, relativity, entropy, and chaos theory, by looking at how these underlying themes are represented in the visual arts. Islamic tessellations, Japanese Suminagashi paper marbling, and works by contemporary artists will guide us toward an intuitive understanding of some of the most exciting ideas in physics, without the need for any prior physics background.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
S. Smith
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110RB Race and Science
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
In Race and Science, we will focus on three themes: our current understanding of human variation based on what we know about human evolutionary history and population genetics; how science has been used to both support and undermine racial categories and hierarchies; and how racial categorization impacts human health and well-being. We will explore these themes through readings, videos, class discussions, student expert panels, and research papers.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
R. Brodie
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

**FYSEM-110RV Embodied Archives: Movement as a Way of Knowing**  
*Fall. Credits: 4*  
This course explores the premise of our bodies as archives, through which movement can become a means of knowing, learning, and deepening connections across varied disciplines and modes of thought. The course asserts that the body can be a critical site of knowledge production and discovery, shaping the ways in which we engage in creative and scholarly work. We will study theoretical concepts prevalent in dance research, and analyze those ideas at work in both the choreography of contemporary artists and our own creative bibliographies. In order to contextualize and challenge our thinking, guest speakers are woven into the course, providing varied perspectives on dance, movement and the notion of archive. The course is designed for anyone interested in embodied and creative practice. Dance experience may be useful, but is not required. 

*Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement*  
*Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive*  
*B. Diewald*  
*Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.*

**FYSEM-110RT Reproductive Rights and the State**  
*Fall. Credits: 4*  
What is the role of governments in regulating human reproduction? How has this changed throughout the 20th and 21st century? Is reproduction an area of our private lives that should be left outside the realm of government? Or is the state actually needed to safeguard our reproductive rights? This course analyzes the history of reproductive policies in the US and compares it with cases from the global South. From family planning to population control, from woman’s right to reproductive justice, we will analyze the evolution of language to name this policy arena and the way this has affected policy design. Through the use of a variety of primary and secondary sources, this course will help students improve their critical thinking, argumentative writing, and analytical skills. 

*Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement*  
*Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive*  
*C. Fernandez Anderson*  
*Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.*
FYSEM-110TS The Work of Translation
Fall. Credits: 4
Mount Holyoke's mission is "purposeful engagement in the world" but in a multilingual world, our goal can only be achieved with the help of translators and interpreters. As the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 46% increase in translation work 2012-2022, this course will consider translation as a scholarly, professional and lay activity. Challenging stereotypes of translation as derivative or faulty, we reflect on the wealth of languages and cultures at Mount Holyoke College and how the curriculum depends on the work of translation. Students discuss what is gained, lost or simply transformed in translation. This introduction to translation studies is especially valuable to students with a background or interest in languages.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
S. Bacon
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110TG Transgressive Music
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
The seminar will introduce and discuss various musical works and genres that fall under rock critic Ann Powers' definitions of "violator art," exploring them within the context of their wanton and disturbing appeal, as well as their often scandalous social impact. Topics will include the Second Viennese School, free jazz, protest music, punk rock, hip-hop, works such as J. S. Bach's 'Cantata No. 179,' Strauss's 'Salome,' Stravinsky's 'Le Sacre du printemps,' Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit,' George Crumb's 'Black Angels,' and artists such as Laurie Anderson, the Sex Pistols, Missy Elliot, and Nirvana.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
D. Sanford
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
Notes: Students should be prepared for mature themes and some coarse language.

FYSEM-110TE Teaching Stories
Fall. Credits: 4
This course explores short fiction as brilliantly crafted exemplars of "teaching stories", stories that use the resources of short narrative fiction to probe life's deepest questions, such as: what is the meaning of our lives? how do we face our inevitable death? why is there evil and suffering? what does it mean to be human? how should we live? We'll read modern works in the larger tradition of Wisdom Literature, with readings drawn from biblical, Hassidic, classical, folk, and Asian traditions, as well as from notable practitioners of the genre (Chekhov, Tolstoy, Borges, Poe, Chopin). We'll explore how these stories work, how they engage the complexity of the world and of life, and ask what fiction can do that discursive philosophical essays can't.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
P. Scotto
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110SV Sustainable Development and Its Discontents
Fall. Credits: 4
Sustainable development has been the leading paradigm linking economic growth, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability for decades. Yet, global inequality metrics are scarcely improving, and environmental issues like climate change and biodiversity loss are reaching extreme levels. This course examines the concept of sustainable development and various attempts to put it into practice around the world, as well as the limitations and contradictions of predominant approaches to sustainability and economic development. We will then explore alternatives to mainstream development advanced by global social movements, including food sovereignty, degrowth, and climate justice.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
C. Flanders
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110SX Sexuality and Society
Fall. Credits: 4
What is the impact of what is included and excluded in formal sex education programs? What does it mean to maintain good sexual health? How does sexual identity relate to behavior and attraction? As a class, we will explore sexuality at an individual, interpersonal, community, and societal level. Primary topics will include sex education, sexual identity, health, consent, relationships, and media portrayals of sexuality.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
K. Tucker
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110TC Why Are We Divided: Inequality, Politics, and Populism
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course explores the intersection of inequality and politics in the United States. We begin the course with an examination of racial, gender, and class inequalities in the U.S. The next section of the class considers the ways in which these inequalities both reflect and influence political divisions in the U.S. Today. We end the course with an analysis of populism. While focusing primarily on the Trump campaign and presidency, we will also examine populist movements throughout the globe.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
C. Flanders
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110TP How to Build an Octopus: An Exploration of Animal Bodies
Fall. Credits: 4
How have animal bodies developed to meet the challenges of living on earth? We will study the common needs of animals — such as eating, breathing, and moving — and the design constraints these place on living bodies. We will also examine the manner in which cells come together to make biomaterials like bones, beaks, and beetle wings, and the way a squishy animal fashions a skeleton from water. Finally, we will trace these same principles of tissue design to better understand the potentials and pitfalls of lab-grown organs.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
S. Bacon
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Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
D. Sanford
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
Notes: Students should be prepared for mature themes and some coarse language.

FYSEM-110TS The Work of Translation
Fall. Credits: 4
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Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
S. Bacon
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110TE Teaching Stories
Fall. Credits: 4
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Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
P. Scotto
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110SV Sustainable Development and Its Discontents
Fall. Credits: 4
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Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
K. Surprise
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110SX Sexuality and Society
Fall. Credits: 4
What is the impact of what is included and excluded in formal sex education programs? What does it mean to maintain good sexual health? How does sexual identity relate to behavior and attraction? As a class, we will explore sexuality at an individual, interpersonal, community, and societal level. Primary topics will include sex education, sexual identity, health, consent, relationships, and media portrayals of sexuality.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
K. Tucker
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110TC Why Are We Divided: Inequality, Politics, and Populism
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course explores the intersection of inequality and politics in the United States. We begin the course with an examination of racial, gender, and class inequalities in the U.S. The next section of the class considers the ways in which these inequalities both reflect and influence political divisions in the U.S. Today. We end the course with an analysis of populism. While focusing primarily on the Trump campaign and presidency, we will also examine populist movements throughout the globe.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
K. Tucker
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110TP How to Build an Octopus: An Exploration of Animal Bodies
Fall. Credits: 4
How have animal bodies developed to meet the challenges of living on earth? We will study the common needs of animals — such as eating, breathing, and moving — and the design constraints these place on living bodies. We will also examine the manner in which cells come together to make biomaterials like bones, beaks, and beetle wings, and the way a squishy animal fashions a skeleton from water. Finally, we will trace these same principles of tissue design to better understand the potentials and pitfalls of lab-grown organs.

Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
S. Bacon
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Fall. Credits: 4
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Apply to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
C. Shread
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110UA Adolescence in the U.S. Today  
Fall. Credits: 4  
What does it mean to be an adolescent? Popular culture has a lot to say about this life stage, not all of it rooted in evidence. In this course, we will examine the range of adolescent experiences in the United States and critically question common assumptions. We will consider how social context and relationships influence youth as they navigate school, college and career expectations, extracurricular activities, and social media. Our interdisciplinary approach will draw on readings from psychology, sociology, history, education as well as media resources.  
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement  
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive  
K. O’Carroll  
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110UF The Agency of Things: Reflections on Stuff and Material Culture  
Spring. Credits: 4  
What is a thing? What is stuff? Water bottles, trash, smartphones, photos, dirt, a broken printer, your favorite socks... Where do they come from and where are they going? In this course we’ll gain an understanding of the political, historical, philosophical, ecological, and affective agency of objects and non-human things. We’ll use examples primarily from modern-day Latin America, Spain, and U.S.-border areas to study how artists, writers, collectors, environmentalists, and migrants engage with the stuff around us. Our study will be enlightened by several excursions to see collections of non-human things, such as the MHC Skinner Museum and the Botanic Gardens. Students will also have a chance to decipher the meaning and global trajectories of their own stuff, in addition to making things in Mount Holyoke’s Fimbel Maker & Innovation Lab.  
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement  
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive  
M. Saltzman  
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110UN Underworlds (and Otherworlds)  
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4  
Associated with darkness, disorder, and death, the underworld can seem like a realm of punishment. But beneath its darkness, literary underworlds are sites for a character’s evolution. This term, we’ll see how narratives variously adapt the underworld topos. Underworlds and otherworlds connote supernatural encounters and obstacles, but they also represent realms of heightened rationalism or optimistic possibility. We’ll ask what happens in a hero’s passage through an underworld or otherworld that cannot happen anywhere else? How do underworlds expose challenging historical, social, psychological, and philosophical problems? And what happens when the underworld is not an exterior locus but an interior condition? Our principal method of analysis will be the close reading of texts and film.  
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement  
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive  
W. Yu  
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-1100UW Awakenings  
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4  
An exploration of writing, primarily fiction, by U.S. women from around 1900 to now, focusing on the theme of awakenings. We will examine how women writers represent political awakenings, transformations of physical embodiment and psychological consciousness, and discoveries of new literary forms. We will read a diverse group of writers and and foreground interpretive frameworks of race, gender, and sexuality. Authors may include Bechdel, Chang, Chopin, Cisneros, Davis, Dunbar-Nelson, Egan, Far, Gilman, Hurston, Larsen, McCullers, Morrison, Stein, Truong, Wharton, and Yamamoto.  
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement  
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive  
E. Young  
Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.
FYSEM-110WR The West and the Rest: Muslims in Post-9/11 Europe and the U.S.

Fall. Credits: 4

This course traces the administrative and popular categorizations of Muslim populations in Europe and the United States following the events of September 11, 2001. The course examines the mechanisms through which Muslims are designated as a coherent, timeless category associated with backwardness, violence, and an urgent threat. By the end of the semester, the students will gain a critical, comparative perspective to identify and analyze some common mechanisms such as racialization, securitization, and gendering, as well as practices of border-making and border-crossing that travel across time and space to define certain groups as “dangerous others.”

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

E. Babül

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.

FYSEM-110XT 1619: U.S. Slavery and Its Legacy

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

This seminar will examine The New York Times’ 1619 Project – an examination of slavery in the historical and ongoing political and social development of the United States – from many sides. Beginning our approach of this work as a body of scholarly and popular writing, we will critically scrutinize how these arguments are presented and why they do or do not work in their current forms, questions that will include the criticism of the series voiced by professional historians. The seminar is geared for students not only interested in learning about how slavery has shaped diverse aspects of American life, such as its arts, music, economics and politics, but also how authors, write and make arguments for the reading public.

Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

A. Aslam

Restrictions: Mount Holyoke first-year students only, by placement.