Gateway Descriptions

2016/2017 Academic year

GW 100-1: “Freedom or Death! Revolution in Latin America”

This course will analyze different instances of insurgency and revolution in Latin America. The focus will be understanding the ideology of revolutionary movements in Latin America and their (often antagonistic) relation to the United States. We will study the revolutionary as artistic, political and cultural production, analyzing films, novels, posters and music.

GW 100-2: (Mis)representing Reality

Long before the advent of reality television, authors, artists, advertisers, and others have been manipulating the “real.” This course will explore questions about representations of reality, including the relationship between truth and accuracy, and the gray area of perception. Specifically, we will look at photographs and documentaries to examine the way framing and focus can create meaning. We will consider both the facts and public perception of a variety of sources, which may include news stories, fine print, or urban legends. We will question what is presented as reality as a way of sorting through and analyzing the images and experiences that are a part of our increasingly altered world.

GW 100-3: Sitcoms & Society

The half-hour situation comedy has been a part of television since the beginning, with The Honeymooners and I Love Lucy paving the way for later lightweight fare that both reflected the current tastes and mores of the American viewing public and also rebutted or rebuked them. This Gateway will use television sitcoms as primary texts for a course in which students will learn and apply the basics of criticism while also exploring the relationship between television sitcoms and society. After viewing a number of influential and representative sitcoms from 1950-2000, students will write for multiple audiences, including a review for the general public, a semi-autobiographical essay, and a critical paper that depends upon research and secondary sources.

GW 100-4: Writing New Russia: From Gorbachev to Putin

The two last decades of the 20th century brought major changes to life in Russia. The break with the soviet past affected not only politics and economy in the country, but also produced new works of literature that attempted to reflect upon the post-soviet experience. In this class, we will examine the experimental Russian prose of the 20th-21st century and investigate major themes and issues that preoccupy Russian writers today. This discussion-oriented course will focus on literary works (short stories, novellas, and critical essays) that deal with such topics as the communist legacy in the post-soviet Russia, rising nationalism and the experiences of ethnic minorities, and continually changing cultural values. Using literary texts as the basis for our discussions, students will learn how to form
arguments and think critically as they interpret and evaluate intelligently and concisely their ideas and thoughts both in speaking and in formal writing.

GW 100-5: Rebels, Radicals, and Revolutionaries: American Feminist Thought

This course will introduce you to the major historical moments in American Feminist History and ask you to consider the title of this course: were feminists “rebels, radicals, and revolutionaries” who worked steadily towards more and more equal rights for women? Who was included and excluded in these equal rights? Did that change over time? How and why? This Gateway section will be part of the Course Cluster for the Annual Theme, “Women’s Power, Women’s Justice.”

GW 100-6: Happiness

What is happiness? How do we obtain it? Is it even a desirable (or possible) goal in life? In this course, we will examine the nature of happiness, and more importantly develop your writing and critical thinking abilities, by considering a variety of different ideas on the subject.

GW 100-7: American Inequality

Capitalism produces a lot of wealth, and a lot of poverty. Depending on how it’s practiced, it also tends to produce high concentrations of wealth held in relatively few hands. In the U.S., this means that just over one-third of net wealth is held by the top 1% of the population, and that the top 20% of the population owns 89% of all net wealth. Curiously, most Americans have, for a very long time, tolerated (or ignored, or even embraced) high levels of economic and social inequality, often attributing these differences either to a lack of personal effort or to market failure, depending on one’s point of view. To the great extent conservatives and liberals disagree on these explanations, the two sides talk past each other. In this Gateway colloquium we will explore these debates, both historically and in contemporary times. Why Americans tolerate so much inequality offers a window on our nation’s soul, and potentially on yours.

GW 100-8: Women and Revolution in 20th-Century China

The fundamental changes in the lives of Chinese women over the past century serve as an especially appropriate context for a Gateway course. They are extremely relevant to our own lives today: the experiences of Chinese women served as a direct catalyst to the growth and expansion of the “second wave” of feminism in the U.S. during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the legacy of which is still very much with us in the year 2015. In addition to its inspirational quality, the role of women in the Chinese revolution has also sparked debate on questions that still arise among those seeking sexual equality: Can revolution lead to liberation, or not? More fundamentally, what does it mean to achieve “liberation”? Is liberation for women the freedom to do what a man can do? Or is it freedom to be “feminine”? Can women’s liberation, however defined, be accomplished for women, or is it necessary that it be accomplished by women? How does women’s liberation fit into the larger agenda for social revolution—an agenda that in China included the country’s national liberation from imperialism and the liberation of oppressed peasants and workers from undue exploitation? Have Chinese women
How prospered more under the bygone period of revolutionary socialism or under the market economy of today? Wide differences of opinion on these questions will be the subject of readings, discussions, and compositions in this class as each of us strives to understand and ultimately to take a position on the competing conceptions.

**GW 100-9: It Stinks! or Criticism as an Art**

We will evaluate the role of arts criticism both in the past and in our present information-saturated society. The focus will be on music criticism, but criticism in other arts will be discussed as well (theater, dance, etc.). First, we will establish what constitutes professional criticism and the credentials necessary to be a critic. To better appreciate the skills necessary for the profession, we will write criticism as well as evaluate it. As the course unfolds, the value of arts criticism should come into focus even as its future seems increasingly uncertain.

**GW 100-10: Sex, Disease, and Medicine in Medieval/Renaissance Europe**

We will use primary sources and the works of modern historians to examine European understandings of sexuality, disease and medicine from approximately 1200 to 1600. Topics of emphasis will include The Black Death (bubonic plague), religious responses to disease, women's roles in marriage and society, and perceptions of homosexuality. Where connections exist, we will relate these historical topics to issues of contemporary social concern. Student writing and discussion will facilitate synthesis of information from multiple sources, formulation of arguments, and exploration of unanswered questions.

**GW 100-11: Did You Freely Choose This Class?**

Are your choices determined before you make them, perhaps by some combination of your genes and your social environment or perhaps by neural activity that you can't consciously control? If your choices were pre-determined, would that mean that you aren’t responsible for what you do? Would it mean that your future choices have, in a sense, already been made? Would it mean that they aren’t really yours? Or aren’t really choices? The problem of free will is one of the most vexing, enduring, and fascinating puzzles about the human condition. In this course, we will study a variety of experiments from neuroscience and social psychology that have been said to pose serious challenges to the claim that we have free will. We will ask, what exactly do these experiments show about the precursors to our choices? Do they show that we don’t have free will, or have their results been misinterpreted?

**GW 100-12: In Another Country: American Pop Culture**

This course investigates American popular culture, the culture that tries to define us, our tastes, our opinions, our values, our sense of what we’re all about. Using some basic analytic moves from semiotics, we will position ourselves as tourists taking a critical view of the pop cultural landscape.
GW 100-13: The Good Doctor

How important is the doctor-patient relationship in eradicating disease? Why do some specialists have better cure rates than others? Is it dangerous for a doctor to look at her practice as a business rather than as a vocation? These and other questions will be discussed in class and explored in writing, using both first-hand accounts from eminent physicians as well as peer-reviewed research. Students will be exposed to competing ideas about controversial issues, and they will be expected to make judgments and provide their own positions on the best medical practices.

GW 100-14: Why do People Cooperate?

Cooperation is important for addressing many of the challenges faced by society, whether for groups of people in organizations, communities, cities, countries or the world. Accordingly, there has been considerable work devoted to understand how cooperation emerges and how it might be most effectively promoted. This course will survey a wide variety of perspectives on cooperation from the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences. We will explore how biological and psychological explanations of cooperation compare with the structural explanations in economics and political science. Readings from mythology and contemporary fiction will provide yet another perspective on this important topic. Our readings will inform our class discussions and writing assignments in which we critically analyze how people cooperate (or not!).

GW 100-15: Progress: Science, Technology, and the Drive Forward

Artificial intelligence, electric cars, the internet, genetic engineering, plastic, solar power, ... Humanity has been discovering and inventing a lot recently. But it doesn't "just happen." How does all of this progress happen? Where does it come from? What guides it? What controls it? Where is it going? Is it inevitable? Where *should* it go? How *should* it happen? We will think critically, discuss, and write about these topics and others like them. We will look at some advances together as a class, and you'll have opportunities to focus on others of specific interest to you individually.

GW 100-16: Madness: The Portrayal of Mental Illness in Literature and the Media

The portrayal of mental illness in both literature and media will be examined across a historical perspective allowing study of classic pieces such as One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest. Emphasis will be placed on contemporary works such as Girl, Interrupted, Beautiful Mind, and Requiem for a Dream. Films will be viewed throughout the semester.

GW 100-17: Constructing Identities: Childhood Memoirs of Race, Class, and Culture

Explore the interplay of race, class, and culture in the construction of one’s identity through autobiographical writing. Enter the worlds of a young girl growing up in Puerto Rico and transplanted to New York, a bi-racial child struggling to understand himself and his white mother, and a white boy growing up in the black housing projects of New York. While we investigate childhood experience and the ways in which we construct our identities, we will focus on writing as a means of intellectual inquiry, discovery, and understanding oneself and others.
GW 100-18: Did You Freely Choose This Class?

Are your choices determined before you make them, perhaps by some combination of your genes and your social environment or perhaps by neural activity that you can’t consciously control? If your choices were pre-determined, would that mean that you aren’t responsible for what you do? Would it mean that your future choices have, in a sense, already been made? Would it mean that they aren’t really yours? Or aren’t really choices? The problem of free will is one of the most vexing, enduring, and fascinating puzzles about the human condition. In this course, we will study a variety of experiments from neuroscience and social psychology that have been said to pose serious challenges to the claim that we have free will. We will ask, what exactly do these experiments show about the precursors to our choices? Do they show that we don’t have free will, or have their results been misinterpreted?

GW 100-19: Facing Evil

Much in our contemporary world seems to indicate that things are not as they should be. Poverty, illness, and pervasive violence suggest that life is unfair and unjust, that evil exists and is simply part of our lives as human beings. In this class, we will critically explore various accounts of evil in fiction, philosophy and memoir.

GW 100-20: Particular Playgrounds

Young Adult or YA literature is a genre that has grown considerably during the last 20 years. It signals a new way of thinking about childhood and adulthood as the line between these two cultural and social identities gets blurred. In this course, we will explore the darker side of award-winning, popular young adult books by analyzing how they represent loss, relationships, political repression and the self. In particular, we will consider how these books follow or redefine the categories of childhood and adulthood and, how they speak to younger and older generations.

GW 100-21: Punishment

Punishment is a pervasive part of our public and private lives. However, other than controversies about capital punishment, we seldom pause to think carefully about this practice. In this course, we will spend some time considering the cases for and against capital punishment, but our overall focus will be broader. What is punishment: What (if anything) distinguishes it from coercion, corrective treatment, or revenge? How might an institution acquire the right to punish, and what sorts of limits are there on such a right? On what grounds can the practice of punishment be justified? What sorts of purposes or functions might punishment be thought to serve? Does it in fact serve them? Are these sufficient to justify punishment as presently practiced? We will read, develop, and critically assess arguments that defend a variety of ways of answering these questions. Although much of our work will address criminal punishment imposed by governments, we will also think about punishments meted out within other institutions, including families and universities.
GW 100-22: The Beatles and Their Music

The Beatles have been voted the “best,” “most creative,” and “most influential” musicians and performers of the 20th century in every poll imaginable. Their influence was (and continues to be) felt in every form of music, from the beginnings of heavy metal genre to today’s hip-hop. It is in their musicianship – their compositions and performances, both live and recorded – that the Beatles’ influence is unique and unparalleled. The Beatles’ careers (as a group and as individuals) and music provide a large variety of possible writing experiences and topics for class discussion. In reacting to the major recordings and critical responses to them, students will be expected to write persuasively in argumentative essays and to participate actively in class discussions.

GW 100-23: Visual Literacy

Images are central to our life, but do we know how to critically read them? This colloquium explores the cognitive, affective, and perceptual modes of visual literacy. Students will gain skills in ascertaining how the visual serves aesthetic and ideological purposes, through writing about images and discussion on visual culture.

GW 100-24: Get a Life: Life Narrative in Practice and Theory

This Gateway Symposium will explore the field of life narrative, an interdisciplinary field which has burgeoned in the last two decades. Life narrative studies includes autobiography, memoir, diaries, blogs, letters, web pages, graphic novels, and other genres. We’ll read a young woman’s blog from Iraq, the testimony of a Guatemalan reformer, the memoir Girl, Interrupted (and watch the film), essays from a brilliant writer with MS, and a graphic memoir from the Holocaust, plus other readings. You’ll be asked to write five papers and keep a journal.

GW 100-25: Constructing identities: Childhood memoirs of race, class, and culture

Explore the interplay of race, class, and culture in the construction of one’s identity through autobiographical writing. Enter the worlds of a young girl growing up in Puerto Rico and transplanted to New York, a bi-racial child struggling to understand himself and his white mother, and a white boy growing up in the black housing projects of New York. While we investigate childhood experience and the ways in which we construct our identities, we will focus on writing as a means of intellectual inquiry, discovery, and understanding oneself and others.

GW 100-26: Personal Response to Literature

According to Dr. Hal DeLisle, “Literature is for many students the only subject in their college career which engages both intellect and emotion. . . . To understand a story without feeling it, to feel a poem without understanding it, is to respond to the literature incompletely. To respond completely to literature is to have your emotions deepened by your understanding, and your understanding heightened by your feelings.” The Personal Response to Literature Gateway course will deal with short works of literature that provide students with material for both oral and written reaction via class discussions and writing assignments.
GW 100-27: How Does a Play Work?

How does a playwright go about creating characters that we care about, settings that add to a play’s effectiveness, and plots that are intriguing in works ranging from ten-minute plays to one-act plays to full-length plays. New works and classics will be examined on the page and on DVDs. In reacting to these plays, students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions and to write persuasively in effective essays.

GW 100-28(S): Why Talk if We Disagree?

In this discussion-oriented and writing-intensive course, we will try to analyze some contemporary debates that continue to divide our society. The specific topics/questions will be finalized after consulting with students in the class. But, in order that you may get a sense of the class, here are some examples of issues discussed by students when the course was offered during previous years. What distinguishes science from nonscience? Should the National Science Foundation support research in homeopathic medicine? Should same-sex marriage be legalized? Should we have death penalty? Should Creationism or Intelligent Design be taught in science classrooms in our high schools? Here are two other issues of great contemporary significance that we might choose to discuss this year. What should we do to address the issue of greenhouse gases and global warming? Many conservatives are claiming that nuclear energy is the new Green: Really?

The goal of these discussions is to develop and sustain a shared commitment to evidence and reason, to create a mutually respectful semantic community where we can have authentic communication even when we disagree on substantive issues and have competing ideas. We will use iterative writing and responsive listening as tools for discovering and shaping our own ideas and to effectively communicate them to our peers.

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GW 100-29(S): Power & Performance: Women, Music, and Dance in Cross-Cultural Perspective

This course explores the social significance of music, dance, and theatrical performance among societies in North America (Native American Pow Wow), Latin America (Brazilian Carnival), Africa (Yoruba Masquerade), India (Kathakali Dance Drama), and China (Peking Opera). Students will gain a broad understanding of the expressive media through which people communicate messages about themselves and others, verbally and non-verbally, in order to create and re-create their social identities over time. Women’s roles within these performance traditions will be highlighted to connect with the University theme, “Women’s Power, Women’s Justice.

GW 100-30(S): Leadership and Power

This course examines the interrelated concepts of effective leadership and the exercise of power. What factors produce effective leadership? Using a variety of case studies from American politics, we analyze the characteristics, strategies, tactics and styles of effective leaders. The related concept of power is also examined. Richard Neustadt maintains that power for American presidents, at its core, is the ability to persuade. That is, the ability to get others to do things that they wouldn’t have done in the absence of one’s efforts. In addition to these personality-based perspectives, this course considers how varying organizational cultures, structures and the broader environment (political, economic and social) condition the exercise of power and leadership.

GW 100-31(S): Peace and War in the Modern World

Martin Luther King Jr. once wrote: “Violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones.”

Despite efforts by countless individuals, institutions, and governments for peace and stability, terrible wars have been fought and atrocities have been committed in the name of both ideologies and religions. Within these belief systems, attempts are made to justify such violence as morally defensible while the same acts are interpreted by those outside that belief system as evil, unjust and unjustifiable, and therefore the legitimate reason for counter-wars in order to restore the peace and order. Either way, the result of such wars is often a cycle of violence and instability rather than a stable and enduring peace.

This course concentrates on peace and war and their complex interrelations. Students will spend their time in critical thinking and argumentative writing through an exploration of peace and (just and unjust) war. They will study the religious texts and other writings and analyze different arguments made in support of war and peace. They will also read the works of peace activists and Nobel Peace Laureates such as the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Barack Obama, Elie Wiesel, Thich Nhat Hanh and John Lennon. In studying peace and war, they will develop the required skills for critical thinking, analytical writing, and effective presentation.
GW 100-32(S): The Democracy of Gods in East Asian Cultures

A writing course, while so named, is by its nature a thinking course, a course that trains students in the organization, formulation and effective delivery of thoughts and ideas. As the platform of such training, this course focuses on the East Asian conception of what is in Judeo-Christian context called “God” – the word “democracy” refers to the fact that this concept, in its East Asian milieu, exists in various names, forms and aspects, and serves various purposes.

GW 100-33(S): “Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?” HAMILTON, hip hop, and the construction of American narratives

This course uses the award-winning musical HAMILTON as a throughline to explore the processes by which historical narratives are constructed, the political impact of hip hop aesthetics, and critical race theory. As is appropriate for a Gateway, it explores expository, creative, and performative writing as forms of inquiry as we “write our way out” of tough, messy questions about the past and present state of this nation.