

**First Year Seminars  
SPRING 2022 FYS**

**111 & 112      TF8/W8      TF9:30/W8      J. Kirtland**

**The Power of a Well-Kept Secret**

How are secret codes created? What purposes have they served throughout history? Does their creator matter? In this class we will examine a variety of methods, called ciphers, used to create coded messages from the ancient world through World War II. To enrich this study of secret methods of communication (cryptography) we will focus on groups who have been historically “hidden” or marginalized, asking how and why social status based on race, gender, or sexual orientation has influenced the makers and breakers of secret codes.

**113 & 114      MR12:30/W2    TR11/W2      M. O’Sullivan**

**Democracies & Dictatorships**

This seminar will examine how several nations have experimented with dictatorship, democracy, and other forms of government in between. While examining the transition from fascism to democracy in Germany, the course will also explore other alternatives to authoritarianism that emerged in Turkey, Russia, and Iran. The seminar will place special emphasis on race and ethnicity as categories of analysis when examining dictatorships and democracies. Combining history, literature, current events, and vast amounts of data from digital sources, this course will encourage civic engagement and global understanding while also developing the skill areas of the first year seminar.

**115 & 116      MR12:30/W2    MR2/W2      P. Tarantello**

**Celebrity in the 19th Century**

In this course, we will examine the concept of “celebrity” in order to better understand what it is, how it is cultivated, and how it changes over time. To this end, we will study the written works and publicity methods of several celebrated personalities of the nineteenth century: Gothic writer Edgar Allan Poe, prolific poet Emily Dickinson, abolitionist and activist Frederick Douglass, and investigative journalist Nellie Bly. In addition to thinking about their cultural value in their own time, we will consider their legacies and examine more modern representations of these figures. Because we live in an age obsessed with fame and self-image, it is useful to look back and see how the concept of celebrity emerged and developed over the years.

**117 & 118      MR12:30/W2    MR2/W2      L. Neilson**

**Murder, Madness, & Mental Mayhem**

This seminar will focus on the recurring motif of madness and mental illness in literature, film, television and society in general, and address the question of how madness challenges traditional assumptions regarding individual identity. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we will explore the nature of the human mind and cultural representations of madness in a variety of contexts. Students in this course will consider how madness is a very ordinary human possibility which can be creative and/or destructive, which can be a breakdown and/or a breakthrough. We will examine the significant presence of madness in society and question how central madness is to human life. Students will study both social/intellectual components and cultural/emotional/expressive aspects of mental illness.

**120**                    **M11/W9:30/W8**

**M. Fitzgibbons**

**Minds and Bodies in Comics**

In this FYS, you will develop your skills as a researcher, speaker, and writer by reading great comics and thinking about how mental and physical experiences are represented within them. Along the way, we will engage with scholarship in a variety of fields, including disability studies, comics history, and visual rhetoric.

Throughout the semester you will have the chance to work with the Cannavino Library's impressive and ever-growing collection of comics. In fact, there are so many wonderful graphic narratives that it's hard to choose just a few for the course. If you have suggestions about a particular text that you think I should consider for the syllabus, feel free drop me a line at [Moira.Fitzgibbons@marist.edu](mailto:Moira.Fitzgibbons@marist.edu). I'll definitely consider your ideas!

**121**                    **TR3:30/F11**

**D. Dighton**

**Sounds in the Key of Life**

This course introduces students to sonic rhetoric--the academic study of the pervasive and consequential force of sound in our daily lives, artistic expressions, and identities. Streetscape "noise," the blips and chimes of our handheld technologies, animal and human voices, and popular music are just part of the sonic landscape through which we are moved and attempt to move others. The rhetorical study of sound helps us understand rhetoric beyond a language based focus on persuasion to the aural and ambient forces that shape identities, relationships, and civic life, informing our emotional experiences and memories. Through examining lived experiences, media ecologies, and creative expressions, students will create written texts and media projects on various aspects of sound to understand its rhetorical dynamics and consequences.

**122 & 123**            **TF9:30/F11**        **TF12:30/F11**

**S. Biro**

**Greek Myth and the Other**

How do we understand myth making in contemporary times? What role might it play in shaping an understanding of ourselves and the world we live in? In this course, we will take a closer look at myths of Greek antiquity and their reception in the realm of contemporary philosophy in order to open a dialogue around the questions of myth, meaning, and otherness. Centering on the themes of creation myths, the outcast, the scapegoat, the ideal state, divine encounters, the power of masks, ethical obligation, alterity and power, students will explore how, through myth (both stories and criticism) and philosophy, an attempt to negotiate the encounter with otherness is a necessary endeavor of our times.

**124**                    **MR12:30/W2**

**B. Loh**

**Happiness Embodied**

The search for happiness gives rise to humanity's basest behaviors and its noblest pursuits. This religious studies and philosophy course examines the connection between happiness, identity, and belonging through the lens of the active human body. We examine how our physicality influences religious depictions of human excellence and the construction of our relationships and groups. More specifically, we will discuss topics ranging from gender and sexuality to martial arts, communal prayer, and ritual

practice. While this course focuses on examining religious and philosophical texts, students in this class will also be invited to participate in physical forms of experiential learning, such as breath meditation or Tai Chi. This experiential learning culminates with the creation of a choreographed flash mob as a way of understanding how ritual functions to transform gathered individuals into bonded groups.

**126 & 127      TF8/W2              TF9:30/W2              C. Muller**

**Family Matters**

We all have families, be they adoptive, biological, or chosen. We have relationships to our parents or caregivers, as well as siblings of various sorts, and many face the question of whether to start families in the future. Although we don't always consider them, families raise a host of philosophical questions, which we will explore in this class. Should one have children? How is parenting affected by race, sexuality, and poverty? Is it best understood as a collective or individual endeavor? Who should do the caretaking and how should children be raised? What obligations do grown children and parents have to each other? Does having children change the world? Does it make life more meaningful? Through reading and discussing *Revolutionary Mothering* and *The Philosophical Parent*, along with your own research, this course will challenge and enrich your thoughts about parenthood and family.

**128                      MW3:30/F11                      G. Webb**

**Sounding the Political: Music and Politics in Africa**

Music plays many functions in modern African life: It consoles people in times of death, stimulates and organizes social events, facilitates interaction with the spiritual world, structures dance, marks important life cycle events, inspires and entertains, markets products and services, or can simply be enjoyed for its aesthetic qualities. Equally important among these functions is music's multidimensional role in political expression – from politicians and political institutions, to the mediation of power relations among groups, to music's role in attempting to undermine or resist political power by marginalized groups. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this course examines the intersection of music and politics in Africa to discover how music articulates and reflects power relations among different constituencies in various social contexts across the continent.

**129                      TF2/W2                      R. Feldman**

**Relevant Science: Developing Your Environmental Intelligence & Stewardship**

First Year Seminars are as much about starting to become a skilled college learner as studying a particular subject. That is, the *process* will be as important as the *content* in this course. The content will include exploring the natural world, environmental threats and solutions, social considerations, and the science of environmental topics. As we learn essentials of the science of ecology, we will explore the natural features of our own 12 acre Fern Tor Nature Preserve. With that important foundation, we delve into a few major topics, e.g. biodiversity, climate disruption and sustainable food production, through course content and your investigations. Interwoven is your role in becoming an environmental steward and society's role in environmentally-sustainable economic development (aka "going green"). Also interwoven is your development as an active learner, critical thinker and writer.

**130 & 131**      **M11/W9:30/W2**      **MR2/W2**      **A. Davis**

**What is Money? How Do You “Make” It?**

In this interdisciplinary course we will use the lenses of economics, history, philosophy, and political science to study stock markets, cryptocurrencies, and financial crises. Our goal will be to gain insight into the economy, the business cycle, and the role of government. Students will examine critical moments in economic and political history, focusing on key debates and contrasting views, as well as the ethical, moral, and value questions regarding the operation of the market.

**132 & 133**      **TF12:30/F3:30**      **TR3:30/F3:30**      **V. Murray**

**Social Marketing for Social Change**

Social marketing involves using commercial marketing tools and concepts to bring about social change. For instance, efforts to protect certain animal species (e.g. the Spotted Owl), or some other area of the natural environment (e.g. air and water quality), as well as efforts to discourage texting while driving, human trafficking, discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. all represent social marketing efforts. This course will provide students with a standard social marketing framework for developing theory-driven interventions designed by leading thinkers in the field. Students will also learn to apply “Social Activist Marketing” strategies in situations where there is counter-group opposition. Moreover, they will learn to apply a “Victim Intervention Marketing” framework to guide strategic decision making in human trafficking settings. Students will use a global dataset of more than fifty-thousand human trafficking cases to develop theory-driven interventions. This course will provide students with a flexible set of strategic intervention tools to make the world a better place, as well as opportunities to hone their writing, public speaking, and information literacy skills. These tools and skills may be employed in a wide variety of social change settings.

**134**      **TR3:30/F11**      **C. Martensen**

**Sowing the Seeds of Success**

What does it mean to be successful? What skills are necessary in order to become an “expert” in a field? What is the relative significance of knowledge, grit, character, and curiosity? What is the 10,000 hour rule? Do successful people have something in common, whether they are artists, scholars, or athletes? In this class we will attempt to answer (or at least examine) these questions by reading works of non-fiction and fiction by authors who have addressed these questions in a variety of ways and from a variety of disciplines.