FIRST YEAR PROGRAM (FIRST-UG)

FIRST-UG 24 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Migration & American Culture (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course will examine the immigrant and migrant narratives of varied racial and ethnic groups in the United States. What changes in identity and in political, social and economic status did they experience? What were the newcomers' expectations of their environment, and what reality did they encounter? Our study will look at coping mechanisms, the forging of intra-tribal identity, the sociology of survival, and the concept of 'otherness.' We will be joined by guest lecturers from notable sites including the National Museum of the American Indian, the Tenement Museum, the African Burial Ground, the Museum of the City of New York, El Museo del Barrio, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The Museum of Chinese in America, and Ellis Island. Readings may include such texts as How the Other Half Lives by Jacob Riis, The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson, The Lucky Ones by Mae Ngai, How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents by Julia Alvarez, Dance and the Railroad by David Henry Hwang, and Imagined Communities by Benedict Anderson. Films will include Family Name by Mackie Alston and A Raisin in the Sun.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 32 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Social Construction of Reality (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

How do we know what is real and what is illusion? From the philosophy of the ancient Greeks to contemporary movies such as The Matrix, this question has haunted humankind. This course begins with the premise that "the real" is something we construct. We create reality through the stories we tell and the stories told to us. Since the most powerful storytellers today are the commercial media, we will pay special attention to the role of entertainment, advertising, and public relations in constructing our reality. Texts for the course include works by Plato, Rene Descartes, W.E.B. Du Bois, Maxine Hong Kingston, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herman Melville, Walter Lippmann, Jean Baudrillard, Slavoj Zizek, Judith Butler, Jonathan Lear, John Berger, and the Blackfoot peoples.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 42 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Wealth, Power and Inequality (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

For many political and economic thinkers, the free market and the private economy are the fundamental building blocks of democratic political systems. Yet activist movements of the past twenty years have been increasingly critical of the ways in which private corporations and the inequality of wealth negatively affect our democracy. This seminar will evaluate different theories of capitalism and consider the ways that thinking about capitalism has changed over time. Is economic inequality a threat to democratic institutions? How does our political system cope —or fail to cope—with large concentrations of private power and wealth? What does it mean to think about economic life from different disciplinary perspectives? Possible readings may include Adam Smith, Max Weber, Nancy Folbre, and Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 49 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Self and the Call of the Other (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Ovid's story of Echo and Narcissus from Metamorphoses portrays the dangers of refusing to heed the call of the Other. Absorbed by his own image, Narcissus ignores the nymph Echo, who relies upon his words to speak. His solipsism leads to their deaths. This class takes Ovid's story as a model for investigating how the self is shaped in relation to the other, a question considered by psychologists, writers, philosophers, filmmakers and literary critics. We will read psychological discussions of the development of the self or ego (Freud, Winnicott, Benjamin), literary portrayals of the self in relation to others (Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, Joyce's "The Dead," Duras' The Ravishing of Lol V. Stein), and philosophical essays (Blanchot, Levinas). We will examine the breakdown in the connection between the self and the other due to trauma, reading essays in trauma studies (Caruth and Brison), and the ways in which colonialism and empire shape conceptions of self and other, reading novels (Forster, A Passage To India) and theory (Said, Spivak). We will also ask what problems arise specifically when women speak—how Echo finds a voice—viewing the films Spellbound and Sunset Boulevard.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 69 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Boundaries and Transgressions (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Boundaries, especially those thought to separate national communities, are powerful human inventions that can scar landscapes and bodies. The frontiers of the United States, for example, have been centuries in the making. Yet, these geographical imaginaries, however stable they may appear, depend on their continuous embracing, enforcement and redefinition. Indeed, the limits of the U.S. community (where the national ends and the foreign begins) are redefined on a daily basis along such sites as the Rio Grande, Guantánamo and others. These sites—porous and formidable—are the cause of much movement, anxiety and debate. This course takes boundaries as a lens through which to think about identity formation, community building and transgressions. It will begin with a broad exploration of boundary-making, subjectivities and imperial formations, and then address more specific dynamics of national demarcations (with special attention paid to U.S. and Haiti/Dominican Republic frontiers). The following questions guide the semester: How are boundaries imagined into existence and made to matter in the daily lives of different peoples? And, how can transgression and its consequences be understood? Readings might include Edwidge Danticat's The Farming of Bones, Frederick Jackson Turner's The Significance of the Frontier in American History, and texts by Sigmund Freud, Amy Kaplan, Gloria Anzaldúa and Julia Kristeva.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 70 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Holy Grails (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

The Quest for the Holy Grail has captured the modern Western imagination, inspiring bestselling fiction, scholarly and conspiratorial study, and no fewer than fourteen feature films since the silent era. In this course, students will discover the ways in which our twentieth-century fascination with the legendary Cup is only the most recent incarnation of a long obsession in popular Western culture—one that reaches back in time to at least the twelfth century, and possibly earlier still. The Holy Grail will serve as a case study for learning about the Middle Ages and medievalism in our world today. We will study the flourishing of the Grail legend in twelfth- and thirteenth-century courtly society, but we will think about other "Grails" as well: quests for the unknown, the unseen, and the unconquered; fascination with conspiracy; fear of cultural and religious difference; and above all, the hope that human beings invest in symbols, not just of the divine, but also of transcendent kindness, compassion, and sacrifice. Readings will include the Perceval romances of Chrétien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach, Robert de Boron's Merlin, and Thomas Malory's Le Morte d'Arthur. We will examine our modern associations of the Grail legend with Crusade, the Knights Templar, the Papacy, and Christian spirituality. And in dialogue with theorists of anthropology, political science, psychology, and comparative mythology, we will discuss why we pursue holy grails in the first place—what keeps us striving for those tantalizing, ultimately unreachable goals that nevertheless compel us ever forward.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 71 First Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Political Theatre and Performance (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

What makes theatre political? What hopes for changing the world does theatre dramatize? What does the study of theatre teach us about politics? How does the theatre become a productive site not only for representing, but also for enacting, political change? How can the practice of embodied performance intervene in politics? This course explores these questions by reading a wide range of plays and theorists working in different time periods, different geographical locations and within different theatrical traditions. The course will engage with a range of political issues with an emphasis on migration and borders. Likely playwrights we will study include: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Ngugi wa Thiong'o & Ngugi wa Mirii, Anna Deveare Smith, Caryl Churchill, Clifford Odets, and Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 74 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Collective Memory of Atrocity and Injustice (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, Primo Levi wrote, "Never forget that this has happened." Levi's imperative raises important questions about the role of memory in the context of atrocity and injustice. What is the difference between individual and collective memory? What is the purpose of remembering atrocity? What is the relationship between memory and justice? What gets forgotten in the collective memory and why? Is historical amnesia necessarily bad? How might collective memory serve to address ongoing systemic injustice? We will pursue such questions by examining specific genres and forms of collective memory--including memorials, truth commissions, reparations movements, and ecological activism--examining how they have shaped, challenged, and revised understandings of atrocity and injustice from the nineteenth century to the present. In addition to informal response papers, students will write 3 formal essays over the course of the semester. Readings may include works by Maurice Halbwachs, Maya Lin, Ta-Nehisi Coates, and Fred Wilcox.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 77 First-Year Interdisciplinary Sem: The Game of Go & the Art of War in Early China (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

In this course, we will combine academic study with an experiential approach to the topic of strategy as an element of both structured play and warfare in early China. To set the stage, we will begin by thinking about the larger meaning of play as a universal human activity and contextualizing several examples of popular games from the Chinese tradition with background reading on related philosophical and cosmological beliefs. At the same time, we will learn the fundamentals of the ancient Chinese game of Go (weiqi), a favorite pastime of scholars and generals since the Han dynasty. Students will be introduced to on-line resources that allow them to play the game in real time with opponents from around the world, and they will also visit local New York City Go clubs. Using knowledge of Go strategy, students will then grapple with classical Chinese philosophy on the art of war by writers such as Sunzi and Sun Bin as well as selected works of Mozi, Guanzi, and Xunzi. Finally, we will conclude with modern echoes of the longstanding relationship between Go and warfare in literature such as Kawabata's The Master of Go and Shan Sa's The Girl Who Played Go.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 82 First-Year Interdiscplinary Seminar: Main Street U.S.A. (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course will consider Main Street as a physical place and as an idea, examining how the space has come to represent American values and ideals for many. We will draw on a range of primary sources, including novels, plays, advertisements, photographs, and films, as well as secondary sources that model interdisciplinary scholarship, to look at the formation of the Main Street ideal and ways that this space has been shaped by some of the larger shifts in American culture and the across the world during the twentieth century, such as urbanization, suburbanization, globalization, and the modern rights revolution. What are the origins of the Main Street ideal? How and why does it promote a nostalgic view of America? How has it been used to both critique and promote small-town living? Who has access to this space, and who is excluded? How has the idea of Main Street been mobilized to present an image of America to the rest of the world? Our exploration of Main Street will allow us to reflect on a diverse range of topics and themes, including Norman Rockwell images, soda fountains, Disney theme parks, suburbs, the Cold War, and debates contrasting Wall Street and Main Street. Readings and films will include It's a Wonderful Life, Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg Ohio, Sinclair Lewis' Main Street, Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun, and Richard Yates' Revolutionary Road.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 83 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Human Rights, Human Wrongs (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course will provide an introduction to the different ways people have debated human rights claims, and the class will collectively explore and analyze the stakes of these debates. We will work through a series of human rights cases and campaigns regarding torture, labor and sexuality to look at different examples of human rights engagements and how these constitute particular notions of 'the human'. What kind of global subject is constituted in human rights engagements? What is the politics of that subject? How does humanity have to be organized, legalized and historicized for the human to be endowed with rights? We will explore these and other questions through the work of scholars, lawyers and activists. This course is neither a celebration of human rights, or a training ground for human rights activists. Rather, it invites us to take a step back to consider debates internal to invocations of right claims to better understand what the human rights framework renders visible and what it casts in shadows. Readings will be wide ranging and extend from John Locke to Karl Marx, Saidya Hartman to Samera Esmeir. We will also read and analyze international human rights instruments and draw on case studies from the US, South Africa, France, India, Kenya, Chile and elsewhere.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 85 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Science and Literature (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

In a 1959 lecture titled "The Two Cultures," C. P. Snow famously declared, "the intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups," with "literary intellectuals at one pole—at the other scientists." Snow asserted that the two are separated by "a gulf of mutual incomprehension," even "hostility and dislike." Snow's view of a fundamental antagonism between science and literature has its roots in the nineteenth-century; his concept of "two cultures" remains influential today. But was he right? This course addresses that question, seeking to deepen our understanding of the relationship between science and literature. Our readings will pair literary and scientific texts: we may consider Ted Chiang's short fiction and the laws of thermodynamics; Michael Frayn's play Copenhagen and quantum physics; Amitav Ghosh's novel The Calcutta Chromosome and sociological theories of scientific knowledge; and the poetry of ecologist Madhur Anand; and Robin Wall Kimmerer's interdisciplinary meditations on the environment in Braiding Sweetgrass. The class is a discussion-based seminar; assignments will include short response papers, brief contributions to a class blog, and formal essays.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 89 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Double, Double (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

What happens when we look out into the world and find our own face staring back? An encounter with a double is an intimation of immortality, of the body's survival beyond its limits, which reminds the self of its own demise. A double is the outward projection of internal division, a copy that displaces the original, continuity that tears the fabric of rationality. This class will explore the ambivalence of the double by examining its repeated appearances in literature, photography and film, psychoanalysis and critical theory. Freud's concept of the uncanny explains the double as our confrontation with what we failed to keep hidden from ourselves, the return of the repressed. But doubling is also a form of magic, a practice of making resemblances that live a borrowed life, and a way of knowing the world: an "embodied knowing" by imitating, knowledge as mimicry rather than mastery. In Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, mimicry is how we form our ego: we imitate our own reflection, longing for an image of bodily coherence that we can never match. In photography and film, doubling defines the very nature of the medium, which simultaneously copies the world and causes it to disappear. We will consider the camera itself as a double, a mechanical eye that positions the viewer's gaze and projects it onto the film. Students will write several analytic essays exploring these views of the double through close readings of texts on the syllabus. Readings may include essays by Rank, Freud, Kofman, Benjamin, Taussig, Lacan, Mulvey, and Silverman; fiction by Borges, Poe, Conrad, Hoffmann, Shelley, Wilde, and Woolf; photography and films by Arbus, Hitchcock, and Mulvey.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 92 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Predicting the Future (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
The future is ephemeral, uncertain, and always seems just within reach. Cultures all around the world have developed a dizzying array of tools for divining the future, from reading goat entrails to calculating carbon dioxide concentrations. Prediction spans religious systems, political policy, business trends, and scientific theories. This course examines a variety of practices of prediction from different cultures, historical eras, and academic disciplines. We will assess the kinds of arguments used in prediction, and how evidence is marshaled to know the unknowable. Claims of prediction have high stakes: what we think about the future changes how we act in the present. Readings may include B.F. Skinner, Karl Marx, Nate Silver, the I-Ching, Claudius Ptolemy, Pierre Simon de Laplace, and Max Weber.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 94 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Caricature (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
Charles Baudelaire and others have posited that caricature is a constituent element of modernity and of humanity's fallen state. Is it? To judge from recent events, one would think that caricature is the last art form that truly matters, for it is in response to it that people move to real, not merely symbolic, acts of violence. Since the eighteenth century, it has been heralded as an emblem and vector of freedom and democracy, even if it is at times allied with stereotype and prejudice. This seminar invites an exploration of the phenomenon that will necessarily lead us to read on printing and the press; stereotypes, racism, and the supposed visual legibility of character; jokes, humor, and laughter; theories of the comic and the performative; pornography and political dissent; revolution and order. In considering the function of caricature and thinking through traditions of caricature, we will look at, amongst others, Goya, Gillray, Daumier, and Posada; and read Lavater, Baudelaire, Bergson, Freud, Bakhtin, Gombrich and Kris.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 96 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Idea of Nothing (4 Credits)
Nothing. No-thing. Negative Space. Zero. Silence. Antimatter. Black holes. Aporias. Each of these terms communicates some aspect of the concept of nothingness, absence, or emptiness. Our very existence is framed by nothing, from the abyss of non-being before our birth to the nothingness of death at its conclusion. The understanding and portrayal of absence is perhaps one of humankind's greatest mysteries, and has triggered explorations in all different fields of human activity. Whether in mathematics, physics, theater, philosophy, theology, literature, or visual art, nothingness as an idea has been explored, defined, and depicted in multiple and contradictory ways. "Nothing is, but what is not," says Shakespeare's Macbeth, but is it possible to speak or write of that which is not? Is our inability to define "nothing" a failure of langue or imagination or does it point to a larger cosmological truth? Is nothingness the negation of all historical and political meaning, or can it serve as a space in which to imagine another history, another political, or a better world? Composers use silence, painters use black or white, sculptors, installation artists and architects employ negative space, authors and poets try to create emptiness within or between words. This course will explore the dimensions of Nothingness as manifested in the arts, religions, philosophy, and science. Readings will include Parmenides, Plato, early Buddhist texts, medieval Christian and Jewish mystics, Shakespeare, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Samuel Beckett, Jean Paul Sartre, Jacques Derrida, David Foster Wallace, and Stephen Hawking. We will look at art by Robert Ryman and Fred Sandbeck, listen to music by John Cage, and watch films and a Seinfeld episode. The class will include guest speakers and visits to museums and performances.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 100 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Slow Looking (4 Credits)
What does it mean to look at an object, image, or practice? How is sight connected to knowledge and power in Western modernity? How might the visual be displaced by other cultural traditions and bodily experiences for apprehending art? And what happens if we slow down our impulse to immediately evaluate works of art and other cultural productions? Drawing on social and visual theorists such as Jonathan Crary, bell hooks, Georgina Kleege, and Jolene Rickard, this class will build a critical genealogy of looking as a social, cultural, and political act. Through writing assignments, we will play with the pace and genre of analysis in documenting our experiences of looking at and participating in art, including visual works, installations, and performances, toward an inquiry into the stakes of slow looking. Alongside shorter texts, we will also read three full books that model slow looking as an intervention, which may include Mieke Bal's Louise Bourgeois' Spider, Michael Taussig's I Swear I Saw This, and Anna Tsing's The Mushroom at the End of the World.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 103 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Photojournalism and Democracy (4 Credits)
A free press is vital to a functioning democracy. In fact, journalism is the only industry in the United States that enjoys a specific Constitutional protection. This course explores how journalism works and contemplates its role in democracy. We examine the history of journalism, explore major debates that have defined and challenged news coverage through the years, and consider the dynamics of reportage in the digital age. Our seminar also takes NYC as a case study, as we consider how some of the city's hot-button issues, like gentrification or race relations, are covered. Learning the basics of reporting and photojournalism, students, in turn, will don the guise of young reporters and photojournalists, as they cover newsworthy events and issues around the city. Students are encouraged to bring a range of interests to class—literary, musical, political—that will broaden our approach to assigned topics. Our readings include history, theory, and cultural criticism; in addition, they comprise varied forms of journalism—from long and short form print to blogs to photo essays—and in turn, so do the class assignments. Guest speakers may include journalists (news editor, reporter, photojournalist) who can help deepen our conversations.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 104 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Literature and the Environment (4 Credits)
Critic Raymond Williams once proposed that the word "nature" might be the most complicated in the English language. This class is about how writers have used imaginative literature to examine those complexities. How have such writers defined "nature"? What relationships do they construct between human beings and the natural world? How are conceptions of nature, the human, and their interaction inflected by cultural assumptions and concerns, including ones about race, gender, and imperialism? Who possesses knowledge about nature? What constitutes such knowledge? We'll address these questions while reading literary works by Amitav Ghosh, Zakes Mda, Jamaica Kincaid, and others; we'll put these texts into dialogue with work on ecology and environmental history by Rachel Carson, Bill Cronon, Rob Nixon, and Robin Wall Kimmerer; and we'll consider how nature shapes even New York City, the quintessential urban environment. Our readings will be supplemented by field trips and lectures that may complicate our ideas about nature by revealing how it shapes even New York City, the quintessential urban environment. Assignments will include response papers, a blogging activity, and formal analytical essays.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 105 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Urban Music, Urban Spaces (4 Credits)
This course will introduce and acclimate students to the globalized music cosmopole that is New York City. As urban dwellers, we are constitutive parts of a vast and complex cultural ecosystem—and the global microcosm that is our city, New York City, reverberates with music that expresses the fullness and diversity of the lives of its inhabitants. Our way of understanding music making in this context, as well as the industry and cultural imperatives behind this music making, is through the city's various music institutions. We will explore a cultural history of the city that highlights waves of migration, the establishment and destabilization of industry, institution building, ethnic enclaves, cultural diffusion, stylistic evolution, and locality. What are the music cultures that surround us, near NYU and beyond? How might musical performance and patronage give us insight into the role of arts and creative expression in the city and in the lives of its inhabitants? What can we learn about the relationship between music, the arts, and the social world? Students will be able to experience what they learn in class out in the city itself; they will be required to attend six musical performances (approved by the instructor) in different parts of the city, each different in style and cultural context than the other.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 106 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Africa, China, and Globalization (4 Credits)
China's controversial investment in Africa has caused reactions ranging from accusations of a "new colonialism" to celebrations of a collaborative "win-win" for development. In addition, immigration both by Africans to China and Chinese to Africa signals a fundamental shift in global power dynamics and the deepening of a new era of multi-polar globalization. Through an analysis of journalistic and historical accounts, literature, economics, art, and film, this seminar will explore the multi-faceted nature of Africa and China relations. We will ask what are the connections between Cold War history and the contemporary moment? How do different African actors at state and individual levels engage with the Chinese presence? And finally, how does this shift to multi-polarity impact theories of globalization?
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 108 First-Year Interdisciplinary Sem: Technologies of Meaning(Un)Making/ Digital World (4 Credits)
For inhabitants of the modern world, digital media's intervention into our lives is nearly complete. Many have celebrated the expansion of digital technologies as a means to dismantle hegemonic power structures, expanding the sites of knowledge production to traditionally marginalized communities and empowering people across grassroots networks. But what does it mean to live in a world so completely mediated by unknown and invisible agents of information? How does this technology construct, illuminate, and obfuscate meaning and identity? Is seeing the code behind the simulacra an act of subversion? In this class, theory and fiction serve as a framework for analyzing online journalism (including the fake news phenomenon and trending tweets), digital art, social media and activism, and augmented reality and games. Alongside this analysis, we will participate in the act of technological meaning making, producing mini digital prototypes and developing the basic skills necessary to become critical authors within this world. Students will have the opportunity to compose digital stories, create data visualizations, curate digital archives, and build interactive AR projects. No prior skills or digital know-how is necessary, just a willingness to try new things. Readings will include Marshall McLuhan, Susan Sontag, Safiya Umoja Noble, N. Katherine Hayles, and Edward Tufte.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 111 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Reading Closely, Reading Historically (4 Credits)
What does it mean to read closely? How does a work of literature change as you learn more about its historical context or the history of its own production? This is a class on reading and perspective meant to cultivate our skills as students of literature or other kinds of texts. In the first half of the semester, we will approach lyric poems, short stories and novels (Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, Shelley's Frankenstein, and the Arabian Nights), as worlds unto themselves, taking seriously the texts' internal logic while probing their peculiarities, ambiguities, and paradoxes. We will attend to how poetry fuses intellectual, emotional and aesthetic concerns while developing a shared vocabulary in order to better understand and describe the ways poets utilize wordplay, figurative expression (such as metaphor, synesthesia, and synecdoche), and sonic devices (like rhyme and rhythm) as they transform ordinary language into art. For fiction, we will consider how stories are narrated, their arrangement of time and space, their experiments with point of view, and the ways in which they instantiate character. In the second half of the semester, our perspective will broaden as we look at two case studies. We will set Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel Jane Eyre against the backdrop of nineteenth-century ideas about women's work, the cult of the home and domesticity, the early feminist movement, and roiling debates about the British empire, all issues which intersect Brontë's strange novel, which is at once a coming-of-age story, a spiritual memoir, and a Gothic romance. Similarly, we will explore how issues of race, diaspora, and urban life shape Langston Hughes's 1949 poetry volume One-Way Ticket. In the process, we will consider how literary forms themselves are marked by genre (a different kind of history) as they play with and against longstanding conventions.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 113 Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: (Un)relatable (4 Credits)
Since the mid-twentieth century, the old word "relatable," which once signified that which can be "told or narrated," took on a new dimension, or so the Oxford English Dictionary tells us. It began to be used to deem a person, situation, or work of art "that…with which one can identify or empathize." "Relatability," in turn, could then indicate the degree to which a work of art or a circumstance could be approached or, more simply, liked. This semester, we will take a harder look at the political, philosophical, and rhetorical circumstances that determine what counts as "relatable" or not. However ordinary the term might seem, the assessment of what or who is "relatable" has prompted fierce criticism: it has been denounced as "empty," "a critique killer," and "self-involved." To understand why and how this term might court controversy, we will examine texts across disciplinary, national, and historical fields that help us form a genealogy of sympathy and its kin: empathy, pity, the more recent "relatable." We will ask how moral philosophy has handled the question of fellow-feeling; how psychoanalysis understands the operations of identification and narcissism; how alternative genealogies of sympathy in Stoic, neoplatonic Islamic, and early modern European philosophies of "natural sympathies" might change how we understand the operation of "relation"; how (and when and why) literary form might undermine "relatability"; and how the determination of the relatable emerges as a question of politics and spectacle.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 115 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Media, Democracy and the New Political (4 Credits)
Across the globe today, we are witnessing the emergence of new political movements, fueled by media technologies, passionately advancing the claims of "the people" against the ruling "political classes". We see the rise of charismatic populist leaders and the simultaneous waning of civic values, and polarized political cultures. In this seminar, we will discuss the cotemporary moment of growing polarization and passionate social media-infused politics, by taking a historical and transnational perspective in our overview of normative theories of media and democracy. We will focus on four core questions throughout the course of the semester. What insights and limitations are offered in theories of the "public sphere" and "deliberative democracy"? How has colonialism and capitalism shaped political imaginaries constituted through the media? How has the rapid expansion and commercialization of media infrastructure transformed political participation? How might we rethink media as space of civil society and contentious politics? Authors may include: Walter Benjamin, Aimé Césaire, Claudia Jones, Edward Said, Partha Chatterjee, Stuart Hall, Aníbal Quijano, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Verónica Gago, Armond R. Towns and Jacques Ranciere.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 116 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Slavery and Science (4 Credits)
In conversation with recent works that argue that many scientific advancements of the 19th century came at the expense of unnamed blacks whose bodies were used for experiment, research and study, students in this seminar will consider the relation between the production of scientific knowledge and the institution of slavery. This course centers a history in which the plantation is a site for experimentation and slaves are specimens--their bodies probed and prodded without consent, their corpses used for postmortem dissection and display, their bones appropriated in perpetuity for medical training. While these exploitative medical practices loom large in this history, we also spend considerable time thinking about how the scientific knowledge produced on the plantation contributed to the business sciences of management, capitalist risk assessment, and accounting. Over the course of the semester, we will individually and collectively reflect on the legacies of this gritty and terrible history and on what it might mean to repair or redress it. In this vein, we will end the class by exploring creative projects of reparation--in which the enslaved reverse Agassiz's scientific gaze, in which stolen bones are buried, in which monuments to racist gynecology are pulled down and the names of brutalized black women are spoken, in which poetry reassembles documents of "insured loss" in order to restore the humanity of the lost.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 117 First-Year Interdisciplinary Sem: History of Ecology & Environmentalism (4 Credits)
This course traces the history of ecology and environmentalism from Charles Darwin to current affairs. The global history of ecological concern stays at the center of this course, which discusses environmental worries in the British, German, Scandinavian, African and American contexts in subsequent centuries. The chief focus will be on U.S. experience in trying to deal with organizing nature, environmental preservation and conservation, population growth, environmental design and global warming, among other issues. Various ecological understandings of human philosophy, race, gender, religion, architecture, politics, and economy will be subject to critical discussion.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 118 First-Year Interdisc. Sem: There & Back Again: Travelers/ Traveling through Middle Ages & Beyond (4 Credits)
The image of the pre-modern world as dark, backward, and stagnant has for too long held sway over our modern popular conceptions of the era. In this course, we will investigate the ways in which movement and migration have always been central to the experience of being human. We will begin by exploring metaphors of movement that pre-modern writers employed in thinking about the natural world and the place of human beings within it. In the second half of the course, we will study encounters between Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. We will delve into the questions, the conflicts, and the painful changes that travels and encounters fomented. And throughout, we will ask how we can better understand the historic dimensions of the identities, structures of power, and ideologies of authority that govern our world today.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 119 First-Year Interdisciplinary Sem: Caves: Science, Art & Metaphor of Subterranean Earth (4 Credits)
Caves hold a mythical position in the human perception of our species' deep past that has resonance with how we conceive of the deep future. What are the varied metaphors of the cave? To answer this question, we will examine the ancient Greek concept of Gaia and the far deeper time depth that archaeology and paleontology give to our understanding of the role caves played in human pasts. We will examine some of the world's iconic archaeological cave sites such as Sterkfontein (South Africa),#Shanidar#(Iraq), Lascaux (France), Altamira (Spain), Matera (Italy), and the Cueva de las Manos/Cave of the Hands (Argentina). We will draw upon recent scientific publications for our understanding of speleology (which combines geology, hydrogeology, biology, and cartography) to understand cave formation but we#will also think through caves and their metaphors for how culture and Nature intersect via theoretical works such as#Gayatri Spivak's#'Imaginary Maps', Bruno Latour's 'Critical Zone' project, and Kate Brown's work with Chernobyl. Films, work by contemporary artists, and recent#cave entrapments and rescues such as occurred at Tham#Luang#(Thailand)#can all be drawn into discussions to query our contemporary imagination of the telluric power that caves contain.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 120 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: American Dream(s): Self, Stuff, Status and Social Mobility (4 Credits)
Faith in the notion that one may attain success and virtue through hard work is a dominant ideology in American life. We exalt those who "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" and repeatedly tell of that ancestor who "came here with a dollar in his pocket" and achieved wealth. This "American Dream" promises self-fulfillment, material comfort, and, importantly, social mobility-- surpassing one's parents in status and socioeconomic standing. Yet, realizing the American Dream has always been more difficult for some than others, and a deep skepticism of its possibility has always been part of US political discourse. As inequality has soared in recent years (by some accounts, you're more likely to live the American Dream in…Canada), that skepticism has moved to the center of political and social debates. This course considers the status of the American Dream as cultural concept and social reality. To what extent do concerns of the self, stuff, status and social mobility animate Americans' notions of the good life? We ask whether an American Dream predicated on social mobility was, is, and will be achievable--and for whom. We explore ways that ideas of the good life are changing in a post-Great Recession context and in the face of ecological limits. We pay particular attention to authors' theoretical starting points, methods, and interpretation of evidence in order to develop analytical reasoning skill. Reading includes works of sociology, political science, economics, literature, and social commentary.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 121 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: What is a Photograph? (4 Credits)
In this seminar we will examine some of the most provocative ways in which photography has been imagined and practiced, from early accounts of the daguerreotype to recent work on the digital image. Through close examination of a range of photographic practices as well as the critical discourses that have grown up around them, we will endeavor to understand not just what André Bazin calls the "ontology" of the photographic image, but also how the photograph has been thought about, talked about, utilized and, in turn, produced fantasmatically as a particular kind of object and a special way of picturing. What, precisely, is a photograph? How have photographers and theorists answered that query? Do we draw upon the photograph's material, chemical, visible, invisible, affective, or discursive properties to describe the essential aspects of the medium? Like no other medium, the photograph is, at once, everywhere and, at the same time, functions in ways that we tend to allow ourselves to remain blind to. This course also serves as an introduction to the nature, processes, and perils of interdisciplinary study, as well as the practices of analytic writing and close reading of both visual images and written texts. Readings may include Azoulay, Barthes, Batchen, Bazin, Benjamin, Fox Talbot, Heidegger, Kracauer, Metz, Moten, Silverman, Smith, Sontag, Tagg, Wall.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 122 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Lives, Deaths and Rebirths of Public Space (4 Credits)
Recent and very visible social movements have reclaimed public spaces in cities around the world, prompting the question of what, exactly, are public spaces and to whom do they (and the cities around them) belong. For many scholars, the existence of public spaces - the town square, the agora, the rialto, are what makes cities distinctive, but a number of critics have, for at least the last fifty years, been decrying the end of such spaces. This course first examines a number of the classic statements on public space, followed by a close reading and interrogation of the decline of public space theses. Finally, we examine a number of attempts to recapture and reinvigorate public spaces, drawing freely from examples of public art, planning and architecture, and social movements. Among the statements on public space will be selections from classical, democratic, and critical theory, including Aristotle, Arendt, Habermas, De Certeau, and Foucault. Critical contemporary readings on urban space will include Jane Jacobs and selections from urban geographers, sociologists, feminist scholars, and critical race theorists who have engaged the question. The last third of the course, dedicated to rebirths, will include selections and materials from planners and architects, activists and artists who have reflected on the issue while engaging it. Course requirements include student presentations of materials, three short writing assignments, and a final paper on a case of a reimagined public space from NYC.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 123 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Aphrodite (4 Credits)
The first monumental statue of a nude woman in the Greek world was reportedly the Aphrodite of Knidos, sculpted by Praxiteles. The sculpture, apparently set up in an open, round temple, so that she could be viewed from all sides, was a hit in antiquity. It became a tourist destination, the subject of ruminations on the nature of sex and the body, and the inspiration for uncountable ancient copies of the nude goddess in various poses. The original statue is lost, but it fundamentally influenced, perhaps more than any other single monument, the later history of European art. Female nudes—including those of Botticelli, Canova, Manet, Dalí—reference the Aphrodite and her famous "pudica" pose, which simultaneously obscures, draws attention to, and, some argue, reduces her to her sex organs. This course takes the Knidian Aphrodite and the long legacy of the female nude as its subject. What are the stakes of nudity in the ancient contexts, and how are those stakes gendered? How does the representation of the divine body relate to the real, and in particular to the sexualized female body? How does the legacy of the female nude engage modern discourses of sexuality, gender, and race? Alongside modern essays that take on these questions, our primary sources will draw from ancient and modern visual traditions.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 124 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Masters and Servants (4 Credits)
This course will explore the tension between masters and servants as portrayed in literature, history, philosophy and film. Writers have depicted this relationship to examine not only relationships of power, but also as a strategy for criticizing social conventions and literary styles. In the 19th and 20th centuries, this dynamic describes more than power relationships. The rapport of servant and master influences our conceptions of knowledge and psychology, defining our mental lives, as well as our social relationships. Through our readings, discussions, and essays, we will seek to discover how this relationship animates our understanding of the world and ourselves.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 125 First-Year Interdisciplinary Sem:Ancient & Renaissance Fest: Its Literary, Dramatic & Social Forms (4 Credits)
This class investigates the role of festive custom and holiday release, ritual festivity as well as public political expression, and the kinds of performance and literary form that they enable or frustrate in ancient Greece and Rome and in Renaissance Europe, with a 20th century postlude. Why does festivity sometimes lead to political revolt and at other times does not? "We will look at some theories of festivity and carnival, at the festive worship of the gods including especially Dionysus, the Greek god of theater and wine (among other things), at the role of music, at representations in Renaissance paintings, and at the way classical ritual practices shape Renaissance and even modern ideas of festivity and irony. We also explore the effect of the Protestant suppression of festive holiday and theatricality in Shakespeare"s England, and at the tensions inherent in festivity between excess and moderation, between the saturnalia and the philosophical symposium. Readings from Plato, Euripides, Ovid, Shakespeare, Paule Marshall; paintings by Botticelli, Velazquez, Titian, Caravaggio, Poussin and Brueghel, and the film Black Orpheus (Orfeu Negro, directed by Marcel Camus). We will include New Orleans carnival and Jazz Funerals, and may end with a consideration of Woodstock in 1969 and the intersection of protest, rebellion and festive celebration in modern times.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 126 First-Year Interdisciplinary Sem: Examining the Mundane: Art & Literature of the Everyday (4 Credits)
What makes boredom interesting? How have writers, thinkers, and artists sought to represent, elevate, and interpret the mundane? Considering that most of life is consumed by unspectacular moments, shouldn"t we have a clearer understanding of how and what these moments mean? What do recent movements like hyperrealism, maximalism, Dadaism, the avant-garde, and hysterical realism tell us about our evolving fascination with life"s routine? This course investigates the complex history and poetics of the mundane as it has been represented in art and literature across a wide-range of epochs, mediums, and traditions. Beginning with philosophical assessments of the everyday, including phenomenology, existentialism, and post-modernism, we will focus our exploration on novelists, poets, photographers, and filmmakers whose work reveals the overlooked and under-thought aspects of daily living that in fact make up life itself. Artists and writers will include: Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Andy Warhol, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Richard Linklater, Slavoj Zizek, Matt Siber, Kenneth Goldsmith, and Jacques Prevert, among others. In addition to these Western perspectives, we will examine the work of modern Arabic poet Amjad Nasser, Japanese filmmaker Koreeda Hirakazu, Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz, and traditional folk music from Bosnia and Kosovo.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 127 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Use and Abuse of Story (4 Credits)
Once upon a time, a story (or "narrative") was regarded as a sequence of words or other symbols arranged to create the impression of events connected over time by the continuing presence of an individual or community. In the West, the formal study of narrative began with a focus on its role in rhetoric and aesthetics--does it persuade or instruct? does it please? In the 2020's, however, as fledgling fashion designers are told they "must have a story" and struggling politicians are told to "get a new narrative," story/narrative seems to have taken on all sorts of new applications—some good, some questionable. Through a survey approach, this class will critically explore the uses of story over time and new understandings of narrative and media emerging today. We will explore the use of story across disciplines, its important functions and forms, and its relation to problems of truth and fiction, intention and interpretation. We will read works that use narrative to give pleasure and conduct philosophical inquiry, build nations and propagate belief, and make sense of our individual and collective lives. The syllabus will include literary and philosophical texts (by Plato, Shakespeare, Nietzsche, Morrison, and others); films, tv shows, and other visual objects; and recent work in the fields of marketing, applied psychology, art history, and anthropology.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 128 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Data: A History (4 Credits)
We live in an era of "Big Data." From smartwatches and social media to credit scoring and baseball analytics, our lives, government, and business are enmeshed in "Big Data." But what, if anything, is new about "Big Data" in the twenty-fist century? This course explores this question by examining the "datafication" of American society from the nineteenth century to the present day. We will consider what data is, investigating the theoretical premise that data is made, rather than simply out there, existing as "raw data," as well as delve deeper into different episodes in U.S. history where the large-scale production, management, and use of information has drastically altered Americans daily life. Readings will feature primary source texts including naturalist Samuel George Morton's Crania Americana (1839), nineteenth-century credit reports, black journalist Ida B. Wells' Southern Horror (1892), turn-of-the-twentieth-century maps, Charlie Chaplin's film Modern Times (1936), and Robert and Helen Lynd's sociological study Middletown (1929). To put these and other primary sources into context, we will also read works from history, sociology, philosophy, media studies, and the digital humanities.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 129 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: American Road Narratives (4 Credits)
This seminar will explore the literary and historical significance of the road narrative in twentieth-century American literature and film. We will identify the defining features of the American road narrative and ask how stories of travel, especially automobile travel, have functioned as a forum for examining larger social and cultural issues. As we consider the possibilities and promises represented by travel in these stories, we will also interrogate how race, class, and gender affect the experience of being on the road. While the road might signify freedom and new opportunity for some, for others it is linked with desperation or homelessness. Throughout the course, we will think about the relationship between cultural texts and the historical periods during which they were produced. The ways that the automobile has shaped American cities, landscape, and daily life will be particularly important to us. Many of the texts in the seminar feature movement from East to West that evokes the conquest and settling of the U.S. West, a central component of the founding mythology of the United States. However, we will also contemplate different trajectories in the Americas that question the association between travel and conquest. Authors include Zora Neale Hurston, John Steinbeck, Jack Kerouac, and Cormac McCarthy.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 130 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Witch, Heroine, Saint: Joan of Arc and Her World (4 Credits)
In May 1431, Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orléans, was burned at the stake as a heretic and a witch by an English partisan court. An illiterate peasant girl just eighteen years of age, she had led the French in war and saved the French monarchy from ruin. In death, she would gain further power still as a martyr and symbol of indomitable French will and resistance. In this seminar, students will study Joan's complex historical moment and her place within the long history of medieval women, Christian mysticism, and religious fanaticism. We will trace the stories of her appearance and military success, attempt to hear her voice in the extant transcript of her heresy trial, analyze contrasting French and English narratives about her life, and explore how she became the transnational heroine, patron saint, and political symbol that she has become today.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 131 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Introduction to Science and Technology Studies (4 Credits)
In this course you will be introduced to the interdisciplinary study of science, technology, and medicine. Since the early twentieth century, historians, philosophers, anthropologists and allied scholars have asked consequential questions about what science is, how it is practiced, and how it is related to society. Our first objective is to learn about the authors, methods, concepts, and approaches that together comprise what might be (or should be?) thought of as canonical to Science and Technology Studies. These include works by Arendt, Popper, Merton, Fleck, Weber, Kuhn, Fanon, and Foucault. We will then address various schools of thought that emerged around the social study of science in the 1970s and 1980s, whose acronyms include SSK (sociology of scientific knowledge), SCOT (social construction of technology), and ANT (actor-network theory). Our focus will then shift to our second objective, which is to examine how STS is now in conversation with a constellation of areas of inquiry that includes postcolonial studies, critical race theory, new materialisms, indigenous knowledges, and queer theory.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 134 First-Year Interdisciplinary Sem: Travel & Travel Writing: From Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean (4 Credits)
How did people travel in a world without passports and borders? As difficult as it might be to imagine this possibility in today's world, in this course we reconstruct the human experience of travel, and its literary expression, in a world unbound by nation-states. Through journeys in two inter-connected maritime arenas, this course examines travel-writing as a literary genre that crystallized between 1400 to 1900. The emphasis is on travelers who crossed conventional or older cultural boundaries, thereby forging a new sense of the world. Each week, we investigate concepts such as curiosity, translation, acculturation, disambiguation, cultural encounters, and boundaries. The materials treated include translations of Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Urdu, and Malay texts to and from the Islamic world (with a specific focus on circulation between the Middle East, South Asia, East Africa, and Southeast Asia) alongside accounts of European (Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, and French) travelers to the Indian Ocean. In this interdisciplinary seminar, students examine the conventions, topoi, and modes of narration in travel accounts while locating early modern texts and their authors within their historical contexts. Students will produce one research paper on a travel account in any language of their choice. The writing process is divided into several stages and students will collectively curate, revise, and workshop paper drafts in class over the course of the semester. Readings may include the Baburnama, Matteo Ricci's The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven, al-Hajari's The Book of the Protector of Religion against the Unbelievers, Shaikh I'tisamuddin's The Wonders of Vilayet, Alam & Subrahmanyam's Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, Mary Louise Pratt's Imperial Eyes, and Stuart Schwartz's Implicit Understandings.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 135 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Popular Dance (4 Credits)
The course will examine selected forms of social or popular dance as expressions of cultural or group identity from approximately the late-19th century to the present. These dances, from the secular tradition of American social dance, include those performed in ballrooms, cabarets, nightclubs, cabarets, discotheques, and the street. The seminar will explore various social and popular dance styles developed as a result of the rich fusions of West African, African American, Euro-American, and Latin American forms of dance within the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean. Topics will ragtime couple dance and the New Woman; the lindy-hop and the crossing of racial boundaries; teen dances and youth rebellion of the 1950s; and tradition and change in contemporary ballroom dance. In all cases, we will explore social and popular dance forms as experiences of movement that both respond and give shape to social, cultural, and political issues of the day. In addition to extensive viewing of dance, readings will include Mauss, "Techniques of the Body"; Katz, "The Egalitarian Waltz"; Hunter, "The Blues Aesthetic and Black Vernacular Dance"; Tomko, Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance; Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York; Malone, Steppin' on the Blues: The Visible Rhythms of African American Dance; and Dinerstein, Swinging the Machine: Modernity, Technology, and African American Culture Between the World Wars.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 137 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Walking New York (4 Credits)
In this course we will walk, while also explore the meaning of it. We will walk famous parks, visit hidden gems, and discover the secret trails of New York City. Along the way we will find new human and non-human friends, and perhaps learn something about the importance of walking to you as a young learner. The history of learning from ancient times till today is filled with walkers, and this course will begin untangling what that may entail for you as a student. We will get to know our NYU neighborhood, and walk places such as Coney Island, Governor's Island, Central Park, Battery Park, The High Line, Brooklyn Bridge Park, Fort Tryon Park, Prospect Park, Flushing Meadows and the Wickquasgeck Trail. Along the way you will get to know the city and its natures, and perhaps also your classmates and yourself. Walks will be without your professor on Sundays 2-5, or independently as you wish. We will read about walking and the places we will visit. You will be asked to document and share your weekly walks through photos, and to reflect on them in two different papers.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 138 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Bananas: An Interdisciplinary Case Study (4 Credits)
During the course of the twentieth century, bananas went from being an obscure tropical fruit never tasted by most people in the United States to an ubiquitous staple of the U.S. diet. This seminar will examine how the banana came to be readily available in U.S. grocery stores, investigate the political, economic, and environmental issues surrounding the banana, and analyze the ways that bananas have been represented in cultural texts in the United States and Latin America. Our study of bananas will serve as an interdisciplinary case study that highlights how one topic can be studied from a variety of disciplinary angles and the insights to be gained from an interdisciplinary approach. Students will explore the seminar topic through literary texts, films, advertising, and secondary material written by historians. Specific topics for discussion include the history of the United Fruit Company, the 1954 CIA-led overthrow of Guatemalan leader Jacobo Arbenz, the career of Brazilian performer Carmen Miranda, the poetry of Pablo Neruda, Gabriel García Márquez's 1969 novel One Hundred Years of Solitude, sustainable agriculture, labor rights, and banana recipes.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 139 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Puppetry and Material Performance (4 Credits)
In an unstable and unpredictable world, what do puppets have to teach us? How might the study of puppetry and material performance inform, challenge, or help us imagine new kinds of relationships (social, political, ecological, etc.) in an ever-changing world? Through a combination of seminars and studio practice, this course introduces students to the field of puppetry and material performance. Throughout the course we will consider puppetry and material performance in a range of contexts including political activism, religious ceremony, cultural celebration, and popular theater. In each of our material investigations we will examine the visual dramaturgy and aesthetics of objects as well as the relationships between animators and objects and how these configurations and dynamics change with the context and circumstance of performance. Readings will be drawn from a range of disciplines including anthropology, dance, political theory, performance studies, disability studies, media studies, to name just a few.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 140 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Work, Freedom, and Social Change (4 Credits)
How have workers created social and political change in the United States? What counts as work? What can workers do today to maintain and build power? This course explores these three thematic questions through an exploration of the history of workers and their organizations in American history after Emancipation. We will explore the history and meaning of class and work and the relationship of work to the state through reading, discussion, and film. We will pay special attention to the ways in which these understandings of class are shaped by gender. Readings include David von Drehle, Bethany Moreton, Selma James, and Wendy Brown.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 141 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Media and Empire (4 Credits)
What does the telegraph and cinema, the Internet and new social media, have to do with empire building? Contemporary discussions about media and technology often focus on how the ways in which our world today has been radically transformed by new kinds of information technologies and novel forms of globalized cultures, yet uneven media flows have long connected the world through processes of imperialism. We will begin at the height of European colonialism in the 19th century, and move forward through the period of decolonization and the Cold War era of the 20th century, into current debates about US hegemony and decline. We will focus on the significance of communication technologies in establishing military and economic power and the role of the mass media in shaping our ideas about racial supremacy and cultural difference. We will also consider the role of these same media and information technologies to challenge colonial domination, mis-representation and imperial rule in the 20th and 21st centuries, with a geographical focus on Africa, Asia and Latin America in relation to British, French and US imperial legacies. Authors we will read include: Simone Browne, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Claudia Jones, Edward Said, Kim TallBear, Anand Teltumbde, among others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 142 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Experience of Being Human (4 Credits)
In this course, students will explore how different cultures throughout time have contemplated the experience of being human. Together we will read a diverse collection of stories, each posing philosophical questions that will demand rigorous introspection and invite critical debate. Does life have a purpose? Do we control our own destinies? What does it mean to live morally? How do we find fulfillment? Must we suffer until we do? What happens when we die? And when, if ever, will humanity itself reach its end? Will anything follow in our place? Texts will include a mixture of old (The Iliad, the Book of Job, Beowulf) and new (Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower, Arthur C. Clarke's Childhood's End, James Baldwin's Another Country). Through engaging discussions and challenging experiential exercises, students will learn a deeper appreciation for the varied human experiences that shape our world, cultivating empathy, self-examination, and a greater sense of interconnectedness with the world around them.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 143 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Copy (4 Credits)
The aura of an object and the speculative nature that surrounds its copy is a tenuous relationship that spans centuries and has only become exponentially more convoluted by today's technological ability to replicate and repeat. This arts workshop will look at how the copy, the counterfeit and the accumulation of likenesses function in contemporary artistic practices. Can the counterfeit or a facsimile have more impact and cultural value than its original? Can a collection of copies be more powerful than a collection of originals by altering the artistic intent behind it? Examples of copying and replication in visual art will be historically situated while student projects consciously work to problematize the notion of the original, its context, and the power of the copy to alter the reception of the original. The course will engage the work of artists like Marcel Broodthaers, Sherry Levine, Richard Prince, Liz Magic Laser, Fred Wilson and Orson Welles, and include texts by scholars such as Homi Bhabha, Hito Steyerl, Arthur C. Danto, and Walter Benjamin. Students will employ myriad techniques in making copies, leading towards a small-scale mass production of their own design through conventional casting processes (e.g. mother molds, rubber, alginate, plaster), while integrating other analog, digital and conceptual approaches to collecting, altering and reproducing. Paralleling historical research, students will work through projects that amass collections and their means of display, render copies of objects toward a transgressive outcome, and situate these copies in a manner that informs their newfound context.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 145 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Babel (4 Credits)
How might we examine the myth of Babel to test assumptions about belonging and separateness? The construction of the Tower and its destruction by God, who then covered the earth with uncomprehending multitudes, would seem to be a story of uniformity, ambition, and then essential difference, of architecture, power, identity, language, and geographic spread. For thousands of years and from the Bible to the Early Modern to today, it seems to haunts us in architectural and imperial ambitions, in film and mass media, in high and contemporary art, in dystopian nightmares about globalization, in novels of authoritarian repression and novellas of spell-binding imaginings of freedom and connectedness. In this seminar we will analyze many of its figurations in Biblical and archaeological scholarship, literature, art and architectural history, film and visual studies, linguistics, philosophy, politics, and history. The subject leaves few alternatives but to broach the culture, politics, and philosophy of living together, and so we will explore some possible alternatives in peace and hospitality, in translation and in embracing the incompetence of language. Amongst the authors encountered, there will be Borges, Derrida, Gideon, Goethe, Huntington, Kafka, Kant, Mirzoeff, and Wordsworth.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 146 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Reading Closely, Reading Historically (4 Credits)
What does it mean to read closely? How does a work of literature change as you learn more about its historical context or the history of its own production? This is a class on reading and perspective meant to cultivate our skills as students of literature or other kinds of texts. In the first half of the semester, we will approach lyric poems, short stories and novels (Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway , Shelley's Frankenstein , and the Arabian Nights), as worlds unto themselves, taking seriously the texts' internal logic while probing their peculiarities, ambiguities, and paradoxes. We will attend to how poetry fuses intellectual, emotional and aesthetic concerns while developing a shared vocabulary in order to better understand and describe the ways poets utilize wordplay, figurative expression (such as metaphor, synesthesia, and synecdoche), and sonic devices (like rhyme and rhythm) as they transform ordinary language into art. For fiction, we will consider how stories are narrated, their arrangement of time and space, their experiments with point of view, and the ways in which they instantiate character. In the second half of the semester, our perspective will broaden as we look at two case studies. We will set Charlotte Bronte's 1847 novel Jane Eyre against the backdrop of nineteenth-century ideas about women's work, the cult of the home and domesticity, the early feminist movement, and roiling debates about the British empire, all issues which intersect Bronte's strange novel, which is at once a coming-of-age story, a spiritual memoir, and a Gothic romance. Similarly, we will explore how issues of race, diaspora, and urban life shape Langston Hughes's 1949 poetry volume One-Way Ticket . In the process, we will consider how literary forms themselves are marked by genre (a different kind of history) as they play with and against longstanding conventions.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 147 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Colonized Ecologies (4 Credits)
Colonized Ecologies examines the deep-seated colonial roots of today's ecological crisis. How has colonization shaped the particular environmental crises that we face today? And why are these problems so intractable? In thinking through these questions, we pay close attention to both social and ecological dynamics, and think across diverse colonial and postcolonial contexts, including historical and present-day dynamics in Anglophone settler societies (the U.S., Canada, Australia, and southern Africa) and in postcolonial settings such as Nigeria, Indonesia and Bangladesh. We also use resources of critical race theory to analyze enduring attributes of settler societies, such as private property or the role of livestock, and the intersections between slavery and indigenous dispossession in the Americas. While linking ecological, historical and social dynamics, we read classics from William Cronon, Robin Kimmerer, Alexis Pauline Gumbs, and Ken Saro-Wiwa. The course concludes by studying on-going colonial legacies for common solutions to climate change.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 149 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Fashioning Identities in Antiquity (4 Credits)
Fashion is central to expressions of identity. In this course, you will be introduced to the social, political, and cultural stakes of fashion in the ancient Mediterranean world (inclusive of northern Africa and western Asia). In this interdisciplinary seminar, students will learn to critically analyze the art historical, archaeological, and literary evidence for fashion—including clothing, hair, cosmetics, and jewelry—to formulate evidence-based observations about ancient societies. Furthermore, we will encounter the ways that the "stuff" of fashion, like textiles, metals, and semi-precious stones, were central to trade and technological exchange across continents. By examining a range of case studies from Pharaonic Egypt to Imperial Roman Italy, Classical Greece to Late Antique Ethiopia, we will investigate how fashioning the body was central to the construction of identity, the discipline of society, the display of power, and the articulation of ideology.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 150 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Climate Change (4 Credits)
Is anxiety about the climate crisis warranted? As protests rock London, New York and other cities around the world, what does an interdisciplinary view bring to these public debates? This course draws on theories from science studies, decolonial theory, anthropology and climate justice to tease apart a multifaceted - and multicultural - view of our collective ecological predicament. First we take on the *political *side of climate change by asking questions about its collective nature. How do we think about political collectivity? Then we turn to a critical understanding of the science, both to expose ourselves to some of the underlying facts and to think about science as a socio-political process. Lastly we focus on 'Living with Climate Change' - human practices ranging from fossil fuel cultures and the sociology of protest, to pragmatic attempts to grapple with a rapidly changing climate around the world. We read works from Pope Francis and Montaigne to Donna Haraway and Slavoj Zizek. Far from instilling a predetermined viewpoint, this seminar is designed to impart critical thinking skills for a rapidly evolving global situation.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 151 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Is Design Color Coded? (4 Credits)
The course *Is Design Color Coded?* considers how color operates and is valued within different design disciplines. Why does the color white represent purity and cleanliness in some contexts while connoting death in others? Why does the color red signal danger or emergency in certain situations but represents prosperity and power in others? Why does purple-colored clothing connote high status in societies as distant as Ancient Greece (7th century BCE) and the Tokugawa period in Japan (1603-1868)? During this First Year Interdisciplinary Seminar, students will explore color as a constitutive element of most people's lived experiences. Analytic exercises, creative projects, reading and writing will structure each course module, and it is expected that both historic and contemporary designs will inform the creation of new work and class discussions. As students develop a critical understanding of how color contributes to our understanding of the designed environment, we will also discuss how color affects our perceptions of race, gender, ethnicity, identity, and social status. Student projects will engage a range of different design disciplines including industrial design, fashion design, interior design, graphic design, architectural and interior design, surface coatings, and digital interfaces. Class meetings will include discussions, presentations of student design work, skills workshops, and field trips. Field trips will include visits to museums, retail stores, and trade showrooms. Because our in-class work will involve work in digital programs like Adobe and Rhino, students should have access to a laptop computer that they can bring to class.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 152 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: The Cultural Politics of Childhood (4 Credits)
This course explores the fraught relationship between children and public policy makers in the United States. How do policy makers understand and seek to regulate childhood? Do all children require the same care and attention from government? And what do we even mean when we talk about "children"? We begin by examining common conceptualizations of the child figure. While all children possess some universal characteristics that transcend time, place, and personal circumstance, we can also understand the child figure to be a social construction, with childhood as we know it emerging as a coherent life stage only in the past few centuries. Public policy—laws and regulations concerning education, child abuse, and juvenile justice, for example—has both responded to and helped shape new conceptualizations of childhood. The remainder of the course focuses on children as members of families. Just as we can understand the symbolic child figure to be a social construction, so we will see that race, class, gender, and sexual orientation are key factors influencing the lived experiences of actual children and their parents. Additionally, we will examine how the proscribed "best methods" of child-rearing seem to change frequently. Scholars and thinkers we will encounter include Ta-Nehisi Coates, Annette Lareau, Sally Mann, Neil Postman, Mical Raz, and Judith Sealander. Ultimately, while the course emphasizes the constructed nature of childhood, students are encouraged to develop and refine their own ideas about what public policies might actually benefit young people.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 153 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: AI + Nature: The Future of Ecological Design (4 Credits)
This course explores the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in innovative design methods to address environmental challenges. Through a myriad of case studies, projects, and collaborative workshops, students will openly explore cutting-edge tools and technologies that harness AI to enhance environmental design. Students will examine how AI is reshaping the fields of sustainable architecture, urban planning, industrial products, fashion, and eco-based technologies, as well as its potential to create resilient, adaptive solutions for climate change, resource management, and biodiversity conservation. The course combines theoretical exploration with practical applications, encouraging students to develop AI-driven design strategies that prioritize planetary needs and future life styles. By the end of the course, students will have a comprehensive understanding of how AI can be a powerful force in shaping the future of dwelling for the collective benefit of our planet. We will investigate and critically analyze controversial figures, innovators, and groups such as Elon Musk, Naomi Klein, Sam Altman, Sherry Turkle, William Mitchell, Ada Lovelace, Boston Dynamics, Singularity University and more.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 154 First-Year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Revolutionary Acts in Radical Spaces (4 Credits)
During the last century, a vibrant alternative theater scene emerged from cafes, lofts, and basements in and around the NYU area. Shaped by mid-20th-century social and political movements — such as the Civil Rights Movement, Anti-War protests, LGBTQ+ rights, the AIDS crisis, and Indigenous rights — this work defined the ethos and aesthetics of what became known as "downtown theater." We'll examine the symbiotic nature of content and form in the work of artists such as The Living Theater whose radical content, informed by anarchist and pacifist principles, directly influenced their choice to abandon traditional narrative structures and conventions of theater. Additionally, we will consider the complex relationships between space, identity, and politics and the ways in which artists use formal experimentation as a vehicle for social change.The class will include site visits and performance outings within walking distance to Gallatin including venues such as La MaMa and WOW Café.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 155 First-year Interdisciplinary Seminar: Intimate America (4 Credits)
Typically offered Fall of even numbered years
This First-year Interdisciplinary Seminar examines government's role, historically and currently, in regulating the intimate aspects of people's lives. The course will focus on three particular areas as manifested in the United States: gender and sexual identity, marriage, and reproduction. To what extent does government restrict the choices people are able to make concerning their intimate lives? What justifications does government offer for such interventions, and how have such justifications changed over time? How successful have individuals been in resisting government restrictions? In considering these questions, we will pay particular attention to topics such as birth control, eugenics, anti-miscegenation laws, LGBTQ rights, and sex education. The course draws from the fields of history, literature, sociology, legal studies, and feminist and queer theories. Texts we might engage include: Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale; Michael Bronski's Queer History of the United States, Adam Cohen's Imbeciles, and Harriet Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 319 First-Year Writing Sem: Aesthetics On Trial (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
While cultures often like to see themselves reflected in the arts, groundbreaking art is frequently accompanied by controversy. In literature, Vladimir Nabokov was faced with charges of obscenity with Lolita. In photography, artists like Robert Mapplethorpe and Diane Arbus challenged the role of the visual arts as innocent representation. In film, Leni Riefenstahl blurred the lines between aesthetics, politics, and ethics by directing Triumph of the Will for Hitler, while Pier Paolo Pasolini, in Salò, or The 120 Days of Sodom, created what one critic has called "the most repulsive, nauseating, yet most beautiful and perhaps most important film ever to exist." Richard Wagner, whose musical genius and historical impact is undisputed, has also been called out for anti-Semitism and misogyny, as have painters like Picasso and Balthus, among many others. Through critical writing, discussion, and research, we will consider such cases and investigate questions such as: What is the proper relationship between ethics and aesthetics? At what point, if any, should ethical transgression count against a work's aesthetic value? How do we define obscenity in the arts? Is art inherently political? What should we make of "cancel culture?" In addition to frequent in-class writing exercises, two short argumentative essays and one longer literary-critical essay will be assigned.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 343 First-Year Writing Sem: Writers On Writing (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
"Language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the while we long to move the stars to pity," said Gustave Flaubert in his relentless quest for "le mot juste." In this course, students will learn to write the academic essay while reading and analyzing essays, letters, interviews, videos, poetry, and fiction about writers and writing. Why do writers write? Where do they get their inspiration? Their preparation? Where do they find their models and mentors? What are their various methods? Why do writers not write? What are the responsibilities of the writer? Can writing be dangerous? Can success have its perils? Some possible answers (and further questions) may come from George Orwell, Joan Didion, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Rainer Maria Rilke, Tracy K. Smith, Joy Harjo, Yiyun Li, Jhumpa Lahiri, Zadie Smith, James Joyce, Jorge Luis Borges, Lorrie Moore, Grace Paley, and Alice Munro. We may attend a reading and a writer or editor may visit.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 357 First-Year Writing Seminar: Wilderness and Civilization (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

In this seminar we will study a sampling of texts from various fields that deal with the tension between wilderness and civilization and the identities it enables. We will consider how the concept of wilderness sometimes doubles for that of nature in shaping a dynamic identity we call "civilized." Our studies will draw on insights from biology, ecology, anthropology, postcolonial studies, political theory, and literature. We will also engage in experiential learning to ground our studies in practice. We will attempt to respond to such questions as: If wilderness is nature without humans, why are we so irresistibly drawn to it? What function does wilderness serve in our civilized lives? How has it become necessary to our imaginative, spiritual, and political lives? What does an investigation of "wilderness," "nature," and "civilization" allow us to express about the world we inhabit? What are the limits of these concepts—what possibilities do they disallow? We will examine these concepts in terms of how they work to create identity for humans, what ways of life they offer, what they obscure. And we'll look closely at related concepts that structure our sense of ourselves, sometimes without our being wholly conscious of it: What does it mean to be natural, or live a natural lifestyle? Should social organizations follow nature, be "organic," or go in a different direction? How natural is sex? gender? class? race and ethnicity? How does what we consider "natural" and "unnatural" affect the lifestyle options available to us? Our goal in this seminar is to think through these and related issues and to develop language that enables us to imagine viable alternative futures.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 361 First-Year Writing Seminar: Collage: From Art to Life and Back (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This writing seminar will explore the implications of making the new from the ready-made, of constructing one's own from what was—and remains—somebody else's. Collage aims at reintegrating art and life, so we will examine collage works that comment on existing society, critique its values and forms of representation and demand their revision. By selecting heterogeneous elements from remote areas of culture, high and low, and juxtaposing them on a single plane, collage disrupts conventional associations and traditional narratives, collapses oppositions, scrambles classifications, and levels hierarchies. What new meanings do the fragments and quotations acquire from these radical juxtapositions, and how does their assemblage contest the mythologies of the culture from which they were taken? The class will consist of several case studies in visual and verbal collage placed in relation to a set of political and aesthetic ideas, which we will derive from a series of theoretical texts. Theorists may include Roland Barthes, Viktor Shklovsky, John Berger, Marjorie Perloff, Rosalind Krauss, Dawn Ades, Peter Bürger, and Dick Hebdige. Collages may include visual artworks by Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger, Hannah Höch, Romare Bearden, and Robert Rauschenberg, as well as poetry by T. S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, and Susan Howe.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 395 First-Year Writing Seminar: Science Fiction: Frankenstein and Revisions (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is not only one of the earliest and most famous works of science fiction, it's also a story that has been retold many times over. This course focuses on Shelley's novel and on the novels and films it has inspired: we may consider H. G. Wells's novel The Island of Doctor Moreau and James Whale's films Frankenstein and The Bride of Frankenstein. How do later authors and filmmakers retell Shelley's story? What appeals to them in her novel? What elements of Frankenstein do they retain, what do they alter, and why? Exploring these questions, we will examine how authors from Shelley onwards use the Frankenstein story to engage with contemporary scientific developments; these may include Darwin's theories of human descent, twentieth-century ideas about eugenics, and recent concepts in artificial intelligence. Our thematic focus on revision parallels the writing practices we will develop in the course: just as a novel or film may creatively rewrite and respond to an earlier story or scientific idea, so is the academic paper a kind of creative rewriting of and response to another text; just as radical revision enables the novelist or filmmaker to create an original work, so does revising and rewriting one's own drafts enable the student writer to make an original argument. The course's assignments aim to help students develop a productive writing practice through short exercises as well as drafts and revisions of three formal papers.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 403 First-Year Writing Sem: Abundance: Thinking, Writing & Creating In The Age of Plenty (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Every three minutes Americans take more photographs than the entire 19th century produced. We have some 100 000 words of text pass through our eyes and ears each day (that's ¼ of War and Peace). We are in the midst of constant abundance – of information, choices, opportunities, products, texts, and images. Even the city we live in is bursting at the seams. But what is abundance and how do we navigate it ethically, socially, and artistically? This course investigates the history and changing shape of abundance, from sonnet writing in the Renaissance to twitter feeds today, from Augmented Reality poems and the Digital Humanities to consumerism, overcrowding, and artistic repurposing. Writers we will consider include Kenny Goldsmith, David Foster Wallace, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Marjorie Perloff, Walter Benjamin; Photography projects will include Penelope Umbrico's Flikr Sunsets, Brandon Stanton's Humans of New York, and Walker Evans's Many Were Called; Music by Glenn Gould, Sonic Youth, and Jay-Z; Films by Richard Linklater, Sarah Polly, and Bela Tarr. As we examine these materials we will also consider the changing shape of the traditional college essay and how to navigate abundance in our own writing. Students will write three short papers and create a final critical essay that reframes and repurposes existent textual or media sources.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 419 First-Year Writing Seminar: Disability Arts & Culture (4 Credits)
The last few decades have seen the emergence of disability as a game-changing social analytic. By foregrounding the generative possibilities of non-normative forms, disability studies has offered profound insight into long-held conceptions of time, space, environment, and difference. Activists and academics alike have drawn upon disability art and culture in order to expand the category and shift towards a focus in self-representation. In this course, we will understand writing as a form of access and we will use many forms of disability art (visual, textual, performative, digital) to develop key modes of textual expression (personal, descriptive, analytical, critical). Over the course of the semester, students will develop complex ideas about disability through a series of essays while also having the opportunity to produce and reflect on their own creative work. In the course, we will engage with the art of Judith Scott, Sins Invalid, Alice Sheppard, Lucy Grealy, the Deaf Poets Society, as well as many theoretical and scholarly texts.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 420 First-Year Writing Sem: The Politics of Home: Gender, Race, Class and Kinship (4 Credits)
The premise of this seminar is that the "home" is not prepolitical or apolitical, in opposition to the public domain, but inextricably linked to the political. Indeed meanings of home saturate – sometimes explicitly, sometimes obliquely – our public discourse and debates. Gender, race, class, and sexuality are publically policed and reproduced with reference to normative familial relations and (private) property. Yet domestic spaces and intimate lives can often serve as spaces of relief, refuge, and even political opposition. The home, depending on where one finds oneself situated, can mean wildly different things: prison or refuge, the banal or the aspirational. In this course we will read critiques and adulations of the domestic in multiple genres (theoretical, literary, popular) alongside contemporary activist projects and artworks that willfully put the domestic on public display through the use of traditional women's work (knitting, embroidery, sewing). We will ask how different domestic spaces and intimate relations are imagined in opposition (or conjunction) with dominant models. Readings will include Charlotte Gilman Perkins, Betty Friedan, Toni Morrison, bell hooks, Kathleen Stewart, Ann Cvetkovich, David Eng, Juana Maria Rodriguez, and Foucault and artworks by Annette Messager, Marianne Jørgensen, and the Gees Bend Quilters.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 422 First-Year Writing Seminar: The History of Orientalism and the Politics of Its Legacy (4 Credits)
Europe's fascination with the, East, or "Orient," has a complicated and often contradictory history. From the time of Alexander the Great to Marco Polo to Napoleon and Lawrence of Arabia, European scholars, linguists, writers, artists, and explorers have depicted the "Orient" as sometimes sophisticated, exotic, mysterious, barbaric, dangerous, or debauched. In doing so, they constructed both a disciplinary field called "Orientalism" as well as a powerful narrative of civilization that pitted "East" against "West." Using a flexible historical approach, this seminar will explore intellectual and cultural encounters between Europe and the "Orient" from Antiquity to the present. Our main text and guide in this course will be Edward Said's seminal 1978 book Orientalism. We will also read selections from the field broadly defined as "postcolonialism, which called for a more complex understanding of how gender, class, power, race, and nationalism shaped the construction and reproduction of knowledge. How do imperialism and knowledge production intersect? Can they be disentangled? Do Orientalist constructs still shape our own understandings of "East" and "West," and our own production of knowledge, still to this day? In answering these questions, we will engage various texts, including primary sources, non-fiction, literature, and theory. Through these readings, class discussions, and weekly writing exercises leading to formal essays, we will explore and write about complex issues of identity, race, exile, multiculturalism, and religious fundamentalism. Readings may also include William Jones, J. S. Mill, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Rudyard Kipling, E. M. Forster, Franz Fanon, Timothy Mitchell, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gayatri Spivak and Nadia Abu El-Haj.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 423 First-Year Writing Seminar: Bedtime Writing: The Literature of Sleep (4 Credits)
"[I]n dreaming, / The clouds methought would open and show riches / Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked, / I cried to dream again" (The Tempest III.ii.147-150). As the supposed one-third of life we spend unconscious continues to shrink, Caliban's lament feels more familiar than ever. But current obsessions with the health and productivity consequences of our collective sleep debt obscure a much longer tradition of cultural engagement with sleep, one that not only makes space for slumber as more than mere refueling, but also posits a special relationship between writers and sleep. This course aims to recover that secret affinity and plunder its "riches" by studying literary representations of sleep. Expect encounters with sleepwalkers, insomniacs, oneironauts, and other creatures of the night as we ask how sleep—or lack of it—factors in to literary practices. Readings will include fiction (Dickens, Collins, Chekhov, Carver), poetry (Spenser, Coleridge, Tennyson, Thomson), history (Burgess, Dorhn-van Rossum, Ekirch, Moss), philosophy (Schwenger, Turcke, Wortham), psychology (Freud), the sociopolitics of sleep (Derickson, Williams, Wolf-Meyer), and contemporary memoirs of sleeplessness (Butler, Greene).
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 424 First-Year Writing Seminar: Work, Freedom and Social Change (4 Credits)
How have workers created social and political change in the United States? What counts as work? What can workers do today to maintain and build power? This course explores these three thematic questions through an exploration of the history of workers and their organizations in American history after emancipation. We will explore the history and meaning of class and work and the relationship of work to the state through reading, discussion, and film. We will pay special attention to the ways in which these understandings of class are shaped by gender. Readings include David von Drehle, Bethany Moreton, Selma James, and Wendy Brown.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 426 First-Year Writing Seminar: What is Science Fiction? (4 Credits)
What is the relation between literature and science? Is fiction a form of knowledge, and if so how is it different from the sort of knowledge arrived at in the natural sciences? What is the role of thought experiments in scientific and philosophical inquiry? Are literary works thought experiments? The course will explore such questions through a focus on science-fiction as a genre, broadly construed. In addition to reflection on what is meant by "genre," we will consider how science and the scientist are represented in works of fiction, the literature and philosophy of artificial intelligence, the idea of time travel, and the idea of fiction and possible worlds. Students write 3-4 essays making claims and using evidence from works on the syllabus, with emphasis on writing clear prose in support of an original argument. Authors and filmmakers may include H.G. Wells, Philip K. Dick, Ursula Le Guin, William Gibson, Edgar Allan Poe, Franz Kafka, Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Sigmund Freud, Stanely Kubrick, Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Delaney, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Italo Calvino, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Alan Turing, Jonathan Lethem, Ridley Scott and George Lucas.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 429 First-Year Writing Sem: Fictions on Record:Journalism, Lit & Claims to Truth (4 Credits)
Literature tends to be seen as a space for dynamic aesthetic experimentation and critical thought. But journalistic texts are rarely granted the same transcendence. How, then, can journalism be read as literature? This seminar examines the relationship between journalism and literature in the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East. Coursework is centered on the following questions: what claims to truth are at work in narrative fiction versus journalistic storytelling? Are certain kinds of fictional and nonfictional accounts better positioned than others to take up political, aesthetic, and philosophical concerns? How have literature and journalism historically interacted with, and reacted to, each other? For the final paper, students will produce a critical analysis of a nonfiction text. Shorter writing assignments will encourage students to experiment with the narrative styles we encounter, and to reflect critically on how their own writing constructs its particular claims to truth. Readings may include excerpts from the work of: Svetlana Alexievich, James Baldwin, Truman Capote, Joan Didion, Ryszard Kapuściński, Valeria Luiselli, Óscar Martínez, Joe Sacco, and Rodolfo Walsh.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 430 First-Year Writing Seminar: Welcome to the Desert of the Real: Text, Image, Film (4 Credits)
At a moment when popular culture is obsessed with reality television and new technology permits “real time” access to current events, this course examines the concept of reality in philosophy, literature, and film. What is the relationship between language and reality? How do different genres and media represent the world around us? How do visual and linguistic representations mediate our understanding of the “true” and the “real?” We will begin the course by examining key philosophical works by Plato and Karl Marx along side films like the Wachowskis' The Matrix and Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times. We will then discuss how writers associated with disparate aesthetic movements such as realism, surrealism, and magical realism claimed to present and define reality. We will probe deeply into the category of everyday life to explore questions relating to race, gender, and the experience of modern life. Lastly, we will consider the force of the photographic image and assess its relationship to evidence, truth, and reality. Here, our primary texts will include works of photography and commercial advertisements. Authors include but are not limited to: Aimé Césaire, Herman Melville, Nikolai Gogol, bell hooks, André Breton, Henri Lefebvre, Franz Fanon, Susan Sontag, and Claudia Rankine. This seminar will help you discover your voice as an academic writer. Students will explore all aspects of the writing process through multimodal assignments designed to facilitate engagement with course materials and develop critical writing skills.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 432 First-Year Writing Sem:Pilgrimage, Road Stories & Travel Narr. from Past to Present (4 Credits)
Travel writing is a fascinating and diverse genre that has proliferated from antiquity to the twenty-first century. It appeals to many people for a variety of reasons: it introduces us to new people and places; it often features vivid and appealing prose; it offers insight into the way people make sense of their real-life experiences; and it inspires us to daydream about our own travels. In this course, we will study travel writing by discussing each text’s authorial personae, context, narrative structure as well as intended audiences, and evaluate the writing through the lens of some potent critiques of travel writing and tourism. Sources of study include European Romantic travel writing by canonical writers such as Gerard Nerval and Gustave Flaubert, Jamaica Kincaid’s A Small Place, travel photography by Maxime Du Camp and excerpts from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s novel Americanah. Throughout the course, we will consider the following questions: Who is telling these road stories? Why? At what type of audience are these stories directed? How can we tell? What are we meant to learn about the people, places, and journeys they describe? How do these texts invite us to make sense of the world? How do the authors shape meaning through their use of language? What anxieties, desires, and visions of selfhood do they project?
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 433 First-Year Writing Seminar: Science/Fiction (4 Credits)
In this writing seminar, we will study the role of boundaries between truth and fiction in the presentation of science to popular audiences today. The course will revolve around two main themes. First, we will examine scientific inaccuracy for the sake of entertainment – how works of science fiction and sensationalist online news sites manipulate scientific facts to leave a more spectacular impression. Second, we will look at the portrayal of physics to the general public in works of popular science – how writers balance the intricacies of expounding advanced and often mathematically based subject matter with the simplicity and clarity necessary for general comprehension. Together, we will investigate whether missing information can sometimes serve as a better educational tool than the full story. How much information is necessary for understanding? Must we always sacrifice accuracy in the name of accessibility? And what is at stake when we do? By reading, analyzing, and discussing a range of sources with different goals and audiences, we will learn how to express technical ideas selectively, succinctly, and engagingly in writing.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 434 First-Year Writing Seminar: Literary Transformations from Ovid to the Present (4 Credits)
From the first century CE when the Roman poet Ovid wrote his Metamorphoses, writers have been fascinated with the idea of transformation. From the most mythic creation stories to gender transformation and fluidity to the way authors "transform" an experience into literature, "transformation" has proven to be an enduring and flexible theme across the literary world. Beginning with selections from Ovid, this course will chart transformation across poetry, prose, and drama. Readings may include Ovid's Metamorphoses, the anonymous Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus, Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Virginia Woolf's Orlando, sections from T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, and Anne Carson's Autobiography of Red, as well as some theories on the construction of identity and its malleability. What does it mean to become someone or something else, especially when "becoming" that person is beyond your control? What writing techniques do authors use to express the way transformation effects relationships, character growth, and the world around them? How are previous stories "transformed" through rewriting, and how does the writing process "transform" history? As a course devoted to writing and the writing process, this class will explore these texts by thinking critically about how and for what purpose authors use "transformation" in their writing while focusing on transforming our own writing along the way.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 435 First-Year Writing Seminar: Money and Literature, Capital Fictions (4 Credits)
Cash or credit, money is a substance that flows, often invisible and ghost-like, behind our most concrete relations. Yet, how do we represent money? What structures of imagination and cultural memory get mobilized whenever we think about currency? Often the desire to describe money, to visualize this opaque medium, gives rise to fantastic, grotesque, and surreal forms. This course will explore the theme of money — and with it, of debt, counterfeit currency, gambling, lottery, austerity, commodity fetishism, as well as relationship between the circulation of capital, desire, and gender — in literature and film. Our exploration of fictions that sustain and critique capitalist advancement will begin with the study of the nineteenth-century realist prose, arguably the literature of capitalist modernity. The works of the nineteenth-century realists like Balzac, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy are preoccupied with money as something that underlies all social relations. Karl Marx, another nineteenth-century figure, is the most famous critic of capitalism and its fictions, which imprison real bodies. The course will also draw on materials from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: from the cinematic adaptations of Friedrich Dürrenmatt by a Senegalese film director Djibril Diop Mambéty to contemporary Greek literature of austerity. The authors and filmmakers we will deal with in this course include Honoré de Balzac, Karl Marx, Walter Benjamin, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Herman Melville, Charlote Perkins Gillman, Edith Wharton, Christina Stead, Robert Bresson, Djibril Diop Mambeti, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, David Graeber, Christos Ikonomou, and others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 437 First-Year Writing Sem: The Radical Eye: Aesthetic Experience in New York (4 Credits)
Crossing on the Brooklyn ferry in 1855, Walt Whitman famously declared, "I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence." Writing during a period of democratic ferment, Whitman used the expansive form of free verse to capture the embodied release he felt walking through crowded streets. In the vital experience of the city, Whitman saw the potential for personal as well as cultural transformation, and many writers in "generations hence" have seized this potential. Radical expression has become the basis for new identities and new conceptions of New York that challenge social limitations. In this seminar, we will examine the cultural history of New York since Whitman's time through the eyes of selected writers in context of the movements that shaped them – labor, feminist, anti-racist, and queer – and parallel experiments in art, music, and film. Drawing on poetry, short fiction, and memoir, we will consider how creative expression mediates historical experience to transform the collective understanding of the city. Students will complete three papers that analyze individual works and authors as well as develop their own perspective on the urban experience. Readings include Whitman, Jose Martí, Djuna Barnes, Langston Hughes, Nathanael West, Frank O'Hara, Joan Didion, The Velvet Underground, Audre Lordé, David Wojnarowicz, Nas, and N.K. Jemisin, supplemented by readings in New York history.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 438 First-Year Writing Seminar: Writing Against Time (4 Credits)
Many first-year college students experience the frustration of scrambling to finish papers and assignments on time. Perhaps equally frustrating has been the intellectual endeavor to grasp the nature of this most elusive of terms we are constantly racing against: time. In this course, we will question, probe, and defy our temporal adversary––"the devourer and demolisher of all things," as Cervantes calls it––through the very act of writing about it. How to define time? Do we all experience its inexorable flow in the same way? Do we have any control over it? Does time exist at all? We will attempt to answer these and related questions through an encounter with a series of writers, thinkers, artists, and cineastes who have grappled with the notion of time. While perfecting our own writing, we will share their findings, illuminations, and exasperations in order to consider time variously as a philosophical category, as a multi-layered medium, as a valuable resource, as a potent currency, and as a political tool. Alongside examining the conventional tripartite division of chronological time into past, present, and future, our discussions will explore other seminal temporal concepts such as eternity, modernity, memory, nostalgia, history, anachronism. Works by Plato, St. Augustine, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Gabriel García Márquez, Ousmane Sembène, and Chris Marker, among others, will guide our reflections.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 439 First-Year Writing Seminar: Small Lives (4 Credits)
How do we tell distinctive stories about ordinary lives? What can the details of 'small lives' tell us about their larger cultural, historical, and political moment? In this seminar we will analyze representations in literature, journalism, memoir, and documentary and fiction film of lives framed as unremarkable and common; politically and socio-economically marginalized; and geographically and culturally adrift. We will focus on the ways in which the nuances and forms of these representations often blur the lines between fiction and non-fiction; how the textures of these 'small lives' are captured in verbal and visual mediums; and how these often isolated lives resonate with the experiences of a greater collective. Within the broader goal of developing critical reading and writing and effective speaking skills, we will focus on understanding the different ways in which our selected writers and filmmakers and we ourselves represent the contours and meaning of the 'ordinary' lives we encounter every day. Texts may include Flaubert's Madame Bovary, Freud's case study of Dora, Teju Cole's Open City, Claudia Rankine's Don't Let Me Be Lonely, Sheila Heti's How Should A Person Be?, interviews by Svetlana Alexievich, and films by Barry Jenkins, Chantal Akerman, and Sarah Polley.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 440 First-Year Writing Seminar: Gender and Masculinities (4 Credits)
This course gives students the vocabulary and analytical frameworks to write systematically and rigorously about how gender orders our everyday lives (e.g., our sense of self, our access to power and privilege, our friendships, romances, conversations, clothing, body image, entertainment, work, sexuality, and parenthood). It develops students' understanding of how gender is constructed and reproduced by social factors and processes such as race and class, culture and socialization, institutions and structures, discourses and politics; that is, it does not assume gender is "natural." Historically, men have been the overwhelming producers of knowledge, but they were by and large not studying themselves as gendered beings. This course takes masculinity as the critical subject of inquiry in order to explore masculinities across and within societies and historical eras. It pays particular attention to the ways masculinity is almost universally privileged and dominant, pitted in opposition to femininity, and—despite significant variation across social terrain—plays a part in the production of a system where men hold a disproportionate number of positions in the highest echelons of political, military, and corporate power hierarchies. Through theoretical readings from scholars such as R.W. Connell and bell hooks, empirical studies such as Niobe Way's Deep Secrets and C.J. Pascoe's Dude, You're a F**, relatable case studies from analyses of The Hunger Games franchise to underground hip hop, and interdisciplinary work from disability studies, queer studies, and feminist international relations, students of a wide variety of interests will gain insight into the complex terrain of multiple masculinities.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 441 First-Year Writing Seminar: Writing(s) on Photography (4 Credits)
Since its inception writers, academics, poets, artists, public intellectuals, and philosophers have been grappling with the nature, purpose, and effects/affects of photography and the photographic image. In this seminar we will study the ways in which photography and the photographic image have been written about from the nineteenth century to the present. Writing assignments will include weekly reading responses, exercises involving the description of photographic works (formal, semiological, and affective), writing an accompanying text to their own or someone else's photographic works (a rationale or artist's statement), and a final essay/review of a photographic exhibition. A creative component (for those who are photographically inclined) may include photographic responses to the texts. Readings will include texts by Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, Jacques Rancière, Siegfried Kracauer, Rosalind Krauss, Allan Sekula, László Moholy-Nagy, and others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 442 First-Year Writing Sem: Manahata Sites of Memory: From Past to Presence (4 Credits)
Who is present that can inform our shared pasts in NYC? When Brazilian pop star Caetano Veloso sings Manahatã, can you feel the Lenape presence? Where were slaves sold? Where were the Underground Railroad stations? Are there any traces left of 19th-century Bengali peddlers in Harlem? Through critical close reading of texts and workshops of student essays, we will investigate the presence of our forbearers invisible in plain sight, many of whom pushed to create a city with a more inclusive character. Utilizing primary sources, fiction, essay, poetry, film, song, and site visits, the course will explore New York both as an historical place formed by displacements and erasures and as an imagined geography projected by collective dreams and nightmares about past and future.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 445 First-Year Writing Seminar: Staging (In)Justice: Aeschylus to Butterworth (4 Credits)
From #blacklivesmatter to climate justice, the cries for "justice" cover our twitter feeds and news networks on a daily basis. But what exactly is "justice"? How are ideas of justice construed or understood across different periods, cultures, places, or individuals? Is justice for one injustice for another? Why depict these tensions on stage? "Staging (In)Justice: Aeschylus to Butterworth" traces the way justice is depicted in drama from Greek tragedy to the present day, with a special attention to the way live theater, which requires the bodies of actors to tell a story, both makes justice more immediate and the audience complicit in the justice or injustice presented—as well as complicit in the actions that follow. Beginning with Aeschylus's The Oresteia, this course will cross time and place to look at plays such as Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, George Bernard Shaw's Saint Joan, August Wilson's Jitney, Sulayman Al-Bassam's The Al-Hamlet Summit, and Jez Butterworth's The Ferryman, as well as a musical such as the Broadway revival of Oklahoma!. Are corrupt systems responsible for injustice? Do we champion some who search for justice and condemn others? Is justice always "fair"? What about revenge? As we focus on theater, this class will also consider how revivals of plays often resonate with contemporary experiences in ways non-dramatic literature cannot. Working on our writing to create clear, convincing arguments backed by textual evidence, this class will work our way through drama to reflect on our own responses—written and otherwise—to current-day cries for justice.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 446 First-Year Writing Seminar: Twilight of the Gods (4 Credits)
"The nymphs are departed." From Milton's Paradise Lost to Marvel's Thor: Ragnarok, the departure of the gods haunts Western literature and art: Titans deposed by their Olympian children, pagan gods banished by the advent of Christ, spirits of woods and rivers displaced by industrialization. Whether defeated in epic battles or consigned to neglect and decline, departing deities leave traces of their abandoned cults scattered across the modern landscape, ruins marking once sacred sites. In this writing seminar, we will ask what is at stake in these stories of fallen gods and their lingering afterlives in the places they once inhabited, now overwritten and overrun by a disenchanting modernity. What sociohistorical forces does their departure allegorically represent? What is exiled from the world along with these banished spirits? What remains behind? We will explore these questions by closely reading a series of works ranging in genre and time period, from Baroque and Romantic epic to modernist poetry and prose to contemporary fantasy. Students will write three analytic essays, formulating critical questions and attending to the imagery and rhetoric of specific texts. Authors may include Milton, Keats, Kipling, Seznec, H.D., Eliot, Tolkien, Jansson, Gaiman, and Jemisin.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 448 First-Year Writing Seminar: Writing About Ethics (4 Credits)
What is the right thing to do? How should we act in the world? How do we know? This writing seminar engages critically with the answers that Western philosophy has given to these questions (which philosophy calls "ethics" and "epistemology") and considers what these answers have neglected or left out. We will inquire into how philosophers, in their approaches to the study of gender and race, teach us how to think about our knowledge of the world and the ways in which we are affected by other people. We will ask how ideas of gender and race have shaped philosophical thought and how they shape our knowledge of our own bodies and the bodies of others. We will read works by Plato, Aristotle, Martha C. Nussbaum, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Audre Lorde, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Judith Butler, and George Yancy. Students will write and workshop a variety of essays that critically and creatively engage with the topic of the course.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 449 First Year Writing Seminar: Asian/American Labor: Past, Present and Future (4 Credits)
This writing seminar will explore the role of labor in the making of Asian America. Much of the course will connect the past to the present, paying close attention to historical analyses and community-engaged research. The readings, discussions, and assignments will provide critical context in our collective understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has affected Asian/American working people. Many of the readings will examine New York City. Each week, we will study interdisciplinary themes around work as it relates to Asian communities, such as "food and migration," "race-making in New York's nail salons," "care work," etc. Through close readings and film screenings, we will discuss the ways in which laboring Asian Americans have organized, resisted, created, and mobilized from the bottom-up, challenging their bosses and the state. How have Asian American workers shaped, pushed back against, and transformed New York? How can we understand racial formation and immigration in New York's labor movements? Through discussions of the readings and films, we will reflect questions that unpack "work" and "labor." Students will write reflective and analytical papers, making arguments with evidence to comment about the past, present, and future of Asian/American labor. Texts by scholars of Asian American Studies and labor histories, such as Vivek Bald and Miliann Kang, will guide students and encourage their writing. Film screenings will include From Spikes to Spindles (1976) and Nailed It (2019), which capture the stories of garment and nail salon workers (respectively), to facilitate our discussions about Asian/American labor studies.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 450 First-Year Writing Seminar: Theories of Memory and the Art of Autobiography (4 Credits)
This course will investigate the variety of stylistic and formal choices that authors make when representing subjective experience, specifically past experience. We will examine a range of autobiographies and memoirs written in Europe, primarily Britain, and America from eras as diverse as the fourth century, the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, and today, and in forms as various as verse, prose, avant-garde language experiments, and graphic novels. We inquire into different ways in which authors understood memory and its relationship to language, with the support of theoretical texts on memory, including writings on trauma, confession, neuroscience, psychoanalysis, dreams, mnemonics and repetition, selective memory, somatic memory, marginalized identity, and the relationship between selfhood and narrative. Questions we will consider include: to whom, if anyone, and why, are we writing when we write about ourselves, and does this affect how we write? And how have authors addressed the problem of accounting for what they cannot remember or cannot explain? Authors include St. Augustine, William Wordsworth, Thomas De Quincey, W.E.B Du Bois, Lyn Hejinian, and Alison Bechdel.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 451 First-Year Writing Seminar: Poetics of the Citizen (4 Credits)
Who gets to be called a citizen? Who is denied the status of citizen and why? How can we define the citizen in ways that elide the state's legal definition of citizenship? Liberal Western thought has conventionally defined the citizen as an autonomous, self-sufficient individual. Artistic and social movements all over the world have questioned this definition, bringing to light the various human subjectivities (gendered, racialized, and sexualized) that such a conception of the citizen has erased. This course investigates what it means to be a citizen in our present historical moment. Taking our cue from Claudia Rankine's poetic work Citizen: An American Lyric (2014), we will examine migration, (dis)placement, (dis)orientation, racialization, gender, class, queerness, foreignness, transness, sexuality, creativity, and self-expression. We will work together to craft an alternative definition of the citizen through creative and poetic means. We will think beyond official, state-sanctioned citizenship and contemplate our citizenness as an ethical relation to one another mindful of the power structures that have packaged and labeled us in accordance with a catalogue of social hierarchies. Students will learn to analyze a variety of genres, such as essays, visual culture, fiction, poetry, and film. Authors will include James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Diane di Prima, Frantz Fanon, John Berger, José Muñoz, and, of course, Claudia Rankine. In addition to discussing the assigned readings in class, students will write and revise drafts of formal papers, review each other's work, compose a found poem, and write less formal in-class essays and reading responses.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 452 First-Year Writing Seminar: Writing of Exile (4 Credits)
How might exile help us think about the problem of nationalism in the modern era? Do those who write about or represent exile in the visual arts propose alternative senses of belonging to a particular group, such as a nationality, race, or ethnicity? And could their approaches help us rethink our fraught notions of social identity and community in the twenty-first century--a century still traversed by the mass dispersion of peoples across the globe? Writers of exile tend to tell stories about departure and return, about the difficulties of residing in a foreign land, or about estrangement in their own homeland. They frequently convey feelings of unease about inhabiting the border zones between at least two different nations, cultures, languages, traditions, or geographies. Yet at the same time they tend to articulate the space of the in-between as a locus for freedom and justice. In this seminar, we will consider the writing of exile in connection to related themes of mass displacement, migration, exodus, and refuge, with an emphasis on the Jewish and African diasporas, accompanied by a range of works from the Arab, Asian, and Latinx diasporas. We will read fiction and poetry by Gloria Anzaldúa, Aimé Césaire, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Mahmoud Darwish, Assia Djebar, Edmond Jabès, Franz Kafka, and Claudia Rankine; as well as literary criticism and theory by Hélène Cixous, Zadie Smith, Paul Gilroy, Walter Benjamin, and Edward Said, among others; finally, we will watch a film by John Akomfrah exploring the digital archives of funk, jazz, and techno. The seminar will introduce first-year students to modern Francophone, Anglophone, and Comparative Literature and Theory, focusing on class discussion, close reading, and analytic writing.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 453 First-Year Writing Seminar: Race and History in Contemporary American Theatre (4 Credits)
The Hamilton craze has swept the country, and with it, a renewed interest in how American history is taught, used, and twisted on the American stage. Lin-Manuel Miranda's vision of placing race at the center of American history has sparked particular interest and heated discussion. While Hamilton may be the best-known version of this phenomenon, it is by no means its only example. Indeed, race—its performance, its abstraction, its stereotyping, or its silencing—has always been a topic of conversation on American stages, especially in the performance and shaping of American history. In the last nine years alone, there have been more than 18 new shows asking these kinds of questions. This course proposes to examine what role race has played in the performance of American history as well as how American history has been portrayed in contemporary theatre. We will read plays along with historical and theoretical texts and view performances and other visual media. Students will write 3-4 essays that use evidence from works on the syllabus to make original arguments in clear analytic prose.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 454 First-Year Writing Seminar: Fashioning the Self in Slavery and Freedom (4 Credits)
One entry point into the experience of the enslaved is how they were forced or chose to dress and adorn themselves. Fashion was one of the few arenas in which slaves could possibly exert a modicum of control. This course will explore the politics of fashion among people of African descent during slavery and the period immediately following emancipation. Geographical breadth is crucial to examining the African Diaspora in its full complexity; therefore, course material will cover the United States, Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa. We will examine in particular the relationship between consumptive patterns among enslaved people (and their descendants) and the development of capitalism in the Atlantic World.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 455 First-Year Writing Seminar: Immigration, Race, and Citizenship in the United States (4 Credits)
In this course, we will survey important themes in the history of American immigration through fiction, poetry, memoir, and film. Since the earliest European settlement, America has provided a refuge for the poor, the disadvantaged, and religiously persecuted seeking a new life. Yet American history has also been crucially defined by those immigrants who came here unwillingly or under duress, whether African slaves, indentured servants, or refugees. The continual cheap source of labor that immigration has provided helped fuel the rise of American capitalism, but has also undermined the privileges of established groups, often provoking nativism along racial, ethnic, and religious lines. In this regard, the history of immigration is inextricable from the politics of the Other. Through literature about immigration, we will explore common experiences across four centuries including: the arrival of European religious dissenters and African enslaved people in colonial America; the struggle of refugees from Irish famine and Russian pogroms to establish themselves in industrial America; exclusion and racial discrimination against Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian immigrants; economic migrants from Mexico and the Caribbean seeking work in fields and cities; and the internal Great Migration of Black Americans fleeing the Jim Crow South. Course texts will draw on the work of Willa Cather, Thomas Bell, Charles Reznikoff, Isabel Wilkerson, Toyo Soyemoto, Francis Ford Coppola, Jonathan Gold, Ramin Bahrani, Caribbean Fragoza and others along with an introduction to key legislation and political events in U.S. immigration history. Students will hone their compositional and close-reading skills through short essays, a longer analytical paper, and creative options.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 456 First-Year Writing Seminar: Trans Poetics and Social Movement (4 Credits)
In this course, we'll examine in detail the overlaps between anti-capitalist politics, social movements for gender liberation, and poetry and poetics by trans writers. Poetics—writing that both encompasses and explicitly theorizes the opportunities and limits of poetry—is one form of cultural production that trans writers have used during the past three decades to reflect on and intervene in a series of historical and political situations. We'll think about the possibilities opened up by this simultaneous exploration of aesthetic and political radicalism, and ask what various experiments of aesthetic movements have to do with social and political demands for people to have access to different, more liberatory, forms of living and being together. We'll practice writing essays about poetry with precision, clarity and creativity; we'll study the surprising and frequent alignment of trans poetry and political radicalism; and we'll think together about whether and how poetry distinctly links people and political movement in new forms of social and political consciousness. Readings, from writers both in the U.S. and internationally, will include writing by Trish Salah, Viviane Namaste, Cam Awkward-Rich, Julian Talamantez Brolaski, Amiri Baraka, Leslie Feinberg, Robert Glück, Lou Sullivan, Bryn Kelly, Nat Raha, Raquel Salas Rivera, Kamden Hilliard and Jordy Rosenberg.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 457 First-Year Writing Seminar: Engaging Art in Our World (4 Credits)
This course will introduce students to the history of writing about art through examining the relationship of Art History and Anthropology. Students will practice writing as a method of thinking through and evoking ideas. Participants in this hybrid creative writing and criticism course will visit artists' studios, galleries and museum across New York City and produce different forms of writing such as ekphrasis, poetry, short essay, art writing and criticism. Students will have opportunities to produce images through photography, photocollage, and a collaborative publication of visual criticism. From early forms of literature, to art writing, and contemporary criticism, students will produce writing and criticism about artwork and exhibitions, which communicate an experience and interpretation of works of art and their social and historical context to a larger audience. This course explores art history, anthropology, critical theory, critical thinking and aesthetics through literature and essays from, Nina Chave, Robert Farris Thompson, Linda Nochlin, Alfred Gell, Harold Rosenberg, and many others. We will consider some key societal commentators on literature, art and society, including Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Ariella Azolay, Fred Moten, Hortense Spillers, Edward Said, Susan Sontag and others. By exploring forms of writing such as ekphrasis, poetry and short essay, along with producing experiences through photo essay and video essay, students will gain an understanding of the relationship between artist and critic.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 458 First-Year Writing Seminar: The Sounds Beneath Your Feet: Downtown Music and Downtown Memory (4 Credits)
In the book Here by the artist Richard McGuire, one undistinguished place—a corner of a living room like the one where McGuire grew up—is pictured through time. The images are juxtaposed across the pages with multiple insets, portraying that same spot in hundreds of moments, as if McGuire were using magic glasses: 1949 (a mother cradles an infant), 1993 (a teenager dances), 1910 (two men fight, with a stick!), 1624 (before there was a house), 10,000 B.C. (before there were any houses: a bison sits in marshland). McGuire's point, or one of them, is that history doesn't need monuments—we walk on its layers everywhere and at all times. The musical history of the 20-block radius around NYU has been historicized a lot—particularly the history of the same few places in the late 1970s, and particularly CBGBs. But longstanding New Yorkers look at the whole area with McGuire glasses. It doesn't matter how many banks or drug-store chains have masked the sites: things happened here. In this class we will read history, criticism and memoir about the sounds of downtown Manhattan over the last 150 years or so--jazz, Cantonese opera, punk, disco, No Wave, Afro-Latin music, and other kinds--learning how to define and theorize a subject as volatile and often misrepresented as urban nightlife. Our materials will include books; oral histories; films; newspaper accounts; photographs, flyers and ephemera. We will read, write, research, and interview about musical events and places that have defined our neighborhood.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 459 First-Year Writing Seminar: The self in its Spaces (4 Credits)
How do the spaces we occupy determine who we are? This writing seminar will explore the ways our identities are formed by the geographic, cultural, and even psychic spaces we inhabit. For example, we'll read authors who are shaped by New York, by memories of a homeland, by queer community, and by various social forces at play through it all. We'll think about the making of a "self" in light of these spaces, and do both literary critical analysis and deep self reflection. Our primary readings will be personal essays, studying the way this most flexible form allows master writers to formulate new ways of articulating selfhood while also engaging with the world round them, but we'll also read some critical social theory to provide a framework for our thinking. We'll read established authors like James Baldwin, Joan Didion, Richard Rodriguez and Jamaica Kincaid, and mix them up with newer authors like Rahawa Haile, Beth Nguyun and Chantha Nguon. We'll also read Michel Foucault to explore notions of surveillance in all public spaces. Students will be expected to write one critical essay of literary analysis, one essay that brings two or more readings into dialogue, and one final personal essay that incorporates ideas gathered throughout the course.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 460 First-Year Writing Seminar: Wild Weather: Writing About Climate and the Environment (4 Credits)
The term "wild weather" implies that extreme climate events are unusual, once-in-a-lifetime, unfathomable, even entertaining. Yet since they are an increasingly common part of our everyday lives, the word "wild" suggests a failure to assimilate, understand, or accept this "new normal." This class asks how short stories, novels, drama, and film can address this problem, providing us with the emotional and imaginative tools to overcome denial and cultivate realism, resilience, and sustainability. Narrative fiction and storytelling have traditionally aimed to help human readers sympathize with and relate to other humans, via shifting points of view, experiments with narrative time, and evocations of mood and (emotional) "climate." What new aesthetic forms might we need now to engage meaningfully both with each other and with the nonhuman—and increasingly inhuman—climates and environments of the Anthropocene? Readings and viewings will include texts by George Saunders, Amitav Ghosh, Richard Powers, Chantal Bilodeau, Lucy Kirkwood, and Bong-Joon Ho.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 461 First-Year Writing Seminar: Travel Writing: Exploring Place with Purpose (4 Credits)
Travel writing has existed since Herodotus trekked the ancient world. Today, from TripAdvisor and blogs to long-form journalism and books, we routinely read about travel, whether it's planning a trip to Shanghai or to the local coffee shop. To be such a writer, however, is not without its challenges. From describing the "Other" to struggling to redefine the notion of travel in a pandemic, travel writing can be as powerful as it is exciting. Through readings and exercises, we will explore the difference between basic narratives and more career-focused practices of journalism. Students will delve into larger questions by focusing on places, finding their voice as they create their arguments related to themes presented in class. We will question cliché in travel writing and perfect our placemaking skills, using New York City as a living laboratory for classroom exercises. Expect a broad range of readings to debate the good and the bad, featuring authors like Marco Polo, Freya Stark, Alain de Botton, Adam Gopnik, Elizabeth Gilbert, and Bill Bryson as well as stories from journalistic publications like The New York Times and Afar.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 462 First-Year Writing Seminar: The Critic as Artist in the Digital Age (4 Credits)
What does it mean to write seriously about art when the critic has to compete with a plethora of pixilated images and quick-handed posts on social media that cater to our ever-shortening attention span? How can long-form writing about art still reach and affect us in a world that favors mass-consumed visual representation on the Internet? How can the art critic create new forms of writing that use the digital landscape but bypass its shortcuts? In this course, we pursue these questions by exploring the complex relationship between art and criticism in the past and present. We study texts by major writers who have written with great poetic skill about artists and their art, including Oscar Wilde on Turner, Marcel Proust on Vermeer; Gertrude Stein on Picasso; Antonin Artaud on Van Gogh; and Jean Genet on Giacometti. We discuss miscellaneous reflections on art by exceptional poets and critics such as Charles Baudelaire, Rainer Maria Rilke, Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, and Wisława Szymborska, as well as influential essayists such as Walter Pater, John Ruskin, Paul Valéry, Susan Sontag, John Berger, Jeanette Winterson, and Teju Cole. We investigate different approaches to writing about art, the artist, and the creative process, and gather assets to break free from conventional criticism through the poetic use of language, style, and form. We visit art exhibits and analyze the reviews they received. Each student will be asked to chronicle their personalized, in-depth, weekly observations about art by producing a notebook. Writing about art, as we shall see, is an art form in its own right.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 463 First-Year Writing Seminar: Pilgrimage & the Pilgrim's Tale in the Medieval World (4 Credits)
This course will examine the concept of pilgrimage within the medieval world. The first half of the course will explore the function of pilgrimage in medieval Western Christianity, Islam and Judaism including the reasons why individuals set out on pilgrimage, how belief and travel intertwined, the necessary preparation for pilgrimage, the enaction of ritual and use of specific objects and the pilgrimage sites themselves, particularly Jerusalem, Mecca, Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela and related sites We will also look at some examples of pilgrimage from medieval Buddhism and Shintoism, such as those described in Lady Sarashina's eleventh-century memoir, in order to reflect on both the universality of pilgrimage and differences within distinct cultures and religions. The second half of the course will then turn to specific tales of pilgrimage and how pilgrimage came to be portrayed by those who documented their experiences. Along with the examination of the pilgrimage itself, students will be encouraged to closely analyse texts in order to understand how the documentation of personal pilgrimage provided a window into diverse medieval perceptions of geography, history, study of religion, politics and socio-economic life. Texts that will be discussed include the 'Travels of Egeria', Adomnán of Iona's 'On the Holy Places', 'The Travels of Ibn Jubayr', Alî al-Harawî's 'Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage', the account of Benjamin of Tudela, 'The Travels of Rabbi Petachia of Ratisbon' and Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales'. In addition, texts reacting to pilgrimage, such as anecdotes of Irish clerical students potentially critiquing distant pilgrimages and Islamic legal regulations about pilgrimage, will be investigated. Students will gain a familiarity with global medieval studies and hone critical thinking and writing skills. This course will enable students to study different regions and religions in the medieval world while also recognizing their links and similarities through a shared, yet still very distinctive, practice in which countless men and women participated.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 464 First-Year Writing Seminar: Shapeshifters: Writing in and across Genre (4 Credits)
The central goal of this course, as of most college writing courses, is for students to develop their voices as academic writers. Implicit in that common aim is a relationship between tradition and individuality that may seem counterintuitive: By practicing the conventions of a particular genre of writing—in this case, the critical essay—one will start to sound, not like other writers, but more like oneself. To help illuminate that relationship between received convention and an original authorial voice, we will look to writers whose works span multiple contemporary literary genres. As readers, we will pay careful attention to how our expectations of a given genre influence how we tune into and interpret a text's unique qualities. We'll begin by reading essays, poems, and a work of self-designated "biomythography" by Audre Lorde, all of which have a first-person speaker or narrator. How does genre shape the relationships between reader, speaker, author, and meaning? We then turn to Samuel Delany, reading examples of his science fiction followed by his coming-of-age memoir, The Motion of Light in Water. How do the differing relationships to real events, people, and places across these two genres cue our reading? We conclude the course by reading two books that combine and blur genre distinctions, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictee and Anne Carson's Decreation, to examine their fundamentally hybrid natures. Throughout, we will also read critical writing about the primary course texts, both to enrich our understanding of those texts as well as to examine the genre conventions of scholarly writing as students set out to practice it.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 465 First-Year Writing Seminar: Do Colors Have Histories? (4 Credits)
The ancient world presents us with some puzzles about color. The ancient Greeks described the sea not as blue, but as porphureos, a term that is most often translated into English as "purple." This is reinforced in their metaphor for the sea as like wine in a cup. The beard of the god Zeus, meanwhile, is kuanos, a deep blue—a quality that he shares with gods in Egypt and west Asia, whose beards are described as and rendered in the blue stone, lapis lazuli. Did ancient people see colors in a different way? Or did "color" entail something different? In this class, these ancient examples serve as prompts for us to consider—or, to reconsider—how we think about color and color's expressive possibilities, especially in the visual arts. Our semester will be divided into three parts, each guided by a question: (1) How did the ancient world think about color differently, and how might their experience of color encourage us to see differently? (2) How does color function symbolically in art and representation? (3) Do colors have histories? We will write short essays that correspond to each part of the class; essay topics may include a description of a color category all your own, a visual analysis, and a history of your favorite color.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 467 First-Year Writing Seminar: Contemporary U.S. Playwriting (4 Credits)
This first-year writing seminar combines the artistic study of some of the most important recent dramatic works in the United States with a detailed exploration of the basic tools of academic writing. This is not a playwriting course (though students may write a short play or two), and this is not a "thumbs-up/thumbs-down" theater criticism course. Students will read, view, and discuss plays written by some of today's most exciting contemporary dramatists, analyzing each play as both appreciative audience and fellow artists. How do these writers structure their plays? What themes loom large in these works, and how does each playwright dramatize/illustrate/complicate those big ideas? How can these big ideas then be placed into larger cultural contexts? How can these plays be placed in conversation with other works, theatrical or otherwise? The class may include a trip to an Off-Broadway show, viewings of streaming/digital media productions, and/or visits from some of the assigned playwrights or other theater artists. Readings may include plays and/or essays by Sarah Ruhl, Jose Rivera, Martina Majok, and Jordan Cooper, among others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 468 First-Year Writing Seminar: The Poetic History of Science in Western Thought (4 Credits)
What does poetry have to do with science? It seems at first glance a fairly implausible pair. Unlike in our world today, however, in Ancient Greek thought these two ideas were actually far more similar to one another than they were different, both stemming from the same notion of creating or "crafting" something. What happens when we moderns forget the poetic roots of our idea of modern technology? Where did our thinking go astray? Working with the texts of figures from Parmenides to Goethe, Mary Shelley to Martin Heidegger, and Plato to Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche, this essentially interdisciplinary course focuses on the interpretation of complex manuscripts from poetry to cybernetics to connect seemingly disparate ideas about the interlocking histories of the arts and the sciences. In this class we will be turning concepts we think we know inside out in order to pose fundamental questions about global issues that occupy our minds today, from social media to ecology. As a First-Year Writing Seminar, this class challenges students to rethink the obvious by interrogating language and grappling with difficult texts to become both more rigorous and technical but also creative and questioning writers.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 469 First-Year Writing Seminar: Books to Read for the End of the World (4 Credits)
In a moment of history so populated with crises, such as climate change, economic and political instability, and international violence, it can be challenging to see the value or the usefulness of literature. What can reading a novel do for global warming? How does a short story engage with political unrest? What use is a book in the middle of a pandemic? This course will explore possible answers to these questions. We will read a series of novels and short stories to think more about how storytelling and creation in general suggest solutions to, coping mechanisms within, or new possibilities for a world that feels on the brink of collapse. We will also interrogate what we mean when we say "end of the world." What forms a world, and what constitutes an ending? Our texts will feature more typical understandings of the terms as they foreground environmental collapse, plague, and nuclear warfare, but others will suggest alternate definitions: a world might be a home or a nation, ended when an individual moves away from it. Or, a world might be one's relationships, ending when one is separated from others. As we read, we will consider this terminological nuance and pair these broader concepts with learning the fundamentals of literary criticism. This writing course will emphasize developing close reading skills and the effective communication of ideas by taking into consideration how writing constructs and deconstructs worlds. Some of our questions, therefore, will emphasize the literary arts in particular: How does form, from the short story to the graphic novel, impact the portrayal of catastrophe? How do different genres, such as science fiction versus horror or literary fiction, imagine (or do not imagine) resolutions to these crises? Through a series of readings and writing assignments (which will include two small papers and one, larger final project), we aim to ask and answer, finally, what can literature or storytelling do for us, the readers, at the end of the world?
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 470 First-Year Writing Seminar: What Are Poets For? (4 Credits)
"What are poets for in a destitute time?" asked philosopher Martin Heidegger, meditating on the place and usefulness of poetry in the modern world. Poets and philosophers have often wondered about each other and sought inspiration in each other's work. Historically, poets were seen as frivolous or even dangerous by philosophers. Plato proposed banning them from the republic. Heidegger proposes a dialogue between the two, suggesting that poets attempt to express an 'unconcealedness of being' with an immediacy that philosophers can learn from, and that poets can offer a path in a destitute time.What happens when this dialogue takes place; when the border between genres is blurred or willfully ignored? This course takes up this conversation in the work of several contemporary poets, and looks at the philosophers who inspire them through the lens of their poetry. We read philosophers who write with the grace and depth of poets, and poets who enlarge the scope of their investigations with the rigor and clarity of philosophers. We look at how they influence and inspire each other, and ask what they have to tell us about how to live today. How can they help us unconceal our own being, and illuminate the dangers of our own destitute time? Students will write several analytic essays exploring this dialogue through close readings of texts on the syllabus, and write a philosophical-poetic project of their own, inspired by the readings. Authors are likely to include Gertrude Stein, Paul Celan, Claudia Rankine, Maggie Nelson, Fred Moten, Mahmoud Darwish, Sara Ahmed, Friedrich Nietzsche, Simone Weil, Byung Chul Han, Aimé Césaire, and Heraclitus.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 471 First-Year Writing Seminar: The Social Skin (4 Credits)
"Man is born naked but is everywhere in clothes (or their symbolic equivalents)," writes the anthropologist Terence Turner. "We cannot tell how this came to be, but we can say something about why it should be so and what it means." Turner's classic text on dress and the body describes the interface of matter, technology, and meaning that is clothing, and calls it as "the social skin." But who (or what) is the self in this understanding of the social? And how do natural and synthetic materials - textiles, pigments, thread, beads, hide, tissue - fashion its body? This first-year writing seminar focuses on observing, understanding, and representing the social skin, through a focus on materials. Students will be introduced to theories of dress, material culture, difference, and the body drawn from anthropology, fashion studies, and conservation. Weekly writing assignments will be tailored around student interests in fashion, the body, and symbolic practices. We will read work by Mary Douglas, Roxane Gay, and Julietta Singh, and think through artwork by Rebecca Belmore, Nick Cave, and Cecilia Vicuña, among others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 472 First-Year Writing Seminar: Illness, Healing, and Narrative (4 Credits)
In narrative medicine, an established but still new field, the patient's individual history, and the stories they tell about themselves, are considered to be as important as their physical symptoms or medical diagnosis. Drawing on narrative medicine and related fields, and focusing largely on work that has emerged from a US context, this class thinks about the intersections between illness, healing, and storytelling. We begin with an introduction to narrative medicine and histories of the relationship between body and mind. We then draw on this work as we turn to fiction and nonfiction narratives of illness, which may include writing by Audre Lorde, Rebecca Skloot's The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, and Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony. Our study of these texts will be enriched through readings about race and medicine and North American Indigenous medicine. The course's assignments aim to help students develop a productive writing practice through short exercises as well as drafts and revisions of three formal papers.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 473 First-Year Writing Seminar: Queer Night(life) (4 Credits)
Delving into the realm of queer existence invariably leads us to the nocturnal, to the realm of twilight and beyond. Within the variegated tapestry of the night, we encounter both enduring yet ephemeral spaces, simultaneously stationary yet in constant motion, where queer individuals not only endure and thrive but also grapple with their identities and forge connections. In this course, we embark on an exploration of queer nightlife across diverse locales: from vibrant bars and pulsating clubs to intimate living rooms and the illuminating glow of streetlights. Through this journey, we pose profound inquiries: What intricate threads link queerness to the nocturnal domain? How do broader historical and societal dynamics shape the politics of gender and sexuality within the realm of night? Join us as we illuminate these questions and traverse the captivating landscape of queer nightlife. From Martin Manalansan to Langston Hughes and Joachim Schlör, we will read texts from anthropologists, performance artists, and poets and explore their questions that curiously connect queer ways of being in the world to ways of being at night.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 474 First-Year Writing Seminar: Re-Visionaries: Creative Work and the Second Look (4 Credits)
All writing benefits from revision, and the writer of perfect first-drafts is a myth. Many young writers have heard these ideas before. But student writers often associate the idea of revising their own work with dread, hurry, communication-policing, or just confusion: how to start? On the other hand, experienced writers know that revision is entirely positive, almost magical: it can yield a new text that is not necessarily better, by some objective scale, but so startlingly true to the writer's voice and essence that the writer can wonder where it came from. Above all, revision returns the work to the writer itself, where it always belonged. This is a first-year writing seminar in which we practice and study revision, not just as a strategy but as an ethos. We will write and revise, sometimes multiple times, our own essays (and help edit our classmates' writing in workshops); we will consider punctuation, vocabulary sentences, paragraphing, and structure. We will also read, watch, and listen to creative works in writing, music, film and visual art which embody the idea of revision, and which help the student writer understand that they are fully in control of the gift they are giving the reader—because only they know what the gift is supposed to be.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 475 First-Year Writing Seminar: Critical Journalism (4 Credits)
What is objectivity? What is perspective? Such questions have major implications for reading and writing any text. When asked of journalism, they are key elements of media literacy, because the practice of journalism shapes where we get our news from, and thus how we learn about the world. This course interrogates the fundamental tenets of journalistic objectivity, professional distance, and aims to recast them for the modern era. Throughout the semester, students will read work that both uphold and challenge existing notions of what makes an observer, and what makes a subject, and will become adept at power analysis that reveals hidden prejudices and biases that come to shape a story. Such skills will prepare students not only to better understand journalism, but also aid them in engaging with any text or ideas at Gallatin, and beyond. In addition to short weekly writing exercises, students will produce three longer essays interrogating – journalistically – ideas of person, place, and event. They will also produce a final analytical paper. Readings will include such journalism classics by Adrian Nicole Leblanc, Katherine Boo, Janet Malcolm, and John Hersey as well as contemporary works by Rachel Kauder Nalebuff, Saidiya Hartman, Lorelei Lee, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 700 First-Year Research Sem: Curiosity: Inquiry, Discovery, and Uncertainty (4 Credits)
In this interdisciplinary research seminar, we will be curious about curiosity itself. Exploring a range of materials from trans-historical US and European contexts, we will investigate the value of not knowing and wanting to know, as well as the anxieties and dangers signaled by the phrase "curiosity killed the cat." We consider: what leads us to ask questions and what happens when we ask a question whose answer is far from sight or endlessly inconclusive? We begin by analyzing children's literature (Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Curious George) alongside theories of education from Locke to Dewey to contemporary school psychology. We then examine the role of open exploration in both poetry and scientific discovery, working with ideas from literature (i.e. Frankenstein, Gothic mystery, Romantic poetry, theories of indeterminacy) and from present-day Mars exploration and the development of vaccines. We consider aesthetics and attributes of objects that spark curiosity in proto-museum curiosity cabinets, modern art, travel shows, and social media. Finally, we investigate the interpersonal ethics of how we fill "information gaps," considering the fine line between openness to learning about others and treating humans as objects of curiosity (as in the case of Afong Moy, the first Chinese woman in the US). We consider who is allowed to be curious, and for whom curiosity is seen as nosiness, gossip, insubordination, or vice, particularly within the long gendered and racialized history of curiosity. As we analyze instances of curiosity in our sources, we also reflect on our own curiosity in our developing research processes.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 703 First-Year Research Sem: Truth or Fiction? (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
The academic field of scholarship in "memory studies" is booming; new memoirs (for example, Crying in H Mart by Michelle Zauner and I'm Glad My Mom Died by Jeanette McCurdy) continue to appear on best-seller lists. We seem to be reckoning with how memory frames the stories we tell about our lives and ourselves, and how stories we tell ourselves about the remembered past, in turn, shape us as individuals, groups, and nations. At the interface of individual memory, cultural and collective memory, and political and social formations of narrative, lies a process of interpretation and manipulation—the process of writing. This course will explore how memories are "written" on the printed page (or the screen) in order to help students sharpen their own writing. The process of writing a series of critical papers over the course of the semester will serve as background for the final research paper addressing some aspect of memory and its framing through story. Readings and film will include Plato, Tawada, Freud, hooks, Borges, Woolf, Duras, Modiano, Machado, and Ernaux.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 709 First-Year Research Sem: Language & The Political (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

How does language affect how we think about political possibilities? How have writers and activists sought to change society through changing how we use language? How is rhetoric used politically, in essays, law, oratory, propaganda, and poetry? We read arguments about the interplay of language and the political, think about political theory, examine political rhetoric, and study literary works. We write about the power of rhetoric to form and criticize political practices: movements for civil rights, human rights, rights for women, workers" rights, and animal rights. We investigate in detail how language participates in our ideas about rights, ethics, political action, and social justice. "And we examine the affective dimensions of this interaction of language, ideas, and values. After familiarizing ourselves with various approaches to thinking about political and social relations, you can then explore in depth an issue of social justice that animates you. This means that we use the reading to focus your critical thinking capacities, expand your horizons, and communicate the results of these processes in writing that is persuasive, coherent, exhilarating, meaningful. Readings may include works by Plato, Alice Walker, Thomas Jefferson, Karl Marx, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Mahatma Gandhi, Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Malcolm X, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Ursula LeGuin, Cornel West, and Jose Munoz.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 717 First-Year Research Seminar: Literature and the Idea of Justice (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

A blindfolded woman holding scales aloft: the classic allegory of Justice might suggest that justice is an abstraction. It also represents justice as tied to a state of equilibrium, which can be completely restored. Yet justice itself is very difficult to define, shifting its meanings over time, between cultures and among individuals; can we presume such a balance? Is justice really only an effect of power, the right of the strong to define the terms under which the weak live? How are law and justice connected? While these seem to be questions for political philosophers, they have also been addressed by literary writers. In this course, our focus will be on how literary texts take up these problems at different junctures primarily in the Western tradition. We will also read some jurists and critical theorists on what constitutes justice and for whom. Readings may include Plato, Aeschylus, Herman Melville, Bertolt Brecht, Richard Wright, Immanuel Kant, John Rawls, Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben, Martha Nussbaum, and Nadine Gordimer. Assignments will include a variety of forms of writing, including a research essay in which students will seek to integrate their thinking with that of our authors.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 740 First-Year Research Seminar: The Cold War: What Was It and Why Does It Matter? (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

The Cold War occupies a central, but contested place in the contemporary political imagination. Some say we are in a new Cold War, while others argue that the Cold War is a relic of a bygone age. Despite these disagreements, such proclamations operate on the shared assumption that we know what the Cold War was and why it mattered. This course seeks to challenge such assumptions. Rather than study a stock textbook version of the Cold War, we will examine interpretations and framings of the conflict, interrogating the very concept and stakes of the Cold War, as well its relationship to other organizing principles in U.S. and global history. What changes, for example, when we re-frame the Cold War not as an existential battle between the United States and the Soviet Union, but rather as part of a shared history of Western colonial/imperial conquest? What are the origins and legacy of Cold War ideology? What role did race, class, and gender play in the geopolitical conflict? What influence did the Cold War have on twentieth-century literature and culture? How do these alternative frameworks shape our understanding of the Cold War in contemporary politics? Students will write 2 shorter close-reading essays and a longer research paper in which they delve into a specific aspect of the intellectual and political debate that interests them.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 747 First-Year Research Seminar: Archaeology and Nationalism (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Modern nations frequently seek an origin in the peoples and civilizations that came before. They often gain from these predecessors—in some ways of thinking, their ancestors—a sense of a long-standing historical and cultural identity, and use the past to shape that nation's relationships to the landscape, to cultural traditions, and even to other nations. Archaeology, including the excavation, preservation, and interpretation of monuments and artefacts, often plays an active part in the construction of these national pasts, contributing to national narratives that claim long, continuous cultural histories, that delineate territory, that present a golden age and the promise of its return, or that give the members of the national community cause to come together. This course investigates the ways in which the archaeological remains have been employed in the shaping of modern national identities. In class, our discussions may focus on Greece, Egypt, Iran, China, and the U.S. For their projects, students are invited to apply the questions and problems we encounter in class to a context of interest to them.

Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 767 First-Year Research Seminar: Looking at Development:Power and Progress in the Modern World (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
Development—in the most basic, common-sense use of the term —is about making lives better. But what counts as "better", and for whom? And how have modern societies across the "First" and "Third" Worlds sought to realize their visions of progress? We will explore these questions by interrogating the dominant ways in which the world is seen in the eye of Development - its "world-view", so to speak. In effect, we will be looking at development by examining how development itself looks: its view of societies, of the "Third World", of the "poor", of labor, of nature, of women, and of the body. These are some of the key themes that we will tune into, as we analyze the histories of colonialism, modernity, and development that have shaped our contemporary existence. Alongside, we will also explore the problems and prospects of putting development ideas into practice in specific areas of concern, such as poverty, food insecurity and environmental degradation. The material for this course primarily draws upon development theory, anthropological analysis, and historical inquiry, supplemented by poetic and documentary sources. We will also make a field visit to a local non-profit. Students with cultivate their research ability by working on three reflection papers, and one final research paper with guidance provided at each stage. Students will also implement a multi-media group project with an oral and written component, which will enable them to grapple with the politics and practice of a specific development issue of their own choice.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 770 First-Year Research Seminar: The Politics of Work (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
Work—especially wage labor—has come to be assumed as a necessary and unavoidable orientation of modern adult life. Even more, we assume that work is intrinsic to our sense of identity and self-worth. Attached to modern understandings of work are implicit values and morals, specifically the work ethic that frames work as individualistic, merit-based, and belonging to the private sphere. However, recent political critiques have begun to (re) question the ways in which labor and spaces of work constitute (or exclude) us as social and political subjects. In this seminar we will consider work as not only connected and buttressed by the political sphere but as itself political. Our aim will be to examine the unquestioned values that inhere in our understanding of work as well the ways in which the organization of modern forms of work constitute us and organize us a political subjects. In doing so we will consider how labor relations produce and reproduce us as embodied and affective subjects that sustain or exclude different classes, genders, races and ages. We will begin by first examining classical understandings and critiques of the organization of work in the writings of John Locke, Adam Smith, Marx, and Max Weber. We will then turn to contemporary critiques of work including those that point to postwork imaginaries. What would it look and feel like to live in a postwork society? How would we reorganize our time? What creative projects might ensue? What conditions (a basic universal income?) would make such a society possible? Readings for this section of the course may include: Arendt, Foucault, Baudrillard, Barbara Ehrenreich, Aronowitz, Negri, Bloch, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Kathi Weeks.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 773 First-Year Research Seminar: The World in Pieces: Emergency Literature (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
How do we write in a situation of crisis, when familiar things and routines lose their habitual meanings? What is the value of artistic practice and intellectual labor in the face of danger? Can words (and, for that matter, music and images) save lives and give form to terrifying uncertainty? This course will explore the literary and aesthetic methodologies used to represent traumatic events and historical crises. By focusing on autobiographical and documentary accounts of three types of dramatic experiences in twentieth-century history (privations and displacement during the October Revolution, hunger during the Leningrad Blockade, and mass incarceration during the Holocaust and Stalinist repressions), we will analyze the international intellectual context that their authors engage with and the ways in which their narratives are structured to impart form to chaos. For their research paper, students will be invited to apply concepts derived from historical readings to analyze an approved work of their choice, emblematic of emergency literature (past or contemporary), and its context. Readings may include: René Descartes, Walter Benjamin, Leo Tolstoy, Victor Shklovsky, Lydia Ginzburg, Varlam Shalamov, Giorgio Agamben, Primo Levi, W.G. Sebald, James Baldwin, and Ta-Nehisi Coates. Films by: Alain Resnais, Sergei Loznitsa, Dick Fontaine, and Abounaddara Film Collective.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 778 First-Year Research Seminar: Shadow Cities: Literary Alterity and Urban Underworlds (4 Credits)
Typically offered occasionally
The city we see is not all there is. Over seven thousand miles of sewers undergird the five boroughs of New York; centuries of occluded catastrophe dictate the architectural fabric of modern London; and in metropolises around the world the labor of an unacknowledged precariat lets us pass through the urban everyday without reflection. This course looks at how these invisible cities are made visible through literature. We"ll grapple with the pathological, the potential, the evanescent, and even the scatological, as we ask how literature maps on to hidden registers of the built environment. Alongside conventional exercises in essay writing, research, and in-class presentations, students can expect to put theory into practice with assignments involving urban exploration, literary fieldwork, and urban audition. Writing requirements will include formal papers responding to readings; an exploration journal linking texts and experiences; construction of a city itinerary (and corresponding reaction to a classmate"s); and a final research project (which can, with permission, incorporate creative elements). Events at the Morbid Anatomy Museum and excursions with the Atlas Obscura collective may be arranged. Readings may include fiction (Daniel Defoe, China Miéville, Neil Gaiman), film (Undercity , Dark Days), photography (Wayne Barrar), sensation journalism (G.W.M. Reynolds, Eugène Sue, and the files of The Illustrated Police News), literary history (David Pike, W.G. Sebald), and social science (Margaret Morton, Robert Neuwirth, Russell and Cheryl Sharman).
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 783 First-Year Research Seminar: Money and the Muse: Culture, Creativity, and Capital (4 Credits)
This course is focused on the interactions between cultural production, individual creativity, and the market forces that impact them. Although centered on the contemporary, we will place this relationship within a wide historical and theoretical context and will make our considerations across a global frame of reference. Beginning with the patronage system that helped to make the Renaissance possible, extending all the way up to crowd sourcing today, our analysis will track the aesthetic and cultural impact money has had over the arts. Our aim is to understand money and its metaphors within artistic, philosophical, and cultural spheres. We will investigate not only how means of cultural production have changed, but also how the contemporary global capitalist superstructure has changed our relationship to cultural production and creativity. Special emphasis will be given to the contemporary movement toward individual producer-consumers, and we will centrally examine works of art and literature that take money as an object of thought and investigation. This element—the examination of works overtly about money and its meanings—will make up a substantial element of the course, and will serve as the grounds where our more theoretical investigations become concretized. Works by artists and writers across a global perspective will be pursued, including Justine Smith's money-sculptures, Mark Wagner's currency-collages, Lyn Hejinian's My Life in the Nineties, Iva Pekárková's Gimme the Money, among others. Slavoj Žižek, Theodor Adorno, Bernard Stiegler and other theorists will provide organizing principles and a working language for our investigations.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 787 First-Year Rsrch Sem: The Detective Story: Solving Mysteries from Oedipus Sherlock (4 Credits)
In the course we look closely at detective stories, novels and films, with attention to their style and narrative structure. Starting with the proto-detective story Oedipus Rex we move on to Edgar Allan Poe's invention of the genre proper in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and to Poe's first inheritors (Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" and the recent BBC television series Sherlock). We then move on to some American "hard-boiled" writers (The Maltese Falcon and John Huston's 1941 film adapation); stories and novels in which the reader must assume the role of detective (The Murder Of Roger Ackroyd, "The Turn of the Screw"; The Real Life of Sebastian Knight); non-fiction forms which share some of the narrative features of detection (Freud's "Wolf-Man" case study); neo-noir films (Chinatown) and works that mix detective fiction with science-fiction (Minority Report).
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 791 First-Year Research Seminar: Autoethnography (4 Credits)
Autoethnography is a genre of ethnography that narrates the self in relation to the social, cultural, and political worlds in which the author is embedded. In critical theorist Mary Louise Pratt's definition, it is "a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in was that engage with representations others have made of them"; in this way, autoethnography is a radical genre that often speaks from the margins to the center. Drawing on feminist genealogies of autoethnography in socio-cultural and visual anthropology, this research seminar will explore the genre to ask questions about how knowledge is produced in the social sciences, foregrounding issues of objectivity/subjectivity, collaboration, and authority. Through writing exercises, object-based analysis, and archival research, students will work toward producing an autoethographic text. We will read several book-length autoethnographies, which may include Ruth Behar's The Vulnerable Observer, S. Lochlann Jain's Malignant and Audre Lorde's Zami. We will also look at visual and material culture forms of autoethnography, including work by artists Richard Fung, Catherine Opie, and Annie Pootoogook.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 793 First-Year Research Seminar: Politics, Religion, and the State (4 Credits)
What role can religious beliefs and institutions legitimately be expected to play in modern "democratic" states? What sorts of relationships have been established historically between secular and theological claims to political authority? In what ways might they not be as different as they first appear? In this class, we will explore both the role of religion in the development of modern states and its persistence as a political factor in a putatively secular, post-Enlightenment world. We will examine a succession of significant moments in the history of politics and political thought, from early modern notions of divine kingship and the emergence of the modern system of international relations to contemporary concerns such as the role of religion in American politics and the rise in the twentieth century of "political Islam." Over the course of the semester, students will be introduced to a range of methods of historical analysis and ways of theorizing the results of historical research. At the end of the term, they will employ those methods in a research project on a topic, whether contemporary or historical, of their own choosing.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 794 First-Year Research Seminar: Utopian Literature from Antiquity to Today (4 Credits)
Due to recent political events stemming from the rise of populism across the globe, dystopian literature from George Orwell's 1984 to Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale have been flying off the shelves. But what about the utopian literature on which they are based? This research seminar traces the path from ancient to contemporary utopias to explore these paradise spaces and the dystopic elements within them. How do we define a utopia? What can utopian literature tell us about time and place? How ideal are these "ideal" spaces, particularly if a utopia is marked by exclusion? How are legacies of empire treated in utopian literature? How can we analyze utopias through the lenses of history, feminism, queer theory, or the place of race, religion, or personal identity? Readings may include selections from Plato's Republic, Virgil's Eclogues, Christine de Pizan's Book of the City of Ladies, Thomas More's Utopia, and John Milton's Paradise Lost; as well as Shakespeare's As You Like It, Aldous Huxley's Brave New World (yes, as a utopia!), Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," and Jez Butterworth's Jerusalem. We will close by exploring how utopian ideas are represented on screen with the film Wall-E.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 795 First-Year Research Seminar: Literatures of Imperialism Imperialism (4 Credits)
Cultural and literary critic Edward Said has boldly declared: "Without empire, there is no European novel as we know it…" (Culture and Imperialism, p. 69). Guided by Said's assertion, this course will examine how empire was represented in nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and non-European literature. We will consider how nineteenth-century literature made visible the purposes, contradictions and anxieties of British and French empire building. In particular, students will attend to the impact of colonial expansion on narrative form, historical consciousness and stylistic choice. While our literary texts will mainly come from Britain and France, we will be examining the meaning of imperialism as a global institution. Central to our considerations will also be an investigation on how the cultures of empire shaped different aspects of metropolitan cultures—from everyday life to social values. We will read novels, critical texts, poetry and travel writing by Edward Said, Jane Austen, Charles Baudelaire and Joseph Conrad as well as a novel written by Assia Djebar who "writes back" to the Empire. Students in this class will write two shorter close-reading essays and develop a longer research paper in which they formulate and answer an original research question related to a specific aspect of one of the literary or theoretical debates studied in the seminar.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 799 First-Year Research Seminar: Afrolatinidad, NYC (4 Credits)
We have often been encouraged to think of "black" and "latinx" as separate, static, mutually exclusive, and often hostile, identities. In this course we aim to deepen our understanding of how ever-shifting strategies of identification (and mis- and dis-identification) have shaped the sense of afrolatinidad in New York City and how it continues to evolve through intercultural, diasporic and transnational exchange. During our first weeks of study we will consider the stories and histories of earlier generations of migrants, focussing on the groups that represent the majority of afrolatinxs living in the area: afro-Puerto Ricans, afro-Dominicans and afro-Cubans. We will also learn about afrodescendiente communities from Honduras, Panamá and Brazil. In the remaining weeks we immerse ourselves in the study of afrolatinx social and cultural life in New York. Music, memoir, dance, food, fashion and religion figure heavily here, and this course has a significant experiential learning component, so be prepared to get out of the classroom and into neighborhood parks, bodegas, botanicas, clubs, cafeterias, museums, art studios, talleres, barbershops and beauty supply stores. Our experiences in these places are designed to remind us that the body is a site for the accumulation and transmission of knowledge–we will rely on all of our senses to conduct research. In our writing and discussion sessions we practice transmitting what we see, smell, touch, taste, hear, and feel when we study.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 815 First-Year Research Seminar: Science Fiction and Social Critique (4 Credits)
In her 1975 essay "American SF and the Other," Ursula K. Le Guin accused American science fiction of "brainless regressivism" in its treatment of "The Other"the being who is different from yourself" in race, class, gender, or planetary origin. Le Guin"s critique and her call for science fiction to embrace the radical idea of equality are the starting points for this class. The first half of the class focuses on stories of otherworldly invasion; readings may include Nnedi Okorafor"s Lagoon and Joanna Russ"s "When It Changed." These narratives will be the subject of the first writing assignment, which asks students to develop original arguments that engage with both primary and secondary sources. In the second half of the course, we"ll consider how authors have used science fiction to experiment with ideas of gender, and to imagine post-apocalyptic futures; readings may include Le Guin"s Left Hand of Darkness, Samuel Delany"s "Aye, and Gomorrah . . .", and W. E. B. DuBois"s "The Comet." We"ll pair these narratives with non-fiction readings that exemplify the types of sources that can appear in research essays. Thus the second half of the semester builds towards the final essay, for which students will research and write about a science fiction text of their choosing. In addition to the two formal papers, assignments will include response papers, peer review, and leading class discussion.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 816 First-Year Research Seminar: Representations of Disability in Contemporary Memoir (4 Credits)
In this course, we will pursue analysis of contemporary memoir through the lens of disability representation, considering the ways the complexities of the body and mind are translated by authors onto the page, and how these experiences are received by readers. Through this practice, we will interrogate our own understandings of disability as well as societal assumptions of idealized and/or normative ways of being. Readings will include first hand accounts of chronic pain, cancer, paralysis, and mental illness, thus highlighting the many ways of moving through the world that may align with disabled identity and community. We will engage in an intersectional approach to analysis, considering the ways that race, gender, sexuality, and class inform the content, form, and construction of disability memoirs. Primary texts for our investigation will include Audre Lorde's The Cancer Journals, Jean-Dominique Bauby's The Diving Bell and the Butterfly, Esmé Wang's The Collected Schizophrenias and Sonya Huber's Pain Woman Takes Your Keys. Readings will be supplemented with scholarship from the growing field of Disability Studies.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 817 First-Year Research Seminar: Immigration, Race, and Citizenship in the United States (4 Credits)
In this course, we will explore important themes and events in the history of American immigration, with particular attention to the concepts of race and citizenship. Since the earliest European settlement, America has provided a refuge for the poor, the disadvantaged, and religiously persecuted seeking a new life. Yet American history has also been crucially defined by those immigrants who came here unwillingly or under duress, whether African slaves, indentured servants, or refugees. The continual cheap source of labor that immigration has provided helped fuel the rise of American capitalism, but has also undermined the privileges of established groups, often provoking nativism along racial, ethnic, and religious lines. In this regard, the history of immigration is inextricable from the politics of the Other. Topics we will explore include the role of immigration in driving capitalism and shaping its radical critics; the legal history of citizenship before and after the 14th Amendment; the rise of exclusion, borders, and quotas to define legal and illegal persons; and the relation between American national identity and cultural diversity. Course readings will draw on the work of Bernard Bailyn, Barbara J. Fields, Greg Grandin, Beth Lew-Williams, Mae Ngai, Isabel Wilkerson, and Anne Fadiman as well as selected primary sources and cultural texts. In addition to two short papers, students will be introduced to methods of archival research and expected to make use of primary sources for a longer research paper.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 818 First-Year Research Seminar: A Tale of Two Caesars (4 Credits)
For ancient Rome, the shift from republic to empire meant the unprecedented centralization of power within a single figure. This course explores the rise and reign of Rome's most remembered autocrats, Julius Caesar and Caesar Augustus, analyzing the birth of the Roman empire from both contemporary and current perspectives. How did Caesar disrupt the traditional dynamics of Roman society? How did the rise of Augustus complicate Roman paradigms of power? And what can these ancient autocrats teach us about leadership and authority in the modern world? Together we examine these questions in context, including the notion of the Pax Romana and Pax Americana, considering also the relationship between power, state, and people within various facets of ancient and modern society. We will utilize both primary texts in translation and secondary sources on the reception of Caesarian politics and the ethics of empire. Readings include Vergil, Ovid, Shakespeare, Hannah Arendt, Duncan Kennedy, and Clifford Ando. A series of short writing assignments will prepare students to explore their historical or theoretical interests in a longer research paper.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 819 First-Year Research Seminar: Sounds Beneath Your Feet: Downtown Music and Downtown Memory (4 Credits)
In the book Here by the artist Richard McGuire, one undistinguished place"a corner of a living room like the one where McGuire grew up"is pictured through time. "The images are juxtaposed across the pages with multiple insets, portraying that same spot in hundreds of moments, as if McGuire were using magic glasses: 1949 (a mother cradles an infant), 1993 (a teenager dances), 1910 (two men fight, with a stick!), 1624 (before there was a house), 10,000 B.C. (before there were any houses: a bison sits in marshland). "McGuire"s point, or one of them, is that history doesn"t need monuments"we walk on its layers everywhere and at all times. "The musical history of the 20-block radius around NYU has been historicized a lot"particularly the history of the same few places in the late 1970s, and particularly CBGBs. "But longstanding New Yorkers look at the whole area with McGuire glasses. "It doesn"t matter how many Duane Reades have masked the sites: things happened here. "This class will research specific topics in downtown music history , including early disco, Afro-Latin music, punk and no wave, experimental music, jazz, folk, and Cantonese opera on the Bowery. "We will learn how to determine what is reliable in a subject as volatile and often misrepresented as urban nightlife. "Our materials will include books; oral histories; newspaper accounts; photographs, flyers and ephemera accessible at NYU"s Fales Collection and other special New York-based collections; and on-the-ground interviewing and research, sometimes collaborative. ""Aside from readings and writing assignments about the past , we will write about musical events and places that define downtown New York now.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 820 First-Year Research Seminar: The Everyday Gothic (4 Credits)
We often associate the gothic with explicitly supernatural and sinister tropes: haunted castles, bloodthirsty vampires, gruesome deaths. But there are also subtler instances of the gothic that swarm our quotidian existence: the eerie message from a bot on our screens; the shady character on the subway staring intently; an elevator altercation that turns into a grotesque crime. How to think of such insidious forces that interrupt the flow of our mundane existence and perturb the ostensible safety of our routines? What are the economic, political, social, and cultural factors that shape our perception of these occurrences and our reactions to them? In this class, we will study the multifarious manifestations of the gothic and will consider it as a literary and cinematic mode of representation as well as a critical analytical tool. We will begin by reading canonical texts by Horace Walpole, Mary Shelley, and Edgar Allan Poe in order to develop a sophisticated understanding of the gothic as an aesthetic. We will then investigate our contemporary daily lives in order to detect, describe, and research pernicious gothic events, tensions, and subjectivities.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 821 First-Year Research Seminar: Microhistory and the Uniqueness of the Individual Instance (4 Credits)
In this course, students will learn the basics of college level humanities research through the lens of European microhistory, a genre of historical writing that seeks to tell the stories of the very small or unique. Much like the case study, microhistory focuses on individual objects, events, persons, families, or communities. Yet while a case study examines the singular in order to demonstrate broader patterns or theses, microhistory seeks to illuminate the uniqueness of the individual instance – the anomalies and disruptions that resist overly simplistic explanations and stereotypical definitions. During the course of the semester, students will analyze the construction of classic microhistories: a sixteenth century imposter who managed for three years to integrate himself into the life of another man, a troop of ordinary men who somehow became able to commit horrific acts of genocide, an eighteenth century clockmaker who revolutionized mapmaking and the future of world travel. Then students will devise and execute microhistory projects of their own about any era or geographic region that they wish to study. Along the way, students will ultimately develop a keener eye – an eye for the unusual, for the unfamiliar, and for the infinite improvisations and innovations that human beings can perform, even within the most limiting and oppressive structures of society and culture.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 822 First-Year Research Seminar: Time Travel: Science, Fiction, and the Western Imagination (4 Credits)
This seminar will examine the idea of time travel from the perspectives of Western literature, popular culture, philosophy, physics, and the history of science. Co-taught by a professor of literature and a professor of physics, the course will consider how the concept of time travel has changed the human imagination. By exploring time in several contexts, we will examine the construct of time and what it means to travel through it. Through thinking about time travel we will necessarily reflect on a variety of related topics including the nature of time, the role of metaphor in scientific understanding, and such speculative topics as parallel universes, the origin of the universe, wormholes, and infinity. What defines a clock, and how does the concept of time differ from its measurement? Students will write several essays reflecting on these fields and questions and will also take on a research project that will involve studying research methodologies in the humanities and the sciences. Course readings will be taken from the fields of philosophy (Aristotle, Augustine, Bergson), physics (Einstein, Penrose, Smolin, Hawking), the history of science (Galison, Gleick), literature (Wells, Proust, Woolf, Heinlein, Asimov), and popular culture (Doctor Who, Harry Potter, The Terminator).
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 823 First-Year Research Seminar: Music Journalism (4 Credits)
Effective music writing – criticism or reporting that places a song or album within the appropriate social, political, personal, and aesthetic contexts – can be as enthralling and moving as the music it engages. In this First-Year Research Seminar, we will explore different ways of writing about popular music, from the record review to the personal essay. We'll consider the evolving tradition of pop music criticism (how is the critic's role changing?) and the mysterious practice of translating sound into ideas (how do we train ourselves to be better and more thoughtful listeners?). Through reading, writing, workshop, and extensive class discussion, we'll contemplate the mysterious circuitry that causes people to embrace or require pop music – from Bob Dylan to Travis Scott – and how best to explore that connection on the page. We'll also learn how to properly contextualize an artist or an album, how to research, how to discuss technical elements of music (even if you're not a musician yourself), and how to artfully render a character or sound on the page. Readings will include selections from John Jeremiah Sullivan, Craig Jenkins, Jia Tolentino, Lester Bangs, Ellen Willis, Hua Hsu, Greg Tate, Ann Powers, and more.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 824 First-Year Research Seminar: Anton Chekhov: Life, Literature, and Medicine (4 Credits)
Anton Chekhov was a Russian writer of short stories and plays who lived and died in the years before the Russian revolution. He was also a physician and he took both worlds—medicine and literature—seriously. In addition, Chekhov's life includes his own lived-experience of physical and mental suffering, a compassionate concern for the politics of embodiment, and a wise and rich approach to spirituality. Not only that, Chekhov is a writer's writer who is deeply enriching to read and contemplate. Bringing all this together, Chekhov becomes a particularly valuable guide and companion for understanding the complexities of the human life and human vulnerabilities. This course will focus on Chekhov short stories across the span of his writing combined with commentary from literary theory, narrative medicine, and health humanities. We will be using these sources to practice reading closely, thinking intensely, and writing well-crafted research papers combining Chekhov's writings with a range of interdisciplinary scholarship.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 825 First-Year Research Seminar: Topics of Conversation (4 Credits)
What is conversation, and what is it good for? In this research seminar we will explore the role of conversation in Western philosophy and culture. How has the idea of dialogue shaped understandings of art and ethics, metaphysics and psychology, race and cosmopolitanism, and gender and sexuality from classical times to the present? More specifically: How does the art of conversation arrive at metaphysical truths? How does talking to another person help us to uncover psychic meaning, and why do we need another person to understand our psyches? What do the dialogues in our selected works tell us about the interpersonal construction of meaning and the nature of friendship and erotic experience? What do we bring to our encounters with people of different backgrounds, and what can we take away from conversations with those of disparate political views? Some of our foundational theoretical texts may include Plato's exploration of metaphysics and love in The Symposium; Bakhtin's The Dialogic Imagination and his interpretation of Dostoevsky's vivid characters and philosophically rich dialogues in Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics; Freud's writings on psychoanalytic technique, including "Remembering, repeating, working through" and "Analysis terminal and interminable"; Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose's feminist revisions of psychoanalysis; and Montaigne and Alexander Nehamas on friendship. We will ourselves put these theoretical works in dialogue with films and novels that take conversation—as well as the silences and tacit subtexts, ambiguities and ironies embedded within—as their structuring principle and primary subject of concern. Texts may include Jane Austen's Persuasion, excerpts from Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov and Notes from Underground, Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle," Teju Cole's Open City, Ingmar Bergman's Scenes from a Marriage, Louis Malle's My Dinner with Andre, Pedro Almodóvar's Talk to Her, and Sheila Heti's How Should A Person Be.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 827 First-Year Research Seminar: The Arts and the Sciences: Divides and Intersections (4 Credits)
In 1959, the chemist-turned-novelist C.P. Snow delivered a lecture in which he decried a growing separation between the humanities and the sciences. In it, he argued that two intellectual "cultures" were developing, both of whose practitioners were increasingly incapable of engaging each other. Today, the notion of a divide between "the humanities" and "the sciences," or, as some term them, "the arts" and "the sciences," is rather commonplace. We often hear people self-identify as "more left brain," for example, or "not a math person." In this course, we will explore how and why different people have found it useful to distinguish the arts and the sciences. We will also consider why others have found it useful to blur the arts and the sciences. Participants will begin by reading and contextualizing Snow's original lecture, after which we will trace both the historical origins of the key concepts involved as well as how their meanings have changed over time from early modernity to today. (Mathematics, for example, was deemed an "art" for much of European history.) Having done so, we will then consider contemporary assessments. All told, in their research and in their writing, participants will be asked to examine how different people have sought to distinguish, reconcile, or even move beyond the "two cultures." Readings for the course may include works by: Francis Bacon, Lisa Jardine, Marwa Elshakry, Paul Kristeller, Yuval Levin, and Rueylin Chen.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 828 First-Year Research Seminar: Black Experiences in Literature, Movies, and Television (4 Credits)
From the antebellum era to the Harlem Renaissance, Black people have turned to art, writing, and spirituals to make a statement about race relations, construct their racial identity, and (re)claim a sense of humanity under conditions of oppression. These artistic expressions are all the more significant and worthy of analysis in this era of mass media and in light of contemporary racial conflicts. This course will explore the pluralities and contradictions of black experiences as depicted in literature, movies, and television. It will take special interest in the work of Spike Lee, Toni Morrison, Tyler Perry, and Shonda Rhimes, all of whom delve into issues concerning race and captivate black audiences while doing so. We will use each artist to decipher what it means to be black; how this definition varies according to gender, class, age, and sexuality; and how depictions of blackness have changed over time. While many of the readings and media in this class are fiction, we will approach them from a sociological and humanistic perspective"that is, mining them for clues on how historical and social conditions (e.g., Jim Crow, mass incarceration, gentrification) shape the possibilities and limits of black experiences. And we will probe how different media permit artists to convey the lived experience and struggles of blacks in different, often more visceral, ways"and to different audiences"than conventional social science and nonfiction reporting. Students must write an 8-10 page term paper. "You are required to critically engage with the existing theories on the topic, choose and analyze your selected case, and make an argument based on your findings."
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 829 First Year Research Seminar: The Politics of Abstraction (4 Credits)
Abstraction has been a valuable artistic style for artists seeking to escape visibility, legibility, surveillance, and other forms of identification that would limit their work. For that reason, abstraction has been a terrain of freedom for artists. However, abstraction can also diffuse meaning and render politics unrecognizable. For example, abstraction has a role in the story of the Cold War: the CIA promoted Abstract Expressionism as a vehicle for ideologies of American freedom. In this class, we will study these ambivalent potentials of abstract art in order to think about how art-making and interpretation are linked to power. We will use this case study to reflect on students' own developing practices of research and interpretation.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 830 First-Year Research Seminar: The Desert of the Real: Text, Image, Film (4 Credits)
At a moment when popular culture is obsessed with reality television and new technology permits "real-time" access to current events, this course examines the concept of reality in philosophy, literature, and film. What is the relationship between language and reality? How do different genres and media represent the world around us? How do visual and linguistic representations mediate our understanding of the "true" and the "real?" We will begin the course by examining key philosophical works by Plato and Karl Marx alongside films like the Wachowskis' The Matrix and Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times. We will then discuss how writers associated with disparate aesthetic movements such as realism, surrealism, and magical realism claimed to present and define reality. We will probe deeply into the category of the "everyday" to explore questions relating to gender, race, (post)coloniality, and the experience of modern, urban life. Lastly, we will consider the force of the photographic image and assess its relationship to evidence and truth by examining works of photography and commercial advertisements. Readings will include texts by a range of authors including but not limited to Jamaica Kincaid, Gabriel García Márquez, Herman Melville, Nikolai Gogol, Susan Sontag, bell hooks, Roland Barthes, Saidiya Hartman, and Claudia Rankine. Student will draw from course themes to hone their research skills and develop final projects that engage their individual interests.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 831 First-Year Research Seminar: Feminist Cultures of the US, 1960s-Present (4 Credits)
This course will explore some of the major strands of feminism in the United States since the beginning of the so-called "second wave" in the 1960s. While tracing the variegated history of feminism as a social and political movement and mapping out major areas of political and theoretical debate, we will pay particular attention to feminist cultural production"literature, film, visual art, performance, and music"and how this has played a crucial role in defining what feminism is and advancing its demands. Among our guiding questions will be: What issues have been most influential in shaping feminist movements? How have feminists grappled with questions around race, class, gender identity, and sexuality? What cultural practices and spaces have helped foster feminism? Are there recognizable feminist aesthetics? What legacies of earlier feminist thought and art resonate most strongly today? "Course materials may include readings by Gloria Anzaldúa, Judith Butler, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Davis, Andrea Dworkin, Alice Echols, Audre Lorde, Laura Mulvey, Jennifer C. Nash, Linda Nochlin, and Adrienne Rich; films directed by Lizzie Borden, Cheryl Dunye, and Barbara Hammer; and a wide selection of visual art and recordings of performances and music. To the extent possible, students will also be expected to take advantage of some of the feminist cultural resources that New York City has to offer, including the Riot Grrrl Collection at NYU"s Fales Library, the Barnard Zine Library, the expansive collection of feminist art at the Brooklyn Museum, and the WOW Café Theatre in the East Village.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 832 First-Year Research Seminar: Aesthetics on Trial (4 Credits)
While cultures often like to see themselves reflected in the arts, groundbreaking art is frequently accompanied by controversy. In literature, Nabokov was faced with charges of obscenity. In photography, Mapplethorpe challenged the role of the visual arts as innocent representation. In film, Riefenstahl blurred the line between art and propaganda by directing for Hitler while Pasolini directed what still remains one of the most shocking films in cinematic history. Through critical writing focused on specific case studies we will investigate such key questions as: Could there be a great work of art that is morally flawed? What is the relationship, if any, between aesthetic and moral values? What, after all, are aesthetic and moral values? Three shorter essays and a longer literary-critical paper are required. Texts may include selections from Aristotle, Plato, David Hume, Vladimir Nabokov, as well as more contemporary writers such as Arthur Danto, Berys Gaut, Martha Nussbaum, Louis Pojman, Kendall Walton, Michael Tanner.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 833 First-Year Research Seminar: The Suburban Imaginary and the American Dream (4 Credits)
The recent interest in the "suburbs" in political tweets and post-COVID19 migration patterns is part of suburbia"s historically fluctuating rise and fall in the American imaginary. In this research seminar we will critically examine the history, culture, and politics of the American suburb and its representation(s) in popular culture, the media, and the arts. The sociological and ideological origins of the suburb will be traced, as well as the growth, popularization, and changing attitudes towards "suburbia" in advertising, television, and film. Particular attention will be placed on the suburb as a utopian and dystopian motif in these various mediums. Readings will include critical texts from fields as diverse as architecture (Le Corbusier), critical race theory (Kate Baldwin, Dianne Harris), feminist theory (Dolores Hayden), queer studies (Karen Tongson), philosophy (Marc Aug?), and the social sciences (Herbert J. Gans, Kenneth T. Jackson). Film and television screenings will include Far From Heaven, American Beauty, The Truman Show, Leave it to Beaver, Desperate Housewives, and others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 834 First-Year Research Seminar: Women's Work and Identity Politics in Latin American Food and Cooking (4 Credits)
This course hinges on harnessing food and foodways to research and explore issues and questions of cultural behaviors and traditions, gender politics, social hierarchies and perceptions or realities of agency in Spanish and Portuguese speaking Latin America. We examine the history and current lived experience in various nations in Latin America by considering how eating and cooking practices changed over time to become a symbol of civilization, whether biased towards European standards or culturally relative to local, indigenous or multiracial realities on the ground. Attention will be paid to the Columbian Exchange, the role of food in various nation-states, and the effects of globalization on the eating habits of Latin Americans. Finally, we consider the connections between food and identity among Latino/as in the United States. Throughout the semester, we reflect predominantly on the role of women in transforming and preserving food cultures, and how women's choices in the kitchen influenced the history of Latin American countries. In this course we will research and question the association of cooking with drudgery, a task from which women should liberate themselves. Concurrently we will look at cooking as a creative and empowering activity, as a source of identity and a manifestation of culture. The course is based on analysis of primary sources such as cookbooks, historical documents, chefs, cinema, and art along with various secondary sources.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 836 First-Year Research Seminar: Supreme Court in American Life (4 Credits)
A core principle of the U.S. Supreme Court holds that it can only decide a judicial question through a specific case brought by two or more interested parties. Many times in its history, however, individual appellants to the Court have become secondary to the larger constitutional issues at stake. A lively debate among the current justices involves how much weight should be given to consequences for the individual parties involved alongside more formalist methods. In this course, we will explore the history of the Supreme Court and the nature of judicial power in American society from the perspective of how rulings of the high court have affected the lived experience of American citizens (and non-citizens). In addition to learning the institutional history of the Court – its constitutional origins, relation to the political branches, and key doctrines – students will analyze case studies of landmark decisions, supplementing the facts of the cases with other primary sources (fiction and memoir) to richly imagine the circumstances of each case. We will also interrogate the "myth of the law" in the U.S., asking to what degree justice can be achieved through constitutional law and judicial politics. Case studies will include: slavery and civil rights; Native American sovereignty; economic and enviromental regulation; immigration law; criminal justice; educational equality; and personal and privacy rights. Based on these case studies, students will write a research paper on one recent Court decision of their choosing.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 837 First-Year Research Seminar: Space, Place, and the Body: From Gentrification to Climate Justice (4 Credits)
In an increasingly virtual world of Zoom classes, Tiktok performances, and political speeches on Instagram Live, this research seminar raises questions about embodiment in physical space and place. How do we map and navigate space and place in our daily lives, and how do we negotiate the official paths we are expected to take with the scenic routes, shortcuts, or desire lines of our preferred, or "delinquent," personal imaginaries? Is there a place for sidewalk culture, public characters, and queer space in increasingly gentrified urban landscapes? How do we decolonize the institutions complicit in the displacement of Black, indigenous, immigrant, and other underserved and overpoliced communities? And how do we reverse a process that may drastically change the stakes of these questions in a few decades, if cities are under water? How do we demand large-scale action in the face of an ever-worsening climate crisis while engaging in multispecies solidarity that makes the world livable for everyone, human or otherwise? Authors will include Frantz Fanon, Jamaica Kincaid, Sara Ahmed, Jane Jacobs, Samuel Delany, Claudia Rankine, Zoe Todd, Neel Ahuja, The Red Nation, Timothy Morton, and Sylvia Wynter.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 838 First-Year Research Seminar: Introduction to Trans Studies (4 Credits)
What is trans studies, and what can it teach us about formations of gender and sexuality? In this advanced introduction to trans studies, we'll think about the emergence of the field over the past 20 years, and we'll ask what it offers to our understanding of gender, labor, race, colonialism, incarceration, policing, public space, family structures, childhood, film and literature. We'll also think about the politicization of trans identity according to different agendas in the present moment. This course will feature readings by Trish Salah, Viviane Namaste, Susan Stryker, Jules Joanne Gleeson, Leslie Feinberg, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Nick Estes, Jules Gill-Peterson, Michelle O'Brien, Kevin Floyd, Jordy Rosenberg, Jasbir Puar, Tourmaline, Emma Heaney, Rosemary Hennessy, Lou Sullivan and C. Riley Snorton.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 840 First-Year Research Seminar: Philosophical Approaches to Identity (4 Credits)
Stuart Hall asks, both rhetorically and inquisitively, "Who needs "identity"?". This question suggests that the very idea of identity cannot be taken for granted and subjects it to critique. Starting from Hall's foundational and classic essay, this course engages with philosophical approaches to identity and to its intersectional character, with a focus on feminist philosophy and philosophy of race (stretching to include figures in cultural studies and critical theory). Coming from a diverse array of backgrounds in exploring issues in identity, we will engage with categories such as class, dis/ability, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, race, sex, sexuality, and additional aspects of identity. This course will take an intersectional approach to identity as a concept in its own right and to the various categories that constitute it. We will gain inspiration for research by reading works from such figures as Kwame Anthony Appiah, Judith Butler, Aimé Césaire, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Michel Foucault, Jack Halberstam, Stuart Hall, Donna Haraway, Charles Mills, José Muñoz, Mae Ngai, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 841 First-Year Research Seminar: The Art of Doing Nothing (4 Credits)
What would it take to stop working? To refuse work? Give it up? To do something else, at odds with productive activity and labor, or nothing at all? And how might doing nothing, so to speak, introduce radically different senses of freedom? In this seminar, we'll think about some of the ways that modern literature and film reflect on the art of doing nothing, frequently turning the city or its outskirts into a locus for personal and collective struggle, resistance, and transformation. Our aim will be to examine strategies for breaking free from the dominance of work, as illustrated by the so-called flâneur/flâneuse, but also by other antiwork figures like the slacker, idler, cruiser, fugitive, drifter, and street ambler, primarily but not exclusively within the urban topographies of New York, Paris, and London from the 19th century onward. We will pay special attention to the critical potentialities of unmanaged and wayward lives at the intersection of race, class, sexual orientation, and gender. The course will introduce first-year students to critical methodologies in the fields of comparative literature, transnational modernisms, queer and feminist theory, and Black studies and enable them to undertake an array of research projects corresponding to their own academic interests or concentrations. We will read fiction, memoirs, and poetry by Baudelaire, Beckett, Boyer, Breton, Calle, Delany, Jacobs, Melville, Poe, and Woolf; theoretical work by Barthes, Benjamin, Federici, Hartman, and Weeks; and watch movies by Tsai and Varda. There may also be occasional musical interludes.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 842 First-Year Research Seminar: Western Materialism (4 Credits)
This course will offer a survey of seminal texts on materialism: the Western philosophical tradition which posits that external, physical reality exists prior to, and independently from, human (or other kinds of) consciousness. What has led to the development and success of such a view, given that many things that matter the most to us are seemingly immaterial: thoughts, ideas, emotions? Indeed, our lives do revolve around materiality in its myriad forms: our physical bodies are subject to violence and pleasure; stuff in our environment degrades––forests burn, glaciers melt; we interact with inanimate objects we grow attached to (or which oppress us). But wouldn't insisting on the materiality of life reduce the complexity of our existence to brute matter? What case could be made in defense of materialism? In answering these questions, we will study the long genealogy of materialist thought, from ancient Epicurean philosophy through classical 19th century Marxism all the way to the contemporary New Materialism. We will explore the various philosophical strands and theoretical debates that are contained in, or are adjacent to, materialism (mind-body duality, empiricism vs. rationalism), along with the challenges posed to materialism from various angles (idealism, deconstruction, and––ostensibly––quantum mechanics). We will discover that materialism has something to say about current debates that include the ecological crisis and the effects of the Anthropocene, movements for social change, and the increasing ubiquity of virtual reality. Reading will include works by Lucretius, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Frantz Fanon, Silvia Federici, Anna Tsing, Jane Bennet, among others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 843 First-Year Research Seminar: The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (4 Credits)
The Great Pyramids of Giza; The Hanging Gardens of Babylon; The Lighthouse of Alexandria; The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus; The Statue of Zeus at Olympia; The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus; The Colossus of Rhodes. These are the seven monuments that were listed as the most wondrous sights in the ancient world, spanning the eastern Mediterranean, northern Africa, and western Asia. Today, only one of the seven monuments is extant; but in antiquity, they were must-see destinations that were famed for their colossality, technological achievements, and beauty. In addition to their marvelous qualities, these wonders beg questions around the cultural, political, and social functions of monuments. In this course, we will unpack the list of 'Seven Wonders,' especially as they relate to topics on travel and tourism, cultural heritage, memory, and myth-making. Furthermore, we will learn how to study and analyze monuments for which the physical, visual, and literary evidence is fragmentary. For their research projects, students will pick a monument for analysis and deep study, using the resources that are available to them through New York University and across New York City.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 844 First-Year Research Seminar: Intellectual History of Capitalism (4 Credits)
How does capitalism differ from other forms of organizing societies such as feudalism or socialism? Is democracy, in particular universal suffrage, a necessary condition or a threat to the capitalist order? Is capitalism a natural order? To what extent is slavery elided in the intellectual histories of capitalism? This course explores these questions by engaging with formative texts in political theory, political economy, and select historical accounts of capitalism that may contest intellectual histories. It is divided into three sections. First, our purpose is to understand how capitalism, resting on specific institutions of private property and 'free' labor, has been socially constructed and reconstructed through powerful political arguments. Second, we will study how capitalism presents several contradictions for democratic ideals of equality and liberty, which is why the waxing and waning of arguments for and against it persist to date. As such, we will inquire if capitalism can exist without the state functioning as its enabler and backstop. The final part will consider the rise of neoliberalism from the mid-1970s to explore if and how it marks a fundamental shift in political and economic thought concerning the role of the state vis-à-vis that of the market.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 845 First-Year Research Seminar: Africa, China, Globalization (4 Credits)
China's controversial investment in Africa has caused reactions ranging from accusations of a "new colonialism" to celebrations of a collaborative "win-win" for development. Furthermore, immigration both by Africans to China and Chinese to Africa signals a fundamental shift in global power dynamics and an opening of a new era of multi-polar globalization after America's dominance post-Cold War. Through an analysis of journalistic and historical accounts, literature, economics, art, film and blogs, this seminar will explore the multi-faceted nature of Africa and China relations. We will ask what are the connections between Cold War history and the contemporary moment? How do different African actors at state and individual levels engage with the Chinese presence? And finally, how does this shift to multi-polarity impact theories of globalization? Readings can range from diplomatic histories like O. Arne Westad's The Global Cold War, and studies in globalization like Giovanni Arrighi's Adam Smith in Beijing, to novels including In Koli Jean Bofane's Congo Inc. and Kwei Quartey's Gold of Our Fathers. We will read studies on immigration like Ufrieda Ho's memoir, Paper Sons and Daughters, Adams Bodomo's Africans in China and Howard French's China's Second Continent. In terms of media we will examine films such as Cold Harbour, the documentary, When China Met Africa, as well as paintings by Michael Soi, China Loves Africa, photographs by Li Dong, Baohan Street, and the blogs, The Mind of a African-Chinese Guy, and Africans in China.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 846 First-Year Research Seminar: The Thingliness of Things (4 Credits)
This course engages a seemingly simple question: What is an object? Relatedly, what is a thing? As a means of illuminating these questions, we will consult everyday objects, theories of various object forms (from our very first loved objects, to commodities, fetishes, even lost things) and literary and artistic representations. We will endeavor to learn to read objects both by having them at hand and by understanding how economic, psychic, and social values shape their properties. In this process, we will engage the popular view that objects tell us something, first and foremost, about the people who create them and use them in all varieties of ways. We will also encounter the proposition that objects may have an intentionality of their own, and that humans do not dictate the meaning of all things. Students will write 2 shorter close-reading essays and a longer research paper in which they delve into a more thorough investigation of an object of their choice.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 847 First-Year Research Seminar: Archives and the Imperfect Production of Knowledge (4 Credits)
What is an archive? This course tackles that complicated question as we investigate the role that archives how they are assembled, curated and used can play in shaping knowledge production and historical narratives. As scholars Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook argue, they are not passive storehouses of old stuff, but active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed. Our case studies of historical visual archives question: Which images matter and why? Who has the power to make such decisions? What might absent images reveal? As Taryn Simon has observed of archives, "Something is said in the gaps between all the information" Working with NYU's Grey Art Gallery collections as well as Bobst Library's holdings, students will study, hands on, as they learn to ask critical questions about organization, access, authorship, and ethics in both traditional and contemporary archival practice. Readings for this course include theory and cultural criticism, and our work entails delving into both online and physical archives. Guest speakers may include archivists and the Grey Gallery's Head of Education and Programs Leah Sweet. Students will write 2 short essays and then a longer research paper, delving into a specific aspect of the historiographical and theoretical debates around archives and the production of knowledge.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 848 First-Year Research Seminar: The Matter of Fact (4 Credits)
We are living in a moment of extreme distrust of scientific evidence ? climate change denialists and anti-vaxxers being only two prominent examples. What is a fact? How do scientists determine what counts as legitimate evidence, proof, or a convincing demonstration? How does the nature of evidence change across different domains of knowledge? Drawing upon historical, anthropological, and sociological literature, in this course we will examine how scientific knowledge and expertise is legitimized within domains such as biotechnology, mathematics, public health, and environmental science. In the first unit we will analyze a range of mathematical proofs, from diagrams to computers to large-scale collaborations. We will investigate the ways standards of rigor are established within a community of practitioners and how they evolve over time. The second unit focuses on the history of public scientific controversies. Examples include evolution and intelligent design, links between cigarettes and cancer, and anthropogenic climate change. Students will focus on how scientists reach consensus when faced with contrasting evidence, as well as how proof is presented by the popular press and in non-scientific domains. The third unit interrogates the nature of scientific evidence in courtrooms. Throughout the course, students will be introduced to key themes in the history of science, such as trust, expertise and policy, and rigor versus intuition. By the end of the term, students will be prepared to think critically about competing claims and evidence, understand how controversy and consensus function socially, and be able to analyze and interpret scientific rhetorical strategies.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 849 First-Year Research Seminar: Reimagining the Museum for the 21st-Century (4 Credits)
In this course, we will take a critical look at the socio-political and cultural role art museums have played in the past; address their problematic links to colonialism and elitism; and search for meaningful, progressive ways to make these long-standing institutions relatable and relevant to everyone today, including historically marginalized and underrepresented communities. We will develop new concepts for an all-inclusive museum that would not merely be a temple for the preservation and exhibition of artifacts from all over the world but serve as a forum of rigorous intellectual inquiry and spiritual exploration to faithfully reflect the diversity of modern society with its rich multitude of histories and lived experiences. Research projects and museum field trips will inform our discussions about the challenges museums are facing today as we observe their efforts to reinvent themselves as ethical and socially responsible institutions. We will highlight significant changes New York's major art institutions have recently implemented and evaluate their impact on the city?s cultural landscape. These include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim, MoMA, The Frick Collection, and The Morgan Museum and Library. Together, we will document and evaluate diverse museum experiences, create new and unexpected connections through art, and articulate an inspired vision for a dynamic, engaging, and genuinely inclusive museum of the future. Our gained insights will inform our final project: the creation of an experimental, virtual platform that showcases what a museum could be, and, perhaps, should be.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 851 First-Year Research Seminar: Bohemian New York: Aesthetic Practice & Urban Communities, 1900-Present (4 Credits)
Bohemianism as a concept had its origins in early-nineteenth century Paris as an identifiable urban space with yet invisible boundaries: a way of life conducive to aesthetic experimentation and a critique of capitalist modernity that, in theory, lies outside the parameters of class and social convention. In more lyrical terms, Djuna Barnes, a pioneering feminist author, described her bohemian community in Greenwich Village as men and women with a new light flickering in their eyes, on their foreheads the radiance of some unseen splendor. Barnes evoked, in spiritual terms, the aesthetic vocation that drew her and her compatriots to the Village then and that has continued to draw young people to bohemian enclaves in New York ever since, whether aspiring to creative pursuits, experimental lives, or refuge from repressive environments at home. Taking the torch from Paris, New York became the leading bohemian metropolis of the twentieth century, and this way of life has defined creative possibilities and countercultures here down to the present day. This course will explore the history of bohemian life in New York, whether in the Village, Harlem, the Lower East Side, or Brooklyn. Grounding our inquiry in the role that aesthetics plays in modernity via the writings of Kant, Schiller, Baudelaire, and Nietzsche, the class will reconstruct some of the most fruitful bohemian scenes of the last century, analyzing creative production in the context of intentional communities. Course texts will draw on cultural history, memoir, fiction, and poetry as well as film, visual art, and music by: Barnes, Langston Hughes, Joseph Mitchell, Frank O? Hara, James Baldwin, the Velvet Underground, Audré Lorde, the Nuyorican Poets, Patti Smith, David Wojnarowicz, MF Doom, and others. Students will also conduct original research and fieldwork in local archives and neighborhoods seeking to understand what role bohemianism might still have to play in the gentrified landscape of post-pandemic New York.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 852 First-Year Research Seminar: Imagining Justice (4 Credits)
Cultural work is political imagining. This course asks just where the picture of a just world comes from. The common link between recent political movements like Occupy, Black Lives Matter, contemporary radical feminisms and queer politics is the claim that justice is not for everyone. Through events, actions and statements, movements urge us to see who is left out of the collective imagination of a just world. The creative work of our culture, as much as much as any political document or decree, teaches us what justice is and whom it is for. This means that it is crucial for us to examine how novels, film, exhibitions, memorials and events represent histories of political change and the achievement of justice. Our time is ripe for this exploration, since in the last few years we have been inundated with work in many genres that represent the anniversaries of the Civil Rights Movement, the Women"s Rights Movement, LGBTQ movements and more. Who do these narratives teach us that justice is for, and what happens to those who fall out of their view? We will investigate a range of texts, considering how they uphold or limit forms of justice and also how they intervene against those limits. " A range of primary and secondary texts might include Morrison's Beloved , Walker's Meridian , Baldwin's The Fire Next Time , Coates's Between the World and Me , and the recent films Selma and 12 Years a Slave.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 854 First-Year Research Seminar: American Gothic (4 Credits)
Emerging from the swamps of desire and the muck of history, dripping in horror and high camp, Gothic literature is paradigmatic in the imagination of the US South. An extremely popular and influential genre, Gothic literature also reveals the discursive contortions and deceptions that characterize the persistent resistance to a full reckoning with American history. Literary scholarship reads grotesque elements of literature as a symbolic "return of the repressed," as the buried histories of racial and patriarchal violence having their revenge. This course traces the trajectory of the Gothic literary genre from its origins in the 19th century, through its canonical works in the twentieth century, and up to its recent incarnations. Breaking out of the established canon of the Southern Gothic, this course recenters US literary history around the Caribbean. Students will use the terms of postcoloniality to investigate how the historical conditions of the southern US colonies (and later states) were both similar and different to conditions in the Caribbean and other parts of North America, producing linked but distinct versions of the Gothic genre. The Gothic mode provides a model to study the relationship between history and art more generally. How do the insights of the Gothic genre allow us to analyze violence, memory, and writing in other places and disciplines? Readings from Nathaniel Hawthorne, Silvia Federici, Edgar Allan Poe, Toni Morrison, William Faulkner, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, Tennessee Williams, Carmen Maria Machado, Shani Mootoo, Paul Gilroy, Sylvia Wynter, Aimé Césaire, and Edouard Glissant.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 856 First-Year Research Seminar: Museums: Power & Politics (4 Credits)
Western museums are in a state of crisis. From calls for decolonization and repatriation to protests over human remains collections and unethical donor policies, museums and related cultural institutions find themselves at a crossroads, reckoning with their violent colonial histories while handling ongoing concerns about labor practices, systemic inequality, and their role in shaping knowledge in the public sphere. Whether addressing climate change policy, Black Lives Matter, or fights for unionization, it's clear that museums are rich sites for research, critique, and writing, especially in the cultural hub of New York City. Beginning with early modern cabinets of curiosity and moving through nineteenth century encyclopedic museums, anatomical collections, the most recent rise of repatriation movements, and more, we will investigate how museum politics and power produce knowledge, from the depths of their archives to the most sensational of their exhibits. Amidst ongoing debates over controversial objects like the Benin Bronzes, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2023 admission of looting practices, the American Museum of Natural History's apology for its eugenic history, and, perhaps most significantly, calls for the return of hundreds of thousands of human remains for proper burial, the role of museums have expanded beyond the bounds of the academy, stoking universal struggles around human rights, international policy, and the politics of preservation, display, and loss. Drawing on readings by historians, theorists, and practitioners like Foucault, Haraway, Lonetree, Quereshi, and Tuck, this course will train students in practical research and writing skills while introducing in-depth analysis of primary sources – including hands-on work with objects from museum collections. We will visit several museums, archives, and collections over the course of the semester, and guest speakers will bring practical skills training into the classroom that students can draw on for future research projects, demystifying archival work while expanding their conceptualization of what "counts" as a primary source. * Fulfills math/science requirement, could fulfill critical race theory requirement
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 858 First-Year Research Sem: Special Collections: Politics, Pleasures and Precarities of Black Archiving (4 Credits)
This course provides an introduction to certain concepts and contexts surrounding the practice of archiving, and of conducting archival research in the field of Black Studies. We begin with a deceptively simple question —What is an archive?—before delving into the issues of politics and power, ethics and erotics that attend the answer. Given the history of black archiving, its slant relationship to institutions and official narratives, we will take a special interest in archiving as informal and vernacular practice—case studies here include black women's community archives, Alexander Gumby's scrapbooks, Questlove's massive record collection, Marion Stokes's obsessive recording of news programs, and West Indian grandmothers' carefully stuffed living rooms. Ever mindful of current thinking in Black Studies around cultural practices of silence, recovery and refusal, we sharpen our awareness of the degree to which the impulse to collect and preserve is often grounded in a profound sense of loss and precarity. In what ways are archives monuments and memorials? What is the relationship of archiving to grief and mourning? Who decided what goes in or out of an archive? Is hoarding a method? What are the affects that attend our archival practice and research? What kinds of worlds are we dreaming inside and outside of the archives we consult and create? Engagements with the work of Saidiya Hartman, Jennifer Morgan, Marisa Fuentes, Arthur Jafa, Marisa Solomon, M. Nourbese Philip, Tina Campt, Jane Bennett, and Alexis Pauline Gumbs, among others, shape our reflections on stuff and feed our collective theorizing about the mattering of black life.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 859 First-Year Research Seminar: Pathos/Pathology: The Meaning of Illness in Literature and Film (4 Credits)
This course examines illness and health as pertinent concepts to the history of literature and cinema. Conceptions of health and illness, as well as the personal experience of artists, have inspired revolutions in how we think about the nature of aesthetics. One of our major goals will be to contextualize the history of representation in media and contemporaneous understandings of the nature of illness and pathology. This course will ask questions such as: how have the representations of pain and disease altered a purely empirical understanding of illness? Does art serve a therapeutic purpose? How do fictional diseases, such as those in horror films or science fiction, make criticisms about society? We will look at plagues and pandemics, what Susan Sontag calls "Master Illnesses" like cancer and tuberculosis, the American AIDS epidemic, conceptions of "madness" in the West, and the ongoing struggle to interpret COVID 19. Our class will try to frame key moments in the history of literature and film in relation to contemporary conceptions of illness. Readings include Virginia Woolf's On Being Ill, Susan Sontag's Illness as Metaphor, Audre Lorde's The Cancer Journals, Emily Martin's Flexible Bodies, Sarah Schulman's Let the Record Show, and Georges Canguilhem's The Normal and the Pathological. Screenings include The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The House is Black, The Fits, Cemetery of Splendor, Dawn of the Dead, and The Last of Us.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 862 First-Year Research Seminar: Truth and Method in Western Thought (4 Credits)
What is "meaning?" And how do we create meaning in our social and intellectual lives? In 1960, the philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer published his famous *Truth and Method,* wherein he outlines and deploys the idea of "philosophical hermeneutics." But what is "hermeneutics?" For Gadamer, hermeneutics is simply a mode of interpretation through which we investigate meaning by way of communication. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke offers insight into this task when he describes the creative process in terms of catching a ball thrown by an unseen partner, a process that is essentially world creating. Broadly, hermeneutics can be understood as a circle of meaning and interpretation, wherein our task is simply to decide how to enter this circle in the right way. This class offers a detailed yet introductory survey of hermeneutics as a research method focused on cultivating the art of active listening when reading in order to produce novel, meaningful questions. An essentially interdisciplinary method, hermeneutics offers a holistic approach to questions in both science and art, drawing these fields together rather than holding them apart. In this course we will learn to tune our ears not only to a variety of complex texts and groups of texts but to how scholarly conversations change over time. As a First-Year Research Seminar, this class encourages students to read as listeners and bring meaning to bear on challenging works to produce original, rigorous, and unique research in topics of their own choosing, be this philosophy, literature, science, or beyond.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1802 Transfer Student Research Seminar: Coming Home: Identity and Place (4 Credits)
Historian Eric Hobsbawm famously referred to the last century as "the age of extremes," an era of violence marked by "the destruction of the past." Responding to this perceived break with history, many contemporary narratives seek to recover lost pasts by employing tropes of homecoming and return in order to bridge temporal and geographical gaps. Stories of coming home document the urgency with which we attempt to remember the past in the aftermath of trauma and invest specific places, or "sites of memory," with the power of recall. Our class will investigate the linkages between identity and place as they are imagined in the aftermath of historical trauma in film, literature, and theory as well as practices including reparations and genealogy. The ways in which contemporary narratives treat the theme of coming home across boundaries of time and space and the role this idea plays in the construction of ethnic, racial, and national identities will serve as the impetus for frequent exploratory writing, formal essays, and a research paper. Readings will include selections from trauma theory, memory studies, fiction, and memoir by Svetlana Boym, Andreas Huyssen, Nadine Fresco, Phil Klay, Toni Morrison, Louise Erdrich, and Jonathan Safran Foer, among others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1810 Transfer Student Research Sem: Examining the Mundane: Art & Literature of the Everyday (4 Credits)
What makes boredom interesting? How have writers, thinkers, and artists sought to represent, elevate, and interpret the mundane? Considering that most of life is consumed by unspectacular moments, shouldn't we have a clearer understanding of how and what these moments mean? What do recent movements like hyperrealism, maximalism, Dadaism, the avant-garde, and hysterical realism tell us about our evolving fascination with life's routine? This course investigates the complex history and poetics of the mundane as it has been represented in art and literature across a wide-range of epochs, mediums, and traditions. Beginning with philosophical assessments of the everyday, including phenomenology, existentialism, and post-modernism, we will focus our exploration on novelists, poets, photographers, and filmmakers whose work reveals the overlooked and under-thought aspects of daily living that in fact make up life itself. Artists and writers will include: Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Andy Warhol, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Richard Linklater, Slavoj Zizek, Matt Siber, Kenneth Goldsmith, and Jacques Prevert, among others. In addition to these Western perspectives, we will examine the work of modern Arabic poet Amjad Nasser, Japanese filmmaker Koreeda Hirakazu, Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz, and traditional folk music from Bosnia and Kosovo. Students will write three shorter essays and one final research essay of approximately 8-12 pages.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1811 Transfer Student Research Seminar: The Politics of Work (4 Credits)
Work—especially wage labor—has come to be assumed as a necessary and unavoidable orientation of modern adult life. Even more, we assume that work is intrinsic to our sense of identity and self-worth. Attached to modern understandings of work are implicit values and morals, specifically the work ethic that frames work as individualistic, merit-based, and belonging to the private sphere. However, recent political critiques have begun to (re) question the ways in which labor and spaces of work constitute (or exclude) us as social and political subjects. In this seminar we will consider work as not only connected and buttressed by the political sphere but as itself political. Our aim will be to examine the unquestioned values that inhere in our understanding of work as well the ways in which the organization of modern forms of work constitute us and organize us a political subjects. In doing so we will consider how labor relations produce and reproduce us as embodied and affective subjects that sustain or exclude different classes, genders, races and ages. We will begin by first examining classical understandings and critiques of the organization of work in the writings of John Locke, Adam Smith, Marx, and Max Weber. We will then turn to contemporary critiques of work including those that point to postwork imaginaries. What would it look and feel like to live in a postwork society? How would we reorganize our time? What creative projects might ensue? What conditions (a basic universal income?) would make such a society possible? Readings for this section of the course may include: Arendt, Foucault, Baudrillard, Barbara Ehrenreich, Aronowitz, Negri, Bloch, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Kathi Weeks.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1814 Transfer Student Research Seminar: La Mode: Fashioning Modernity (4 Credits)
How has fashion contributed to shaping the social, visual, and libidinal environment in which we live and the ways in which we live in it? To what extent do changing fashions not only reflect but also factor in the formation and transformation of cultures? Students in this course will develop their understanding of and capacity to engage in interdisciplinary research through the study of a tradition of writing on fashion that dates back to the early nineteenth century, and that encompasses journalism, aesthetics, sociology, psychoanalysis, political economy, and philosophy. Over the course of the semester students will be introduced to a wide range of authors, texts, intellectual traditions, and theoretical approaches to the study of fashion, as well as to contemporary issues bearing on the clothed body in both Western and non-Western contexts. In addition to encouraging students to think critically about the place and function of fashion in modern life, the course assignments aim help them to develop the ability to address complex questions with both clarity and substance, to craft well-constructed and compelling arguments, and to recognize and assess the different methods employed and types of claim advanced by scholars working in various disciplines. Readings will include texts by Honoré de Balzac, Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Caroline Evans, Kennedy Fraser, Anne Hollander, Joan Wallach Scott, and Thorstein Veblen, among others.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1815 Transfer Student Research Seminar: New York City's Public Spheres (4 Credits)
Where, in the city, are demands for justice made? This course surveys a history of public spheres in New York City—of contested spaces where critical matters are discussed and addressed. Sometimes these spaces are parks, as with the history of Labor protests in Union Square; other times these spaces are virtual, as with the recent "Sh*tty Men in Media" list that helped launch the #MeToo movement. In all cases, from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe to the community centers that hosted the first hip-hop concerts, the demand for recognition or justice—and the debates surrounding these demands—require claiming, reclaiming, or inventing sites where debates can take place and demands can be made. Focusing on the 20th and 21st century, we will consider the history of constant struggle for control by commercial, political, governmental, and activist forces that define the city's public spheres, and we will consider the aesthetic works produced in and around these sites, from the literary experiments of the Harlem Renaissance to the Rimbaud photographs of David Wojnarowicz. These works will be read as extensions or elaborations of the public sphere—calls for justice and recognition through inventive approaches to fiction, film, music, art, and architecture. The course will consider the evolving meaning of the public sphere as we survey an intellectual and cultural history of spaces and works where claims for justice or recognition have been—or are being—made.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1816 Transfer Student Research Seminar: Literatures of Imperialism (4 Credits)
Cultural and literary critic Edward Said has boldly declared: "Without empire, there is no European novel as we know it…" (Culture and Imperialism, p. 69). Guided by Said's assertion, this course will examine how empire was represented in nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and non-European literature. We will consider how nineteenth-century literature made visible the purposes, contradictions and anxieties of British and French empire building. In particular, students will attend to the impact of colonial expansion on narrative form, historical consciousness and stylistic choice. While our literary texts will mainly come from Britain and France, we will be examining the meaning of imperialism as a global institution. Central to our considerations will also be an investigation on how the cultures of empire shaped different aspects of metropolitan cultures—from everyday life to social values. We will read novels, critical texts, poetry and travel writing by Edward Said, Jane Austen, Charles Baudelaire and Joseph Conrad as well as a novel written by Assia Djebar who "writes back" to the Empire. Students in this class will write two shorter close-reading essays and develop a longer research paper in which they formulate and answer an original research question related to a specific aspect of one of the literary or theoretical debates studied in the seminar.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1817 Transfer Student Research Seminar: Bedtime Writing: The Literature of Sleep (4 Credits)
"[I]n dreaming, / The clouds methought would open and show riches / Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked, / I cried to dream again" (The Tempest III.ii.147-150). As the supposed one-third of life we spend unconscious continues to shrink, Caliban's lament feels more familiar than ever. But current obsessions with the health and productivity consequences of our collective sleep debt obscure a much longer tradition of cultural engagement with sleep, one that not only makes space for slumber as more than mere refueling, but also posits a special relationship between writers and sleep. This course aims to recover that secret affinity and plunder its "riches" by studying literary representations of sleep. Expect encounters with sleepwalkers, insomniacs, oneironauts, and other creatures of the night as we ask how sleep—or lack of it—factors in to literary practices. Readings will include fiction (Dickens, Collins, Chekhov, Carver), poetry (Spenser, Coleridge, Tennyson, Thomson), history (Burgess, Dorhn-van Rossum, Ekirch, Moss), philosophy (Schwenger, Turcke, Wortham), psychology (Freud), the sociopolitics of sleep (Derickson, Williams, Wolf-Meyer), and contemporary memoirs of sleeplessness (Butler, Greene).
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1818 Transfer Student Research Sem: Fictions on Record: Journalism, Literature, & Claims to Truth (4 Credits)
Literature tends to be seen as a space for dynamic aesthetic experimentation and critical thought. But journalistic texts are rarely granted the same transcendence. How, then, can journalism be read as literature? This seminar examines the relationship between journalism and literature in the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East. Coursework is centered on the following questions: what claims to truth are at work in narrative fiction versus journalistic storytelling? Are certain kinds of fictional and nonfictional accounts better positioned than others to take up political, aesthetic, and philosophical concerns? How have literature and journalism historically interacted with, and reacted to, each other? Small writing assignments over the course of the semester and a short mid-term essay will allow students to practice elements of academic research and writing in preparation for a final research paper, which will be developed and polished in a series of workshops. Readings may include excerpts from the work of: Svetlana Alexievich, Hannah Arendt, James Baldwin, Truman Capote, Joan Didion, Ryszard Kapuściński, Valeria Luiselli, José Martí, Rodolfo Walsh, and Ida B. Wells.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1819 Transfer Student Rsrch Sem: No Justice, No Peace: Peacebuilding, Social Movements, and Intellectuals (4 Credits)
"What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now! If we don't get it...SHUT IT DOWN!" This seminar teaches essential research skills for undergraduate writing through the lens of peace and justice studies and sociological approaches to the study of social movements. We will combine both primary (interviews, surveys, etc.) and secondary (existing literature and data sets) research methods, studying how and when agents for social change fight for justice as peacebuilders, organizers, and intellectuals. In this course, we will read peace scholars such as Johan Galtung, social movement intellectuals like Angela Davis and Keeanga-Yahmatta Taylor; we'll learn to evaluate academic and practitioner work measuring, describing, and analyzing the efficacy of peacebuilders, activists and intellectuals writing in academic and nonacademic spaces. Students will work through the interdisciplinary course material on peace, justice, and activism through low stakes shorter essays on course content. They will compose a literature review, a proposal for a semester-long research project, and a final research essay, submitted in sections with ample time for peer review. Upon completing this course, the successful student will be prepared with general research skills as well as a strong foundation in the various ways scholars and practitioners fight for justice.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1820 Transfer Student Research Seminar: Promise & Pitfalls of Markets (4 Credits)
In his classic text, The Wealth of Nations, the Scottish economist and moral philosopher Adam Smith argued that the human propensity to "truck, barter and exchange" would naturally lead to socially optimal outcomes if people were left to trade freely, without any government interference in markets. This idea that a competitive market can lead to efficient outcomes is a central tenet of economic theory today. Moreover, the more general belief that markets know what's best is widely held throughout U.S. society. This course is designed to teach students about what economics has to offer to the analysis of markets and the ways that firms make decisions. It also will include analyses of market outcomes from scholars in disciplines outside economics, and some discussion of firms' ethical obligations. In its exploration of these topics, the course draws largely on disciplines such as economics, history, moral philosophy, and the law. Readings may include texts such as the following: Free to Choose by Milton and Rose Friedman, The Winner-Take-All Society by Robert Frank, The Globalization Paradox by Dani Rodrik, The Jungle by Upton Sinclair, Lochner v. New York by Paul Kens, and Mary Hirschfeld's Aquinas and the Market.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1821 Transfer Student Research Seminar: Looking at Development (4 Credits)
Development—in the most basic, common-sense use of the term —is about making lives better. But what counts as "better", and for whom? And how have modern societies across the "First" and "Third" Worlds sought to realize their visions of progress? We will explore these questions by interrogating the dominant ways in which the world is seen in the eye of Development - its "world-view", so to speak. In effect, we will be looking at development by examining how development itself looks: its view of societies, of the "Third World", of the "poor", of labor, of nature, of women, and of the body. These are some of the key themes that we will tune into, as we analyze the histories of colonialism, modernity, and development that have shaped our contemporary existence. Alongside, we will also explore the problems and prospects of putting development ideas into practice in specific areas of concern, such as poverty, food insecurity and environmental degradation. The material for this course primarily draws upon development theory, anthropological analysis, and historical inquiry, supplemented by poetic and documentary sources. We will also make a field visit to a local non-profit. Students with cultivate their research ability by working on three reflection papers, and one final research paper with guidance provided at each stage. Students will also implement a multi-media group project with an oral and written component, which will enable them to grapple with the politics and practice of a specific development issue of their own choice.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1824 Transfer Student Research Seminar: What is a Revolutionary Woman?: Intersectional Approaches (4 Credits)
Women across lines of race, class, and national borders have always been at the forefront of social protest and political revolution. This fact, however, seems lost on the news media and even history textbooks, all of which tend to treat women's activism as limited exclusively to so-called "women's issues". This approach implies a specific imaginary of what a woman is and should be and overlooks not just women's contributions to political change, but also how much of women-oriented activism is scaffolded upon networks first developed fighting on other fronts. Many leaders of the US women's suffrage movement were first active in abolitionism, and before Margaret Sanger agitated for birth control, she was agitating for workers' rights in mill strikes. While the media has largely turned a blind eye, women have rallied for civil rights and democracy and against colonialism and dictatorships. This course seeks to situate such women in history, approaching them in a critical rather than hagiographic manner, analyzing their contexts, words, actions, and afterlives. Over the course of the semester, we will analyze how women's roles in social movements were shaped not only by gender, but also by race and class. We will also address how these women have come to be represented--or not--in our collective memory and how their respective social contexts relate to this representation. We will analyze and critique journalism, political cartoons, advertisements, fictional depictions, and new media sources such as social media posts. Movements we will study include abolitionism, the international labor movement, the American civil rights movement, and global decolonial movements through critical frameworks informed by thinkers such as Jennifer Nash, Stuart Hall, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, and Nancy J. Peterson.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1825 Transfer Student Research Seminar: Pathos/Pathology: The Meaning of Illness in Literature and Film (4 Credits)
This course examines illness and health as pertinent concepts to the history of literature and cinema. Conceptions of health and illness, as well as the personal experience of artists, have inspired revolutions in how we think about the nature of aesthetics. One of our major goals will be to contextualize the history of representation in media and contemporaneous understandings of the nature of illness and pathology. This course will ask questions such as: how have the representations of pain and disease altered a purely empirical understanding of illness? Does art serve a therapeutic purpose? How do fictional diseases, such as those in horror films or science fiction, make criticisms about society? We will look at plagues and pandemics, what Susan Sontag calls 'Master Illnesses' like cancer and tuberculosis, the American AIDS epidemic, conceptions of 'madness' in the West, and the ongoing struggle to interpret COVID 19. Our class will try to frame key moments in the history of literature and film in relation to contemporary conceptions of illness. Readings include Virginia Woolf's On Being Ill , Susan Sontag's Illness as Metaphor , Audre Lorde's The Cancer Journals , Emily Martin's Flexible Bodies , Sarah Schulman's Let the Record Show , and Georges Canguilhem's The Normal and the Pathological . Screenings include The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari , The House is Black , The Fits , Cemetery of Splendor, Dawn of the Dead, and The Last of Us.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No

FIRST-UG 1826 Transfer Student Research Seminar: Abundance (4 Credits)
Every three minutes Americans take more photographs than the entire 19th century produced. We have some 100,000 words of text pass through our eyes and ears each day (that's one quarter of War and Peace). This course investigates the history and changing shape of ideas about abundance as an aesthetic principle, from sonnets to autofiction and conceptual art. Philosophers, writers, and artists include David Foster Wallace, Karl Ove Knausgaard, Jean Baudrillard, Zadie Smith, and others. Students write three essays and multiple short assignments.
Grading: Ugrd Gallatin Graded
Repeatable for additional credit: No