First Year Seminar (FYS) Course Descriptions — Fall 2017

One of the first class choices you’ll make is your FYS. You’ll study a subject that’s interesting to you while also getting acclimated to Guilford College expectations. You don’t have to choose something from your field of major, as this course does not count as a major class.

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**Anime, Japanese Culture and Globalization**  
Hiroko Hirakawa

This interdisciplinary course looks at Japanese culture and society through the lens of anime (Japanese animated films). We will primarily examine works by Studio Ghibli from multiple perspectives, considering how history, gender, race/ethnicity, spirituality, nature/environment and nationhood, among others, are imagined and contested in the context of accelerated globalization. We will also ask how and why anime (and other Japanese popular cultural products) are crossing national boundaries into American society.

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**Creativity and Problems**  
Mark Dixon

“Thinking outside the box” is a cliché! As ironic as that is, there’s a reason the phrase is so overused today. Your world is in great need of people who can innovate, surprise, solve, mystify, delight and disrupt. This is as true for business and the sciences as it is for the arts and humanities. If creativity is that important, let’s leave the clichés behind and learn practical techniques for doing it better. In Creativity and Problems we will sharpen our creative skills through problem-solving exercises and by studying creative luminaries from diverse fields. The class will include frequent readings, journaling, and traditional research but much of our work will be hands-on and experimental practice. This means: challenging ourselves with complex and invigorating problems; engaging our diversity in curious and appreciative ways; crossing lines that separate disciplines; questioning our comfort zones and learning to connect our ideas with those of others. My aim is for you to build a personalized set of creative tactics that you can carry forward into anything you do next.

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**The Green(est) Game**  
Bryan Brendley

From the first time an obscure Scottish shepherd hit a rock into a hole with a stick, golf proved to be an endlessly fascinating game. While players and writers scribble many words about new equipment, the PGA and LPGA Tours, trips to “top” destinations and so on, golf has had a deeper impact on America. This course will look at three general areas of life through the lens of golf. The first is the environment. We will examine the “green golf” movement and how large tracts of land for golf impact water usage and overall ecology. Are such courses sustainable? Second, we will assess the cultural change that have, and still do, revolve around the game. From Ouimet to Woods, there has been a defined hierarchy of who was and who was not allowed to have access to golf courses and to Tour events. Golf in America has a deeply segregated past that must be examined. But, in 2017, we also discuss the state of the game to provide positive outlets for many underserved populations! Finally, golf course design is an art. The building of a classic golf course is difficult and we will think critically about land usage for recreation and how the styles of golf course design have changed over the last 300 years. Come and walk the linksland, albeit virtually, and you, too, can ask yourself if golf is indeed the “green(est) game”!
Developing a Global Vision on Business
Wenling Wang

Do you have a global vision? In globalization era, having a global vision is so important for both companies and individuals. This course will help you develop a global vision through exploring the macro and micro aspects of doing business globally. For macro aspects, we will discuss the country differences in terms of political economy, culture, and ethics. We also will look at the global trade, investment, and money system. For micro aspects, we will learn how these macro-environmental factors impact companies’ business strategies and activities in the global marketplace.

Discovering Disney (Honors Section)
Jill Peterfeso

What do you think of first when you hear the word “Disney”? Do you think of Mickey Mouse, or theme parks like Walt Disney World? Do you think of films you watched in childhood or films you enjoy today? Do you think of the man who started it all, Walter Elias Disney? In this course, we will expand our ideas of Disney — what it means, what it does, what it invites us to do — as we complicate the man and the messages behind one of America's most dominant cultural exports.

Some topics and questions we will consider: was Walt Disney an anti-communist witch-hunting anti-Semite who was cryogenically frozen upon his death? And if not, what can we learn about the persistence of such questions well into the 21st century? What does Disney offer us in thinking about fairy tales and myths and our cultural founding narratives? What messages does Disney give us about women and girls, about men and masculinity, about relationships and parenting? What does Disney tell us about race, ethnicity, and racial constructions? What role has Disney played in the constructions of America, in the U.S. and abroad?

In this multidisciplinary course, we will draw on academic fields as varied as religion and gender, literature and film, history and pop culture, theory and theology. At its core, this is a class that examines creativity. You will practice creativity (in critically mindful ways) in your work as scholar and Guilford student, as we consider how to apply creative thinking to intellectual pursuits and challenges in today's world.

Filming the Personal Narrative
Chad Phillips

With the onset of new media, the personal narrative is saturating our daily lives in the form of social media, blogs, podcasts, online journals, and personal documentaries instantly uploaded to the Internet. This course is not only an exploration of this postmodern phenomenon, but a hands-on documentary filmmaking course in which the students document their own journey in the First Year Experience. Through explorations of feature-length personal documentary films, existing podcasts, video blogs, and more, students will explore their own creative, ethical narrative based on the experiences around them and learn to professionally edit and upload video. Students should be comfortable with their likeness captured on video, and should be willing to participate in a possible larger documentary film based on this experience.
Finding Home
Aleksandra Babic

When, where, and how do you feel most at home in your own body and in the greater world? What is the relationship between our concepts of home and social justice? In this interdisciplinary course, we will utilize art, film, personal narrative, lived experience and empirical research as evidence for what it means to seek and find home. We will explore how forced migration, voluntary exile, mass incarceration, trauma, chosen family, and intersecting systemic oppression affect our concepts of belonging and creating home.

Finding Place: Exploring Identity and Creativity Through Hip Hop Culture
Antoine Williams

Are you straight out of Compton with NWA and Kendrick Lamar, or maybe from around Forest Hills Drive like J. Cole? You could just be “from the north (yea, that way)” like Migos. No matter where you are from, you are an individual with a story to tell. What is your story? What is the best way to express yourself? Hip-hop has been a vehicle for people around the world to do everything from push themselves creativity to speaking truth to power. The world you will inherit will require self-reflective creative and critical thinkers. We will look at the origins of hip-hop to current day artists and discussions.

In this course we use various forms of hip-hop culture (music, dance, art, film, and writings) to explore identity. How does your place, personal experiences, and perspectives on the world shape who you are? We will also looks are hip-hop as problem solving tool through a series of art exercises meant to hone your creativity.

Freedom Dreams
J. Tiffany Holland

What is freedom? Can freedom be boundless or does it have limitations? Who can define it, and who protects it or polices it?

This course explores the ways in which black Americans have imagined freedom and their varied efforts to achieve it. We will traverse over four centuries to examine the ways black people labored, moved and settled, formed families and communities, revolted and reformed, desired and loved and created art and culture as they strove toward individual and collective “freedom.” We will evaluate how radical imagining, speculation and dreaming can transform institutions and individuals and can push the boundaries of ideas of race, nation, belonging and liberation.

This is an interdisciplinary course, which will draw heavily from history, literature, and the performing and visual arts to delve into this questions and issues. In addition to scholarly works, we will examine novels, art, film, and music.

Growing Up in America: A History of Childhood in the United States
Sarah Thuesen

This course will explore the history of childhood in America, from colonial times to the present. We will use this subject as a way of exploring changing ideas about independence and dependence; authority and deference; innocence and knowledge; vulnerability and resilience. We will try to understand why the path to adulthood overall has grown longer in recent years and how that path continues to be shaped by race, class, and gender. We will
wrestle with childhood not simply as a transitional phase of life but as a critical foundation of personal identity. In that way, we will consider the importance of memories of childhood and the stories that people tell about it. A final class project will include oral history as a tool for exploring memories of childhood and charting generational patterns of youth culture. Our readings will include secondary sources (for example, Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*), as well as a selection of primary sources.

**Histories and Stories of Race**
*Karen Spira*

Last year, our nation's first African American president concluded his second term in office. At the same time, Barack Obama's presidency was punctuated by tragic stories of police brutality and violence toward unarmed African American citizens, including shooting deaths of men and even youths. In this course, we wrestle with the complex, troubling and also inspiring history of race relations that led to such a jarring juxtaposition. Our studies begin very close to home with historic struggles for civil rights that took place right here in Greensboro, N.C. After then looking at race relations in the U.S. more broadly — including writings by Obama himself — we turn our attention to Latin America in order to study societies with different histories of race relations and even different concepts of race. In particular, we will study (and problematize) how governments and intellectuals promoted the concept of “mestizaje” — the mixture of European and indigenous cultures and peoples — in order to build bridges between different sectors of society. Throughout the course, we use literature and film in addition to nonfiction texts in order to illuminate how race structures society. We also take several field trips to historic sites related to course content.

**Humans of Guilford College: How Clothing Reveals Us to the Campus and The World**
*Robin Vest*

Clothing is one of the pillars of survival. It conceals the body but also reveals who we are and who we desire to be. This class examines perception of the human based on our everyday clothes. We will explore issues such as cultural appropriation, gender identity and conspicuous consumption. We will look at clothing throughout time as both a manifestation of power and an oppressor. Throughout the semester we deconstruct Brandon Stanton’s “Humans of New York” blog, finding clues in the clothing that link the wearer to their story. We will look at how Brandon has used photography and narrative to build empathy between various communities, bring political questions to light and to reveal to the reader the humans they pass every day in the city but never meet. The class will spend the semester creating our own blog “Humans of Guilford College”. We will define what we hope to achieve with the blog using HONY as a model. This class will be project based, hands-on learning. There will be readings, informal writing assignments and student presentations. We draw in the class but drawing skills are not necessary.

**Journey into the Unknown: Exploring the Intersection of Knowledge, Power and Culture**
*Omari Dyson*

In 1951, the film *Alive in Wonderland* explored the idea that “curiosity leads to trouble” as Alice chose to venture down the rabbit hole. About 50 years later, the *Matrix* (1999) re-visited the rabbit hole as Neo’s “curiosity” compelled him to choose the “red pill.” Similar to these characters’ journey to the unknown, this course examines how concepts such as knowledge, power and culture shape identity(-ies). By utilizing tools such as introspection, storytelling, mindfulness, movement and love, our journey through the rabbit hole will lead us to a key that has the potential to unlock our true human potential. So, the choice is yours: “are you willing to experience how deep the rabbit hole goes?”
Leadership in a Diverse World
George Guo

This course explores convergences and divergences of leadership theories and practices in different cultural settings. It investigates the cultural roots of leadership across cultures and approaches the rich cultural aspects (both ancient and modern) from the viewpoint of how their philosophy, religion, intellectual traditions, and social/political structures form an integrated society. It analyzes various theoretical frameworks to identify culture's effects on attitudes and behaviors, as well as on approaches to ethics, motivational practices, negotiations patterns, strategic decision-making and change. It also examines how cultural forces influence many aspects of the leadership phenomenon and what constitutes “effective” leadership across cultures.

Living Under Surveillance
Rod Spellman

Traffic cameras, airport scanners, tracking cookies, drones. Our daily lives are in a near-constant state of surveillance — watched by commercial and governmental entities that claim to have our safety and convenience in mind. At the same time, we constantly watch others — monitoring their eating habits, love of kittens, and relationships through reality TV shows, Facebook, Tumblr and more. This course explores the intersection between viewer and viewed, as we struggle to define ourselves under increasing scrutiny from our peers, our government, our schools, our work, etc. We will use John Gilliom and Torin Monahan’s book *Super Vision* as our main textbook, but we will also “read” TV shows, websites, movies and other texts. We will stay up to date on current events that relate to surveillance, read a novel that focuses on the theme, and discuss popular movies and TV shows (*Big Brother* and others) that deal with our own desires to be watchers. We will write and present on our own attempts to surveil each other, public spaces, virtual spaces, and to map out local surveillance — to watch the watchers.

Materialism and Stuff
Chris Henry

This course explores our complicated relationships with our “stuff” – our material possessions. How much stuff do we need? What do we need it for? Is it good or bad to want so much of it? To help us address these questions, the course will explore a variety of psychological, social, and environmental perspectives on materialism. In the process, we will discuss such topics as the relationship between materialism, happiness, and self-fulfillment, the roles of advertising and mass media in the promotion of material consumption, the increasing commercialization of Western culture, the environmental effects of the production, usage, and disposal of material goods, and some possible alternatives to the consumption-driven lifestyle. Throughout the course, our overarching goal will be to attempt to discern the appropriate role of material possessions in the lives of the healthy individual, society and world.

Media Myths and Social Realities
Naadiya Hasan

Using perspectives from the sociology of culture, communication studies and history, this course explores the ways that media representations reproduce taken for granted ideas about American history, values and institutions. By analyzing media products as important sources of cultural knowledge, we examine and debunk social myths about social inequality in the U.S., past and present. Students improve their media literacy through critical engagement
with media products that surround us every day, and gain more accurate understandings of contemporary American society and the people who live within it.

The Power of a Voice
Krista Clark

What is the power of a voice? How is a voice understood and interpreted? Through what avenues can a voice be offered? How can change be brought forth through a voice? How does a voice define a moment? Listening to the voices of those who are speaking up offers insight into the struggles and realities that a person or group of people faces. At Guilford College, our core values push us to strive for equality, justice, integrity, and community. Within this educational tradition, it is important to try to hear everyone’s “voice”, especially the “voice” of those who have historically been marginalized or disenfranchised by the dominant paradigm. In this First-Year Seminar, we will be making the connection between historical voices, your voice, and the voices heard throughout Guilford and society. Our texts for this course contain civil rights speeches and poems of social justice. These will provide focus and context, yet we will also allow space for voices beyond the texts — especially yours — to be heard through other avenues, such as art, videos, and the news. We will link a “voice” with moments that define a people when seeking civic development and responsibility — individually and as a community, a Nation and a global society.