

FRESHMAN TUTORIALS – FALL 2017

In the fall, every freshman enrolls in a tutorial. This class, limited to about fifteen members, encourages your participation in small-group discussions that will challenge you intellectually and suggest the kind and quality of educational experiences characteristic of the liberal arts at Wabash College. Instructors select topics of importance to them and ones they judge to be pertinent to student interests. You need not have had previous experience with the topic in order to sign up for a particular tutorial. Although the topics, often interdisciplinary and non-traditional, vary among the tutorials, all students engage in common intellectual experiences and practice both written and oral self-expression. Reading, speaking, research, and writing assignments, of course, will vary with individual instructors, but the goals of every tutorial remain the same: to read texts with sensitivity, to think with clarity, and to express one's thoughts with precision and persuasion - all in terms of each tutorial's particular subject.

FRT-17A-01: In the Future We Will Play: The Art and History of Interactive Media – Michael Abbott

In 1903, anthropologist W.H. Holmes reported: "The popular notion that games are trivial in nature and of particular significance as a subject has given way to an adequate appreciation of their importance as an integral part of human culture."

Playing is not reading. Yet, increasingly, video games and other forms of interactive media are challenging us to reassess the ways we think about storytelling, authorship, and representation. Aside from their obvious popular appeal, games such as *The Last of Us*, *Nier: Automata*, and *Inside* test our current ways of understanding semiotics and engagement with the reader/player. Increasingly, gaming can be seen a convergence point where media as diverse as film, literature, art, music, and design meet and coalesce to form a new, unique art form - one that fits squarely within the Humanities.

We must develop a methodology for "reading" video games that affords this new medium the scrutiny it richly deserves. This tutorial will explore a variety of ways to accomplish this, borrowing, adapting, and revising familiar methodologies, and proposing new strategies for seeing and critically comprehending video games. To this end, we will play, analyze, discuss, research, and write about video games as a modern emerging art form.

FRT-17B-01: Fashion, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship: How to Dress Like a Gentleman in the 21st Century - Christie Byun

How you dress is a reflection of who you are. Whether you wear a hoodie or a power suit, you're making a fashion statement. And unless you wear nothing at all (which is a fashion statement in its own right!), it's a statement you make every day. If you look around, fashion is everywhere—in politics, sports, music, religion, and business. People use fashion to express creativity, pursue anonymity, or stick it to the Man. Fashion may be the ultimate embodiment of democracy since everyone can use it for free expression and creativity.

This course is about fashion in all its forms. From the cotton grown in fields half a world away to the t-shirts we buy at the local mall, fashion is a multi-billion dollar global industry with designers, entrepreneurs, counterfeiters, and ordinary consumers. We will see how the production, consumption, and ultimately the disposal of fashion items has made this industry one of the most important in the world. This course may appeal to anyone with an interest in economics, politics, music, science, or art.

FRT-17C-01: Winning World War II—FDR, Churchill, And Our Role in the World Today - Scott Himsel

December 1941. The Nazis are ruling Europe, starving England, and driving deeply into Russia. Japan has largely destroyed the US Pacific fleet. And the US Army is ranked 17th in the world. Despite these terrible odds, FDR and Churchill rallied their people to win the war and built the world's most successful alliance. What lessons can we learn from them today? How do great leaders inspire us to achieve (and even exceed) our highest potential? Should America still support allies and station troops in Europe and Asia as it has since World War II, a practice President Trump has questioned? Did we improperly exclude Jewish refugees during World War II, and are we also improperly excluding refugees today? Should we have departed from democratic principles to save lives on the battlefield during World War II, and may we do so today through waterboarding terrorist suspects? How did we begin to stop discrimination against women, minorities and the disabled during World War II, and are we successfully fighting discrimination today? We have much to learn from our history. FDR and Churchill not only led their nations from defeat to victory; they overcame incredible personal difficulties that would have ended the careers of lesser men. They were also extremely colorful and entertaining characters who knew how to find moments of joy and fun that helped them bear the burdens of leadership.

FRT-17D-01: TALL in the Saddle: Exploring the Mission of Wabash on the *Lonesome Dove* Trail – John Lamborn

Written in 1985 by Larry McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* is an epic western novel about the initial cattle drive on what became the Texas – Montana trail. In 1989, the book was made into a television miniseries. The story in either format is still popular among fans of the western genre. We'll read the book in consideration of historical accuracy and literary antecedents. Is it history? To what extent does it rely on legend and myth for plot and character development? How does film compare to book as a medium for telling this story? For McMurtry the "trail" was a character-building, life-changing, spiritual awakening for those who made the journey. Does it share a "mission" in common with Wabash in that, through shared experience, it taught those involved to, "Think critically, Act responsibly, Lead effectively, and Live humanely"? Let's investigate, consider, discuss and decide. Saddle up!

FRT-17E-01: Rocket Science – Colin McKinney

In this course, we will explore rocketry: mathematics and science, history, ethics, and politics.

We will study the work and impact of important figures in the history, including early conceptual work by Tsiolkovsky and Moore, to initial rocket development by Goddard and von Braun, to the height of the Soviet and American space program under Korolev and von Braun. We'll study less visible "hidden figures" of the American program, specifically the largely female computational staff with NASA who pushed the boundaries of mathematics and physics while being simultaneously oppressed in the Jim Crow south. We'll discuss ethical questions, such as how to interpret the legacy of von Braun given that much of his early work was part of the Nazi war machine.

If you've ever played or tried to play the indie game *Kerbal Space Program*, or tried your hand with model rockets, you know how tricky rocket construction and flight can be. There are so many challenging problems to consider, even simply getting off the launch pad. If you've ever been curious about Δv , Hohmann transfers, the Oberth effect, orbital resonance, aerobraking, Molniya orbits, specific impulse, Tsiolkovsky's rocket equation, Kepler's laws...then this is the course for you! We'll engage in a variety of activities, including rocket construction and launch, simulations, calculations, and a mix of technical, non-technical, and argumentative writing.

FRT-17F-01: The American Road Trip - Derek Mong

Wanderlust is a defining feature of the American psyche. Americans invented the automobile and the drive-thru window. They built the Interstate Highway System and—shortly thereafter—left a car on the moon. In this section of Freshman Tutorial, we'll explore how roads, cars, and road trips function in American culture, keeping a few pertinent questions on the dashboard as we go: do road trips allow Americans to cross borders of race, class, religion, gender, and sexual identity that they would otherwise not? Who is able to take road trip? Who stays at home? Our texts will range from Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* to stories of migrant workers, escaped slaves, and a roving Swiss photographer (Robert Frank). Other works might include Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road"; Flannery O'Connor's "The Misfit"; Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic novel, *The Road*; and the 1991 film *Thelma and Louise*.

FRT-17G-01: Eye of the Beholder: Images of Jesus in Gospel and Film – Gary Phillips

Have you ever wondered why so many different images of Jesus? A Google image search yields Jesuses who are tall and short, young and old, blue eyed and brown, blond and dark haired, bearded and clean shaven, black and white, brown and yellow, European and Asian, African and American, muscular and emaciated, masculine and feminine, miracle worker and revolutionary. Writers, painters, filmmakers, theologians, and ordinary believers are fascinated by Jesus, and they conjure up images that reflect deeply who they are, where and when they live, and what their concerns and religious beliefs are. Inspired, believers fashion their Jesus who speaks to them and their communities' deepest values and most pressing questions.

This freshman tutorial explores images of Jesus in ancient Gospel texts and contemporary film. We look at gospel stories that made it into the New Testament (Mark, Matthew, and John) and gospel stories that didn't (Thomas, Philip, and Mary). We will study these different Jesuses in their literary, historical, and theological settings. And we will complement these ancient texts with modern film representations of Jesus (for example, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Jesus of Montreal*, *The Life of Brian*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *The Passion of the Christ*, *The Big Lebowski*, and *The Matrix*). We will view these films together over a common meal as we think about Jesus in the eye of the beholder.

FRT-17H-01: The “American” Family – Michele Pittard

Is there such a thing as the traditional American family? Do solutions to America's most pressing problems depend on the re-establishment of the family? What exactly are “American” family values? Is the dysfunctional family the new norm for life in the United States? If so, how do we level the playing field when a stable family background is the primary predictor for a child's future success? The black sheep of the family, the golden child, the wild child, the over-achieving oldest, the forgotten middle, the spoiled baby of the family – how does our place in our family shape our identity and impact our lives?

Students in this course will examine these and other questions related to traditional and nontraditional notions of family in the United States. Using the American family as the context, students will have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences and engage in rich class discussions based on a range of texts including fiction and scholarly articles, films, and contemporary news stories.

FRT-17I-01: The Secret Life of “Stuff”: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Materials That Shape Our World – Lon Porter

Scientists and engineers continue to develop exotic new materials that will enable astounding new technologies to enhance our ability to build amazing new structures, develop next-generation supercomputers, fight disease, and explore the galaxy. This freshman tutorial class will explore the potential of 21st century materials and their diverse applications. Materials chemistry and engineering are some of today's most dynamic research fields, with a huge impact on social development and on our entire way of life. Ceramics, polymers, semiconductors, superconductors, alloys, and composites are the materials of choice for a host of applications ranging from building materials and advanced microelectronics to food packaging and medical implants. In order to develop or select the proper material for a certain application, scientists and engineers must understand the structure of various materials at the molecular level. This is because bulk properties (density, chemical resistance, color, biocompatibility, *etc.*) are dictated by chemical structure.

Today's chemists, engineers, physicists, and biologists are working together to develop exotic new materials to enable the revolutionary technologies of the future. This course will explore the frontiers (*e.g.* 3D printing, biotechnology, nanotechnology, *etc.*) of the field via popular readings, examples from the primary literature, mass media articles, and popular films. Students will get the opportunity to work on a team-based project in the Wabash 3D Printing & Fabrication Lab and

conduct a few laboratory activities. Furthermore, students will consider the social, political, economic, environmental, and ethical ramifications of 21st century materials.

FRT-17J-01: Heaven and Hell: The Mythological Geography of Good and Evil – Dan Rogers

From graphic novels like *Hellboy* and *Spawn*, films such as *Constantine*, *What Dreams May Come*, *Event Horizon*, and even *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*, to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Goethe's *Faust*, and the mythological imagination of the Greeks, Romans, Aztecs, and Maya, Heaven and Hell with all their attendant angels and demons and have played an outsized role in the popular imagination. In this Freshman Tutorial, we'll explore classical myths and folklore to better understand current films, stories, graphic novels, and even video games that separate good and evil in geographical terms.

FRT-17K-01: The Challenges of our Lived Religions: Diversity and Conflict in America – Bob Royalty

In this tutorial, we will explore the ranges of lived religions in our contemporary society. We will study the beliefs, practices, rituals, and celebrations of the religions present in local areas; study sociological and demographic research on immigration and religious diversity in America; and think about religious diversity, pluralism, and religious conflict. In addition to class time at Wabash, this class will visit mosques, synagogues, Sikh and Hindu temples, and a wide range of Christian place of worship in the Indianapolis area to experience first-hand the living religions in our society.

Please Note: There is no expectation for students to have a religious background or knowledge of religious traditions. All students, whether they are part of a religious tradition or community or not, are welcome in the course. All that is required is curiosity, openness to new experiences, and a willingness to learn about the society we live in.

FRT-17L-01: Me, My Self and My Brain - Neil Schmitzer-Torbert

Imagine you've created a machine that is able to make an exact, physical copy of any object. However, the process of making the copy requires that the machine destroys the original. So, if you put your phone in and turn on the machine, the phone is instantly vaporized. But, in another compartment, you find an exact duplicate of your device. Such a machine would be quite interesting, but we might imagine that it has little practical value.

However, what happens if *you* step into the machine, and turn it on? You are instantly (and, let's assume painlessly!) vaporized, and out of the second compartment steps your exact duplicate. Who is this duplicate? Does he think he is you? If he does, then are you actually dead? What if the machine malfunctions and you are not vaporized: are you and your duplicate both "you"? If you then kill your duplicate, was there in fact a murder? What if he kills you?

In this class, we will take these types of thought experiments seriously, and use them to look carefully at the problem of self, and what it means to be a person. Through works of science fiction,

philosophical thought experiments, and stories about the lives of humans with brain damage, we will try to locate our “I”, our sense of self. We will also look at gender, sexuality and inquire about how these accidental facets impact our personal identity. Finally, we will look beyond our own selves to examine other kinds of persons, such as aliens, artificial intelligences and genetically modified humans, who might share the world with someday.

Some of the texts we will read include Brok’s *Into the Silent Land*, selections from Rorty’s *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, and a number of science fiction short stories and novels (such as *The Mote in God’s Eye* and Le Guin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*). We will also watch several films in the course, including *The Thirteenth Floor* and *Arrival*.

FRT-17M-01: Socrates and the Examined Life – Adriel Trott

The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates thought the well-lived life must be an examined one. In response, the Athenians condemned him to death. The examined life, it would seem, is dangerous. Why did the Athenians find it threatening? Why does it seem to require other people to examine one’s own life? What does such a life even look like? These questions and more will be considered in this course through an engagement of the dialogues of Plato, who uses Socrates as a character in his writings. These dialogues will be supplemented by readings from 2 Samuel, Hannah Arendt, Ann Patchett, and viewings of TED talks, South Park, and more.

FRT-17N-01: Food and the Liberal Arts – Rick Warner

Can there be anything more central to life than food? Can such a simple subject be made complicated by critical thinking skills in a liberal arts setting? Are there potential connections between EXPERIENCE and REFLECTION that might be gathered by the serious study of food?

This freshman seminar will explore the subject of food from numerous disciplinary perspectives; among these are included the disciplines of history, political science, chemistry, economics, and anthropology. We will discover that Food Studies is a new yet fertile academic field. In the end, the course will serve as an introduction to scholarly diversity within the liberal arts, as we hone our skills of critical thinking and expression... and you will learn how to cook!

FRT-17O-01: The Kids Are Alright: Perception of Youth in History and Culture – Matt Weedman

“Back in my day...”

“For our generation...”

“You’ll understand when...”

“What do you know? You’re just a kid.”

In our society, young people are often seen (and, perhaps, see themselves) as embryonic adults who are the promise of the future, but who hold no agency in the present. History and culture tell a very different story. In this Tutorial, we will look at how societies view “youth,” and as well as the consequences of these perceptions. We will study stories of the achievements of young people

throughout history, and trials and accomplishments of contemporary youth. We will examine depictions of “youth” in literature, music and film, which often suggest power and abilities that only the young possess. We will see the young imprisoned for their youth, learn of the cultural revolutions of the young, and analyze familiar tales for the conflicts and concordances between young people and adults. Finally, we will consider what is lost and what is gained when the young become the old? Do we have a choice?

FRT-17P-01: Patriotism and Protest in the American Songbook – Matt Wells

“They’ve all come, To look for America.” - Paul Simon

What does it mean to be an American? Because answering this question is actually more difficult than it might appear, we frequently look to the artists among us to inspire us, providing the words that we might lack. For many of us, we might agree with Lee Greenwood when he sings, “And I’m proud to be an American, where at least I know I’m free, and I won’t forget the men who died, who gave that right to me.” But does he speak for all of us? For you? Maybe Rage Against the Machine’s line, “The land of the free? Whoever told you that is your enemy!” resonates with you a bit more. These sentiments are pretty black and white, but maybe your feelings are slightly more complex. Perhaps Bruce Springsteen captures the tension you may feel, as he maintains in “Born in the USA” that one can still be a “cool rockin daddy in the USA” even if you were “born down in a dead man’s town.”

In seeking to understand different conceptions of what it means to be an American, this course will trace the evolution of patriotic and protest music throughout American history. Beginning with songs like “Yankee Doodle” from the American Revolution and ending with contemporary tracks such as Kendrick Lamar’s “Alright,” we will learn how music has given voice to all members of the American family, from those with an unflinching and unapologetic love of country to our brothers and sisters whose experience is defined more by conflict, oppression, and exclusion. Along the way, we will use literature and film to put ourselves in the times and places that gave birth to these songs, and, ultimately, we will use our own experiences to articulate what America means to each one of us.

FRT-17Q-01: Call of Duty: Hero and Homecoming in Homer’s *Odyssey* – Bronwen Wickkiser

What compels a man to spend ten long years away from his wife and young son, fighting a war that he doesn’t believe is entirely just? What sustains him when the sea voyage home, plagued by monsters and magic, takes another ten years? What makes this man Odysseus such a renowned leader? What are his values? What is a hero? And how does Odysseus finally reunite with his wife and now-teenage son?

It’s a story that has enthralled audiences for centuries. We’ll investigate why by discussing, debating, and writing. Teeming with tales of adventure, the *Odyssey* is fertile ground for exploring topics like leadership, identity, warfare, masculinity, piety, and family values in ancient Greece and today. We’ll also take exciting detours, like learning to row a trireme, analyzing a Hollywood blockbuster spin on the *Odyssey* (*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*), and talking with a veteran of the Vietnam War about his experiences entering and returning from combat. Along the way, students

will hone their analytical skills and acquire a deep knowledge of a centerpiece of the Western canon. It'll be epic!