

Bard Sequence

Core Seminar Courses

SEM 101 First Year Seminar I 3 credits

This course launches the core of the Bard Sequence by introducing students to the close reading of texts and the writing of substantive analytical essays that are the basis of much college work. This seminar course, subtitled *The Examined Life*, focuses on themes of self-discovery, the relationship of the individual and society, and the nature of values and responsibility. It draws on and develops methods introduced in the Writing and Thinking Workshop, fostering critical thinking and the effective articulation of ideas. In the first semester, reading for the course include Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, Plato's *Symposium*, Homer's *Iliad*, and the first parts of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, as well as selections from the Book of Genesis and other short supplementary readings selected to broaden student's ideas about literature and philosophy and how to approach texts in various genres.

SEM 102 First Year Seminar II 3 credits

This course continues our examination of some of the foundational texts of Western literature. After completing the second half of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, we will read *The Prince* by Machiavelli, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. We will then study selections from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and conclude the course with Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. The course is designed to develop the students' ability to respond critically and creatively to these texts through close reading, active discussion and reflective writing. As in the first semester, the theme of 'personal identity' will be a key theme, but second semester will place a particular emphasis on the role of power, gender and sexuality in the construction of identity.

SEM 201 Sophomore Seminar I 3 credits

This course explores the development of ideas that are central to the way we think about modernity. It focuses on the ways in which several prominent 19th- and early 20th-century thinkers both shaped and challenged the shape of the emerging modern world. Through study of evocative novels and works of political, social and psychoanalytic theory, the seminar asks students to think and write critically about concepts that have revolutionized the world in the last 150 years and continue to provide the framework for contemporary debates about economics, evolution, religion, cross- cultural encounters, race, sex and family. Course texts include Marx

and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Forster, *A Passage to India*, Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, and Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*.

SEM 202 Sophomore Seminar II 3 credits

In this seminar, subtitled *The Age of Uncertainty*, students explore the contemporary culture of uncertainty and its impact on their lives first through reading and discussing several core texts, and then by conducting a research and writing project inquiring deeply into the controversial ideas of one or more contemporary authors. Students are encouraged to discover how principles of uncertainty can facilitate thinking about the complex, global world of our new century and their place in it. Readings include Kafka's *The Trial*; Michael Frayn's play *Copenhagen*; selected texts by authors such as Jean-François Lyotard, Fredric Jameson, Michel Foucault, and Susan Sontag; and Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Students will also have the opportunity to engage in a semester-long inquiry project of their interest - a project that will require them to synthesize and reflect on many of the thinking and writing skills they have learned throughout the Bard Sequence.