
First-Year Seminars



Albion College

Albion College's distinctive character and commitment to its students begin with the first courses entering students may select. The First-Year Seminars listed in this booklet are special courses Albion has developed to offer opportunities for you to explore beyond the boundaries of the more traditional class.

Structured to create a stimulating learning environment in the small class setting, Albion's First-Year Seminars initiate the intensive contact with our extraordinary faculty that has been recognized as Albion's greatest strength. Small classes like these—with an emphasis on discussion, an opportunity for individualized student research projects, and the development of strong communication skills—serve as the foundation for your undergraduate experience at Albion and will help you develop the appreciation for lifelong learning that characterizes Albion graduates.

The First-Year Seminars are the centerpiece of Albion's dynamic First-Year Experience, which also includes Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR), Learning Strategies Programs, and academic and career planning. With programming that enriches every aspect of your life—in and out of the classroom—there's simply no better way to begin your college education than in Albion College's First-Year Experience.

*Mauri Ditzler
President*

First-Year Seminars, Fall 2015

All entering students enroll in a First-Year Seminar as part of the College's core requirement for graduation. Please read through the descriptions of the seminars in this booklet and identify your first four choices among these offerings.

Additional information on registering for a First-Year Seminar appears on a separate form which can be downloaded from the Web at www.albion.edu/firstyear/seminars/. Note: In some seminars, a field trip fee will apply.

These seminars are offered as part of the William Atwell Brown, Jr., and Mary Brown Vacin First-Year Experience.

Africa: Myth and Reality

Emmanuel Yewah—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 11:45 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

Course Description—Using a variety of sources—history, geography, photographs, world fairs, newspaper articles, art, film, music, literature, documentaries, and the Internet—this course, interdisciplinary in scope and eclectic in its theoretical approaches, seeks to study and understand the process of construction of myths about Africa. Moreover, it attempts to deconstruct those myths so as to expose the reality hidden behind them, to acquaint students with the “other” Africa. Additionally, the course helps students develop a sense of who Africans are, what they do, feel, and hope for, reinforced through an experiential trip to Cameroon, West Africa in January 2016. *Field trip fee and passport required of all students who choose to participate.*

Instructor—A native of Cameroon, Emmanuel Yewah has expertise in the literatures and cultures of French-speaking peoples, with special emphasis on Africa and the Caribbean. Currently he is professor of French and comparative cultural studies and chair of the international studies program at Albion College. He earned a Ph.D. in comparative literatures from the University of Michigan. He has published extensively on literature and politics, literature and law, literature and the environment, adaptation of literary texts into film, detective fiction, and African immigrants in the United States.

After the Apocalypse: The End Times and Urban Renewal

Nels Christensen—Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday, 10:30 – 11:20 a.m.

Course Description—If you answer “yes” to either of the following questions, this seminar is for you: Do you love to read post-apocalyptic novels about environmental and social collapse? Are you interested in hands-on experience rebuilding small Michigan towns and communities? “After the Apocalypse” will explore how stories of the end times can help us think about our own time, here and now, particularly regarding urban renewal in American towns and cities. You will regularly work and play in and around the town of Albion, constructing creative projects inspired by the town, its people, and its environments.

Instructor—Nels Christensen (Ph.D., Michigan State University) grew up in northern California near the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains, reading books, writing stories, and playing in the woods. Now he gets to do all that for a living. For the past 12 years, he has spent his time teaching and canoeing in Michigan and New England.

Albion and the American Dream

Wesley Dick—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15 – 4:05 p.m.

Course Description—Are you curious about the community of Albion which hosts the College and your host city for the next four years? Do you know that Albion was selected as an All-America City in 1973? In fact, Albion mirrors many of the central themes of American history—the good, the bad, and the ugly.” This course explores the American experience using Albion and Michigan history as case studies. Topics will include: the natural environment; Indians and the Michigan “Trail of Tears”; pioneers and the Michigan frontier; the founding of Albion College; abolition, anti-slavery, and the underground railroad; birth of the Republican Party and the Civil War; Sojourner Truth, Madelon Stockwell, Anna Howard Shaw, and the women’s rights movement; the agricultural and industrial revolutions and the movement from farm to factory; immigration from Europe; World War I and the “Great Migration” of African Americans from the South to the North; the Ku Klux Klan in the North and the “Roaring Twenties”; prohibition and the Purple Gang; the Great Depression; migrations of Mexican Americans from Texas and white Southerners from Appalachia; the civil rights era; economic boom and bust; environmental pollution and environmental activism; and contemporary community problems and strengths.

Our goal will be to deepen our understanding of the past and to connect the past to the present through a variety of reading and writing assignments, discussions, student presentations, guest lectures, and Albion area field trips. The class will also connect with the community through service learning. An anticipated bonus will be the opportunity to acquire an extended family, namely the people of Albion met through the course. In addition, our seminar will benefit from the contributions of historian Leslie Dick.

A field trip to Washington, D.C., is planned during the fall semester. In the seminar and on the road, our class will be on a journey in search of “Albion and the American Dream.” *Field trip fee.*

Instructor—Wesley Arden Dick was born and raised in eastern Oregon. He attended Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, and completed his graduate studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. He married Leslie Keller Dick, also a native Oregonian, in 1960. Hired to teach history at Albion College in 1968, Wes, Leslie, their daughter Hilary,

and a cat named Puff packed up and headed for the Midwest. As uprooted Pacific Northwesterners, a long way from home, Wes and Leslie found themselves searching for a “sense of place” in Albion. Community involvement in organizations such as the Albion Branch of the NAACP and raising three more children—Shane, Hadyn, and Hadley—helped. Seeking understanding through history also helped. In 1988, Leslie edited and annotated *A Michigan Childhood, the Journals of Madelon Louisa Stockwell, 1856–1860*. Madelon was the granddaughter of Albion’s founder and the daughter of the principal of Wesleyan Seminary, soon to become Albion College. Madelon grew up in Albion and later attained a place in history as the first woman to gain admission to the University of Michigan. Leslie’s research demonstrated the richness of Albion’s local history. Wes had earlier created a course entitled “American Dreams and Realities.” The result was the collaborative creation of the first-year seminar, “A Sense of Place: Albion and the American Dream.” Our seminar will have the added advantage of Leslie’s knowledge of Albion history.

Born to Run

Roger Albertson—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15 – 4:05 p.m.

Course Description—Running is a fundamental part of the human experience. Few animals can rival the human capacity for endurance running. We will explore physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of running. Topics will include running-induced physiological adaptations, training strategies, injury prevention, performance-enhancing drugs, the psychology of ultra-endurance running, and running cultures such as the Tarahumara Indians and the running monks of Japan. We will explore these topics through readings, writings, videos, guest speakers, and discussions.

Students will also explore their own experience of running. The course will involve personally designed running programs and approximately two hours of walking/running per week. Data will be gathered, analyzed, and presented throughout the semester. Students are also expected to participate in an organized race one weekend during the semester.

Instructor—Roger Albertson (Ph.D., University of Oregon) has been an avid runner since childhood. During his high school and college years, he was a competitive 800-meter runner. Over the last 22 years, Roger has completed more than 45 marathons, an ultra-marathon, and an Ironman Triathlon. His appreciation, enjoyment, and finishing times for running have all increased over the years. When Roger is not running through town or the Whitehouse Nature Center, he can be found teaching biology or examining bugs and microbes in the laboratory.

Children’s Worlds

**Jess Roberts—Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/
Friday, 10:30 – 11:20 a.m.**

Course Description—Both a lived reality and what scholars would call a “cultural construct,” “childhood” begs and rewards careful and creative critical inquiry—and that is precisely what we will give it in this class. Turning to artists and writers for help, we will seek to understand how we define “childhood” and why that matters. We will read works of fiction and nonfiction both for and about children, and we will investigate how things like “wonder,” “vulnerability,” “innocence,” “imagination,” and “cruelty” shape our experience and memory of childhood.

When you enter this class, be prepared to read and talk about books that challenge some of the most enduring myths about “children.” Be prepared to question and confront the work of nostalgia. Be ready to write words that will help you access, comprehend, and represent the complicated realities of your not-so-distant past. Expect to work and to play, to challenge and be challenged, to learn in the classroom and in the world beyond its walls.

Instructor—Jess Roberts (Ph.D., University of Michigan) had an itinerant childhood: she attended eight different schools in five different states before she finished seventh grade. She has spent the last eight years reading, writing, and teaching here on the banks of the Kalamazoo.

Designing Your World

John Woell—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15 – 10:20 a.m.

Course Description—What does it mean to be an innovator? An entrepreneur? A TED-Talking thought leader? This seminar will explore the possibility that the very same thing that helps you find your way at the airport, learn to operate new devices, or locate a comfortable spot in the library can be used to approach the problems and challenges great innovators and entrepreneurs solve. This process, known broadly as “Design Thinking,” has been applied in fields as diverse as education, computer programming, philanthropy, and health care to improve the ways in which humans interact with each other and their environments.

We will work together to develop and understand the tools of design thinking and apply them to real challenges in the city of Albion and at Albion College. You will work collaboratively and creatively on projects and challenges that push you out of your chair and deep into hands-on problem solving. Guest speakers—from entrepreneurs to architects, from authors to artists—will facilitate our learning and help us see the ways in which the issues of the twenty-first century can be approached using design thinking. The course will focus on developing new ways of thinking that can help you improve your creative confidence, even if you don’t think of yourself as particularly creative. We will engage in doing as much as talking and build skills that will transfer to a variety of areas. A field trip to participate in a three-day design-thinking workshop and tour is planned. *Field trip fee and passport required of all students who choose to participate.*

Instructor—John Woell took an itinerant path to becoming associate provost and professor of philosophy and religious studies at Albion College. He moved through five majors in four years at Valparaiso University before finally settling on majors in theology and the humanities and a minor in history and continues to hold the interdisciplinary interests started there. His Ph.D. and subsequent work are in philosophy of religion, which combines the tools of philosophy and applies them to issues in religious studies. The academic wanderlust from his undergraduate education has never really left him, and he maintains interests in philosophy, literature, design thinking, creativity, bicycling, and the occasional home improvement project.

Don Quixote (in and out) of La Mancha

Kalen Oswald—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 11:45 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

Course Description—“The best novel in history: 100 renowned authors select ‘El Quijote’ in a survey conducted by the Nobel Institute.” Thus reads the title of a full-page article in *El País* from Wednesday, May 8, 2002. Most critics agree that Miguel de Cervantes’s work *Don Quixote of la Mancha* is a masterpiece of world literature that changed the trajectory of the genre of narrative fiction, and secured itself a privileged place in world culture.

Virtually everybody has heard of Don Quixote and Sancho, and most have seen some representation of their (mis)adventures, be it the Broadway hit *Man of La Mancha*, the more recent made-for-TV movie starring Jon Lithgow, or Mr. Magoo’s Don Quixote. The phrase “tilting at windmills” and the adjective “quixotic” are found in English dictionaries. Don Quixote is all around us, especially this year, 400 years after the publication of Part II of the work. Nevertheless, relatively few human beings have actually read the entire book cover-to-cover.

We will study all of *Don Quixote* in translation and examine its intertextual relation to works that preceded it, and others that were inspired by it that have been produced in and out of Spain. Finally we will visit La Mancha (in December for one week) to see where it all began and to appreciate how this novel—set in a particular place and time—has managed to transcend seventeenth-century Spain. Students will discover that reading and analyzing this work—the first great modern novel—can be a challenging and life-changing experience.

Students who take this course should have studied Spanish for at least two years in high school. *Field trip fee and passport required of all students who choose to participate.*

Instructor—Kalen Oswald (Ph.D., University of Arizona) grew up in the Mountain West (pronounced “Mouh’en West” in his native Utah). He has also lived in the “Four Corners” area of the United States, northwest Argentina, and southern Arizona before settling in the Midwest (first Wisconsin and now Michigan). He is fascinated by cities (especially cities in Spain) and the urban process that shapes them, but prefers living in smaller towns with easy access to camping and hiking and where there is plenty of space to play with his family (wife Amy and children Taylor, Kendall, Lynnsey, Spencer, and Kaya). This is his thirteenth year at Albion College where he teaches beginning to advanced Spanish language, literature, and cultures.

The Elements

Kevin Metz—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Course Description—Look around and try to find one tangible object that is not made from chemical elements. You can’t do it. Everything we can touch is made from one or more of these 118 building blocks. The elements are so important that fields of study have been created to understand them. But, the elements have a role in our lives that extends beyond chemistry and physics. Wars have been fought over them. Trade routes have been established because of them. They have been used to create great works of beauty. Songs have even been written for them. (OK, maybe only one song!)

This course will be divided into three major themes. First, we will study the discovery of the elements, and the creation of the periodic table. These early experiments had a significant impact on the shaping of science as we know it today. Second, we will examine the elements throughout history, looking at their political, social, and economic impacts. We will also examine the elements’ roles in art and literature. Third, we will look at how the elements have been used to create our current society. Look around again—can you find anyone who does not have a mobile phone, tablet, or computer?

Instructor—Kevin Metz (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) can often be found running through the Whitehouse Nature Center, swimming laps in the pool, or riding his bicycle anywhere he needs to go. Interestingly, he is only decent at one of these activities, which keeps him from becoming a turducken (a reference you will understand if you take this course!). When Kevin is not barbecuing, cheering for the Packers, or playing with his kiddos, you can find him teaching chemistry or working on research with his students in the laboratory.

Film Noir

Robert Starko—Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15 – 4:05 p.m.

Course Description—This class will examine the history, development, and techniques of film noir, the dominant cinematic style of the 1940s and ’50s. Plunge into the sordid world of dark shadows, extreme camera angles, hard-boiled private eyes, and deadly femmes fatales. Trace film noir from its roots in German Expressionism to the turmoil of the Second World War, and, finally, through the fear and paranoia of the Cold War and the nuclear age. Study the famous directors: Fritz Lang, Alfred Hitchcock, Billy Wilder, Robert Siodmak, and Anthony Mann. Enjoy classic

performances by some of the best actors of the twentieth century: Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, Barbara Stanwick, and Joan Crawford. Learn how the genre evolved and reflected the political climate change during a volatile period of our history.

Instructor—Robert Starko holds an M.F.A. in acting from Illinois State University. He has been active in the performance scene in the Detroit area, having worked for the Attic Theater, the Performance Network, Michigan Opera Theater, The Jewish Ensemble Theater, the Purple Rose, and Wild Swan Theatre Company. He also has worked in commercials, voice-overs, and industrial films.

From Sesame Street to Wall Street: Puppets and Society

Amber Cook—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:30-11:35 a.m.

Course Description—We often think of puppets as a childish art for storytelling and play, but their roots in society are much deeper. Puppetry can be used as a powerful form of communication and education—think Sesame Street—and as a tool for social and political change, as during the Occupy Wall Street protests. Puppets can tell important stories and spread awareness of social issues in entertaining and effective ways.

In addition to the social uses of puppetry throughout history, we will explore various styles of puppetry, such as bunraku, marionette, rod, and shadow. By viewing works and inspiration from various puppeteering groups around the world, you will gain a larger worldview as well as knowledge of how to utilize this method of communication. Course work will include the collaborative building of puppets for use in 1-2 performance opportunities over the course of the semester. A collaborative and creative spirit and a desire to experiment are requirements for this course.

Instructor—Amber Cook has an M.F.A. in production design and is a costume and scenic designer for Albion’s theatre program. Her teaching interests include society’s influence on clothing, and uncommon materials for construction of scenic and costume elements. She has worked at regional theatres across the country as a designer and technician. Recently she was honored to have stitched on the Tony Award-nominated production *The King and I* at Lincoln Center. She is a proud member of United Scenic Artists USA Local 829. In her free time, she loves road trips, camping, and the pursuit of the perfect cheesecake.

Full Metal Shining: The Cinema of Stanley Kubrick

Geoffrey Cocks—Monday, 2:15-5:00 p.m.; Wednesday, 2:15-3:05 p.m.

Course Description—Stanley Kubrick (1928-1999) was one of the greatest filmmakers of the twentieth century. His movies were unique in enjoying immense popularity while also offering thoughtful inquiry into the human condition. Words and images from his films have reached iconic stature in the culture of the modern world, from computer HAL’s glowing red eye and his “I’m sorry, Dave, I’m afraid I can’t do that” to Jack Nicholson’s face in the splintered door with “Heeeeere’s Johnny!!!” This seminar will present all thirteen of Kubrick’s feature films and place them—and Kubrick himself—in the history and culture of their times. All of these films will be shown at the newly renovated Bohm Theatre in downtown Albion via shuttle service to and from campus.

We begin with two early and inventive crime films, *Killer’s Kiss* (1955) and *The Killing* (1956), and follow with the angry and despairing First World War drama *Paths of Glory* (1957). We then view the Roman Empire big-screen epic, *Spartacus* (1960). Then comes the scandalous *Lolita* (1962), followed by the classic Cold War black comedy *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). In 1968, *2001: A Space Odyssey* revolutionized science-fiction film cinematography, while also channeling the

psychedelic youth culture of the 1960s in a contemplation of the entire past, present, and future of humanity. *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) broke many movie taboos in its merciless pop-art examination of youthful criminality and government misuse of behavioral science. A tale of young ambition and cruel disillusionment, *Barry Lyndon* (1975) re-creates the world of Europe before the modern era of millions of dead in two world wars and the Holocaust. *The Shining* (1980), too, in its redirection of the 1970s popular mania for horror movies onto youthful discovery of the terrible realities of the adult world, dwells on the horrors of the human family and of human history in the modern age. We will also see Rodney Ascher's *Room 237* (2012), a documentary on meanings and interpretations of *The Shining*. *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) examines the transformation of young men into killers in service to the United States Marines in Vietnam. Kubrick's last film, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), transports a novella about Vienna before the First World War to present-day New York City in order to explore the perils and possibilities of love and marriage in an empire in decline.

Instructor—Geoffrey Cocks (Ph.D., UCLA) is a specialist in modern German history, and has taught on the Holocaust for many years, building in part on his published work on the history of modern Germany and the Third Reich: *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich* (1985, 1997), *German Professions, 1800-1950* (1990), *Medicine and Modernity: Public Health and Medical Care in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany* (1996), *Treating Mind and Body: Essays in the History of Science, Professions, and Society Under Extreme Conditions* (1998), and *The State of Health: Illness in Nazi Germany* (2012). He appears in the film *Room 237*, Rodney Ascher's 2012 documentary on Kubrick's *The Shining*. He is also the author of *The Wolf at the Door: Stanley Kubrick, History, and the Holocaust* (2004).

Global Transformations in the Twentieth Century through German Film

Perry Myers—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15 – 10:20 a.m.

Course Description—This seminar (no knowledge of German required) will focus on important European and global social, cultural, and historical transformations, as illustrated in selected German films from the early twentieth century through the post-1989 era (Fall of the Berlin Wall). For example, we will explore themes of industrial capitalism, Fascist dictatorships, and the aftermath of ideological conflicts that give rise to global crises such as World War II.

Films include the silent horror film, *The Student from Prague*, Germany's first feature film, and *The Last Laugh* (1924), which depicts the increasing isolation of the worker in capitalistic society. The rise of Nazi Fascism is illustrated in *Hitler Youth Quex* (1933), and *The Murderers Are among Us* (1946) explores responsibility for the global disaster of World War II. *Goodbye Lenin* (2003) demonstrates the conflicts that Germany confronts as the country seeks to re-unify after 1989. To help students learn to analyze, discuss, and write about film, class discussions will build on readings from our textbook, Brockmann's *A Critical History of German Film*, and worksheets that students prepare during and after the films, which focus on how the films reflect historical, social, political, and economic transformations during the twentieth century.

Instructor—German studies professor Perry Myers (Ph.D., University of Texas) began his career as an investment banker in Frankfurt, Germany, where he lived for 11 years. His publications include two books, *The Double Edged Sword: The Cult of Bildung, Its Downfall and Reconstitution in Fin-de-Siècle Germany* (Rudolf Steiner and Max Weber) (2004) and *German Visions of India, 1871-1918: Commandeering the Holy Ganges during the Kaiserreich* (2013).

Heroes: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Deeds

Carrie Booth Walling—Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00 – 9:50 a.m.

Course Description—We will examine the concept of the hero from the larger-than-life personalities that have shaped our world and define our cultures to the ordinary people who do extraordinary things quietly and outside of the spotlight. This course will examine “the hero” in literature, history, popular culture, politics, and society. Our studies will include the astonishing and the mundane but always focusing on people who when faced with injustice—whether ordinary or extraordinary—rejected unfairness, refused inequality, and resisted the inhumane. We will consider examples of courageous leadership and learn how heroes are made through social habit, situational awareness, and positive deviancy. We will study great men and women of politics and history as well as human rights advocates and whistleblowers and explore subjects as diverse as human rights, social business, Holocaust rescue, humanitarianism, and social entrepreneurship. Students will spend two days interacting with dozens of heroes from around the country and around the world at the third annual Hero Roundtable, a project of Hero Town U.S.A. *Field trip fee.*

Instructor—Carrie Booth Walling earned her Ph.D. in political science with a specialization in human rights from the University of Minnesota. Her research examines the causes of, and responses to, international human rights violations including military humanitarian intervention and the establishment of international courts. Her publications include the book, *All Necessary Measures: The United Nations and Humanitarian Intervention* (2013) and articles on ethnic cleansing, humanitarian intervention, and international human rights trials. At Albion, she teaches courses in political science with a focus on international politics and human rights. Outside of Albion, she enjoys spending time with her family, involvement in Flint and Michigan politics and participating in human rights advocacy.

Intersectional Pizza: Gender, Race, Class, and Food

Trisha Franzen—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15 – 4:05 p.m.

Course Description—“Intersectional Pizza” asks questions about food and identity. Who makes your pizza? Who harvested the tomatoes? And who eats most of the pizza? This course considers the people who grow, harvest, process, transport, prepare, and consume our food beginning with the ubiquitous and seemingly favorite food of young people in the United States: pizza. We will consider how the intersection of gender, race, and class determine which people play which roles in these processes. In addition to reading, discussing, and writing about food and culture, the class will also visit a farmers' market and an industrial farm, work in a garden, and prepare food. Our final project will be a food book based on students' research into their favorite foods.

Instructor—Trisha Franzen (Ph.D., University of New Mexico), professor of women's and gender studies, loves history and food. She teaches the program's introductory course, women's history, feminist theory, and sexuality studies. Her new book is *Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage*. The Wildcat Garden, which she coordinates, is a cooperative effort between Albion College and the Albion Public Schools.

It's Alive! Exploring Zombies and Other Monsters

Allison Harnish—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15 – 4:05 p.m.

Course Description—Anthropology is the study of humans, incorporating human biology and ecology as well as human history, art, language, religion, politics, economics, and more. This course is an interdisciplinary study of the *unhuman*. Practically every culture in every epoch of human history boasts monstrous

folktales, literature, art, and mythology that haunt the imagination. Some are more real than others—take, for instance, the mummies of ancient Egypt and the witches of Salem, versus Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, or Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*. Yet, all speak to the social anxieties of their time (colonialism, racism, immigration, financial crisis, capitalist exploitation, pollution, nuclear proliferation, biological warfare, police violence, repressed sexual desire) and reflect public concerns over health and safety, fears of the “Other,” suspicions of science/modernity, and mistrust of government. In so doing, these monsters actually expose our deepest selves and aid in the anthropological project of understanding what it means to be human.

We will investigate the historical development of certain monsters from their folkloristic origins to their modern iterations. We will draw on multiple disciplines, including biology, history, religious studies, psychology, and film studies as well as anthropology and sociology. One of the culminating activities of this course will be a “Thriller” parade and Day of the Dead festival that is open to the Albion and surrounding communities.

Instructor—Alli Harnish (Ph.D., University of Kentucky) is an assistant professor of anthropology. Her research and teaching interests include gender, globalization, environmental politics, and indigenous communities. When she's not teaching at Albion or studying international development in Zambia, she can be found backpacking, bicycling, rock-climbing, or romping with her dogs.

Knowledge: Searching for “Truth” in Information, Facts, and Statistics in the Internet Age

Cheryl Blackwell—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00 – 2:05 p.m.

Course Description—Do we really know what we think we know? How do we know what we know? What is truth? How do statistics inform us? What do we mean by facts? These questions compel us to look at the methods we use to understand the world around us. These questions are particularly relevant in today's society as advances in science and technology lead to discoveries that challenge our notions of knowledge and commonly held beliefs. This seminar will examine some of the strategies, methods, and techniques used to determine what is factual, what is false, and what is unknown. It will encourage the development of well-researched ideas and opinions, and stress verbal and written communication.

Instructor—Cheryl Blackwell (M.L.S., University of Michigan) has been a reference librarian at Albion College since 1987. Her main research interest is library instruction, specifically research strategies and the research process. Her “other” interests include mid-twentieth-century modern design and finding the perfect date!

Lessons Learned at “The Office”

Vicky Baker—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Course Description—What are the key issues facing businesses and individuals in today's society? That is the key question we will explore as part of this discussion-based seminar. Specifically, we will examine four important areas: civic engagement, diversity, ethics, and leadership using lessons learned from the sitcom “The Office.” According to BusinessWeek, the top 50 employers hiring recent graduates are more interested in students' leadership, communication skills, and work ethic as the most important indicators of on-the-job performance. As is evidenced in the media and recent trends cited by employers, the goal of this course is to help students gain an appreciation for and awareness of issues centered on the four areas that are likely to affect business, society, and individuals regardless of major or career. To introduce each content area, we will rely on an episode of “The Office” to guide our understanding of the issues and to facilitate analyses from business, societal, and individual perspectives.

Course materials will include case studies, videos (such as *Blue Eyes*, *Brown Eyes*), and other experiential activities (e.g., a scavenger hunt, team presentations). Throughout the semester, students will work in groups to create a video diary of their first-semester experience related to the content areas.

Instructor—Vicki Baker (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University) is an associate professor of economics and management. She teaches courses in management, organizational behavior, and human resource management. Because of her love of movies, Vicki uses video clips from movies like *Rudy*, *Miracle*, *Office Space*, and *Legally Blonde* to illustrate key principles and ideas related to course topics. Her research interests include behavioral ethics, educational leadership, and liberal arts colleges. In her spare time, she enjoys watching college sports and spending time with her family.

The Machinery of Life

Christopher Rohlman—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15 – 10:20 a.m.

Course Description—The past two decades have witnessed remarkable advances in medical science and our understanding of the biomolecular science of living systems. Even with all the apparent answers these advances have provided, we continue to face both the local and global challenges of infectious disease, adequate access to basic health care, and cancer. These technical challenges also present bioethical issues that arise as a natural consequence. Are we merely the sum total of our molecular parts? Can biomedical science provide solutions to these problems? What do we need to understand about the basic science of living systems and medicine in order to be active participants in these discussions? We will consider these questions, and others, in hopes of gaining a better vision of the resulting impact biotechnology and biomedical science will have on ourselves, and our society, and how our answers to these questions will shape this century.

Instructor—Chris Rohlman's research and teaching interests lie in the areas of biochemistry and the structural biology of living systems. He has been involved in undergraduate science and math education and student-faculty collaborative research throughout his career. With a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, he chose a career as a faculty member at liberal arts colleges that value both classroom learning and undergraduate research. Along the way he has managed to balance and meld his professional interests in science with a love of music, lifelong learning in a range of disciplines, and a life outside the lab. When he is not in the science center you can find him on the course, on the sidelines of soccer matches, along the trails running, hiking or biking, or listening to good music.

The Martial Arts: History and Practice

Nathan DeBoer—Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15 – 4:05 p.m.

Course Description—What is the difference between Kung Fu and Karate? How were Samurai, Ninja, and Shaolin monks trained differently? Could a swordsman deflect an incoming arrow? What is the relationship between East Asian religions and the martial arts? How much cutting power does the Japanese sword have? In this course, we will address all of these questions and more. Through the semester, we will read and discuss the works of ancient warriors, locate them in history, and even witness their theories in practice. Students will have the opportunity to witness martial arts demonstrations, and will be required to visit a martial arts school for a few lessons. Written assignments will focus on describing, comparing, and analyzing the martial traditions as they are represented in punch, kick, and writ.

Instructor—Nathan DeBoer (Ph.D., University of the West, Fall 2015) is an instructor in the Department of Religious Studies, and has taught courses on Hinduism, Buddhism, and Religions of Japan.

Since the age of fourteen, he has studied the martial arts in Japan or the United States: Moo Duk Kwan Tang Soo Do, Tai Chi Chuan, Aikido, Iaido, Uechi-ryu Karate-Do, Kyudo, and Taijutsu. He also has a passing acquaintance with foil fencing in the Western tradition, and loves Skyrim.

Mathematics and Technology in the Arts

David Reimann—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00 – 2:05 p.m.

Course Description— Mathematics and art are two ancient disciplines with many connections. Geometry plays an important role in the arts from perspective drawings, to wheel-thrown ceramics, and sculptural forms. Western music uses a scale based on mathematically defined intervals. Symmetry is a theme in both art and mathematics. Artists are often at the forefront of employing new technology in the creative process. Many artists now make extensive use of computer software and three-dimensional printing. We will look at the historical developments in mathematics and art and see how these influenced ancient artists and new developments that continue to influence both mathematics and art. We will read and write about these developments, see how artists use mathematics, discuss their implications, and create related artworks. A trip to a major art museum is planned. We will have a large collaborative group art project that engages the entire campus in some concept using mathematics and technology in a major way. You need not be an expert in mathematics or art, but should be comfortable using basic algebra and have a willingness to be creative!

Instructor—David Reimann (Ph.D., Wayne State University) is a mathematician and computer scientist interested in the applications of mathematics and computer science to art. He is currently studying the historical development of symmetry, tessellations, and interlace patterns and creating software to produce such patterns. He enjoys traveling and is an avid cyclist.

Parks and Recreation

Michael McRivette—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 11:45 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.

Course Description—From the awesome volcanic features of Hawaii to the dramatic glacial valleys of Yosemite, from the record of ancient life on Earth at Dinosaur National Monument to the globally unique ecosystem of the Everglades, and from the 200 B.C. earthen structures of Hopewell Culture societies in the Ohio River Valley to the battlefield at Gettysburg, the U.S. National Park Service preserves and protects hundreds of sites of great natural, historical, cultural, and ecological significance to the United States.

The national park idea was first envisioned in 1870 as a revolutionary call to protect the natural beauty of what would become Yellowstone National Park, rather than see it exploited for economic gain. This proposal to create the world's first national park was part of a broader nineteenth-century global movement to establish and set aside spaces solely dedicated to recreational use. Since that time, the park concept has evolved to encompass a wide range of 'recreations,' including outdoor activities, historical discovery, ecological preservation, wildlife observation, cultural immersion, and pure amusement, as well as a spectrum of 'spaces,' from nature preserves to amusement parks.

We will examine the roots of the park movement in general and its evolution to the present day, focusing largely on parks in the United States. The history of America's national park system in particular will be explored, including the geologic origins of the grandest "flagship" parks, the philosophical transitions leading to the expansion of the park system to include sites of historical, cultural, ecological, and recreational significance, and the unique challenges faced by parks and the management approaches undertaken to meet these challenges. The semester will conclude with an assessment of the status and role of parks of all kinds in modern society, particularly

timely as the National Park Service approaches its 100th anniversary in 2016. The seminar will also include a multiday field trip with camping and hiking during fall break to experience a small sample of the natural, historical, cultural, ecological, and recreational legacy of the central United States preserved by parks.

Instructor—Mick McRivette (Ph.D., UCLA) is an assistant professor of geology and has also directed Albion's Geology Summer Field Camp in the Rockies. His academic interests revolve around the active construction of mountain belts, in particular the mountains of the Tibetan Plateau. To accomplish this, he spends significant time hiking in China and mapping major geologic structures.

Rent and the Bohemian Life

Maureen Balke—Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15 – 4:05 p.m.

Course Description—“The bohemian life.” What does it mean? Passion, poetry, and poverty? Life, love, and art? Opposing convention and the status quo? Living for “no day but today” and “measuring lives in love”?

We will study the Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning musical *Rent* by Jonathan Larson, which is based upon the beloved Puccini opera *La Bohème*, which in turn is based upon the 1840s Parisian novel *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* by Murger. We will compare the struggles of all these “starving artists” as they “strive for success and acceptance” while enduring “obstacles of poverty, illness, and the AIDS epidemic.” Mature thematic material including issues of drugs, sexuality, discrimination, and AIDS will be discussed in the larger context of our own community, society, and the world.

Additional materials for the course include *Philadelphia*, the Academy Award-winning film starring Tom Hanks; Kushner’s award-winning series *Angels in America*; *Moonstruck*, the Academy Award-winning film starring Cher and Nicholas Cage; and selections from *The AIDS Quilt Songbook* and from the musical *Avenue Q*. We will also discuss the autobiographical novel *Without You*, by Anthony Rapp, from the original cast of *Rent*.

On her recent sabbatical, Maureen Balke spent several weeks in New York observing the contemporary musical theatre scene, including *The Book of Mormon*. Scenes from this currently running Tony Award-winning musical will also be studied.

Note: No in-depth knowledge of musical terminology is required for this course.

Instructor—Soprano Maureen Balke (D.M. in vocal performance, Indiana University) has performed opera, musicals, and art song recitals throughout the Midwest and in several European venues, winning several competitive voice awards along the way. The desire to pursue a professional career in music developed while she grew up on a Christmas tree farm in Wisconsin with her nine siblings and parents, all of whom sang and performed music in various genres, including country/western and folk music. Always interested in poetry and languages, she has specialized in German and French art song and has released a CD of art songs by composers Joseph Marx and Anthony Taffs, titled *Never Seek to Tell Thy Love*.

Science, Truth, and Other Enigmas

Jeremy Kirby—Monday/ Wednesday/Friday, 1:00 – 2:05 p.m.

Course Description—There is a substantive difference between, for example, astrology and astronomy. The latter conforms to the practices of our best scientific thinking, while the former is a pseudo-science at best. But how might one explain the difference between pseudo-science and real science? It might be suggested that scientists rely upon observation and obtain better predictive results than pseudo-scientists. Astrologists, however, rely upon observation, and they are

rarely mistaken in their predictions. Perhaps, then, what distinguishes pseudo-science from real science is that the hypotheses of the latter may be disconfirmed while the ‘conjectures’ of the former will hold, come what may. However, Charles Darwin’s critics accuse him of dealing in platitudes as well, and few of Darwin’s supporters would want to classify him among the pseudo-scientists. The principle of natural selection is all about “the survival of the fittest.” And, as the critics will ask, who are the fittest, if not those who survive? Distinguishing pseudo-science from science is, thus, easier said than done. But this is precisely what we shall endeavor to do in this course.

Instructor—Jeremy Kirby teaches in the Department of Philosophy. He holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Florida State University. His research focuses primarily on the history of philosophy. In addition, he has interests in the philosophy of science, epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophical logic. He enjoys reading Greek and Latin literature. His skill with a fly rod is legendary.

Sound Science

Charles Moreau—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:30-11:35 a.m.

Course Description—We will explore the scientific basis of sound and music. Topics may include the wave nature of sound, design of sound-generating devices and musical instruments, digital encoding of music, and amplification. A yearlong class project will form the basis of the course. Basic math skills will be expected, and students with an interest in physical science or music performance are strongly encouraged to consider this seminar.

Instructor—Charles Moreau (Ph.D., Michigan State University) is a Michigan native who enjoys music and movies. When not spending time with his family, he is a (very) amateur guitar player. He even finds a little time to study condensed matter physics, in particular the way in which electrons travel through solids whose dimensions are on the order of one-tenth of one-millionth of a meter.

[Steam]punk: Exploring Sub-Cultures

Guy Cox—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.

Course Description—Have you ever wished you could build your own ray gun, think through the mechanics of dirigible flight, design a costume you could actually wear, or tinker with clockwork? This course will give you your chance! We’ll start with a grounding in the anthropology of subculture, using the Steampunk subculture as our particular lens. We’ll consider, both as a class and individually, present-day issues that Steampunk may (or may not) help us to discuss, including but not limited to issues involving class, race, ethnicity, gender, ethics, etc. During our study of the sub-culture concept and Steampunk, we’ll write reflective journal entries, a research paper, do a creative project—and maybe a little participant-observation if you are brave enough!

Instructor—Guy Cox is director of the Ferguson Center for Technology-Aided Teaching and Learning. Before coming to Albion, he was a member of the Computer Engineering Department at University of California, Santa Cruz, teaching and working in the areas of software engineering and engineering ethics. He has also worked as a project manager and R&D lab manager in Silicon Valley. However, underneath the technology he is a cultural anthropologist who has been doing participant-observation of sub-cultures—sometimes heavy on the observation, sometimes heavy on the participation—for 25 years. He used to remark that “software engineers are my tribe.” Now some say he has “gone native.”

To Sleep or Not to Sleep

Tammy Jechura—Monday/Friday, 1:00-2:05;
Wednesday, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Course Description—College life is full of exciting and important new experiences, including classes, sports, and a variety of social interactions. Sometimes it might seem as though there aren’t enough hours in the day to enjoy all the opportunities available, but the only way to lengthen the day for activities is to reduce the time at night for sleep. Is sleep just a waste of time? Can we really sacrifice sleep for “more important” things?

This seminar will explore the importance of sleep and some of the factors that influence it. You will learn how sleep (and lack of it) can drastically impact learning, memory, performance in sports, sociality, and mental and physical health. We will examine the role of timing cues in our environment, from natural cues such as sunrise and sunset to the common alarm clock. We will explore how plants and animals, including humans, use environmental time cues to tell time and to navigate their world. Discussions will cover the evolutionary significance of sleep patterns among a variety of species, especially humans. We will also talk about the history of time-telling, from flower clocks and sundials to today’s atomic clocks. Our bodies’ natural daily cycles, circadian rhythms, and how they are affected by environmental time cues and other factors will be a significant part of the class as well.

Most importantly, to tie all the topics from the class discussions together, all participants will be both active researchers and participants in studies of human sleep/wake cycles. In addition, we will travel to Europe to experience and scientifically measure jet lag and its effects and to perform an experiment (using ourselves as participants) to figure out ways in which people might be able to reduce jet lag symptoms. *Field trip fee and passport required of all students who choose to participate.*

Instructor—Tammy Jechura (Ph.D., University of Michigan) began exploring nature around the time that she started to crawl and has never stopped. Her love of psychology and biology has been a driving factor in the direction of her studies. As an undergraduate, she studied homing pigeons’ natural navigational abilities. Her graduate work examined the role of social cues in an animal model of jet lag recovery. As the health psychologist at Albion College, she hopes to spread her enthusiasm for scientific exploration to her students through hands-on activities and practical application of class information. Besides nature, her interests include animal behavior, photography, outdoor activities, and painting.

Virus Hunters

Section 1

Kenneth Saville—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Section 2

Ola Olapade—Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

Course Description—Ebola, HIV/AIDS, H1N1 flu, Avian flu, SARS, MERS, HPV, small pox, hepatitis, herpes, measles, mumps, rubella, Oh My! All of these are examples of viruses that cause human disease. We will explore the basic biology of viruses, along with the medical, social, and historical implications of viral infections and epidemics, including the role of vaccinations in protecting human populations from these diseases.

Bacteriophages, or simply ‘phages,’ are another type of virus, but these viruses only infect bacteria, and are harmless to humans. The study of bacteriophages played an important historical role in our current understanding of the structure and function of genes. Today, what we learn from phage biology contributes to a better understanding of human disease viruses and may contribute to better prevention and treatment of devastating human viral diseases. Also, since bacteriophages are highly specialized through evolution

to efficiently attack and kill bacteria, they are excellent candidates for a new class of antibiotics. Through readings and presentations, students will explore these historical and medical implications of bacteriophages.

You are invited to become a member of our virus hunter team! As part of the team, each student will isolate, characterize, and name his or her own previously undiscovered phage! (Because bacteriophages are harmless to humans, we will limit our hunting to these types of viruses—don't worry, we won't be working with Ebola or any other harmful viruses.)

Albion is one of over 100 schools nationwide participating in the Phage Hunters Advancing Genomics & Evolutionary Science (PHAGES) program. Our work in this seminar will contribute to this research undertaking, and our results will be submitted to a central database, available to researchers in the field of bacteriophage genetics.

This course is not intended just for aspiring scientists—there is no assumed scientific background for the course.

Instructor, Section 1—Kenneth Saville (Ph.D., Syracuse University) has been teaching at Albion since 1995. His interest in genetics and molecular biology began while doing undergraduate research at Western Michigan University. His research focuses on the genetics of transposable elements (or “jumping genes”) and a variety of other aspects of genetics using the fruit fly as a model research organism. More recently, Ken has been exploring the field of bioinformatics, learning about some of the computer tools needed to analyze large sets of DNA sequence data. Ken enjoys involving students in research and recently was a co-author on a paper along with 85 Albion undergraduates. Ken lives in Albion and enjoys playing golf, soccer, and hockey and watching his daughter play high school soccer and tennis as well as perform in various high school drama productions and the band.

Instructor, Section 2—Ola Olapade (Ph.D., Kent State University) is a microbiologist with general interest in the areas of microbial ecology, environmental microbiology, bioremediation, and public health. He continues to conduct several research activities and published those results from studies that examined microbial community composition, structure, and enzymatic activities in various freshwater and marine environments including on surfaces, in lakes,

streams, rivers, and coastal systems. At Albion, he teaches upper-level courses including Microbiology, Environmental Microbiology, Virology, and Epidemiology. Also, he regularly contributes to two Biology Department introductory-sequence courses: Cell and Molecular Biology and Ecology, Evolution, and Biodiversity. He enjoys spending time with family at home and on the road during extensive traveling.

Writing Your Story, Writing the World

Helena Mesa—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Course Description—Our identities, memories, and experiences shape the stories we tell ourselves and others, and those stories directly affect our perception and understanding of the world. In this seminar, we will use creative writing as a way to explore our stories. You will write, workshop, and revise your own poetry, fiction, and essays throughout the semester. We'll start by writing about our personal lives; later, we'll move away from the self and look to the surrounding world for our subjects and inspiration. For example, we may write in response to music (after taking in a Blues at the Bohm show in downtown Albion); we may write in response to art (after viewing the art galleries on campus); we may write in response to an environmental documentary; or we may write in response to history (after visiting a historical museum).

In doing so, we will ask what it means to “respond” to history or the environment? How does music inform our experience, writing style, or way of making meaning? Can we translate art into writing? How does turning away from the self allow us to say something significant about the human experience? Because we cannot learn to be writers without reading literature, we will also read and discuss a graphic novel, collection of essays, poetry book, and short-story anthology. Finally, you will put together a final project that showcases and “publishes” your revised work in some way—be it through a blog, a reading, a bound manuscript, a recorded song, a YouTube video, etc.

Instructor—Helena Mesa (M.F.A., University of Maryland; Ph.D., University of Houston) teaches creative writing and poetry at Albion. She has published a collection of poetry, *Horse Dance Underwater*, and is currently at work on her second collection. In her spare time, she likes to read, write, watch movies, and run.

