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# First-Year Seminars

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**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.*

*Susan Conner  
Provost*

# First-Year Seminars, Fall 2014

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/](http://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.

## 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 which will be 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: Indians and the Michigan "Trail of Tears"; pioneers and the Michigan frontier; the Underground Railroad, the birth of the Republican Party, and the Civil War; Sojourner Truth, Madelon Stockwell, Anna Howard Shaw and the women's rights movement; the movement of jobs from farm to factory; the history and impact of ethnic and cultural diversity; the Great Depression; World War II; the Civil Rights Era; economic boom and bust; environmental pollution and environmental activism; and contemporary community problems and strengths. An anticipated bonus will be the opportunity to acquire an extended family, namely the people of Albion met through the course.

A field trip to Washington, D.C. is planned. 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**—Oregon native Wesley Dick earned his Ph.D. at the University of Washington. When he was hired to teach history at Albion College in 1968, he and his wife, Leslie, both found themselves searching for a "sense of place" in their new home community. Involvement in organizations such as the Albion NAACP helped as did learning more about local history. Recently, he directed a two-year research project, "Boom, Bust, Recovery: Explorations of Albion, Michigan—The Last Half Century" with Albion students. For relaxation, he gardens with Leslie at the "house across from Wesley Hall," listens to folk music, and plays tennis.

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## Bridging East and West: A Cross-Cultural Communication Perspective

Yuxia Qian—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 2:15-3:20 p.m.

**Course Description**—"East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." This line by Rudyard Kipling still speaks some truth today when it comes to cross-cultural communication. People with different cultural backgrounds, especially those from East and West, tend to encounter communication difficulties, misunderstandings, and conflict. Why is it so difficult for easterners and westerners to communicate and understand each other? This course attempts to reveal the cultural differences between the Eastern and Western countries, which go beyond the surface of different languages, behaviors, and customs. Readings will introduce students to the fundamental value orientations, and specifically the cultural and thinking patterns, in Eastern and Western countries. A comparative and historical approach is adopted to explore how Asians and westerners think differently and why, and what impact the thinking patterns have on cultural differences. This course offers a close study on some Eastern and Western cultures, such as the Chinese, the Greek, and the American cultures. A practical guide will also be provided on cross-cultural communication between East and West.

**Instructor**—Since joining Albion in 2008, Yuxia Qian (Ph.D., Ohio University) has taught courses in small group and organizational communication, organizational culture, and intercultural communication. Before coming to the U.S., she had been teaching at the collegiate level in China for four years. Interculturally educated and experienced herself, she holds a strong interest in the multi-levels of intercultural communication within and across various organizations.

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## 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 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.

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## Cultures, Connections, and Communities from Albion to France—and Back

Dianne Guenin-Lelle—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 8:00-9:05 a.m.

**Course Description**—The Albion-France connection is rich, vibrant, and longstanding. Besides having a dynamic Sister City relationship with Noisy-le-Roi and Bailly, France, there are many individuals both at the College and in the Albion community with French ties. As part of the course, we will meet and interview some of these individuals, both at Albion and in France to learn from their experiences and insights, and analyze this new information as we also study theories of “culture” and cross-cultural communication. Thus, we will grow in our understanding of how our identity relates to our home culture, and acts as a filter through which we understand other cultures.

Course materials include readings such as *Cultural Misunderstandings*, *A Year in Provence*, and *French or Foe*, films, news items, and relevant Web sites. As part of our fieldwork, there will be a trip to France, during fall break, in Noisy-le-Roi and Bailly, located near Paris. To enroll in the course, students will need to have studied French for at least two years in high school. A passport is required. *Field trip fee*.

**Instructor**—For the past 25 years, Dianne Guenin-Lelle (Ph.D., Louisiana State University) has taught a wide array of courses at all levels of French, as well as courses relating to women’s studies, ethnic studies, and peace studies. Born in New Orleans, in a family where French is not a “foreign” language, she is currently working on her third book, *Imagining French New Orleans: A Transnational Creole Space*. She hopes that her students learn to be more understanding of the richness of the human condition, and more tolerant and accepting of difference. She loves to travel, research, and, most of all, spend time with her family.

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## Dinosaurs

William Bartels—Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—This seminar investigates dinosaurs and their role in culture and society. We will first explore the origin, evolution, adaptations, and extinction of dinosaurs in the context of the physical, climatologic, and biotic Mesozoic world. Once we have attained a better understanding of dinosaurs, we will examine their role in the history and philosophy of science, public education, museum science, the study of evolution, and popular culture. The seminar will include student presentations, discussions, lectures, films and documentaries, hands-on work with fossils, and a trip to the University of Michigan Museum of Paleontology.

**Instructor**—William Bartels (Ph.D., University of Michigan) is a paleontologist and sedimentary geologist. He studies ancient river deposits and fossil reptiles (turtles, crocodylians, and lizards) from his field areas in Wyoming. Most summers, he leads joint Albion College-University of Michigan expeditions to Wyoming to study the geology and collect fossil mammals and reptiles. At Albion, he teaches introductory and advanced courses in earth history, paleontology, and sedimentary geology. Outside interests include his children, golf, and Lionel electric trains.

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## Dr. Who and You

Lynn Verduzco-Baker—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 a.m.

**Course Description**—This course will focus on the *Doctor Who* television series from 2005 through the present. Students will analyze *Doctor Who* episodes in order to understand more about humanity and Western society from a sociological perspective. Themes will include: technology, gender roles, environmental issues, exploitation, inequality, war, genocide, colonialism, and human nature. A term project/paper will give students the opportunity to analyze an additional science fiction/fantasy TV, film, or book series of their choice from a sociological perspective. A campus-wide scavenger hunt based on *Doctor Who* will be one of the culminating activities.

**Instructor**—Lynn Verduzco-Baker (Ph.D., University of Michigan) focuses her research and teaching on race and its intersections with gender and class. She approaches teaching from a social justice perspective that can be traced to her experiences as a university/college instructor, an English teacher at an inner-city high school, and an advocate for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. She is also a sci-fi nerd who enjoys not only *Doctor Who* but also *BSG*, *Star Trek* (TNG and the recent films), and sci-fi writers Ursula K. LeGuin, Greg Bear, Orson Scott Card, and Octavia Butler.

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## Explorers

Thom Wilch—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:30-11:35 a.m.

**Course Description**—Do you dream of travel and adventure in distant places? For centuries, explorers and travelers have left their homes and ventured into the unknown in pursuit of new lands, wealth, fame, knowledge, and sheer adventure. Sometimes the explorers got things right and were incredibly successful; other times they failed miserably with tragic consequences. Almost always they underestimated the physical and cultural challenges they were to encounter. In this seminar, we will live vicariously through travel and adventure narratives and film. We will discuss explorers’ motivations, their decisions, and their discoveries. We will sail across the Pacific, raft down the Colorado River, climb mountains in the Andes and Himalayas, and journey across Africa, Asia, and Antarctica with men and women explorers.

In addition to reading (there will be lots of reading) and discussing the adventures of others, we will spend several afternoons hiking, walking, and canoeing on local trails and streams, and in neighborhoods. A centerpiece of the seminar will be a five-day fall break camping trip to Georgian Bay, Ontario. A passport is required. *Field trip fee*.

**Instructor**—Thom Wilch became interested in geology while hiking the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia. His B.A. in geology from Macalester College led to graduate research at the University of Maine (M.S.) and New Mexico Tech (Ph.D.). He has traveled extensively to study glaciers, volcanoes, and climate change. His research travels include trips to Iceland, Hawaii, Italy, New Zealand, and 10 research expeditions to Antarctica. Wilch lives in Albion with his wife, Ellen.

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## Global Transformations in the 20th Century through German Film

Perry Myers—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—The 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 20th century through the post-1989 era (Fall of the Berlin Wall). For example, the seminar 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.

The course includes an optional one-week trip to Frankfurt, Germany during fall break. Frankfurt is important historically, culturally, and economically. We will also take a day-trip to Heidelberg. Passport required. *Field trip fee.*

**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).

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## The Holocaust

Jocelyn McWhirter—Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—The Holocaust stands as one of the greatest atrocities of the modern era. From 1938 to 1945, Germans—ruled by the National Socialist Party—systematically slaughtered more than six million European Jews. So how did the Holocaust happen? How did it affect its victims? Why did some people stand by or willingly participate while others broke the law in order to save Jewish lives? We'll address these questions in dialogue with perpetrators, survivors, and rescuers through a variety of media: personal conversation; literature; artifacts; photographs; video; movies; a museum. In the spring semester, students will have the option to visit Poland as participants in the College's Holocaust Studies Service Learning Project (HSSLP).

**Instructor**—Jocelyn McWhirter (Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary) ran high school track meets on the massive Nazi parade ground in Nürnberg, Germany. Shortly after she graduated from college, she decided she was through with the Holocaust. She knew all she wanted to know. Apparently she was wrong, because she has been teaching about it since 2005. She is now preparing for her fifth trip to Auschwitz with the HSSLP. She also teaches courses on Judaism and the Bible in Albion's Department of Religious Studies.

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## "I'm Not a Crook!"

Dyron Dabney—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—"I'm Not a Crook!" This infamous statement, made by President Richard Nixon in defense of his public service record in the wake of the Watergate investigation, serves as an appropriate backdrop to explore scandal, corruption, and ethics violations in U.S. politics. In this course we will examine the culture of corruption and scandal—from sexual liaisons and sexual harassment to lies, deception, and malfeasance—through well-known and not-so-well known cases in American political history. For example, contemporary cases such as the Clinton-Lewinski scandal, *Tailhook*, the Larry Craig and Anthony Weiner scandals, as well as

cases of deception and malfeasance identified with Richard Nixon, Donald Rumsfeld, and Kwame Kilpatrick, just to name a few, will be considered in the course.

For comparative measure, we will also consider cases of corruption and scandal in other nations. Attention will be given to how corrupt behavior by political elites alienates the public, jeopardizes citizens' trust in government, and threatens the political stability of a nation. We will explore these cases by way of respected political science and behavioral science literature, "tell-all" autobiographies, and documentaries and docudramas.

**Instructor**—Dyron Dabney (Ph.D., University of Michigan) is an assistant professor of political science. His research and teaching interests include campaigns and elections, political parties, political participation, and elite politics. While specializing in Japanese politics, Dabney's research and teaching interests invite comparative analyses of Japanese and American politics, culture, and society. His research is motivated and informed by interdisciplinary studies that bring into focus gendered differences in political participation and behavior. His current research projects include an examination of spousal participation effects on election campaign outcomes in Japan and the U.S., as well as gender and election campaign corruption in Japan and the U.S.

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## Imperial Vienna

Clayton Parr—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

**Course Description**—We'll explore the intellectual, cultural, social, and artistic life in one city—Vienna—in the time period roughly between 1780 and 1914 extending from Mozart to World I and the fall of the Austrian Empire. You'll read, write about, and discuss the work of musicians, artists, architects, philosophers, psychologists, and politicians, and discover the foundations they laid for modern culture that endure to the present day. We will travel to Vienna at the end of the semester, to experience some of this culture firsthand, through museum and building tours, concerts, and reflection on how your travel has enhanced your understanding of these issues. A passport is required. *Field trip fee.*

**Instructor**—Clayton Parr (D.M.A., Michigan State University) is director of choral activities at Albion. He was a Fulbright scholar at the Sarajishvili State Conservatoire, Tbilisi, Georgia, and is music director of Ensemble Alioni, a Chicago-based group dedicated to the performance of Georgian folk song. Music director of Michigan Educators Male Ensemble, a new TTBB group of vocal music teachers, he is also the conductor of the Battle Creek Community Chorus. As a performer, Parr has sung with the Cincinnati Opera, Oregon Bach Festival, and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale.

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## 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, 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.

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## 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!

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## Life on a Bicycle

Kevin Metz—Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00-9:50 a.m.

**Course Description**—“Life on a Bicycle” is for any student who has ever ridden a bike and smiled. In this seminar, we will explore how we, as adults, can recapture the excitement and freedom that came with our first bike rides. We will explore: the bicycle culture of North America; the social, economic, and environmental impacts of bicycle riding; and the utilitarian use of bicycles around the world. Course assignments will explore these topics through readings, writings, and discussions.

Reading about bicycles, however, will not allow us to experience the joy of riding a bike. Thus, we will also have weekly group bike rides, a few of which will take place on Saturdays. Some of these rides will be short, simply around town, and a few of these rides will be longer, taking us to area attractions. A course highlight will be a car-free weekend in South Haven during fall break, which we will begin by biking from Kalamazoo to South Haven. As the weather turns cold, we will examine alternative uses for bicycles, such as electric generators and water pumps. Owning a bicycle is not a requirement of this course; you can use a Briton Bike available on campus. Owning a helmet is strongly recommended!

**Instructor**—Kevin Metz (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) can often be found running through the 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.

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## The Machinery of Life

Christopher Rohlman—Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00-9:50 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. 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.

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## The Man Who Would Be King

Christopher Hagerman—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—Do empires evolve organically or are they consciously constructed? What happens when cultures collide in circumstances where power is unequal? What is the role of individuals in the development of empires? What does imperial power do to individuals and by extension to peoples? To what extent can empire be a force for positive change? Does history provide useful lessons and rationalizations or caveats for would-be empire builders? These are the questions Rudyard Kipling addressed in his short story of illicit empire-building in central Asia, “The Man Who Would Be King.” Kipling's story and the questions that inspired and shaped it will be our point of departure for an extended and comparative examination of the historical phenomenon that is imperialism. This in turn will lead us to contemplate the intersections among the nature, purposes, and power of narrative, whether fictional, historical, or cinematic. Our meetings will be organized around discussions of literature (*Heart of Darkness*, *The Quiet American*, and *Younghusband*), film (*The Man Who Would Be King*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *The Quiet American*), and historical scholarship.

**Instructor**—Chris Hagerman is an assistant professor of history. Born and educated in Canada, Hagerman holds graduate degrees in classical archaeology and history. He teaches European history ranging from antiquity to the twentieth century. At present his research focuses on exploring the connections among British elites, the classical tradition, and imperialism. He is also a proud father, passionate hockey fan, Tolkien freak, and avid kayaker.

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## Mauka and Makai

Suelyn Henke—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

**Course Description**—This seminar emphasizes understanding, appreciation, and respect for the history and cultures of the peoples of the Hawai'i and provides opportunities for students to reflect upon their own cultural moorings and belief systems. Diverse epistemological perspectives about place, identity, language and schooling are explored through interaction with historical texts, fiction, poetry, music, and film. We will be partnering with another field-based First-Year Seminar, “Mountains and Oceans.” Educational travel to the Island of Hawai'i is optional in January.

**Instructor**—Suelyn Henke received a Ph.D. in curriculum with an emphasis in cultural studies from Miami University's educational leadership program. She taught high school in Cincinnati and

spent two years teaching at the University of Hawai'i-Hilo on the Big Island before coming to Albion in 2002. She is interested in narrative research and teaches courses in sociocultural foundations of education and secondary education. She enjoys spending time with her family, two dogs, and cat. Her hobbies include reading and playing tennis.

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## Mountains and Oceans

Carrie Menold—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

**Course Description**—“Mountains and Oceans” is a discussion-based class exploring various aspects of Hawai'i's natural features. A fundamental question we will seek to answer is why the islands exist. We will investigate the geological forces that created the volcanoes and those that destroy them, and learn why their location is anything but random. Several other themes will be examined, including their sensitivity to climate change, their role in the exploration of the Pacific, and their significance to the cultures that call them home. To explore these topics, students will read a collection of books and articles, participate in a variety of related activities including discussions, debates, and hands-on investigations, and write several papers. We will be partnering with another field-based First-Year Seminar, “Mauka and Makai.” Educational travel to the Island of Hawai'i is optional in January. Travelers should be prepared for several long hikes on the island to explore various features of the volcano.

**Instructor**—Carrie Menold (Ph.D., UCLA) is a member of the Geology Department. Her teaching focuses on rock and mineral studies as well as environmental geology. Her research field areas are in the Alps and Himalayas, where she uses geochemistry to study mountain-building.

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## Microbes and Human Affairs

Ola Olapade—Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—This writing-intensive seminar will try to critically answer the rhetorical question: “Are microorganisms humans’ friends or foes?” through various in-depth discussions of scientific literatures, short laboratory activities, field trips to industrial sites, and video documentaries that are selected to focus on different microbial groups, i.e., bacteria, fungi, algae, protozoa, and viruses (obligate intracellular parasites), especially their diverse activities as they ultimately influence humans within their immediate environments. The diverse microbial activities vis-à-vis human affairs to be critically explored in this seminar will include contributions to agricultural practices, food production and spoilage, biotechnology, and bioremediation as well as in causation of various communicable infections.

**Instructor**—Ola A. 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. He enjoys spending time with family at home and on the road during extensive travelling.

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## The Physics of Music

Charles Moreau—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

**Course Description**—Music is an essential element of human society. We experience music in a variety of ways, and on a daily

basis, from the grocery store checkout line to the driver’s seat of our cars. In this course we will explore the physical basis of the three necessary components of music production: the instrument which produces the tones, the transmitting medium which conveys the tones between locales, and the listener who perceives the tones. Additional topics will include electrified instruments and sound reinforcement, room acoustics, and computer-based tone storage and generation including compression techniques.

**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.

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## Plants and Human Affairs

Dan Skean—Monday/Wednesday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—Plants provide the photosynthetic foundation of most ecosystems. They produce the oxygen we breathe and, with human assistance, the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the shelter we need, the drugs some of us abuse, and many of the medicines that heal us. Over the last three decades, recombinant DNA technologies have been used to alter crops genetically so that they resist predators and herbicides, a fact that is disturbing to some, but ignored by most. This seminar examines human uses of plants, past and present, the importance of plant biodiversity, widespread American acceptance of genetically-modified foods, and the sustainability of current agricultural practices. Hands-on activities include growing and breeding rapid-cycling mustards, extracting and amplifying plant DNA using PCR, paper-making, and brewing (root) beer. A highlight of the seminar is a fall break field trip to St. Louis, where participants are introduced to leading institutions that shape our knowledge of plant biotechnology and biodiversity. *Field trip fee.*

**Instructor**—Dan Skean (Ph.D., University of Florida) is a tropical botanist whose research has centered largely on the evolution and classification of the melastome family in the West Indies. He has described over 20 species of flowering plants new to science. Skean teaches introductory botany and upper-level plant and tropical biology courses. In his spare time, he enjoys camping, nature photography, and fishing.

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## 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 current 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 in this course.

Note: No in-depth knowledge of musical terminology is required for the 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*.

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## Seeing the Nazi in American Movies

Geoffrey Cocks—Monday, 2:15-4:35 p.m.; Wednesday, 2:15-3:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—This seminar explores the American movie image of the most malevolent villain of the modern age, the Nazi. There were many versions of the Nazi in Hollywood movies before and after December 7, 1941. There was the Nazi as enemy of freedom, the Nazi as threat to America, the Nazi as enemy of civilization, and the Nazi as murderer of the Jews. After the Second World War, the Nazi assumed new movie guises: the Nazi in hiding, the Nazi plotting a comeback, and the Nazi as a reflection of what was wrong with America. But the Nazi also became the “not see,” as Germans in the 1950s became our allies in the Cold War against Communist Russia. From the 1960s on, the Nazi in American movies resolved itself into two major images. One was as the black, relentless, mechanical mass murderer of the Jews. The other was the Nazi as profitable means of movie entertainment in dramas, adventures, and comedies.

**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).

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## Travel East with Your Mind—Secrets of East Asian Landscape

Noelle Sunyu—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

**Course Description**—What is the relationship between life and landscape in the East Asian imagination? In China, the Koreas, Mongolia? How did Chinese gardens inspire the European Age of Enlightenment?

You may have seen East Asian landscapes as background in Hollywood movies, or foreign films, maybe even video games or music videos—but probably didn’t pay close attention to the actual landscape. You would see mountains, and more mountains. You would see water, in lakes, rivers, and oceans; in snow, rain, and flooding. And you would see people sharing the landscape with mountains, water, and other people.

The peoples of East Asia, however, would say that landscape in the East Asian imagination is much more than mere background imagery. Through the subject of landscape, this course explores East Asian cultural beliefs, values, and aesthetics toward nature, humanity and art—in poetry, painting, ceramics, gardening, photography, and animation.

By studying landscape in different cultures, regions, and time periods, we will learn a great deal about the societies. We will also begin to see history holistically, to detect historical and cultural trends, to relate yesterday to today, and to question both the present and the future.

**Instructor**—Noelle Sunyu (Ph.D., Nanjing Normal University, China) came to the U.S. in 2007, after having taught art history at Donghua University Shanghai for nine years. Since 2010, she has been teaching various art history courses in the U.S. and has been at Albion College since 2012. She believes that her cross-cultural educational background and academic experience have expanded her horizon, and she wants to bring this vista to you.

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## Water: Science and Policy

Timothy Lincoln—Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—Water is essential for life, and, in many parts of the world, is a critical and limited resource. Even in places where water is naturally abundant, contamination can pose an insidious threat to health. This seminar explores the ways scientists study water resources and the ways their studies are used in making decisions.

To understand the science of water, students work in teams on their own research projects. The local Kalamazoo River is our laboratory. Projects, such as canoeing down the river and locating recharge zones by measuring temperature variations and using global positioning systems (GPS), allows students to work on real problems while seeing both the power and limitations of scientific studies. When the weather gets cold, we move inside to see how these techniques have been applied to real problems. Groundwater contamination is viewed through the book *A Civil Action*, a stark view of the legal system. Issues related to flood control and water as a resource are explored through videos and additional readings. We will see that throughout history prudent decisions commonly have not been made, sometimes because of flawed science, sometimes because of flawed policy that ignored good science. Our goal is to think critically about ways to better use science in making policy.

**Instructor**—Tim Lincoln (Ph.D., UCLA) has shared an appointment in Albion’s Geology Department with his wife, Beth, for 22 years. His academic interests revolve around geology as applied to human problems. He is also the director of Albion’s Center for Sustainability and the Environment. Lincoln divides his spare time among trying to stay in shape (wally ball, Stairmaster, and weight room), crafts (wood-working, ceramics, and stained glass), and, when possible, backpacking in the Rockies, canoeing the Kalamazoo, and cross country skiing in the Whitehouse Nature Center. He is also an avid fan of the Lions, Red Wings, and all Briton teams.

