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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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mauri Ditzler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mauri Ditzler  
President

# First-Year Seminars, Fall 2017

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 [albion.edu/firstyear/seminars/](http://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.

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## 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 2018. Field trip fee and passport required of all students who choose to participate (approx. \$1500 - \$1800).

**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 Modern Languages and Cultures department 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.

## 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 (\$300 - \$450)

**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, 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.

## All Power to the People: Radical Racial Resistance

**Nels Christensen – Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/  
Friday, 10:30 -11:20 am**

**Course Description**—We live in unsettled times. But tensions—especially racial tensions—aren't new in America. From the very first days of our nation, the fight for racial justice has motivated young men and women of color (and their white allies) to resist institutions of oppression. "All Power to the People" will take a close look at some of the more radical (and militant) resistance movements: the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement (AIM), the Young Lords (which started as a Chicago street gang) and Redneck Revolt (white folks against white supremacy). We'll learn about the powerful lives of these young people struggling for equal rights and freedom. And, as a result, I hope we'll come to see more clearly what we can and should be doing here and now in our own troubled times.

**Instructor**—Nels Christensen (Ph.D., Michigan State University) grew up in northern California near the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains. For the past 12 years, he has spent his time teaching and canoeing in Michigan and New England.

## All the World's a Disc! The Wit, Wisdom, and WTF of Terry Pratchett

**Mark Hoffland – Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 -12:20 p.m.**

**Course description**—This course will explore the Discworld, its inhabitants, and its mythology—as we learn what the fantasy universe of Discworld may teach us about our own world. The world exists as a flat disc balanced on the backs of four gigantic elephants, which in turn stand on the back of a giant turtle swimming through space. We will focus on several of Pratchett's *Discworld* graphic novels and examine what Pratchett is trying to tell us about our own world and the times we live in. We will also view film and stage adaptations, and discuss the success or failure of these adaptations; the final project for our seminar will be creation of an adaptation of one of the *Discworld* graphic novels for the stage.

**Instructor**—Mark Hoffland has taught in the Department of Theatre since 2004. He has been the Scenic and Lighting Designer, the Technical Director, directed many plays and taught most of the courses in the department. The ultimate "generalist," Mark has produced theatre with people of all ages and experience levels and now wishes to explore his playwriting side and create and develop new works for the stage. Mark has wide-ranging interests in history and humor, and has been a Terry Pratchett devotee for over 20 years.

## Building Community Through Music

**Cliff Harris – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 am**

**Course Description**—This course will explore how music brings people together in many different ways: the connection between members of a cohesive band; the shared experience of an audience for a live musical event; the community of fans for a band or a genre of music; the identity a community assumes when music becomes a point of shared civic pride, and much more. We will read and write about the experiences of other people, bands and communities. At the same time we will become part of the vibrant and growing musical scene in and around the City of Albion as full participants in creating a music festival over Homecoming weekend. Finally, we will read and write about Albion's music scene, and the way we and others experience it.

**Instructor**—Cliff Harris is a Chemist by training and a musical fanatic by birth. He is the lead singer in a band, produces, directs and MC's a monthly Blues concert in Albion, organizes & promotes concerts, and is the local director of Walk the Beat - Albion. Walk the Beat is a music festival that raises money to provide local kids with musical instruments, musical lessons, and support for improved literacy.

## California Screaming: Natural Disasters in the Golden State and on the Silver Screen

**Michael McRivette – Monday/Wednesday/Friday,  
10:30-11:35 a.m.**

**Course description**—California suffers more and a wider variety of natural disasters than any other region of the United States, routinely experiencing earthquakes, landslides, and wildfires. Though less frequent, volcanic eruptions, floods, and tsunamis have likewise left their mark on the state with regularity. The longer-term disaster of drought is also a common occurrence. Yet California is also the most populous state in the country, with nearly 40 million people calling this dynamic and threatening environment home. This seminar will examine the geologic and geographic causes and processes of natural disasters with specific focus on California. Historic, recurring, and ongoing event case studies will be used to understand the physical, societal, and economic impacts of disasters. We will also survey a collection of natural disaster films to explore the degree to which the largely California-based movie industry shapes public conceptions of science and natural disaster processes and impacts. The seminar will culminate with a winter break field trip to southern California, during which students will examine exceptional examples of the impacts of historic natural disasters, visit locations associated with active and ongoing disaster processes, and explore film production at a major movie studio. Field trip fee (\$600 - \$1000).

**Instructor**—Mick McRivette (Ph.D., UCLA) is a native Californian who lived in both rural Northern California and the big cities of Southern California before joining Albion's Geology Department in 2008. As a result, he is mostly cool with earthquakes, but still thinks tornadoes are a little bit

scary. Mick teaches courses in environmental geology and geography and mapping, and is the Director of the Albion College Geology Summer Field Camp in the Rockies program. His research focuses on the geology of large mountain systems such as the Himalayas-Tibet and the Scandinavian mountains. He enjoys most outdoor activities, playing soccer, and traveling with his family.

## 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.

## 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 (\$1100 - \$1300) 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.

## Fly Me To The Moon

**Nicolle Zellner – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:30 -11:35 a.m.**

**Course Description**—This class includes the history and future of space exploration and will discuss topics related to the science of spaceflight, different countries’ efforts to explore space, human spaceflight, gender and diversity in the astronaut/cosmonaut/taikonaut corps, spacecraft missions, and exploring planets, moons, and asteroids in our Solar System and beyond. A trip to Washington, D.C., to tour NASA Headquarters, the Smithsonian Institution meteorite collection, and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, including the Udvar-Hazy Center is planned. Field trip fee (approx. \$300 - \$450).

**Instructor**—Dr. Nicolle Zellner is an associate professor of physics. She teaches introductory and advanced astronomy and physics courses. Nicolle’s research interests focus on understanding the impact history of the Earth-Moon system and how those impacts affected the conditions for life on Earth. She studies lunar impact glasses to interpret the bombardment history of the Moon (and Earth), and a second project focuses on understanding how the chemistry of simple molecules is affected by impacts. Nicolle was a member of the ANSMET team that searched for meteorites in Antarctica. She spent two months there, and she and the team collected over 800 meteorites! Nicolle was a member of the scientific ground crew during NASA’s STS-67 *Astro-2* mission in 1995. Her PhD is from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (2001), where she received the school’s first Multidisciplinary PhD. Her research has been supported by the American Astronomical Society and is currently supported by NASA and by the National Science Foundation.

## Global Transformations in the Twentieth Century through German Film

**Perry Myers – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:30-11:35 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).

## Great Lakes Playlist: The history and culture of music in the Midwest

**Clayton Parr – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 11:45-12:50 p.m.**

**Course description**—In this seminar, we'll explore the varied musical heritage of the Midwest region, from Native American music and Great Lakes sailor and lumberjack songs, to Chicago blues, gospel, Motown, rock and R&B. Through listening to many songs, plus reading, writing, discussion, class presentations and class travel, we'll learn about the people who made this music, and their experiences in the region that helped make the music what it is—an amazing heritage of music, culture, and history. Potential field trip destinations include Chicago (for blues and gospel), Detroit (for the Motown museum), and Cleveland (Rock and Roll Hall of Fame)

**Instructor**—Clayton Parr is the choir director at Albion. A long time ago, he graduated from Albion with majors in music and physics. He went away and taught in a number of other places (most of them in the Midwest) before returning to Albion to join the faculty in 2012. His research interests

include the music of Georgia (the country, not the state.) He also directs the Battle Creek Community Chorus, Michigan Educators Male Ensemble, and Alioni Georgian Choir of Chicago. When he's not doing music, he's usually in a kayak, at the ballpark, or looking up something obscure. He walks to work every day and likes it that way.

## Growing Up Wild: Teaching, Nature and Culture

**Suellyn Henke – Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30-12:20 p.m.**

**Course description**—This course emphasizes experiential learning and teaching. Real-world opportunities to enhance oral, visual, written and interpersonal communication skills abound. Are contemporary youth suffering from “nature-deficit disorder?” Our class will complete *Growing Up Wild* ecology certification and create displays, games, outdoor investigations and unique lessons for local youth by integrating the natural world and culturally responsive teaching practices. We will frequently meet at the Whitehouse Nature Center and in local school settings. Excursions to learn about unique natural educational settings and careers will be scheduled during the semester.

**Instructor**—Suellyn Henke received a Ph.D. in curriculum with 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.

## Hawaii and the Himalayas: Geology, Ecology and Cultures of the Tallest Mountains on Earth

**Carrie Menold – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:30-11:35 a.m.**

**Course Description**—This is a discussion-based class exploring the geology and cultures around the world's tallest peaks, Mt. Everest (Himalayas) and Mauna Kea (Hawai'i). Most people know Mt. Everest is tall but measured from its ocean base Mauna Kea is even bigger! A fundamental question we will seek to answer is why mountains exist and why are these two mountains so much taller than any others. We will investigate the geological forces that create (and destroy) mountains, and learn why their locations are not random. The Himalayas and Hawai'i also have distinct cultures linked with their unique geology and ecology. We will spend time learning about Tibetan and Hawai'ian cultural practices and their links to mountain environments – for example, the Tibetan practice of walking around holy mountains and the Hawai'ian goddess Pele's association with the volcano. Several other mountain-related themes will also be examined, including their presence as natural barriers that both invite and impede exploration, their importance as unique ecosystems, and their role as nature's water towers. As we explore these topics we will do so with a focus

on college academic preparation and transition from high school: instruction in college-level reading, writing and class discussion, time-management, finding and using sources for research papers as well as participate in a variety hands-on activities (several of which will be outdoors). In January, students will travel to the big island of Hawai'i to examine mountain-building processes, the active volcano, and a unique mountain culture. On the trip, we will travel across the island, from the mountain tops to the beach, and we will be outside everyday hiking to explore the geology and its influence on the culture. Field trip fee (\$1000 - \$1300).

**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 courses. She uses geochemistry and field work to study mountain-building, looking at the first rocks to collide as mountains begin to form. Those rocks end up in the middle of the tallest parts of mountain ranges as collision proceeds so her field study areas are up on the Tibetan Plateau and in the high Himalayas of India.

## 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. Writing assignments include telling your own pizza story and researching your favorite food. Two years ago, the students in this class built a brick wood-fired oven. As a group this class will research the idea of a “community oven” and how we might open up our oven to the larger community. In addition to reading, discussing, and writing about food and culture, the class will also visit a farmers’ market, work in a garden, and prepare food in own oven at the Whitehouse Nature Center.

**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 Shelly’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 and Justice

**Dan Mittag – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—I know that my wife has fed our dog, that fresh tomatoes are juicy, and that George Washington was the first US President. I also know that lots of people disagree with me about various important issues: the moral status of preemptive war and the truth of evolution among them. But how exactly does knowledge work, and what determines whether these knowledge claims are true? What determines whether or not I can reasonably retain my belief in the face of known disagreement? Can I ever reasonably do so? We will consider these questions, and others, as we explore various philosophical problems concerning knowledge and justice.

**Instructor**—Dan Mittag is a faculty member of the Philosophy Department at Albion College. His research focuses on the concept of justified belief, and he teaches courses in logic, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language. In his spare time he enjoys scavenging for vinyl records and seeking out live jazz.

## Knowledge: Searching for Truth and Meaning 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 our psychological biases influence (and often) undermine our experiences and decisions? How do we know what we know? What is truth? Why bother looking for truth and meaning? How do statistics inform us? What do we mean by facts? These questions compel us to look at the concepts, models and 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 supported by evidence 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 ultimate Aviation!

## Latino USA

**Deborah Kanter – Monday/Wednesday/Friday,  
11:45-12:50 p.m.**

**Kyle Shanton – Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30-12:20 p.m.**

**Course description**—Latinos may comprise 25% of the U.S. population by the year 2050. What does it mean to be Puerto Rican, Mexican, Dominican, Latino . . . or Latinx? What are the challenges and joys of being Latino? How do the experiences of a newly-arrived immigrant differ from a fourth-generation Latina? Fiction, films, music, videos, oral history, artwork, and games will introduce us to the histories and cultura for Latino/as of different generations.

**Instructor**—Deborah Kanter (Ph.D., University of Virginia), Professor of History, teaches Latin American and U.S. Latino history. She lived and worked in Mexico for over four years doing research which led to her first book, *Hijos del Pueblo: Gender, Family, and Community in Rural Mexico, 1730-1850*. She is completing her book, *Chicago Católico: Making Parishes Mexican, 1920-77*. A Chicago native, she enjoys watching movies, hiking, and discovering ethnic restaurants of every variety.

**Instructor**—Kyle Shanton (Ph.D., University of Arizona), professor of education, teaches courses in processes of learning and teaching, literacy, English as a second language and student teaching. He lived and worked in Arizona and New Mexico for nearly twenty years teaching in Spanish-

English bilingual classrooms at pre-collegiate and collegiate levels. Recently he served as a Fulbright US Scholar to Cost Rica. Kyle’s research on bilingualism in family and community led him to his first book, *The Most Important Work: Stories of Sovereignty in the Struggle for Literacy*. A mid-western native, he enjoys biking, cooking, traveling with his children, and walking his dog.

## Lessons Learned at “The Office”

**Vicky Baker – Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00 a.m.-9:50 a.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.

## Plants and Human Affairs

**Dan Skean – Monday/Wednesday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.,  
Friday, 1:00-3:00 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. (\$150 - \$300)

**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.

## 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*.

## [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.”

## The Fairest of Them All: Examining Disney Princesses In Popular Culture

**Andy Boyan – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course description**—This course will explore the Disney Princess phenomenon started by the 1937 Disney classic *Snow White*, and continuing to the present with 2016’s *Moana*. Students will use the Disney films, historical versions of the stories on which the films are based, and critical and social scientific scholarship as context for our discussion. In the course students will be challenged to view these iconic films with various critical lenses, and make arguments for their own critical readings (viewings) of the films in light of their potential impact on present society. Ultimately, students will explore how these representations of princesses have impacted their own images of themselves and women and girls in our society.

**Instructor**—Andy Boyan (Ph.D. Michigan State University) is fascinated by rule systems and how people learn them, know them, and apply them. This serves his research and teaching interests in Communication Studies where he is concerned with how people navigate unspecified rule systems to talk with one another, how people learn rules of games, and how people learn new communication rules when given

new communication situations such as social media. Andy is an avid gamer, father, college football fan, music lover, reader, martial artist, poor guitar player, amateur cook, and Harry Potter aficionado. He loves to try new games, and will completely destroy you in Tekken 3 or Monopoly.

## The Natural History of Love

**Douglas White – Monday/Wednesday/Friday,  
1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—We will explore the nature and function of love in humans from the perspectives of evolutionary biology, ornithology, brain science, anthropology, psychology, mythology, and the arts. What is love? Why do we love?

Love is a topic of deep and universal personal and societal interest. Love is systemic to many and disparate academic disciplines. Yet, love is virtually absent from Albion's catalog. Here, we break through obscuring jargon, silos, and silence, first by considering the breeding biology of birds. Can we see love there in revealing variety? We move on to examine how modern sciences of neurobiology, anthropology, and psychology are being used to characterize human love. Do they have it right? Do people and birds pick mates in similar ways? Next, we will see if love, in its expansive sense, relates to the human subconscious as revealed by comparative mythology. Where is your bliss? Finally, we will test our biological model of love against meditations on love prized in drama and music.

In our exploration of love, we will use the insights and tools of evolutionary biology including asking why questions, considering both proximate and ultimate causes, adopting a systems perspective, and reasoning from comparative evidence. And, we will practice skills in scholarship, reading, discussion, and writing that are integral to the Albion academic experience.

**Instructor**—Douglas White, PhD. Trained as a biologist and evolutionary ecologist at Penn State, University of Tennessee, and Rutgers University, I have been with Albion's Biology Department since 1995. I serve as associate director of Albion's Center for Sustainability and the Environment and regularly teach introductory courses in environmental science and environmental studies. As an ornithologist, my research focuses on the breeding biology of House Wrens which I've studied in collaboration with Dr. Dale Kennedy at the Whitehouse Nature Center for over 20 years. For many years, I co-taught a First Year Seminar on Art in the Environment. I taught my first class on love in the Albion's Honor's program in spring 2016.

## This View of Behavior: Nature, Nurture, and Survival

**Jeff Wilson – Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday,  
1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course description**—Humans behave. Animals behave. Plants beh... Well, we'll discuss that matter. All organisms engage in behavior, and their behavior can determine

whether they survive or not. In this seminar, we'll explore similarities and differences in the behavior of varied species, as explained both by Charles Darwin's view of evolution and by learning--as we begin to puzzle with relationships between nature and nurture.

We'll look for answers to questions like the following. How similar are related species in their ability to learn? Can we compare intelligence across species? Are courtship and mating rituals governed by natural selection--even in humans? Can human altruism be understood in the context of natural selection?

In the seminar, we will learn to think critically about behavior. We'll read and discuss, we'll visit a zoo, we'll watch the behavior of various species on campus--including humans--and we'll attend the Pavlovian Society meeting in Philadelphia. Students will write frequent reflections, lead group discussions, and write a longer paper on a topic of their choice. Field Trip Fee (\$250 - \$500).

**Instructor**—Jeff Wilson (B.A. Haverford College; M.A., Ph.D. UCLA) is a behavioral neuroscientist and learning theorist interested in learning, memory, emotion, and motivation. Much of his career was spent studying behavior in cats and rats. Six years ago his focus shifted to earthworms, and he has also dabbled in cockroaches and tardigrades (the ever-lovable water bear). He is the scientific great-grandson of Ivan Pavlov (does that name ring a bell?) and as a result is especially interested in issues related to classical conditioning. He is a founding member and a past president of Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience (FUN), and serves on the executive committee of the Pavlovian Society. When he is not professoring, he engages in photography and likes quality time with his family. More info at [campus.albion.edu/wjwilson](http://campus.albion.edu/wjwilson)

## To Sleep or Not to Sleep

**Tammy Jechura - Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/  
Thursday, 9:15 -10:05 a.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 (\$1100 - \$1300) 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

**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**—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.

## You Are What You Eat

**Marcy Sacks – Monday/Wednesday, 8:00-9:50 a.m.**

**Course Description**—There are few acts more basic than eating. What many of us do not realize as we pick up our forks each day is that this seemingly mundane act is intricately linked to culture, economics, and politics—in short, how we eat tells us about who we are. This course puts food into its social contexts. We'll explore how what we eat and the way we eat it express our social identities (as members of social classes, ethnic groups, religions, etc.); how preparing and consuming (or not consuming) food reproduce gender roles; how the economic system for producing and marketing food affects what (and how much) we eat; and how food is both an object of politics (e.g., a target for government regulation) and a subject of politics (e.g., a basis for social movements). This course will explore food as both a commodity and a cultural marker. We will examine a broad range of issues about the production, distribution, and metaphorical significance of food. Participants in the course will have the opportunity to engage in and reflect on the eating, purchasing, preparing, and harvesting of food in a variety of settings.

**Instructor**—Marcy Sacks (Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley) has been teaching history at Albion College for the past 14 years. Her area of expertise is African American history and U.S. race relations. She is currently at work on a book about heavyweight boxer Joe Louis, sports, and race relations in twentieth-century America. When she is not busy teaching or researching, she spends her time running marathons, baking, reading, and parenting.



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