
First-Year Seminars



Albion College

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mauri Ditzler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "M" and a long, sweeping "Z" at the end.

Mauri Ditzler
President

First-Year Seminars, Fall 2018

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/. 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.

A Sense of Place: 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.” (Details for the extended trip are still being worked out and students will be asked to pay some of the costs.)

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.

In May of 2018, Wes completed his 50th year teaching history at Albion College. At the 2018 Albion College Commencement, Leslie and Wesley were awarded honorary doctorates, in part, because of their commitment to their first-year seminar on Albion.

All Power to the People: Why the Black Panthers Still Matter

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

Course Description—Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale weren’t much older than you when they formed The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. They looked at the racial and social injustice in their neighborhoods, in their city, and in their country, and they decided to do something about it—something big and real and radical. This class takes a close look at the men and the women of the Black Panthers in order to see more clearly what we can and should be doing 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.

Amazing Topics in Genetics

Ken Saville – Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 -12:20 p.m.

Course description—A new genome editing technology has been released from the lab and has transmogrified a wolf, a crocodile and a gorilla into huge flying monsters that are rampaging RAMPAGing through the big city!!!

OK, the flying and the rampaging parts are a bit far-fetched, but the technology involved called CRISPR can do some amazing things. CRISPR technology can be used to target and change specific DNA sequences in practically any organism. This technology has already been used to edit the genomes of human embryos, correct genetic defects in human cells, and has the potential to correct many human genetic diseases. Many other applications, such as the generation of new crops, modifying mosquitos to fight malaria, and ridding human cells of the AIDS virus have also seen some success.

CRISPR technology, along with other Current and Amazing Genetic Topics (CATG – get it?) will be explored in this course. Students will identify topics of interest and we will explore these as a class through readings, presentations, videos, movies, and online activities. We might even get into the lab to try some of these things ourselves.

Of course, new genetic technologies come with the potential for abuse and/or unforeseen and unintended consequences. We will explore some of the objections and limitations to the uses of genetic technology such as the development of Genetically Modified organisms (GMOs). Is this technology really as scary as many people claim?

So, if you're interested in genetics, or just curious about these latest and greatest advancements in genetic technology, take this first year seminar.

Instructor—Ken Saville has been teaching Genetics and Molecular Biology at Albion College for over 20 years. His research involves the genetics of fruit flies, particularly how transposable elements, or 'jumping genes' damage DNA and how this DNA gets repaired. He has recently become interested in analyzing large genetic data sets using data science technology in a field called bioinformatics. Dr. Saville particularly enjoys involving students in his research and has worked with over 100 students at Albion, with many of them becoming co-authors on papers. When not in the classroom, or in the lab, he can be found on the golf course or playing old man hockey at the rink. He is married to Kate and has four kids with two attending the University of Michigan, one just starting at Michigan State University, and the fourth entering high school in Lansing.

American Culture, Grit, and All That Jazz

James Ball – Monday/Wednesday, 11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Course description—Grit is a central theme in American culture: the idea that a person, any person, can achieve success in just about any field through determination, hard work, and persistence. Success might be measured as making a million dollars by the age of 25, or winning the league championship in diving, or composing a jazz standard that lasts beyond one's lifetime. Everyone also knows that lots of obstacles can get in the way of success, and that our views of success change over time, both individually and as a society.

This First Year Seminar will examine success strategies and obstacles as evidenced by American culture of the 19th to mid-20th centuries. We'll look at and listen to music, stage, radio, screen, and television representations of success, and obstacles to success. We'll also study the historical periods that gave us these pop culture representations. And together we'll learn about common trends and lasting influences of these popular American stories, as we begin to understand the origin and complex history of current thinking and cultural representations of success, failure, and grit.

Instructor—Dr. James Ball has taught at Albion College since 1999 and serves as Director of Orchestral and Jazz Activities and teaches conducting, trombone, jazz improvisation, the Evolution of Jazz and has taught several different First Year Seminars. As a conductor, he has conducted in Europe, Latin America and Japan as well as numerous places around the United States. He was Music Director and Conductor of the Tecumseh Pops Orchestra from 1999 - 2016. His work in the jazz idiom began at Albion College where he began the study of jazz bass performance in 2003 when he began directing the Jazz Ensemble. He was founder of the Liberal Arts Jazz Festival and has taught on the Jazz Faculties of Hillsdale College and the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. Dr. Ball holds degrees from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri – Kansas City, Northwestern University, Georgia State University, and the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music.

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

Michael McRivette – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 11:45 a.m.-12:50 p.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 tsunami 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. This seminar will include a 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 (\$800-\$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.

Fact or Fiction

Michael Dixon – Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Course Description— The class *Fact or Fiction* will engage with various current events and histories to practice and develop critical thinking skills. We will use reading, writing, discussion, film, and video as mediums for developing a critical personal dialogue. Other activities will include team building exercises, art creation, an anti-racism workshop, and in-class visiting lecturers. There will be a class field trip to the *Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia* at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, MI.

Instructor— Michael Dixon is an artist working primarily with oil paint. He was born in San Diego, California, and received his MFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder in painting, and his BFA from Arizona State University in painting and drawing. Dixon is currently a Professor of Art at Albion College. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants including a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, Joan Mitchell Foundation Emergency Grant, Puffin Foundation Grant, Blanchard Fellowship, and Phi Beta Kappa Scholar of the Year Award. Dixon has received numerous artist residencies including the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, Yaddo, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the Ragdale Foundation. His work has been shown both nationally and internationally at museums, universities, art centers, alternative spaces, and galleries. Dixon explores the personal, societal, and aesthetic struggles of belonging to both “white” and “black” racial and cultural identities, yet simultaneously belonging fully to neither. The works of artists such as Robert Colescott, Beverly McIver, Michael Ray Charles, Glenn Ligon, and Kerry James Marshall have informed his work.

Fantastic Beasts

Bille Wickre – Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Course Description—Unicorns, dragons, mermaids, chimeras, werewolves....humans have a long history with fantastic beasts. In cultures from around the world these amazing creatures appear in some of the earliest art and recur throughout history. Even today researchers seek evidence of the existence of fantastic beasts. In this class we will combine traditional art historical scholarship with creativity and imagination to pursue fantastic beasts from art and history and create some beasts of our own. Local field trips to museums and other sites.

Instructor—Professor Bille Wickre (Ph.D. University of Michigan) teaches art history in the Department of Art and Art History. Her specialties are women artists, 19th through 21st century European and American art, political and environmental art. Dr. Wickre is passionate about art that involves animals from all periods in the history of art. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Humane Society of South Central Michigan. She lives in Albion with her own pack of “fantastic beasts.”

Free Speech on Campus

**William Rose – Monday/Wednesday/Friday,
9:15-10:20 a.m.**

Course Description— In the United States, the idea of free speech is understood to be both an important political and moral ideal. The First Amendment makes freedom of speech central to our identities as citizens and to our national identity more generally. What it means to be an ‘American’ has seemed to be linked to our rights of free speech. But what, precisely, do we mean when we join the ideas of freedom and speech? What kinds of speech, and what kinds of freedom, are we talking about and why have they come to mean what they do? And, what might it mean to silence, or limit, certain kinds of speech?

So, then, at least since the early days of the republic, we have agreed that free speech is essential for a healthy, vibrant, and democratic society. However, context (both time and place) matters when we talk about freedom of speech. And, in the present moment, the idea of freedom of speech on college and university campuses is challenged by the ever-evolving social and political realities of contemporary democracy in the United States. This seminar will provide its participants with the resources to think critically about the role free speech plays on college and university campuses and how this discourse shapes the broader story about free speech protections across the United States more generally. Why have questions regarding free speech suddenly become an issue on college campuses? Has anything like this happened before? Is speech or student ‘safety’ really at the heart of the issue? Do the values of speech and expression trump other values and concerns (for example, ‘dignity’ or equality)? What is the principal mission of colleges and universities in the 21st century, and how does that mission impact our understanding of the place of speech on campus? How has the definition of free speech evolved between the 20th and 21st centuries, and how are colleges and universities addressing these changes?

Instructor— William Rose is a professor in the department of political science, where he has taught since the fall semester of 2001. His areas of teaching and research interests are in legal and political theory, ‘law and society’, and American constitutional law. He earned his Ph.D. in the department of political science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Before that, he practiced law in Tampa, Florida.

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—We’ll investigate the various musical heritages of the Midwest region, from Motown to Chicago blues, from gospel to R&B, from classic rock to hip-hop. Through reading, writing, discussion, listening, class presentations and class travel, we’ll explore the people who made this music, and the aspects of their history and experiences in this region that helped make the music what it is. Potential field trip destinations include Chicago (for blues and gospel); Detroit (for the Motown museum); and Cleveland (Rock and Roll Hall of Fame).

Instructor—Dr. 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 various parts of the Midwest) before returning to Albion to join the faculty in 2012. His research interests include 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.

Grey’s Anatomy and Ethics

Holly Hill – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 2:05-3:15 p.m.

Course Description—Have you ever wondered what it would be like to make some of the tough decisions faced by medical professionals every day? These choices can often be black and white, but what about the grey? Meredith Grey that is...

We will be using popular movies and TV shows such as Grey’s Anatomy to examine ethical issues faced by medical professionals both in and out of the professional setting. The class will take a look at short stories, case studies, and current events to reveal various ethical decisions we make as a society in our every day interactions with one another; as well as, the fundamental moral principles and values that underline our personal and professional lives. At the completion of this course you will have thought, discussed, and written your way through many topics such as assisted suicide, healthcare cost, truth telling, and medical experimentation in hopes of strengthening your own pillars of ethics.

Instructor—Holly Hill (M.A. Western Michigan University) is a certified & licensed Athletic Trainer and Instructor in the Kinesiology Department. Having been in the field of athletic training for 10 years prior to coming to Albion College she learned the value of ethical decision making while working with high school athletes, DIV II collegiate athletes, and in the industrial setting with gas and electrical linemen. She also has a passion for functional anatomy and has been teaching in the Kinesiology department since 2014. When not in her office she can usually be found in search of the perfect cup of coffee with her family and their corgi in tow.

Intersectional Pizza: Gender, Race, Class, and Food

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

Course Description—Why do we eat so much pizza? This class asks questions about pizza and our identities. There are the obvious questions such as who eats most of the pizza and what kinds? But we keep going to deeper levels, examining who makes our pizza and who profits from our pizza eating. Overall this course considers the people who grow, harvest, process, transport, prepare and consume 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, work in a garden, make pizza at our own wood-fired pizza oven, and consider regional pizza differences through a pizza-focused trip to Philadelphia. (Details for the extended trip are still being worked out and students will be asked to pay some of the costs.)

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.

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!

Languages

Kalen R. Oswald – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 2:15-3:20 p.m.

Course Description—As humans we are constantly sending and receiving messages through verbal language, but rarely do we reflect on how or why that is. We take it for granted as an inherent aspect of our humanity. We often do not even think about the issue seriously until we are confronted with the desire or need to learn a second language. In this course we will attempt to understand how languages work, how they have evolved and continue to evolve, how language is acquired, how languages can influence and be influenced by community, and how learning another language can be advantageous to individuals and groups. We will also learn how to communicate some basic messages in several different languages.

Possible field trip to the Michigan World Languages Association Conference in Lansing, MI October 18, 2018.

Instructor—Professor Kalen R. Oswald (Ph.D., The 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 sixteenth year at Albion College where he teaches beginning to advanced Spanish language, literature, and cultures.

Latino USA

Deborah Kanter – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 11:45-12:50 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 historias 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 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*. A Chicago native, she enjoys watching movies, hiking, and discovering ethnic restaurants of every variety.

Mauka & Makai: Place and Education in Hawai'i

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

Course description— How do culture, identity and sense of place influence our understanding of what it means to teach and learn? *Mauka and Makai: Place and Education in Hawai'i* is designed as an interdisciplinary case study about the development of education in Hawai'i. Hawai'i's rich sociocultural history of diverse indigenous and immigrant heritages, controversial overthrow by the United States, and location as an isolated volcanic archipelago, provide a unique landscape for examining culturally responsive instruction. Educational travel to Hawai'i is a highly encouraged option in January. Travelers should be prepared for thoughtful and culturally appropriate interactions with natural settings, schools, and community members. Estimated trip cost (\$1100 - \$1300).

Instructor—At the beginning of this century, I received a Ph.D. in curriculum with an emphasis in cultural studies from Miami University's Educational Leadership program. I taught high school English in Cincinnati Public Schools and spent two years teaching at the University of Hawai'i -Hilo on the Big Island before coming to Albion in 2002. I teach courses in sociocultural foundations of education and secondary education. I enjoy spending time with my family, being outdoors, reading, and hanging out with my pets. One of my dogs, a goofy goldendoodle named Kai, is even a therapy dog on campus.

Medicine in the Information Age

**Christopher Rohlman – Tuesday/Thursday,
8:00-9:50 a.m.**

Course Description— How do we navigate the wealth of biomedical information and data that are available to us? In the age of personalized medicine, what decisions do we leave to the experts, and how do we advocate for ourselves? Today we have immediate access to primary research that can impact medical decisions and treatment in real time. How do we decipher the meaning of the science behind drug development, cancer treatments and genomic research? We will examine the sources of biomedical research, develop a basic knowledge of biomolecular science, and learn how to use the tools available to us, in an effort to ask better questions and gain understanding. These are questions faced by those that provide medical care and those that receive it. How do we make these decisions for ourselves, and help others understand the choices they have?

Instructor— Dr. Christopher Rohlman is a professor of biological chemistry. He teaches introductory and advanced courses in chemistry, biochemistry and biophysics. Chris's research focuses on understanding biomolecule structure and function, and the interactions that allow life on the cellular level. Chris is a Michigan native, who has worked in California and Colorado, ultimately returning to the Midwest.

His research group is driven by undergraduate students, who present their work at national meetings of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He is an avid fan of music, film, and the outdoors.

Patchwork America

Matthew Schoene – Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-12:22 pm.

Course Description—In the contemporary United States, we are constantly bombarded by the idea that we are divided – economically, ethnically, politically and culturally. In this seminar, we will take the position that the real divide within this country is one of communities with different characteristics – characteristics with the potential to shape who you are, how you spend your time, what you believe and how your life is likely to turn out. Using simplistic, dichotomous designations like conservative/liberal, rural/urban, rich/poor or black/white tends to miss these core realities of community life.

Communities give us an opportunity to think about the local organization of human society. What are the economic, environmental, political and cultural structures that create the realities of different communities? How do these conditions influence the behavior of the people who call it home? Ultimately, we can never truly understand a local community better than the people who actually live there, but we can take steps toward better understanding social diversity in the United States by examining perhaps the only thing that everyone has: a hometown. This class will include a field trip to our closest major metropolitan area, Detroit (fee: \$200-300).

Instructor—Matthew Schoene (PhD, The Ohio State University) is a global/transnational sociologist studying social and political activity in cities, especially those of the European Union. Despite his global research agenda, he has lived in 5 different states throughout his 20s (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina and Michigan) and has subsequently become very interested in how we live, work and interact within our local communities.

Tales of Pigs, Scurvy, Seamanship and Miscommunication

**Marcella Cervantes – Monday/Wednesday/Friday,
9:15-10:20 a.m.**

Course Description— In this course we will examine the first two voyages of Captain James Cook from a variety of perspectives. Like you, he set off on a voyage of learning. He and his crew visited new lands, experienced different cultures, and expanded the known world for Europeans. Guest speakers will help put the voyages into historical, cultural, religious, political, and scientific context. Communication between the sailors and the Polynesians was sometimes reduced to reading cultural queues, since they did not share a common language. The assumptions the Europeans made about the peoples of the South Pacific, and

that the Polynesian peoples made of Europeans led to many instances of misguided gifts and miscommunication. We will share our stories of being in similar situations. Captain Cook's skills as a map maker made it possible for others to follow his route. Approaching your education as an explorer, using the tools given to you, should make your time at Albion College a memorable journey. Early in the semester we are going to learn to sail from Freyja Davis. Two years later, we will travel to Great Britain to visit the museums, gardens and ships that commemorate Captain Cook's voyages. The trip to Britain requires a passport and a field trip fee (\$1100. - \$1300.)

Instructor— Marcella Cervantes (Ph.D., University of Washington, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center) is a cell and molecular biologist who studies mating type recognition in *Tetrahymena thermophila*, a swimming unicellular organism. She enjoys spreading the word about the wonders of *Tetrahymena* and works the topic into her Cell and Molecular Biology and Cell Biology courses whenever possible. Although Dr. Cervantes is originally from Texas, she has also lived in Oregon, Washington, Scotland, England, California, and has now settled in Michigan. In addition to travels throughout Europe, she has had the amazing experience of travelling around the world following the first two voyages of Captain Cook. Her inspiration to travel is the same as it was for her education, there is always more to learn.

RENT and the Bohemian Life

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

Course Description—“The bohemian life.” What does it mean? Passion, poetry, and poverty? Life, love, and art? Opposing convention and the status quo? Living for “no day but today” and “measuring lives in love”? We will study the Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning musical *Rent* by Jonathan Larson, which is based upon the beloved Puccini opera *La Bohème*, which in turn is based upon the 1840s Parisian novel *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* by Murger. We will compare the struggles of all these “starving artists” as they “strive for success and acceptance” while enduring “obstacles of poverty, illness, and the AIDS epidemic.” Mature thematic material including issues of drugs, sexuality, discrimination, and AIDS will be discussed in the larger context of our own community, society, and the world.

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

On her recent sabbatical, Maureen Balke spent several weeks in New York observing the contemporary musical theatre scene, including *The Book of Mormon*. Scenes from this currently running Tony Award-winning musical will also be studied. Note: No in-depth knowledge of musical terminology is required for this course.

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

Science, Truth, The Sea & Miscom

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

Course Description— There is a substantive difference between, for example, astrology and astronomy. The latter conforms to the practices of our best scientific thinking, while the former is a pseudo-science at best. But how might one explain the difference between pseudo-science and real science? It might be suggested that scientists rely upon observation and obtain better predictive results than pseudo-scientists. Astrologists, however, rely upon observation, and they are rarely mistaken in their predictions. Perhaps, then, what distinguishes pseudo-science from real science is that the hypotheses of the latter may be disconfirmed while the ‘conjectures’ of the former will hold, come what may. However, Charles Darwin's critics accuse him of dealing in platitudes as well, and few of Darwin's supporters would want to classify him among the pseudo-scientists. The principle of natural selection is all about “the survival of the fittest.” And, as the critics will ask, who are the fittest, if not those who survive? Distinguishing pseudo-science from science is, thus, easier said than done. But this is precisely what we shall endeavor to do in this course.

Sound Science

Charles Moreau—Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00-9:50 a.m.

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

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

Sounds and Stories: Narratives of Everyday Life

**Scott Hendrix —Monday/Wednesday/Friday,
2:15-3:20 p.m.**

Course Description—We all have sounds and stories we remember from our early childhood years, from the past year, and from all the years in between: the first song we learned to sing; the bark of the family dog; stories told us by parents and grandparents, by friends and enemies; teen stories of love and fear; sounds of music that fuel our saddest days; the raucous, joyous sound and storytelling of family holidays; and sounds of trains passing through town at night. Sounds and stories form and frame our lives. And we often overlook them, do not wonder where the sounds come from, or what they might mean, and do not ask what the stories might teach us, if we really slow down and listen.

In this seminar, we will try to listen, and also learn about, read about, talk about, and collect, record, and share several different kinds of sounds and stories. Our goal is to learn about—and learn from—the individual and collective telling, gathering, and sharing of sounds and stories. Success in this course requires only an open mind and open ears, a desire to hear more of the sounds and stories that make up your life, and willingness to share your own stories of trial and error, love and fear.

Instructor—Scott Hendrix (Ph.D., University of Kansas) is the Writing Dude at Albion College. He teaches writing and language courses in the English Department and directs the college writing center. Many years ago, he grew up on a place where stories were the local currency: neighbors swapped eggs for sugar and a few words of gossip; men and boys told stories while they dug graves on a hillside in the rain. He learned that the truth of a story—the facts, that is—are less important than how and why a story is told.

[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 Evolution of Consciousness

**Roger Albertson – Monday/Wednesday/Friday,
11:45 a.m.-12:50 p.m.**

Course Description— Who am I? This seemingly simple question has fascinated humans for thousands of years. Philosophers, scientists, mystics and seekers alike have spent their lives in search of an elusive answer.

Using a variety of sources from philosophy, metaphysics, neuroscience and psychology, this course will explore the nature of consciousness. We will first explore how genetics, brain chemistry, social conditioning and beliefs shape one's perception of reality and self identity. We will consider how perspectives are influenced by schizophrenia, autism, PTSD and rituals involving psychoactive medicine/drugs. We will next explore techniques seekers use to expand their self awareness including: meditation, yoga, cultural immersion and solo retreats.

This seminar will also examine how consciousness has evolved within cultures such as hunter-gatherers, dictatorships, nation states as well as capitalist and socialist societies. Lastly, we will explore the possibility of creating consciousness through artificial intelligence.

The seminar will include student presentations, discussions, lectures, films, short periods of meditation, personality tests and guest speakers.

Instructor— Roger Albertson earned his Ph.D. in molecular biology from the University of Oregon. He grew up in New Jersey and has lived five years each in Colorado, Oregon and California. He is fascinated by the various perspectives found within foreign cultures and he has visited and lived with locals in twenty foreign countries. Roger's scientific research involves symbiotic relations: how microbes manipulate their host's brain activity and behavior.

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 1938–1945, 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 testimonies and documentary; 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 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 sixth trip to Auschwitz with the HSSLP. She also teaches courses on Judaism and the Bible in Albion's Department of Religious Studies.

The Horror!: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Zombies, Vampires, and Other Monsters

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

Course Description—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 Bram Stoker's *Dracula* or Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*. Yet, all speak to the social anxieties of their time—e.g., raging culture wars, concerns about changing science and technology, distress over communicable disease or environmental degradation, mistrust of government and/or corporations, and fears of “the Other” that manifest themselves through racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other forms of oppression and intolerance. In this seminar, we will investigate the historical development of certain monsters from their folkloristic origins to their modern iterations. We will study horror movies new and old—including George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017). We will take a “Ghost Tour” fieldtrip and participate in a public performance of Michael Jackson's “Thriller”. We will draw on multiple disciplines, including biology, history, religious studies, psychology, and film studies as well as anthropology and sociology in order to understand how even the most far-fetched of monstrous creatures are real in their capacity to reflect back onto societies their deepest fears and their darkest secrets.

Instructor—Alli Harnish (Ph.D., University of Kentucky) is an assistant professor of cultural anthropology. Her research and teaching interests include gender, globalization, environmental politics, and indigenous communities. When she's not teaching at Albion or conducting research in Zambia, she can be found playing with her dogs, attempting DIY home projects, and enjoying the great outdoors.

The Natural History of Love

Douglas White – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 a.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.

Time

**Ian F. MacInnes —Monday/Wednesday/Friday,
3:30-4:35 a.m.**

Course Description—Our lives occur in and through time, but we really know very little about it. Humans have always found ways of accounting for or measuring time, but we have never learned to alter it or change its direction. And we can't stop thinking about it. Time has been the subject of poetry, philosophy, and science through the ages. This course introduces you to the liberal arts by taking you on a trip through the history of time from its perception in the ancient world up to the modern dream of time travel. You'll hear from Albion's own experts in fields like physics, geology, and psychology about how they understand time. You'll practice hands-on learning, designing and building a working mechanical clock. And you will encounter a wide variety of texts from Shakespeare's sonnets to movies about time travel.

Instructor—Ian F. MacInnes (B.A. Swarthmore College, Ph.D. University of Virginia) is a Professor of English at Albion College. His Southern Michigan farm is home to an assortment of animals from horses to chickens, creatures which serve as backdrops for his scholarly interest in representations of animals and the environment in Renaissance literature, particularly in Shakespeare. He is also interested in science and technology; when he isn't reading Shakespeare, he's reading science fiction. As a teacher at Albion College for more than twenty years, Ian is particularly interested in teaching methods that rely on students' curiosity and sense of play.

United States of Latin America

**Marcie Noble - Monday/Wednesday/Friday,
10:30-11:35 a.m.**

Course Description—What comes to your mind when you hear the word "America", and how does it differ from your understanding of "Latin America"? In this course, we will critically examine the complex relationships between the U.S. and the countries, cultures, and peoples of Latin America. You

will study the geography and history of the region, and U.S. interventions in particular, through works of art, literature, and film and reflect on information and images shared through news sources, propaganda and popular culture. You will question the perceptions and reveal the misconceptions that pervade the imagination here in the United States.

Instructor—Dr. Marcie Noble is from Kalamazoo, Michigan and has lived and studied abroad in Burgos, Spain and Queretaro, Mexico. She teaches courses in Spanish language, and the literature and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Her research interests include twentieth and twenty-first century Latin American literature and cultures, globalization, migration, race, and gender studies. She enjoys spending time with her family (including two cats and a dog), working in her garden, and riding a tandem mountain bike with her significant other, Roger.

Who Runs the World: The Importance and Influence of Women in Popular Music

Ashley Feagin—Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30-12:20 p.m.

Course Description—Starting from the earliest recordings of Mamie Smith to the contemporary anthems of Beyoncé, we will examine the trajectory of women in popular music across decades and genres. We will investigate how female artists channeled their work to create and influence social, political change and begin pivotal dialogues throughout our contemporary history.

Instructor—Ashley Feagin (M.F.A., Louisiana Tech University) is an Assistant Professor in the Art and Art History Department. In her teaching and in her art, Ashley challenges her students and her viewers to explore how we build stories—and also participate in the storytelling process—through photographs, installations, performances and collaborations. Her work has been featured in several books published by Vermont Photography Workplace, and in the traveling group exhibition, Spinning Yarns: Photographic Storytellers.

