

Core Discovery Course Descriptions for 2010-2011

Fall semester Core Discovery Classes carry 4 credits, Social Science/Spring semester classes carry 3 credits, Humanities.

Race, Ethnicity and Identity *Core 103/153*

This course moves beyond the tired old either/or debate about race in order to celebrate the rich heritages represented in the United States and to explore those places where conflicts need to be resolved. Bring your past experiences, assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, and most of all, your sense of humor to this class: We use them all.222

Contemporary American Experience *Core 104/154*

This course takes a broad look at contemporary American life, from fifty years ago to the present. Students analyze films, stories, poems, court cases, popular media, and other cultural objects for what they say about aspects of American experience including; religion, family, a sense of place, gender/sexual orientation, race, and class.

The Monsters We Make *Core 105/155*

What social roles do monsters in art, film, and literature fulfill? What makes something monstrous? This course explores the complex relationship between “normality” and “monstrosity” and the creation, role, and destruction of “the monster” in order to reveal, and challenge, the roots of the idea of monstrosity.

The New Wild West *Core 106/156*

This course uses conservation biology, literature, history, and other social sciences to understand varying opinions surrounding Western environmental issues such as endangered species, energy production and consumption, dams, rivers, water, tourism and land management, urban sprawl, agricultural sustainability, and the impacts of mining and logging. Students use creative problem solving, case studies and research skills to explore these and other issues.

Sex and Culture *Core 110/160*

From body image to head scarves, hate crimes to gun laws, culture shapes gendered behavior and commonly held beliefs about the “right” ways to be male or female. But what is gender? How is it socially produced and experienced? This course uses films, plays, fiction, personal stories, the arts, media, science, and the law to examine how ideas about gender make us who we are.

Feel the Groove *Core 112/162*

“Our jokes, tall tales, even our sports, [with their] sudden turns, shocks and swift changes of pace” are jazz-shaped. So said writer Ralph Ellison about this indigenous American art form that has shaped, and been shaped, by our country’s unique and diverse history. This course uses the idea of jazz – individual creativity supported and encouraged by strong communities and cross-cultural influences – to look at the history and culture of America. It features explorations into music, films, literature, theatre, and dance.

Globalization *Core 113/163*

This course is the study of how different cultures influence and interact with each other. It examines how people from different backgrounds come together through war and peace, marriage and divorce, food and drink, sickness and health, life and death, travel and work, buying and selling, faith and science, and a multitude of other daily acts. The course helps students better understand globalization, its players, and the immense impact this phenomenon is having on people around the world.

Understanding Media *Core 114/164*

This course examines the history of mass media, the forces that shape media messages, and the influence of media on individuals and society. Students learn to analyze the credibility of media content and to distinguish among news, information, advertising, and entertainment messages. Students gain the critical perspective on media necessary for responsible citizenship and discuss current issues and controversies surrounding the media.

The Sacred Journey *Core 116/166*

Students in this course study sacred images, the afterlife, and other ideas and issues relevant to world theologies. It is nonsectarian and devotes time and consideration to primordial, Greco-Roman, Ancient Near Eastern, and African religions, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and religious minorities such as the Sikhs, the Jains, the Mormons, the Baha'is, and other religions of interest to members of the class.

The Movies, the World, and You *Core 117/167*

A central aim of this course is to help students become more active, critical, and compassionate movie viewers. Because movies go far beyond entertainment to explore and document experiences and shape and challenge world views, watching them must be more than a passive activity. This course also uses perspectives of several academic disciplines to examine the aesthetic features of movies and the social concerns they raise.

Sports and American Society *Core 119/169*

This course uses ethics, sociology, history, literature, film, political science, physical education, and cultural studies to explore the central role of sports in America. The course examines the relationship of sports to gender, race, class, ethnicity, consumerism, media, and a number of other topics. Course materials include essays, documentary and feature films, short fiction and poetry, and historical, legal, and sociological studies.

Art, Artists & Madness *Core 120/170*

What separates madness from genius? What distinguishes one person as a creative genius and another as a lunatic? Students in this course explore mental health disturbances and the lives and work of several artists to better understand the interplay between art and madness. Through psychological case studies, film, literature, art, and creation of personal works of art, students explore how emotional, cognitive, and creative elements can reflect or expand their own emotional landscape.

Shared Places *Core 121/171*

This course was designed by students and faculty from the American Indian Studies Program to allow students to study American Indian culture and histories before and after contact with Euro-American culture. Readings, guest speakers, videos, and literature presenting the American Indian perspective are featured. Students focus their study on central aspects of American Indian culture including oral tradition, a sense of place, a holistic approach to all living things, and rituals.

What is Normal Anyway *Core 122/172*

This course explores how disability is experienced and perceived, examines oppression individuals with disabilities have experienced throughout history, and weighs the pros and cons of policies designed to provide equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Through analysis of representations of disabilities in pop culture, movies, and literature, students gain insights into how media shapes and perpetuates disability stereotypes. Current bioethical questions related to disabilities are also explored, including genetic testing, abortion, growth limitation, and environmental contaminants.

Riddles & Paradoxes *Core 123/173*

This course explores how markets and the economic way of thinking shape our world. Students examine markets from historical, social, and philosophical perspectives and learn how economic methods and theories are linked to methods and theories of many other academic disciplines. Students study, write, and talk about incentives and disincentives, advantages and disadvantages of government intervention in the economy, scarcity and sustainability and other economic issues important to them personally and to society as a whole.

The Earth and Our Place On it *Core 125/175*

Through class discussion, writing, field trips, community service-learning opportunities, music, art, readings, and film, students in this course explore how residents of the planet are connected to each other and the environment. For this course, the earth is viewed as a system impacted by human and natural forces and shaped by public policies and the acts of ordinary citizens. Central questions of the course concern the sustainability of the earth system, major threats to the system, and each individual's role in maintaining its health.

Shaping the World: Science, Technology and Society *Core 126/176*

How do humans shape technologies and how do they shape us back? These and related questions will be at the center of this year-long exploration into the interacting worlds of people, technology, and science. This is a hands-on course in which students will complete their own technical research projects and help lead class discussions. Class members will learn to better understand what responsibilities humans have for deciding what technologies can (and more importantly should!) be developed and they will explore how technological and scientific issues impact societies across the globe.

War and the Virtual World *Core 129/179*

This course approaches armed conflict as it is represented in the virtual world. We begin with the study and impact of electronic war-games, we then explore literary representations of war and social science explanations for the attraction of war. We end by reconsidering the virtual world as a vehicle for personal and civic responsibility. While we incorporate the play of e-generated war games, this course is not about playing video games; it is about studying the causes and consequences of the virtual world they create in relation to the literal world of war.

Running on Empty; Energy and Ethics in the 21st Century *Core 131/181*

"People cannot stand too much reality." This premise of psychologist Carl Jung is challenged in this course on energy and ethics. Students and instructors take a realistic look at the ethical, social, and ecological issues surrounding the production, development, and use of energy worldwide. "Will the perpetual demand for energy lead to perpetual warfare?" "Will we imperil our food supply to fill our gas tanks with bio-fuels?" "Can nuclear power really be green?" Through reading, composition, discussions, project development and outside class activities, members of this class will grapple with these and other questions related to one of the toughest and most real issues of our day: the ethics of energy development.

On Flight the Responsibility, Authority and Romance of Aviation *Core 132/182*

This course will address how a complex societal system — aviation — works (or sometimes does not work) in the intersection of authority, responsibility, and romance of flying. While some people are motivated to choose a particular profession by opportunities for responsibility or authority, pilots tend to be much more motivated by the romance of flight. Students in this course will explore history, engineering, science, psychology, law, economics, geography, and communication to answer questions about these trials and triumphs of flight.

Core Science Classes

Core Science classes carry 3 credits and fulfill a Natural Science requirement with no additional lab attached.

Human Reproduction: Science, Ethics and the Law

Cors 206

Human embryonic development is a series of complex biological events. Some of these events are prone to error. This course explores some of the genetic and environmental factors that can lead to pregnancy failure or birth defects, the recent advances in medical science to assist in reproductive and developmental processes to increase fertility or correct embryological errors, and the ethical and legal ramifications of these new scientific advances. In addition, the biology and the current problems associated with cloning and stem cell development are explained.

Color, Chemistry & Art

Cors 215

This course investigates the synergy between art and chemistry and uses the medium of art as a framework for discussing scientific principles. Theories of color, the chemistry of vision and perception, dyes, pottery glazes, and photography are some of the topics discussed in this hands-on course.

Exploring the Solar System

Cors 217

Exploration of the Solar System occupies the dreams, the science and the future of mankind. Exploration of other worlds is currently a top priority at NASA and manned missions into space will soon be happening again. This course examines our solar system from the standpoints of: planetary science history, planetary science questions, engineering challenges, political issues, and ethical dilemmas.

Physics

Cors 221

Much of our world and the technologies we use every day are governed by a few principles of physics. This course helps students understand those principles and, through that understanding, make the world a more predictable place. Students learn how Newton's three laws are applied to everyday life, explore energy and physics, and examine modern physics and medicine.