

# Bard Sequence

## Bard Sequence Course Descriptions

### Division of Language and Literature

#### **SEM 101 First Year Seminar I**

This course launches the core of the Bard Sequence by introducing students to the skills that are the basis for most college work: close reading and annotating challenging texts, creating substantive, polished analytical writing, and participating in a student-run seminar discussion. The first year of Seminar takes on the question, “What does it mean to be human?” Students begin the semester by using James Baldwin’s *The Fire Next Time* as a way of framing and understanding their engagement with canonical texts that are at times philosophically or culturally recognizable and at other times radically, thought-provokingly distant. Throughout the semester, students practice short and longer-form writing about great texts, drawing upon methods introduced in the Writing and Thinking Workshop. Using these and other texts as a basis for writing and discussion, they practice the core skills of critical thinking and the effective articulation of ideas.

#### **SEM 102 First Year Seminar II**

This course continues the Sequence’s examination of foundational texts in conversation around key thematic questions. In the second semester, the thematic units include Beginnings and Redemptions, Journeys Into the Self, and finally, Power and Doubt. As in the first semester, the course is designed to develop students’ ability to respond critically and creatively to these texts through close reading, active discussion and reflective writing. Students will continue to examine the role of power, gender, race, and sexuality in the construction of identity, building upon what they have encountered in the first semester to draw these ideas into increasingly sophisticated writing projects and class discussions, with the expectation being that all students will feel confident and well-versed in seminar discussion and academic writing by the end of this first year.

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## **SEM 201 Sophomore Seminar I**

This second year of the Bard Sequence explores the development of ideas that are central to the way we think about modernity. Throughout, it asks the question: What does it mean to exist within the multiple, diverse perspectives on humanness that modernity reveals and emphasizes? Beginning with texts that take on this question directly -- Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* -- Second Year Seminar expands upon the themes introduced in the first half of the Sequence through the literary and philosophical texts of the past two centuries. If the first half of Sequence modelled the ways in which scholarly conversations arise around such themes, the second half emphasizes ever more broadly how students might enter into and forge these conversations themselves. In the first semester of the course, students consider Class Conflict, Consciousness and Its Discontents, and Revolutions. As in the first half of Sequence, students reflect upon these and other readings through annotation, discussion, and critical writing exercises, with increasing independence.

## **SEM 202 Sophomore Seminar II**

The final semester of Seminar is split into two parts, with the first half continuing the course's text-based discussion and the second half focusing on the culmination of students' work in Sequence: the Inquiry Project. Throughout the first half of the semester, students address themes such as Violence and Justice (Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*) and Feminist Interventions (Morrison's *Sula* alongside theoretical works by Adichie, Butler, Walker, Gay, and others). If time allows, students may elect to add in texts that interest them, including graphic novels or contemporary drama. The final half of this semester turns students' attention entirely toward their Inquiry Project, in which they synthesize and reflect upon all that they have learned in Sequence by devising, carrying out, revising, and presenting an original research project of their choosing.

## **WRIT 102 Writing and Composition**

Writing is a crucial skill in any major and field, before and during college and beyond. This course seeks to provide students with an introduction to composition in a variety of different forms, chief among them the academic or argumentative essay and the personal essay (including the college essay). Throughout three different writing "progressions," students will familiarize themselves not just with the mechanics of constructing a strong piece of prose, but the process of editing and refining their writing, both on their own and with the help of their peers. For each progression, students will be graded on their completion of steps throughout the writing process, their participation in class discussions and activities, and their creation of a final, polished essay.

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### **WRIT 103 Creative Writing**

This intensive reading and writing course provides you with an introduction to the theory and practice of short fiction and poetry writing. You will develop work in both mediums, short fiction and poetry, throughout the semester. En route you will learn to pay close attention to language, structure, genre conventions, and other elements of craft. Texts from contemporary and canonical authors will serve as guides as you prepare your own work for peer critique and eventual publication.

### **Division of Social Studies**

#### **HIST 115 Introduction to African American History**

This course is a survey of US history from colonialism to the present with an emphasis on African American history. Through our work together, we will re-examine the conventional narrative of American history to foreground the perspectives and experiences of African-Americans. Along the way, we will be introduced to major primary and secondary source documents, and we will trace changes in the way historians have included African American history in telling the story of our nation's history. This course will take Edmund Morgan's "American paradox" as its central question: how did the nation reconcile (or not) the persistence of racial inequality alongside its ideals of liberty and equality? How did African Americans themselves draw attention to, and struggle against, that paradox?

#### **HIST 123 Introduction to Latin American History**

What are rights, and who deserves them? What should be the government's role in answering these questions and enforcing the answers? Which government (local, state, national, or extra-national) should have the most power in making these decisions? Which popular traditions and behaviors should the government work to preserve, and which should it try to abolish? These questions and others animated the history of Latin America in the period after 1808. They continue to be at the forefront of important debates going on in the region today. In this class, we will explore decisions that were made in specific countries to answer these questions, as well as the consequences of these decisions. Instead of taking a strictly chronological approach, we will focus our study on specific regions and nation-states. We will explore the ways that the past continues to echo in the present.

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### **SOC 110/PS 209/HUM 116 Civic Engagement and Social Change**

What entices communities to start movements of change? How do we best address social injustice? How do we empower ourselves as citizens to protect ourselves and our communities against inequity? What strategies can we employ to effect meaningful social change? Civic engagement is an act of problem-solving. As such, we will use moments in the long history of social justice movements in the U.S. and abroad to uncover the most thoughtful and impactful theories and practices for social action. Along the way, we will read, learn about, and discuss what strategies and processes we can use to effect social change in the communities in which we live. Some of the questions we will address include:

- What is a community? What does it mean to be part of a community?
- What do we mean by “social justice”? What do we mean by “civic engagement”?
- What characteristics of a community enhance its ability to solve its problems?
- What are the disadvantages of the different approaches to community problem-solving?
- Should community problem-solving address larger social, political, and economic structures and issues, or focus solely on local, more readily ‘winnable’ issues, and/or on meeting individuals’ immediate needs?
- How do we know whether or not a particular approach to problem-solving contributes to greater social justice in a community?

### **HIST 172 Topics in the History of Science: Global History of Disease, Medicine, and Society**

Historian William H. McNeill once wrote, “The history of the world is the history of disease.”

Outbreaks of infectious disease, whether parasitic, bacterial, viral, metabolic, or genetic, have threatened, devastated, and transformed human societies for thousands of years. The bubonic plague, commonly known as the Black Death, cholera, influenza, AIDS, Ebola, SARS, and now Covid-19, to name the most feared and deadly of these diseases, have time and again engendered profound socio-economic, political, and cultural changes across the globe. Through a detailed analysis of major historical outbreaks of these diseases from the birth of humanity to present day, this course examines the ways in which different societies in different eras have responded to pandemics, and how those responses altered and continue to alter the course of human history.

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### **HIST 218 Topics in Global History: Drugs and Empires in World History**

This course introduces students to the disciplinary development and methodologies of World History (also known as Global History) and specifically focuses on the global history of empires and the ways in which intoxicants—as medicines, recreational drugs, and commodities—factored prominently in the stories of colonization and capitalism in modern history. The first weeks of the course (roughly 3 weeks) will focus on the academic discipline of history and the methodological subfield of World History. The next 10 weeks of the semester will explore the story of imperial drug trades—in alcohol, sugar, coffee, cannabis, opium, cocaine, and chocolate—across the globe (1500-present day) and how the transnational and transimperial networks forged by these trades influenced and continue to shape the course of modern history. The story of imperial drug trades sheds important light on the histories of the peoples and societies connected through the production, sale, and consumption of drugs, medicines, and other imperial consumer products. The final 3 weeks of the semester will be spent exploring, via a research project, the ways in which these imperial histories of intoxicants helped produce contemporary ideas about drugs and the various policies deployed by governments across the world to regulate and/or prohibit their production, sale, and consumption.

### **HIST 118 Topics in U.S. History: American History, 1960 to the Present**

This undergraduate survey course focuses on recent US History from 1960 to 2010. Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, Watergate, the rise of conservatism as well as the great changes in culture and the role of the US in the world will be explored. Cultural shifts, the changing nature of work, technological change, and their effects on social institutions will also be studied. One highlight of the course will be to study recent American history through plays, music, and film. The course will also teach the fundamentals of historical research and writing, culminating in a project involving research and a paper/project on a topic of your choice. Social movements, (e.g., the women's rights movement, the civil rights movement, the gay rights movement, the labor and environmental movements) will be at center stage.

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### **HUM 201 Introduction to Gender Studies**

What is “gender trouble”? This provocative question was posed by the philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler in 1990, and it continues to echo with meaning today. In fact, it seems to refract into multiple questions, including:

*What is the trouble with gender?*

*Do we – or specific individuals – experience trouble with “gender” as society defines it?*

*How do societal concepts of gender cause us trouble?*

*How do we trouble those societal concepts to better serve or describe ourselves as individuals?*

These are just a few of the questions that we will explore in this course through an array of literary and theoretical texts that touch upon the concepts of gender, sex, and sexuality. Students will be asked to be close and insightful readers and to approach their reading with an open mind and an interest in “troubling” their own preconceptions of gender.

### **Division of Science, Mathematics, and Computing**

#### **CMSC 101 Introduction to Computer Science**

Introduction to Computer Science is an introductory college-level computing course. Students cultivate their understanding of computer science through working with data, collaborating to solve problems, and developing computer programs as they explore concepts like creativity, abstraction, data and information, algorithms, programming, the internet, and work on projects that help them understand the impact of computers

#### **MATH 109 College Algebra**

College algebra enables students to polish their algebra skills in order to study more advanced math; the course also serves students who intend to focus on areas outside of mathematics and the sciences in their college studies. The algebraic tools studied includes those required for pre-calculus and calculus, as well as for the study of probability, statistics, computer science, and other quantitative fields. Students learn about graphs, polynomials, rational functions, exponential functions and logarithmic functions.

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### **MATH 110 Pre-Calculus**

In this college-level precalculus course, you will prepare for calculus by focusing on quantitative reasoning and functions. You'll develop the skills to describe the behavior and properties of linear, exponential, logarithmic, polynomial, rational, and trigonometric functions. In this course we will cover more advanced skills required for high-level applications of mathematics. Negative and rational exponents and functions, their properties and operations, including inverse functions; linear, quadratic, polynomial, rational, absolute value, exponential, logarithmic functions and trigonometric functions are explored. Students develop graphical and algebraic skills and study applications of concepts.

### **MATH 125 Introduction to Statistics & Probability**

This course is an overview of descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistics is inherently applied through the course, which emphasizes solutions to problems in a variety of applied settings. Measures of location and variability, probability distributions, correlation and regression, sampling and sampling distributions, hypothesis testing and estimation with confidence intervals for means and proportions are explored.

### **PSY 115 Social Psychology**

Social Psychology is the study of human behavior, emotion, and thinking in the social contexts such as families, relationships, friends, as well as broader social systems. In this course students will learn about many of the ways in which we are influenced by these social systems, and how these effects are created. Some of the questions we will explore include:

- \* How does the situation we are in impact our behavior, thinking, and emotional processes?
- \* When do people go out of their way to help each other?
- \* Where do stereotypes and biases come from?
- \* What makes someone kind? Aggressive? Empathic?

### **PSY105 Positive Psychology**

Study in the field of Psychology often focuses on where things go wrong: pathology, deficit, trauma, etc. But there is another side to the human mind and the human experience as well. This course, Introduction to Positive Psychology, focuses on the psychology of when things go right, including happiness, self-esteem, empathy, friendship, leadership, love, achievement, creativity, mindfulness, spirituality, and humor. Through reading, discussion, and our own experimentation and activities, we will explore the science behind these human capacities, their historical and cultural context, and of course their application in our lives.

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### **EUS 108 The Science of Climate Change**

In this course, we will explore what's behind the climate change through a scientific lens and study how the environmental and chemical factors, compounded by human activities, contribute to the issue. By definition, climate change refers to the long-term changes in the climate and involves not a single factor but a multitude of interconnecting factors. To help you better understand their importance individually, we will examine each factor in depth and expand to the impacts of energy, natural elemental cycle and environmental pollution on the climate that in turn affects the ecological and human systems. Finally, we will incorporate these considerations into a simulation model for predictions and understand how they guide the regulations and decision-making processes.