

SJNY100-Freshmen Seminar: Section Topics for Fall 2024: Long Island Campus

The Freshman Seminar will introduce you to college learning and to St. Joseph's University through the lens of a special topic. Please read the descriptions below and choose several which interest you. Not all topics may be available at time of registration. [See note at end of listing.]

Oh, the Horror! It is us!

David Andreas

Throughout the decades, horror movies have proven to reflect the plights of modern society. *Night of the Living Dead* is an allegory of racism in the late 1960s; *Dawn of the Dead* is representative of 1970's consumerism in

America; *Candyman* deals with racism and the once-taboo subject of interracial relationships. Horror movies don't simply spill blood, as they often showcase the darker aspects of humanity's social progress. This course will trace the importance of horror movies from their inception to the modern day, and how they're influenced by the eras in which they are made.

T-TH 3:10-4:35



"You're Not in Kansas Anymore"

S. Karen Donohue

"Musical Drama is a tiny mirror by which we catch our reflection and become relieved of our own isolation for a brief moment." --"Torch Song Trilogy" by Harvey Fierstein

This course is meant to provide students with social, psychological and cultural experiences through the use of musical drama. It is meant to enhance critical thinking skills, encourage the application of lessons learned from musicals and readings that will provide a connection to life experiences in the 21st century. Students are expected to work together in the creation and production of an original project. The course is meant to allow students to take risks and think out of the box, use their talents and work together through group expression and interpretation.

M-W 9:35-11:00



We Are History: Hanging Out with Our Nation's Heroes **Steven Fuchs**

Do you like talking to people about their lives? Are you interested in hearing a good story? Would you like to support our troops? Perhaps make a difference in someone's life, maybe even your own? This course introduces students to oral history, service learning, therapeutic recreation, and veteran-related issues by providing mutually beneficial educational opportunities for students and veterans alike. In the process,

students learn how to use oral history as a research tool, become familiar with the lifestyle of older adults in a residential facility, participate in therapeutic recreation

activities, and appreciate that learning can occur outside of the classroom. If conditions allow, students will visit the Long Island State Veterans Home and/or other facilities throughout the semester.

Monday 1:40-4:40

Picturing the World: From Cave Paintings to Refrigerator Art

Kelly Heider-Walsh

At approximately 18 months of age, a toddler will pick up a crayon and begin to scribble purposively. It is a developmental milestone, but there is also wonder and joy in the primitive marks they make. We, as humans, have sought to express ourselves through pictures from the time our prehistoric ancestors drew on cave walls 40,000 years ago to street artists of today spray-painting images that are a reflection of self and society on subway cars. What are the motives that inspire our species to create? Why do we choose the contexts that we do? These are some of the questions we will seek to answer as we look at both the meaning expressed through childhood experimentation as well as the fully developed personal and formal visual languages of humans from prehistory to the present.

T-TH 9:35-11:00

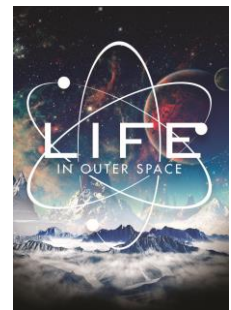


Where are the aliens?

Igor Ivanovski

How many images do we have in our imaginations about alien life forms? From movies to Sci Fi stories to our favorite TV series, we find humans confronting aliens from other planets: little green men, Vulcans, E.T. to superheroes from outer space. Behind the images lies a serious question: "are we alone?" In a vast and ever-growing universe many believe alien life is inevitable. However, it may be eerily like microbial life we already have here on earth rather than monster spiders or large-headed humanoid-like creatures. Before we can begin understanding life beyond our planet, we must first understand what life on earth requires. In this seminar we will learn what is essential to life, and begin to explore what life might look like apart from what we find on our small earth.

M-W 8:00-9:25



Sustainability: Going Green to Save the World?

Kirk Lawrence

"Sustainability" is invoked as a value and a goal by political, economic, and religious leaders and in public surveys throughout the world. With so many valuing and seeking sustainability, it would seem that we are on a path to achieving it. Are we? Do we even know what sustainability means? In this course, the meaning(s) of ecological sustainability and degree of its achievement, locally and globally, will be examined through a combination of historical and contemporary written and visual sources. We will also visit a local ecologically-interesting site(s) and hear guest speakers that illustrate sustainability issues. The primary focus will be on human-environment interactions; in particular, social relationships with animals, the landscape, and material resources. But we will not solely discuss what is now; we will also consider possibilities for a sustainable future

T-TH 11:10-12:35

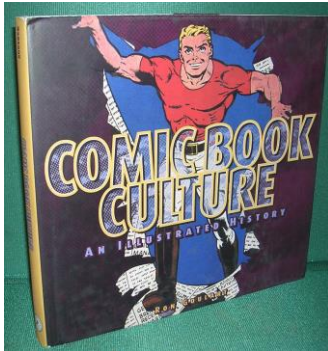
The Wonderful (and not so wonderful) World of Disney

Paul Mager

For almost a century, Disney has been entertaining families through animation, film, theme parks, and products. However, what about the man behind the mouse? Despite the incredible success of the Disney Corporation, the history of the organization is filled with false starts, internal disagreements, and legal trouble. And what about the stories we find in all this media? Can we argue that Belle should have chosen Gaston or that Jafar may have been the good guy in Aladdin? Have things like feminism or bigotry influenced the creators of various films throughout the decades? This course will study the history of Disney, looking at its humble origins and exploring its important and sometimes controversial business choices that helped shape culture. This course will also examine the choices of characters and the content makers to encourage critical thinking and foster thoughtful discussion and debate about various social issues.



M-W 9:35-11:00



Wham! Bam! Pow! Comics and Culture Collide **Chander Mallhotra**

“With great power, comes great responsibility.”

Since their introduction, comic books have become ingrained in our pop culture. In movies, television, and even radio, comic books have jumped off the page and branched into other mediums. Throughout their history, comics have remained relevant by touching on historical and sociological themes. This seminar will look at comic books as a cultural source and discuss how authors, artists, and characters have

impacted our cultures. Social, political, and religious themes will be analyzed and discussed.

T-TH--3:10-4:35

Gilmore Girls: A window into growing up and negotiating the world

Adrienne Manzella

“You’re a person of great heart and great character and that combination will always win the day.” -Richard Gilmore

Whether you identify most strongly with the women and girls or men and boys on this series, you will find no shortage of relatable, colorful characters in Amy Sherman-Palladino’s hit comedy-drama series, *Gilmore Girls*. Set in the quaint and quirky town of Stars Hollow, Connecticut *Gilmore Girls* follows the story of three generations of Gilmore women: Emily, Lorelai and Rory, their friends, and the men in their lives along with many of their quirky neighbors. This course will provide the student with insights about the life and relationships of these characters as it unfolds over the years. In doing so, we will reflect on the struggles, fallouts, and successes that we ourselves face growing up. *Gilmore Girls* serves as a fictional invitation to help us gain a



better psychological and sociological understanding of relationships, conflict, family dynamics, class division, friendship, and community.

T-TH 11:10-12:35



From Blackboard Jungle to Abbott Elementary: How Movies and TV Reflect American School Culture

Andrew Manzo

Since the 1950s schools have been a popular setting for movies and television alike. This course will give students a chance to study how Hollywood has acted as both a reflection of popular culture's view of education and an influencer of the cultural norms embedded within school systems. Discussions will focus on comparing and contrasting these depictions with students' real life experiences from their own schools, elementary through high school. Students will analyze today's schoolrooms by looking back through the popular cultural lens of yesterday, including films such as *The Breakfast Club* and *Mean Girls* as well as explore how sociology and cultural studies decode these images of school experience as reflective of American culture.

T-TH 1:40-3:05

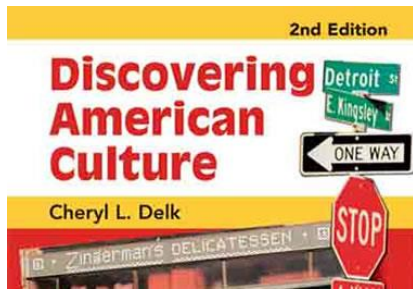
Serial: Exploring America's most infamous criminals through fact and fiction.

Jason Ostrowe

You know the names – Albert Fish, BTK, Jeffery Dahmer, John Wayne Gacy, Ted Bundy, and Richard Ramirez – and heard the stories. Public fascination with serial killers runs both wide and deep with no shortage of movies, streaming shows, documentaries, books and articles dedicated to these infamous criminals. But what is real and what is fiction? How can so many serial killers lead what appears to be normal lives? And, why are we so fascinated by those who commit such terrible crimes? This course will explore these and other questions related to serial killers from an interdisciplinary perspective. We will seek gain a better understanding of the facts and circumstances of their lives, and identify what led them to their notorious crimes. In doing so, we will explore public fascination with serial killers in popular media and literature.

M-W 3:10-4:35





The Human Experience: A Contemporary Adventure across the Landscape of American Culture **Fr. Francis Pizzarelli**

This course will use the lens of sociology and social work to look at the impact of social networking, social media, contemporary music, film, and addiction on human development and behavior. Using social science literature, it will be a critical analysis and ongoing discussion on how these social entities impact contemporary human behavior and

developments with an in-depth conversation on how to make positive life choices that empower the person to reach his or her full human potential.

M-W 8:00-9:25

M-W 9:35-11:00



It's a bird! It's a plane! It's a Superhero Movie! **Stephanie Reese**

Superhero films have dominated our screens for decades and continue to bring in theatre-goers. Why do these movies appeal so much to audiences? Is there a specific formula they all follow? Recently critics have argued there are too many of these films and viewers are experiencing "super fatigue." Does this mean this could be the end of the Superhero Film Genre? Is the influx of Disney Plus shows helping or hurting the industry? In this class we will discuss all of the above while looking back on where this all started including watching films from the Marvel Cinematic Universe, DC Comics, and more. This should be a lively interactive class with lots of opportunities for you to share your favorite (and not so favorite) superhero movies.

T-TH 8:00-9:25

Home Is Where the Horror Is: Family and Place in The Haunting of Hill House & The Haunting of Bly Manor

Kristen Roedel

Why is home sometimes not the most inviting place for the holidays? Mike Flanagan's critically-acclaimed series (2018-2023) highlights the role of the family, as it perpetuates social institutions (such as organized religion) and attitudes (heteronormativity/homophobia), often to individuals' detriment. Focusing on themes such as the avoidance of home, homecoming, and found/created families, this course will take both literary and cinematic approaches to this television anthology.

We will begin with the origins of the American gothic and horror genres. Then, we will explore the ways in which the series uses its conventions to unveil the underbelly of the nuclear family. No previous knowledge of the television series is required to take this course.

M-W 1:40-3:05



The game's the thing?—sports and psychology
Gerard Seifert

This seminar will examine a number of psychological topics through the lens of sports and exercise. Some questions we might consider: How does a basketball or tennis player see the whole court? Why was it so difficult for athletes to walk away from playing their sport? Why do some players seem to buckle under pressure? Is youth sport participation always healthy? How important is winning in sports? When does healthy physical exercise become a cult? Our exploration of these and other questions will serve to introduce a number of models from psychology: personality psychology, group dynamics, social psychology, positive psychology, among others. We will be able to move from the theme of sports to the larger arena of life, college, and careers.

M-W 8:00-9:25



The Walking Dead
Chris Vivas

AMC's television series, **The Walking Dead** is a pop culture phenomenon. But it can also be viewed as offering deeper philosophical and psychological insights into the human condition. This seminar will explore this television show through the lens of mythology, literature, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and pop culture. What deep fears does it reflect? How does it suggest the strengths and weaknesses of being human?

T-TH 1:40-3:05

Students in the Freshmen Honors Program

The Dreams That Stuff is Made Of – Science Fiction and the Great Questions of Life

Thomas Petriano

Science fiction, while it invites us to think about new ways of imagining our universe, is not so much about science as it is about the great questions of life. How did the universe come about? Where is it heading? Are we alone in the universe? Is there a God? Is there a future for humanity? Through reading some of the great science fiction novels and short stories and viewing classic science fiction films, this course will explore how science fiction addresses these questions.

T-TH 9:35-11:00



World Pandemics

James Blakeley

This course will explore world pandemics from an historical perspective. It will focus on the social, political, economic, religious, and human consequences of such pandemics as the Black Death, the Spanish Flu, the Bird Flu, and AIDS. This course is specifically designed for those who are interested in the consequences of illness, fear, and mass death. It questions how modern-day Americans would react if such an event were to occur.

T-TH 9:35-11:00



****Note: Please be aware that the days and times listed here may change. When you register you will see if your choices are being offered as listed here.**

The mission of St. Joseph's University is to provide a strong academic and value-oriented education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, rooted in a liberal arts tradition that supports provision for career preparation and enhancement. The University prepares each student for a life characterized by integrity, intellectual and spiritual values, social responsibility and service - a life that is worthy of the University motto, *Esse non videri*: "To be, not to seem."

To accomplish this, St. Joseph's University has established the following goals:

- To offer curricula that foster the knowledge and intellectual skills associated with the liberally educated person
- To encourage students to develop personal value systems and responsible self-direction
- To foster committed participation in the local and global communities
- To help students develop as whole persons by providing individual attention, interactive teaching and opportunities for active participation in academic and extracurricular programs
- To prepare students for their careers by offering the necessary professional and pre-professional education
- To provide for the needs of a diversified student population with varied educational and professional experiences
- To foster an environment of openness to the exploration and understanding of diverse ideas, traditions and cultures
- To support educational programs and services that will contribute to the vitality of the communities served by the Brooklyn and Long Island campuses

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