LAR 101

This course will take you on an intellectual, human rights and human wrongs journey. The destination is social consciousness (awareness) by way of inquiry. You will have a compass of truth and ethics to guide you on this journey. However, you must first uncover and calibrate this compass.

The History of Science
LAR 101-2
Mark Meyenburg, PhD, Associate Professor of Information, Science and Technology

This History of Science course deals with the history of science and technology, from the dawn of humankind to today. The course is not about who, what, and when. Rather, we will explore the nature of science and technology, and how science and technology have impacted human society. We will learn how science and technology have been related to each other in the past, and how they are related today. We will come to understand the way governments and religions have impacted the development of science and technology, and vice versa. We will see how the philosophy of science has changed over the course of human history. We will begin to understand how science and technology were related to the rise of civilization, and how they are related to our modern culture as well. In our major semester project, teams of students will develop video game based on the course’s history of science content.

Taking a Stance!
LAR 101-3
LAR 101-4
J. L. Vertin, MA, Instructor in Mathematics

“Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.” ~ John. F. Kennedy

What are your thoughts on immigration? Do you support same-sex marriage? Do you oppose the death penalty? Why is Health Care Reform such a big deal? The purpose of this course is for students to move beyond just having an opinion on these issues, to being able to construct a persuasive argument. In this course, students will critically analyze several journal articles in order to develop an informed perspective on these issues. Students will learn how to formulate, organize, and communicate their ideas on these issues by multiple methods.

A Human Rights Journey
LAR 101-1
Alec Engebretson, PhD, Professor of Information, Science and Technology

This course is for students to move beyond just having an opinion on these issues, to being able to construct a persuasive argument. In this course, students will critically analyze several journal articles in order to develop an informed perspective on these issues. Students will learn how to formulate, organize, and communicate their ideas on these issues by multiple methods.

Heroes
LAR 101-5
Dan Clanton, PhD, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

Humans have always sought the answers to pressing questions through the telling of stories. Some of these questions include, what does it mean to be human? What happens after we die? What does “home” really mean, and what are you willing to do to achieve it? How should humans relate to the Divine? What does it mean to be honorable? What is the price of duty? What is “justice,” and how is it achieved? These, and other questions, have been asked and answered in cultures of the past through stories about heroes. This class will examine three classic epics—Gilgamesh, The Odyssey, and Beowulf—in order to discover how previous cultures answered questions like these. We will also address answers to these questions by examining and discussing our own modern mythology, as found in stories of comic book superheroes.

Journeys of Becoming
LAR 101-6
Kristen Hedrick, PhD, Assistant Professor of German

The transition from home to college is one of the great adventures of life, and it will in various ways alter how you perceive yourself and the world around you. We will explore this particular aspect of the journey of becoming who you are by using your own experiences as they relate those of others, both in the classroom and outside of it. Through literature and film, we will also discuss other events that can shape a person’s worldview and alter one’s life trajectory, such as travel, illness, and choosing to leave one’s home country for new opportunities.

Exploration
LAR 101-7
Brandi Hilton-Hagemann, PhD, Assistant Professor of History

This course focuses on the idea of exploration from both historical and modern perspectives. Through selected works of fiction and non-fiction, students will explore various cultures, viewpoints and regions of the globe to refine their understanding of our multifaceted world. Additionally, students will assess their personal exploration from high school to college life.

Journeys
LAR 101-8
LAR 101-9
Kim Jarvis, PhD, Associate Professor of History

This course examines the idea of the journey from historical and contemporary perspectives. Students will read selected works of fiction and non-fiction that focus such issues as adapting to a new culture and challenging political oppression. In addition, students will examine and reflect upon their own transition from high school to college.
In this course you will examine many of the diverse ethical issues related to the human body. Topics such as body modification (tattooing, piercing, etc.), pandemics, organ transplant lists, and artificial bodies/body parts will serve as material for our reading and writing about how we make ethical decisions. Moreover, in the spirit of the Liberal Arts Seminar, we will examine the human body as an interdisciplinary subject, applying concepts from art, biology, religion, philosophy, literature, economics, etc., in an effort to understand how we approach ethical choices from a wide range of perspectives.

The Impact of the Visual
LAR 101-12
Valerie Knobel, B.A., Instructor in Art

Visual images possess a far greater impact on our ideals, values and belief systems than many of us realize. Photography, the Internet, television and movies as well as works of visual art created by trained and non trained artists affect our everyday experiences and influence our mind. Our ideas (including visuals) concerning gender, race, and “the other” play into our thoughts and decisions about the themes of justice and injustice, as well as our own personal journey through the years. In this course, we will examine how influential our visual world might be, and ponder the ways we connect to the written word vs. the images we are constantly exposed to.

GROWING UP GLOBAL: How Coming-of-Age Stories Connect Us All
LAR 101-13
Betty Levitov, PhD, Professor of English

Understanding each other ---by developing knowledge and respect-- is the basis of human progress. Our course is about finding and exploring connections in our global society as well as examining the ethics and meaning of global obligation. Literature, film, and art will be primary sources for our explorations; research, writing, and discussion will be our tools for analysis. We will read personal coming-of-age stories from around the world and from different time periods, beginning with The Complete Persepolis, a memoir told in comic format, of a girl growing up in Iran. We will read a Holocaust memoir and a memoir about a boy growing up on an American Indian reservation. Our individual research and writing topics will focus on how we as individuals see each other and how other people see us.

Information as Power: Fuel or Folly
LAR 101-14
Christine StarrDavis, MFA, Adjunct Instructor of English

Since Alvin Toffler coined the expression, “information overload”, experts and laypeople alike have wondered and sometimes made troubling predictions about the toll of the Information Age on our social, cultural and intellectual vigor. More recently authors like Mark Bauerline and Nicholas Carr have warned of the demise of brainpower, due to our over-reliance on technologies that seem to diminish rather than expand intellectual curiosity. Where are we on our journey in the U.S. toward a technologically-leveraged literacy? How are you handling the unprecedented access you have to information? Is it possible to over-use, even abuse information power? Or, is the greater danger in under-using it? Through video, key readings and Internet sources, we’ll examine information as a source of personal power in the 21st century.

The Power of Stories
LAR 101-15
Katy Hanggi, PhD, Assistant Professor of English

Why do we tell stories? We often consume stories without thinking about why we enjoy them or how they appeal to us. Yet, they are integral to our lives. From a very young age, we rely on stories to not only entertain us, but also to explain the world around us. In this class, we will consider the role of story in our lives. We will learn how to analyze narrative and its components through reading literature and watching film. We will discuss how different academic disciplines research and use the concept of narrative.

Dazed and Confused: Making Sense of a Complex World
LAR 101-16
Nathan Erickson, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Too often, people confuse religion with culture, politics with religion and social class with nationalism. Furthermore, those same issues become more confusing when we try to understand them in light of our personal lives. To be competent consumers of information, we need a foundation of knowledge which can provide accurate, thoughtful and in-depth understanding of complex issues. This course will unravel the complex cultural, religious and political relationships found in the graphic novel Persepolis from a sociological perspective. Persepolis, the common book for all LAR sections, examines the coming of age story of a young girl growing up in revolutionary Iran. With the completion of the course, students will be better equipped to discern fact from fiction, and at the same time work to make sense of our own contradictory and messy lives. As a result, students will realize the world is far more diverse and also far less diverse than they previously thought.

Crossing Boarders
LAR 101-17
Nick Vaccaro, PhD, Associate Professor of Political Science

This course will examine the borders between countries, and the forces which drive people to cross them. The class will consider the idea of borders: what they are, why they exist, and their impact. Beyond this general question, the majority of the class will involve examining important cases of migration across national borders during the past century. Some specific topics that will be discussed include the division of India and Pakistan, exiles from the Iranian Revolution, refugee flight from North to South Korea, and migration from Central America to Mexico and the United States. In each case, we will explore the history and nature of the borders that enclose the countries we are studying (and the different national identities that those borders reflect), and will discuss and compare the experiences of people who have moved across those boundaries.

Science and Society
LAR 101-18
Kate Marley, PhD, Professor of Biology

Course Description: Why isn’t Pluto considered a planet anymore? Why is there a whole category on the food pyramid just for dairy products? Why did the Red Cross initially refuse to test donated blood for HIV infection? In this course we will explore what it means to pursue scientific discovery and the process through which findings are considered by citizens, evaluated for decision-making, and translated into policies. The LAR 101 course serves a critical purpose to help first year students develop college-level critical reading, research, thinking and communication skills. In this section, students will practice those skills while playing the role of scientists, business leaders, religious leaders, policymakers and citizens. Maybe Pluto will have a new fate once we’re done!