LIBERAL ARTS SEMINAR

The Liberal Arts Seminar is designed to introduce first-year students to college-level writing, discussion, critical thinking, and critical reading. Students will learn library research skills, practice working collaboratively, and gain an appreciation for multiple perspectives. These skills will be developed in the context of exploring interdisciplinary content.
Journeys of Becoming
LAR 101-6  T Th 2:30 – 3:45pm
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  T Th 9:30 – 10:45am
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  M W F 9:00 – 9:50am
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.

GROWING UP GLOBAL: How Coming-of-Age Stories Connect Us All
LAR 101-13  T Th 1:00 – 2:15pm
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  M W F 9:00 – 9:50am
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  M W F 1:00 – 1:50pm
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.

Crossing Boarders
LAR 101-17  T Th 1:00 – 2:15 pm
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.