

PY.260 (HUMANITIES - LIBERAL ARTS)

Courses

PY.260.021. ESL Writing Intensive 1. 3 Credits.

A year-long course designed for international students who are new to writing in English. Course objectives: teaching students the elements of formal writing, including spelling, grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and the elements of thesis, evidence, and conclusion.

PY.260.022. ESL Writing Intensive 2. 3 Credits.

A year-long course designed for international students new to writing in English. The course introduces foundational writing practices and teaches formal writing skills. Course objectives: teaching students the elements of formal writing, including spelling, grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and the elements of thesis, evidence, and conclusion.

Prerequisite(s): PY.260.021[C]

PY.260.023. Critical Writing Intensive 1. 3 Credits.

A year-long course to prepare students for college-level writing. This course introduces students to foundational academic writing skills in summary, citation, use of evidence, analysis, and argument. Assignments focus on sentence- and paragraph-level coherence, while reinforcing the conventions of standard American English in academic settings.

PY.260.024. Critical Writing Intensive 2. 3 Credits.

A year-long course to prepare students for college-level writing. This course introduces students to foundational academic writing skills in summary, citation, use of evidence, analysis, and argument. Assignments focus on sentence- and paragraph-level coherence, while reinforcing the conventions of standard American English in academic settings.

Prerequisite(s): PY.260.023[C]

PY.260.115. Core 1. 3 Credits.

Introduction to the practice of analytical thinking and writing in the context of reading foundational historical, philosophical, and/or literary texts. Course objectives: ensuring competence in writing and critical analysis. Students will write four analytical papers (3-4 pages each).

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.216. Core 2. 3 Credits.

Introduction to the basics of writing a research paper. Course objectives: ensuring competence in academic research and writing. Students will select a research topic, find source materials, and complete a formal academic research paper (10-15 pages), with appropriate references properly documented. Prerequisite: Core 1 or approved placement.

Prerequisite(s): PY.260.115[C]

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.241. Art History: European Art Survey, Renaissance - 1855. 3 Credits.

An introduction to the history of art. Open to undergraduates only. Art History 1 surveys European art from the 14th through the mid-19th centuries. It surveys Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture in Italy and Northern Europe, its origins in Medieval art, and examines shifts in artistic concepts and forms from the 16th through the mid-18th centuries that led to the emergence of Mannerist, Baroque, and Rococo art. The course concludes with an examination of Neoclassicism, Romanticism, and Realism up through the mid-19th century. Artistic movements, styles and influences relevant to the development of western art will be covered, with the inclusion of some American art traditions as time permits. Additional commentary as it relates to music history will be interwoven.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.252. Art History: Modernism. 3 Credits.

An introduction to the history of art. Open to undergraduates only. This course offers a survey of avant-garde European and American art from the mid-19th century to the present. Some of the many artistic movements covered include Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, German Expressionism, Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, De Stijl, early American Modernism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art, and Postmodernism. Additional commentary as it relates to music history will be interwoven.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.261. Introduction to Psychology. 3 Credits.

An introduction to the fields and research methods of contemporary psychology, including such topics as biological and social bases of behavior, human development, perception, memory, learning theory, intelligence, and abnormal behavior. Special emphasis will be placed on subjects of importance to music education. Open to undergraduates only.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.301. Why Study the Liberal Arts?. 3 Credits.

This course has no specific content, no given topics. It doesn't try to teach you about a particular subject, time period, or place. No. You the student provide the content. Your work is the focus of this class. Whether you are a dancer, an instrumentalist, a singer, a conductor, a composer, a new media artist, or a recording engineer you will provide the content. We will take what you are doing in your major and look at it from the perspective of the Liberal Arts. You will each have the chance to introduce to your classmates and to write about at least one thing you are interested in—like a particular piece, a technique, an artist, a concept, or a genre. And your classmates will listen to you, read about your interests, and discuss these things as they would a topic in any other Liberal Arts class. You will not only try to express yourselves about your work, but to understand others and their work. You will practice speaking as well as listening, writing as well as reading. And through this communication we will try to build community. For the Liberal Arts are not just a collection of subjects to be learned (and too often forgotten). They are aptitudes and attitudes, ways to build bridges between our islands of experience.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.304. What Can Music Do. 3 Credits.

No doubt, things are grim. So, what can music and dance do to help us get through these and other dark times? How can such arts improve our lives? What can they teach us and where do they touch us? Do they have the power to heal our minds? Our bodies? Our hearts? This course is designed for students with all sorts of tastes, backgrounds, and interests in dance and music. Although the professor will lead discussions and provide some texts, yet, by learning how to find and research different sources, students will also explore the power of music and dance from whatever perspectives interest them. If you are a dancer, you might ask how music-inspired movement can strengthen social bonds or how dance can brighten a dementia-darkened mind, if only for a moment. Musical performers, composers, and engineers might investigate the ways that music education can regenerate a dying culture or revolutionize an oppressed people. From folk to popular, classical to jazz, ballet to modern, and any other soundwave or movement you can convince us to consider, our texts will be limited only by your tastes. The ultimate goal of this course and its diversity is not just to pursue our own individual interests in music and dance, but to hone our ability to communicate and collaborate with one another.

Prerequisite(s): Core 2 is a required prereq

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.307. The Posthuman Era. 3 Credits.

In this course we will explore what has become known as the Posthuman. Although the term originated in the writings of science fiction, it has come to mean much more than something merely imaginary or fantastic. The Posthuman or Anthropocene—both terms are very similar in meaning—may be what describes us, now. Behind these terms is the idea that humanity has entered into a new age or epoch, one where the advances of technology have created conditions for life on earth that are unprecedented. We are, it is said, no longer simply human, and whatever human beings had been defined as in the past, no longer describes us. The specific conditions are, to name the most important, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and climate change. The impact of these developments on life and the arts has been immeasurable. Our course will explore each of these topics in order to offer students a chance to catch a glimpse of what is happening to us now and in the future.

Prerequisite(s): Core 2 is a required prereq

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.313. Katharine the Great: An Everlasting Film Star. 3 Credits.

How does an artist endure? What makes one star last while another fizzles? Katharine Hepburn, 1907-2003, is ranked by the American Film Institute (AFI) as the “greatest female star in the history of American cinema.” She lived as originally as so many of the film heroines she portrayed. This humanities seminar examines the roles and movies that defined the pioneering Hepburn as an actress, a businesswoman, and progressive thinker in American history. Along the way, we will trace pivotal events and cinematic trends in the 20th century contributing to Hepburn’s legacy.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.315. Love in Philosophy, Film, and Literature. 3 Credits.

What is “evil”? How is it depicted in the arts? –In order to address these questions, our two main readings this semester will be Goethe’s drama *Faust* and Bulgakov’s novel *The Master and Margarita*. While Goethe’s work is a tragedy, Bulgakov’s novel is a satirical dark comedy. We will pair these readings with selected philosophical essays depicting, for example, Kant’s theory of “radical evil”, and movies, such as “Hannah Arendt”. The discussion topics in this class will be challenging for their intellectual depth, but at the same time incredible fun and entertaining.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.330. Asian Representation in Film and TV. 3 Credits.

Depictions of East Asian and Asian-American characters in film and television have evolved since the earliest days of Hollywood. Alongside world events and US immigration patterns, representation shifted and a host of stereotypes emerged. Consider the wise guru, the exotic girlfriend, and the martial arts sidekick among many portrayals. This liberal arts seminar offers historical context and critical tools for analyzing and discussing these representations while gaining acquaintance with a range of films and television series.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.333. Contemporary Philosophy. 3 Credits.

Philosophizing means to think and ask questions. In this class you will delve into captivating topics that will encourage you to ponder and exchange ideas with your fellow students, professor, and engaging guest speakers. Together, we will explore the fundamental questions surrounding the cosmos’s ultimate reality, the notions of free will and consciousness, the intersections between science, the humanities, art, and cultural diversity, the debate between theism and atheism, and the nature of transcendent experiences. None of the readings in this class require any prior familiarity with philosophy. Our primary course materials include: (1) South Korean-born Byung-Chul Han’s 2019-*The Disappearance of Rituals. A Topology of the Present*; (2) Sean Carroll’s 2016-*The Big Picture*; (3) topics selected by students as part of an engaging group work assignment. Embark on this intellectual journey with us, where class discussions will revolve around your thoughts and questions, shaping the course’s dynamic exploration.

Prerequisite(s): Core 2 is a required prereq

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.335. Existentialism. 3 Credits.

Through readings, discussions, and critical analysis, students will explore existentialist perspectives on freedom, choice, authenticity, and the search for meaning in life. The course will consider existentialist literature, art, and film to contextualize philosophical concepts within broader cultural and historical contexts. Existentialist authors that will be discussed include: Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Buber, Musil, Sartre, Beauvoir, and Kundera. We will try to understand what the existentialist angle on life is, and whether it is applicable to the 21st Century. Unlike traditional approaches to philosophy, the thinkers discussed in this class do not attempt to provide final answers to a traditional set of questions, such as "What is human nature?" "What is the meaning of life?" "What is truth?" Rather, philosophical inquiry emerges within the context of specific practical concerns of human beings, who live in a finite world with no objective standards as guidance. There is a sense of predicament, alienation, estrangement, radical freedom, and responsibility common to these thinkers. What do these characteristics of human life imply for how we (should) relate to ourselves, others, and the world? What kind of society should we build? How can we find consolation and meaning in life? Despite significant differences, all authors discussed in this class do what all good philosophy does: they make you think and ask questions. Upon completion of this class, you will be able to: -Understand the historical development and key concepts of existentialist philosophy. -Analyze existentialist texts and critically engage with primary sources. -Explore existentialist themes such as freedom, choice, alienation, authenticity, and the absurd. -Examine existentialist perspectives on ethics, morality, and the nature of existence. -Apply existentialist insights to contemporary issues and personal experiences. The culmination of this class will be topics selected by students as part of an engaging group work assignment.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.337. Philosophy of Art. 3 Credits.

In this "Philosophy of Art" course, we'll explore two biographies—"Johannes Brahms" by Jan Swafford and "Miles" by Miles Davis—alongside your own artistic projects. We'll begin by discussing philosophical texts on how emotions are expressed in music, what philosophy of art is about, and how art can serve various purposes. Subsequently, we'll examine parallels between Johannes Brahms and Miles Davis to reflect on the artist's role in the 21st century. Enjoy the journey!

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.338. Ethics and the Modern World. 3 Credits.

This is a course that will engage you in several of the most interesting ethical issues and concerns of our time. "Practical Ethics" also goes by the name of "Applied Ethics." Under "ethics" we consider the rational and critical bases of moral problems and issues. What sorts of things can we be morally responsible for? What is the good life? What makes an action moral or not? In applied ethics we apply these moral questions that arise from philosophical reflection to particular cases and situations of moral conflict. Thus, a course in applied ethics is case-oriented. The subjects studied in applied ethics are many, more than we can cover. Our main emphasis will be on and we can only cover a few of them including: human rights and problems of freedom and equality, poverty and economic justice, the ethics of the environment, and the right to life and death. Our course will proceed largely as a theme-based course. We will first study some of the basic ethical theories to familiarize ourselves with them, like utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics. Then we will address various issues that contain ethical problems in which the solution is not clear. This, we shall see, is often the case. In life, we are confronted with moral dilemmas where the clear choice between right and wrong is not present. That means that a deeper analysis of moral principles behind our choices are necessary. Our class will engage in these conflicts of choice, examining them carefully, engaging very often in in-class discussion and debate.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.341. United States History: Methods and Questions. 3 Credits.

"I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear..." – Walt Whitman, poet, 1860. In this course, we'll listen to those varied carols, whether songs of praise, of protest, or of mourning. This course offers a chronological study of histories of the United States, starting with colonization and continuing through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Throughout, students will practice "thinking historically" by using historical methods to explore major questions in American history. Students will work with primary, secondary, and tertiary sources in order to better understand the major issues of American history. We will pay particular attention to the ways that American history has been contested and debated, created and memorialized. Students will demonstrate their understandings in a midterm essay and a final essay, and they will create a creative performance project exploring an era, issue, or persona relating to the course.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.344. Opera: Research as Rehearsal. 3 Credits.

Interesting opera is created not just by memorizing a score and mindlessly practicing and repeating it. Thoughtful research is also a form of rehearsal. Performance can be enhanced and understanding deepened by studying an opera's literary sources, mining its historical context, viewing related artworks, and studying its production history. In other words, doing the work of a dramaturge. Every semester in which it is offered, "Research as Rehearsal" will take as its subject an opera currently being rehearsed by the Peabody Opera Theatre Program. This year we will focus on Handel's *Semele*, scheduled for performance in March. We will read such texts as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (a literary source for the opera) and excerpts from Euripides' *Bacchae* (since *Semele* is the mother of *Dionysus*). We will study paintings like Gustav Moreau's *Jupiter et Sémélé* and Peter Paul Rubens' *Death of Semele*. Since the performance will be staged in a 1920s style, we will read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby* and watch film versions of the novel. We will also investigate the ways in which this opera's origins in a pagan Greek myth affected its first London reception during the period of Lent and how that in turn affected future rewrites of the opera. Open to Graduates and Undergraduates.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.345. US History 1875-Present: Cultural History and Politics. 3 Credits.

American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it" - James Baldwin, black American author and activist, 1963. In this course, we will strive to understand some of that long, large, various, beautiful, and terrible history. This course offers a chronological survey of histories of the United States, from Reconstruction to the 21st century. Throughout, we will explore the connection between historical events and cultural history. We will pay particular attention to the development and dissemination of mass media and mass culture, whether film, radio, television, print media, or the internet. Students will demonstrate their understandings in a midterm essay and a final essay, and they will create a creative performance project exploring an era, issue, or persona relating to the course.

Prerequisite(s): Core 2 is a required prereq

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.350. Introduction to Sociology. 3 Credits.

This course is an introduction to sociology and social problems as a way of understanding the world. Sociology is a field of study that explains social, political, and economic phenomena in terms of social structures, social forces, and group relations. The course will introduce students to the problems that exist within the world and the relationship between individuals and society, which includes focusing on socialization, culture, the social construction of knowledge, inequality, race and ethnic relations, poverty, and political sociology. As a social science, sociology offers an objective and systematic approach to understanding the causes of social problems.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.353. Music and Segregation: Soundtracks of Division and Unity. 3 Credits.

This course examines how music reflects and shapes issues of social class, mobility, and cultural identity. We'll explore the role of music in civil rights movements, the emergence of hip hop as a response to urban inequality, and how the digital divide affects who gets to create and be heard. Through listening, discussion, and case studies, students will analyze how music can challenge, or reinforce, social boundaries.

Prerequisite(s): Prerequisite: Core 2

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.354. Music and Social Justice. 3 Credits.

Music is integral to social justice movements and has inspired social and global change. It has been used variously as a coping mechanism, instrument of protest, site of resistance and a means of healing. This course will explore the intersection between music, social conflict, and social change. Students will examine social movements to analyze the social, cultural and political issues and learn why music plays such significant roles. For example, they will inquire why disco enabled the marginalized gay community and explore how anthems inspired pride and protest from the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter. By understanding why music has the power to bring about social change, students will learn to think reflexively about their own music.

Prerequisite(s): Core 2 is a required prereq

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.361. Bodies in Society. 3 Credits.

We're taught to understand our bodies as natural. Everyone has one. They are universal objects, consistent across humanity. But, people around the world have differing conceptions of what bodies are, what they can do, and where they begin and end. Moreover, people's experiences of their bodies are highly variant. Even at Peabody, for example, what lips do are very different if you are a dancer, a singer, a horn player, or a flautist. The class is designed to give students new ways of approaching their crafts by introducing them to multiple perspectives on how bodies do things in the world.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.363. Performing Gender. 3 Credits.

This course examines gender and gender relations as they are performed in spectacular and mundane settings. Gender is a key organizing category globally, though people's experiences and ideas about what gender is and does vary dramatically across cultural and historical contexts. Drawing on anthropology, feminist studies, and performance studies scholarship, we will investigate how people do gender and what gender does in our cultural imaginaries. This interdisciplinary perspective seeks to show how culture and society shapes gender, how ideas about and experiences of gender are disseminated through performance, and how performances of gender affect culture and cultural meaning around the world.

Prerequisite(s): Core 2 is a required prereq

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.365. Queer Studies. 3 Credits.

This course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary examination of sexual desires, sexual orientations, and the concept of sexuality generally, with a particular focus on the construction of queer identities. We will look specifically at how these identities interact with other phenomena such as government, family, and popular culture. In exploring sexual diversity, we will highlight the complexity and variability of sexualities, both across different historical periods, and in relation to identities of gender, race, class, and cultural location.

Prerequisite(s): Core 2 is a required prereq

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.381. Social Media. 3 Credits.

This course delves into the dynamic world of social media, exploring its evolution, societal implications, and economic opportunities. Students will embark on a comprehensive journey through the history of social media platforms, tracing their development from rudimentary networking sites to sophisticated digital ecosystems. The course will critically analyze the multifaceted impact of social media on society, including its influence on communication patterns, social relationships, cultural norms, and democratic processes. Through case studies, discussions, and research projects, students will explore the various ways in which social media shapes individuals' identities, perceptions, and behaviors.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.411. The Libretto. 3 Credits.

This class looks at the history, theory, and practice of opera's most overlooked and ridiculed element: the libretto, Italian for "little book." Following the fortunes of the libretto from its origins to the present, we'll see how different ideas about librettos influenced the evolution of opera. During our discussions, we'll entertain theories about what makes a good libretto. For example, the theory that librettos can be like ugly frogs that the "kiss" of music turn into princely operas. Or that the duty of the librettist is to strip their literary source of all that makes it beautiful, so that the composer can fill all of that back in with music. Librettos come from many sources: dramas, novels, poems, historical events, and original ideas. We'll ask how the libretto's origins affect how it gets written. At the level of the sung word, we'll listen to what happens when you translate a libretto from another language and how "singability" influences word choice. Finally, we'll also apply this knowledge to writing our own librettos.

Distribution Area: P, Y

PY.260.835. The Art and Architecture of Peabody. 3 Credits.

How often do you visit the George Peabody Library to find a quiet and inspiring place to work? Do you ever walk up the spiral staircase (designed by the same architect who designed the library) or just take the elevator? Are you aware that Peabody has a plaster copy of the Parthenon frieze, one of the most important artworks of Ancient Greece? Or what about the bronze cast of Lorenzo Ghiberti's "Gates of Paradise," a masterpiece of the early Renaissance? Did you know George Peabody conceived of the Peabody Institute as a home not only for a music conservatory but also, among other things, a public library and an art gallery? Though much of the art has disappeared, certain celebrated pieces remain, along with the library and the staircase. This class will take you around Peabody to look at these various works, as well as some of the architecture. We will study, for example, the Parthenon frieze, the "Gates of Paradise," the George Peabody Library, and the Peabody Institute Spiral Staircase. We will interpret these works informed by historical context and theoretical support. But we will also simply read them closely, informed only by what we can see when we slow down and allow ourselves to feel a little appreciation and awe.

Distribution Area: P, Y