AVAILABLE FOR FALL 2011: FRESHMEN EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

These are available to students who are not already participating in other special UAlbany freshmen programs like the Honors College, EOP, or Living-Learning Communities.

We recommend all students eligible register for one. Speak with your advisor for more information!

Freshmen Year Experience 1-credit classes (UFSP 100 – 1 credit, graded A-E)

These classes are designed specifically for freshmen to get to know each other and a member of our faculty in a small class setting. They are great opportunities to learn about a cutting edge topic from our best faculty while developing the skills needed to be a successful UAlbany student. Most meet once a week for 55 minutes and provide students with an intimate learning experience designed to help them acclimate to the academic challenges at the University at Albany. (Some meet for 110 minutes for the first 8 weeks of the semester.)

Professor Sue Faerman

Leadership

Before coming to UAlbany, you likely had the opportunity to observe other students as leaders of student clubs and teams, or you may have observed your supervisor at a job you held, and you likely made judgments about whether or not they were good leaders. Similarly, others may have observed you and made judgments about your leadership. How do people decide whether or not someone is a good leader?

The fact is that people often talk about the importance of good leadership for the effective functioning of groups and teams, organizations, and political entities, but we don’t always agree on what good leadership is. For example, some think of good leaders as individuals who have good ideas and can provide a vision that others want to follow. Others think of good leaders as individuals who listen to others’ ideas and work to build consensus. In this seminar, we will explore the concept of leadership. After examining both current and historical theories of leadership, students will have the opportunity to develop their own ideas about what makes effective leaders, as well as learn some tools and techniques that can be used to increase their leadership capacity.

Professor Ray Bromley

Gandhi: Life, Ideas & Impact

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948) is the world’s best-known and most revered advocate of non-violent resistance and civil disobedience in the face of overwhelming power, repression, and social injustice. Often called “The Mahatma” (Great Soul), he was the most important leader in the Independence of India, the jewel of the British Empire, and a country with one sixth of the world’s population. Gandhi’s adult life was devoted to combating colonialism, prejudice and exploitation, and to the propagation of voluntary simplicity, community development and environmental sustainability. He was a major contributor to the decline and fall of the British Empire, and his ideas inspired millions of people around the world, including Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. This course focuses on Gandhi’s life, ideas, impact and assassination. Students will watch and critique the movie Gandhi (1982), winner of eight Academy Awards, read and research on Gandhi’s life and message, and discuss how his ideas can be applied in the contemporary world.

Professor Diane Dewar

Health Care Reform: What it Means to You?

What will health care reform mean to you? To your family? This course offers a brief history of U.S. health reform, walking you through President Obama’s eight principles to guide the development of health reform. Specific strategies that will be used to reform the health insurance system will be examined as well as how such reform will affect different groups of individuals based on age, income level, and health status. Students will be engaged in what-if exercises as well as working through economic and political perceptions and realities.

Professor David Smith

Lessons from Warren Buffett and other Billionaires

Warren Buffett, of Omaha, Nebraska, is the third-richest person in the world. Many observers have debated the source of Mr. Buffett’s “edge” over other investors in accumulating more than $40 billion in personal wealth. Is it his superior analytical techniques? His usual personal temperament? His access to investment opportunities and information that others cannot access? Many were surprised that as Mr. Buffett approached age 80, he began redirecting his priorities toward education, population control, and disease prevention, especially in developing countries.

This course investigates the various factors that most likely led to Mr. Buffett’s extraordinary success, and whether his techniques and behaviors can be replicated by students today. More generally, the course examines research findings that reveal common lifestyle characteristics of people who become wealthy, as well as the benefits and costs of extraordinary wealth accumulation from a societal and family perspective. Finally, the course considers the idea and potential impact of personal philanthropy.
Professor Lauren Kozakiewicz  
This class will look at the different challenges experienced by male and female political leaders. The American political culture has historically treated men and women differently when it comes to political leadership. We will see how this history still influences how we view current political figures and even political power couples.

Professor Corianne Scally  
How Can Cities Recover from Disasters?  
Rebuilding New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina  
Earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, terrorist attacks, rioting – disasters strike cities every year, leaving massive amounts of physical, social, and economic damage in their wake. What happens to cities when disaster strikes? How can cities respond and recover while promoting social equity, and economic and environmental sustainability? How can they plan for the future in a way that allows everyone to provide input? This course will examine opportunities and challenges around building resilient and sustainable cities in the face of disaster, using the example of planning and recovery efforts in the city of New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina devastated the city in 2005.

Professor Dayna Maniccia  
Why do People do What They Do?  
Have you ever wondered why people behave the way they do? Why some people take better care of themselves than others? How about why some people change behaviors while others do not? If you have, than this class is for you. During the semester we will discuss the behaviors people engage in that influence their health and explore the reasons for those behaviors. Additionally, we will explore techniques to change health related behaviors. By the end of the semester, students will possess an understanding of some of the factors that influence health behaviors and strategies to facilitate behavior change.

Professor Ingrid Fisher  
Financial Fraud: Case Studies and Lessons Learned  
This course explores the circumstances that provide the motivation and the opportunity for corporate employees and executives to commit financial fraud. Using real world fraud scandals we examine the means by which complex financial crimes were committed and why they were not detected in a timely manner. Finally the course considers the profile of a fraudster as well as what factors can be effective in deterring future financial crimes.

Professor Robert Keesee  
Globalization and the Environment  
You’ve probably heard the phrase “The world is getting smaller”. Advances in technology, including communication and transportation, have made resources, goods, labor, and services more accessible from far ranging places across the globe. A challenge in a globalizing society is how do people respond to their local situation and at the same time maintain a global perspective. In other words, how do we “act locally, think globally”. What we will do in this seminar is explore how this process of globalization provides both problems and opportunities in dealing with the environment from the local to global scale. After a little groundwork is laid down, the specific topics will depend on the interests of the class. Students will be responsible for presentation and discussion of these topics.

Professor Alan Oliveira  
Introduction to Science Education  
Thinking about becoming a teacher? This seminar is designed to introduce undergraduate students to the field of science education. It will focus on issues of essential importance to the science teacher profession including scientific models, nature of science, controversial issues (e.g., evolution), curriculum, technological resources for science teaching, classroom management, and equitable education. Students will learn to (1) understand the tools needed to teach science effectively, (2) become familiar with the professional science education literature terminology, (3) explore some key challenges and trends related to school science teaching, and (4) familiarize themselves with a variety of teaching strategies and methods.

Professor Jason D’Cruz and Professor Ellena Young  
What It Means to Be A Human Person: Thinking About Personal Identity  
What does it mean to “be yourself”? What does it mean to be “fake”? How do you know when you are being “authentic”? How do you figure out who you are? The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to fundamental philosophical questions by investigating the nature of personal identity. The course is structured around activities that are designed to help you master philosophical tools and concepts. You will deploy these tools and concepts to arrive at a fuller understanding of who you are as a person.

Professor David Lewis  
The Three E’s of Sustainable Development: Equity, Environment, and Economy  
The course begins with defining what sustainable development is and how it is different than similar concepts such smart growth and new urbanism. Using this operational definition, the class then turns to understanding the need for balance among the 3 Es of sustainability (environment, economics and equity) and the dynamic relationship across time and space. The political, economic, and social barriers to a more sustainable future are analyzed with focus on how individual action and political engagement can influence the outcomes.
Professor Lisa Fuller and Professor Kathleen Whipple  
**Issues in Personal Morality**

In this course, we will be examining a selection of both ethical and practical topics that are pertinent for first-year students. Specifically, will be examining a number of ethical issues that arise in people's personal lives, such as drug use, infidelity, pornography, vegetarianism and whether we owe anything to those people living in extreme poverty. We will also discuss what is expected of students at the University of Albany and how to effectively use the university resources. Such topics will involve plagiarism and the honor code, how to navigate library databases and use Blackboard, how to understand program requirements, choose courses and how to decide on an appropriate course load.

Professor Irina Holden  
**Science Literacy through Sustainability**

We read and hear about scientific studies in the popular media all the time. But how do we understand and use scientific literature? In this class, students will learn about current food–related issues connected with sustainability such as sustainable food supply and sustainable food production and consumption, at the same time getting familiar with basic concepts of science literacy (civic, practical and cultural). Various case studies will be examined to help students to understand the importance of science literacy in our daily life. The students will also learn the basic principles of online research and the importance of information in their academic and personal life.

Professor Susan Harris  
**Public Health Ethics: What the Heck is Public Health, and Why Should I Care?**

Public Health issues, dilemmas, and ethics surround us. They affect us personally. Selected readings will introduce what public health is all about and will present public health controversies to spur discussion and debate. How should you weigh your rights against the interests of the community where you live? Is your community responsible for the care of individuals who know better, but persist in unhealthy behaviors? In a time of scarce resources, is universal health care cost effective and is it built on social justice? Why should you care about social justice? How much government regulation of food and drugs is good for public health and safety, and how much intrudes on one’s personal lifestyle? Where does personal privacy and choice end, and where does community health and safety begin when it comes to contagious diseases, seatbelts, or alcohol use? This is just a sample of the opportunities and challenges this seminar has to offer those who want to get to know each other by joining in a lively public health conversation that affects each and every one of us and the college community.

Professor Sean Rafferty  
**Critical Thinking and Skepticism**

Do you believe everything you read? This class will present students with the basic principles behind thinking critically. Students will be presented with a range of real world examples to show the value of a scientifically literate and skeptical outlook. Throughout the course, we will read *The Demon Haunted World* which is described on Amazon.com as “Demons, UFO’s, the Loch Ness Monster, Big Foot, fairies and the like are all investigated in this incredible non-fiction book by the late Carl Sagan.”

Professor Karyn Loscocco  
**Identity and Culture Viewed through a Virtual Tour of Italy**

Who are you? Would you be the same person if you had been raised in a different country(ies)? We’ll use sociological imagination to investigate how we have been shaped by our culture(s). We’ll look at the habits and customs, and the informal and formal rules of behavior, that tell us how to act, and react, and even how to think. One of the hardest things about studying a culture we’ve grown up in is that we have little perspective on it – it just seems to be “the way things are”. A great way to understand our own culture(s) is to be immersed in that of another country. That’s why we’ll take a virtual journey to Italy to learn about ourselves. Particular emphasis will be given to day to day interaction and to popular culture such as film and television.

Professor Blanca Ramos  
**Multiculturalism in Today’s U.S. Society**

How do your heritage, background, race and ethnicity influence your view of the world? Your day-to-day interactions? This course helps students expand their awareness and understanding of how culture shapes and influences daily life, enhance your appreciation of different cultural groups within and outside of the U.S., and prepare you to function successfully in cross-racial, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural contexts. Topics covered include immigration and the immigrant’s experience, racial and ethnic identity, and western and non-western values. You will be encouraged to analyze concepts, issues, and themes from a social justice perspective. The course offers you an opportunity to heighten awareness of your own immigrant background, racial and ethnic heritage, and cultural values and beliefs, particularly as this will strengthen your ability to grapple effectively with issues of multiculturalism in today’s U.S. society.