FRESHMAN SEMINARS AVAILABLE FOR FALL 2017:
We recommend all students eligible register for one. Speak with your advisor for more information!
These are available to students who are not already participating in other special UAlbany programs like the Honors College, EOP, and Living-Learning Communities.

Freshman Seminars 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. Classes 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.

Professor Kevin Bronner
Personal Financial Planning for Freshmen
#7279  M 12:35-1:30
Now that you are in college, how will you pay for it? How much debt is ok? This course will help students figure out how to conduct financial planning related to events such as 1.) student loan payments, 2.) credit card debt, 3.) housing costs, 4.) automobile payments. Basic accounting principles will be reviewed in class to enable the students to understand personal finance issues. Students will be able to construct a real or hypothetical personal financial plan.

Professor Andrew Byon
World of East Asian Studies
#7299  M 4:40 – 5:35
Specially designed for freshmen studying Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, this seminar will help you understand the culture and background for these East Asian languages. You will work closely with faculty teaching language classes, understand study abroad opportunities, and connect with other freshmen interested in East Asian studies. The class will also include co-curricular ways to practice your language skills and learn about these fascinating cultures outside the walls of the classroom. (Students can also participate in language tables. Enroll in UUNI 99 #10306.)

Professor Luis Cuesta
An Introduction to Spanish and Latin American Film
#9259  W 5:45 – 6:40
In this course, we will study important movies from Spain and Latin America, and familiarize ourselves with the basic terminology of film analysis. This seminar introduces new freshmen to films of renowned directors from around the Iberian world, such as Pedro Almodovar (Spain), Alejandro González Iñárritu (Mexico), or Juan José Campanella (Argentina). We will consider how race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality are cinematically represented on the screen. Together, we will discuss cultural diversity through moral, spiritual, philosophical, and intellectual themes, and we will compare these to American filmmakers. This course is taught in English and all the films that are part of the seminar have English subtitles.

Professor Steven Doellefeld
An Introduction to Careers in Education
#6871  T 2:45 – 3:40
Through your own experiences in education, you've developed a notion of what it means to be a teacher, but have you ever considered teaching as a career? We will explore demography and employment trends for instructional staff at different levels of formal schooling, from Kindergarten through higher education. In addition to readings and class discussions, we will meet and talk with people employed in the field -- not only in careers in the classroom, but also in the myriad of careers in both management and support staff that facilitate and enable teachers to better perform in their roles. This exploration will include, but not be limited to, school counseling, curriculum development, guidance, and administration.

Professor Michael Elliott
Seeing Through Others’ Eyes: Exploring Intercultural Awareness Competencies
#8500  M 10:25 – 11:20
This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of intercultural awareness competencies, including exploring cultural identity, cross cultural understanding, dimensions of culture, and intercultural communication. Intercultural competence is a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics an individual possesses or develops to support effective, appropriate interaction in a multitude of cultural contexts. This course will offer students an opportunity to participate in interactive activities aimed at raising cultural awareness.
Myths and stereotypes about what it means to be a contemporary artist are pervasive in our culture. Discover what it really means to be a socially-engaged studio artist today by visiting the studios of artists at a wide range of points in their careers, from undergraduate students in classes to Masters in Fine Arts (MFA) students in seminars, to established artists preparing to install their work in a museum or gallery. Together we will discover the diverse range of influences and approaches that guide these artists. You will experiment with techniques and processes through hands-on workshops as you explore the work of some of these practitioners through writing exercises. Recommended for those considering majoring or minoring in Art or just interested in all forms of art.

Professor Paul S. Grondahl
#10437

How Do I Get Published?

The Director of the New York State Writers Institute, a veteran journalist and author of a dozen books, will explore the many avenues for students to get published. The explosion of digital media has presented more ways than ever before for students to publish their work, including newspapers, magazines, blogs, websites, online publications, and social media storytelling platforms. The course will involve some writing and reading, but primarily it will focus on a discussion of tips, strategies, and critiques for aspiring authors in any genre. Students will discuss their reading preferences, share some of their own writing, and be open to workshop critiques about their writing samples.

Professor Irina Holden
#9262

Science Literacy

Food and Our Future: Understanding Sustainability through Science Literacy

We often read and hear about scientific studies in popular media, but how do we understand and use them? In this class, students will study basic concepts of science literacy - civic, practical, and cultural - while learning about issues related to food sustainability, such as food supply, production, and consumption. Course activities will include examining case studies and learning basic principles of online research. On completing the course, students will have gained a better understanding of food sustainability, as well as importance of science literacy in their academic and personal pursuits.

Professor Allison Hosier
#9263

Empowering Yourself as a User and Creator of Information

Everyone knows that you shouldn’t believe everything you read, but at one time or another we have all believed something that turned out to be false or that was unsupported by evidence. In this class, we’ll discuss some of the complicating factors, both internal and external, when it comes to deciding what information to believe and when to change our minds. We’ll learn to think critically about the information we encounter on a daily basis and establish a set of responsibilities for ourselves as consumers and creators of information that can be applied to a variety of information-seeking and information creation contexts.

Professor Robert Keesee
#6432

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 Linda Krzykowski
#7278

Start Something That Matters

“Start Something that Matters” to YOU: Be a Social Entrepreneur! Can you make money and do something meaningful? Can you be passionate about your career or is making money separate from doing what makes you happy? Social entrepreneurs are doing both and we’ll explore how in this class. Using the story of TOMS shoes, we’ll explore our interests and discover our passion.

Professor Ross Lazear
#7605

Storms, Climate Change and Environmental Impacts

Whether it’s checking the weather forecast on the way to school, saving energy on a hot summer day, or taking shelter from a severe thunderstorm, we have an important, close relationship with our planet and its future. Along with important lessons on the transition from high school to college, this course will cover major topics taught by experts in the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, such as sustainability, energy and resources, hazardous weather and forecasting, and climate change. Enrolling will be a great opportunity to get to know faculty in the department, and meet your UAlbany peers who share the same passion for the atmosphere and environment you do. Recommended for those interested in majoring or minoring in Atmospheric Sciences or Environmental Sciences.
Everyone has multiple social identities that are meaningful to them, some matter a lot and others hardly at all. What, however, causes one kind of identity to take precedence over others? Why do so many conflicts occur around social identities? How can conflict be mediated through improved cultural and linguistic understanding? This seminar will explore these questions and others through a social sciences approach to identity politics.

Professor Mary Ellen Mallia
#6433     T 2:45 – 3:40
In order to protect the environment on a global scale, everyone — not just scientists and policy makers — must be educated about and commit to environmental awareness. That’s where environmental advocates and educators play an essential role. Environmental science is complex, and changing behaviors on a large scale is difficult. This course will introduce students to the concept of environmental advocacy and examine its application on a personal and professional level. The course will consist of engaging in campus events and using project based learning to illustrate and implement the ideals discussed in class.

Professor Nomi Manon
#9256     Th 1:15 – 2:10 with discussion section on Jewish Expression in the 21st Century
#9498     T 1:15 – 2:10 – held over lunch
This course will explore diverse voices in today’s Jewish community. What are the many ways that young Jews today connect with their history, culture, and each other? What new methods have Jews in the 21st century found to express their Judaism in meaningful ways? How can we create community in the digital age? How does Jewish tradition inform the decisions that young people make in their lives – both Jewishly and in secular society? Through examining topics such as gender, sexuality, tattoos, and food, we will learn about the diversity of the contemporary Jewish landscape. No prior knowledge of Judaism is necessary for this course.

Professor Rae Muhlstock
#10746    F 2:45 – 3:40 with discussion section on World of Zombies
#10747    M 5:00 – 5:55 held over dinner
Are you a fan of the Walking Dean? Join us in this class to understand why Zombie movies and in our culture are so popular. Zombie narratives tap into the tensions of our society, exploring our fascination with death and the undead and demonstrating the possibility of reinventing yourself in a post-apocalyptic world. Explore zombie traditions with professors in the classroom, friends in your class, and at the Zombie Film Festival in October!

Professor Sean Rafferty
#6451     W 10:25 – 11:20
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 Blanca Ramos and Ramon Guerrero
#6452     M 2:45 – 3:40
How do your cultural and ethnic heritages influence your view of the world and your day-to-day interactions? This course helps you expand your awareness and understanding of how culture shapes and influences your daily life and enhances your appreciation of different cultures within and outside of the U.S. The course offers you opportunities to heighten your awareness of your own cultural and ethnic heritages, immigrant background, and cultural values and beliefs. It will strengthen your ability to grapple effectively with issues of multiculturalism in today’s U.S. society. You will be encouraged to analyze multiculturalism concepts, issues, and themes from a social justice perspective.

Professor John Fred Schwaller
#10323    T 1:15 – 2:10
This course will invite freshmen to look at and compare the conquests of native peoples in the New World, Cortes in Mexico, Pizarro in Peru, the Dutch in Nieuw Amsterdam, the British in Jamestown, all provide insights both into the nature of European History at the time, but also how European saw native peoples. Until recently this was the only perspective we had to study. Increasingly native accounts of the conquest period are becoming available and opening new doors in understanding the process of European conquest. Students from all majors are encouraged to join us and look at conquests from both sides and seek to find some common features.
Professor Megan Solon  
**Bilingualism: What it means to speak, know, and learn a second (or additional) language**  
#9260  
F  10:25 – 11:20  
This course will explore, from multiple perspectives, what it means to know two or more languages. For example, we’ll delve into societal attitudes toward bilingualism (and how they change over time and according to the speakers and languages in question) and discuss some of the potential benefits (and drawbacks?) of bilingualism. We’ll also take a look at bilingualism from a cognitive perspective: What actually happens to the brain when we learn, know, and/or speak an additional language? We’ll even try some new language learning ourselves! Finally, we’ll tackle such questions as what “counts” as knowing a language and when one can consider him/herself bilingual, and we’ll examine why these questions aren’t always easy to answer.

Professor David Smith  
**Lessons from Billionaires**  
#9258  
M  10:25 – 11:20  
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 unusual 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.

Seminars tied to Living-Learning Communities

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