

Bard

Sequence

Summer 2023 Course Descriptions (all courses are 3 credit college courses)

Introduction to Positive Psychology

Study in the field of Psychology often focuses on where things go wrong: pathology, deficit, trauma, etc. But there is another side to the human mind and the human experience as well. This course, Introduction to Positive Psychology, focuses on the psychology of when things go right, including happiness, self-esteem, empathy, friendship, leadership, love, achievement, creativity, mindfulness, spirituality, and humor. Through reading, discussion, and our own experimentation and activities, we will explore the science behind these human capacities, their historical and cultural context, and of course their application in our lives

Introduction to Gender Studies

What is “gender trouble”? This provocative question was posed by the philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler in 1990, and it continues to echo with meaning today. In fact, it seems to refract into multiple questions, including:

- What is the trouble with gender?
- Do we – or specific individuals – experience trouble with “gender” as society defines it?
- How do societal concepts of gender cause us trouble?

How do we trouble those societal concepts to better serve or describe ourselves as individuals?

These are just a few of the questions that we will explore in this course through an array of literary and theoretical texts that touch upon the concepts of gender, sex, and sexuality. Students will be asked to be close and insightful readers and to approach their reading with an open mind and an interest in “troubling” their own preconceptions of gender.

College Algebra

College Algebra enables students to polish their algebra skills in order to study more advanced math; the course also serves students who intend to focus on areas outside of mathematics and the sciences in their college studies. The algebraic tools studied includes those required for pre- calculus and calculus, as well as for the study of probability, statistics, computer science, and other quantitative fields. Students learn about graphs, polynomials, rational functions, exponential functions and logarithmic functions.

The Science of Climate Change

This course begins with studies of Earth's climate system and how it works across a range of time and space. These include investigations of the circulations of the ocean and atmosphere and their dynamic interactions such as monsoons, carbon and other cycles; radiation balance, the greenhouse effect, and other factors that force climate to change; and feedbacks in the climate system. Students further explore past climates and how they give us insight into our present climate change considerations and predictions.

Civic Engagement and Social Change

What entices communities to start movements of change? How do we best address social injustice? How do we empower ourselves as citizens to protect ourselves and our communities against inequity? What strategies can we employ to effect meaningful social change? Civic engagement is an act of problem-solving. As such, we will use moments in the long history of social justice movements in the U.S. and abroad to uncover the most thoughtful and impactful theories and practices for social action. Along the way, we will read, learn about, and discuss what strategies and processes we can use to effect social change in the communities in which we live. Some of the questions we will address include:

- What is a community? What does it mean to be part of a community?
- What do we mean by “social justice”? What do we mean by “civic engagement”?
- What characteristics of a community enhance its ability to solve its problems?
- What are the disadvantages of the different approaches to community problem-solving?
- Should community problem-solving address larger social, political, and economic structures and issues, or focus solely on local, more readily ‘winnable’ issues, and/or on meeting individuals’ immediate needs?
- How do we know whether or not a particular approach to problem-solving contributes to greater social justice in a community?