SPRING 2018 FIRST YEAR SEMINARS

(These courses are open ONLY to freshman of the class of 2022)
Students may register for only ONE First Year Seminar

HUMA-159-F1 Etiquette: Rules of Manners in Modern Society  A. Stafford       MWF 12:45PM-01:50PM
This course will look at how the social custom of etiquette reflects cultural changes resulting from new politics, technology, and social movements. Some questions this course intends to pursue are: Are traditional forms of etiquette disappearing in our modern era of technology? How much is etiquette an accurate reflection of one’s upbringing? How important is it to maintain certain social customs in various contexts (academic, professional, familial, etc.)? To further reflect on the significance of social customs in our society, we will also look to historical predecessors of these modern views on etiquette, notably the royal court of Louis XIV. Using the example of the palace of Versailles, where etiquette was enforced to an almost militant extent, we can question the influence of etiquette on social status and opportunity.

HUMA-159-F2 Learning Without Teachers  G. Hafer                              TTH 09:45AM-11:35AM
We will learn about exciting new views on how we learn and manage time, all insights that occur independent of teachers. Sample topics include the surprising ways we learn, the shaping of memories, and study strategies that work (and don’t). We will each choose a modern popular book on learning and design a brief activity on a learning topic. This course is not a dry review of theory, but one that generates practical help for lifelong learning.

HUMA-159-F3 Salem Witch Trials  C. Pearl                                    TTH 09:45AM-11:35AM
The Salem Witch Trials of 1692 are one of the iconic events in American history. Almost from the conclusion of the final trial, these tragic events captured American imagination. This class examines the trials themselves and the various ways in which contemporaries and modern scholars have interpreted them. Largely a discussion based class; students will analyze trial records, poems, and firsthand accounts of the event. Students will also evaluate differing scholarly and popular interpretations of the trials in Salem.

HUMA-159-F4 Becoming a 21st Century Story Keeper  A. Rogers                  TTH 09:45AM-11:35AM
Learn the art of digital storytelling through the creation of two digital projects that teach students to release their own story and the narrative of a community member from the local area. This course is designed for students to research and explore the history of Lycoming County, expanding and enriching the lives of themselves and community members as they build personal relationships in this digital age of technology. Students will work with community members to create digital stories about their own lives.
How can an author deal with issues and plots often too controversial for their day? One way historically has been to invent a fantastical world or universe where the reader or viewer can suspend their disbelief and entertain the story’s thesis far from their own reality, i.e. science fiction. Science fiction provides a literary and theatrical means for investigating many aspects of the human experience. The role of science in society and the portrayal of the scientist as protagonist will be explored using classic science fiction films and literature. A running theme will be various ways of dealing with the saga of “The War of the Worlds.”

Why are there some books we just can’t put down? Why do we have to see some movies? In this course, we will explore the composition of a wide variety of media - Harry Potter, Star Wars, and Supernatural to name a few – in an effort to ascertain the hold these narratives exert over us. Specifically, we will analyze the undergirding historical and social frameworks that make such media compelling, offering us a “backdoor” into the way that we think and feel in the contemporary world. This allow us to question what appeals to us and why and to provide sophisticated analyses of media that we otherwise thought were “just for fun.”

Are you interested in games? Do you want to learn the secrets of the casino? Have you ever played a game and wondered why you lost or perhaps you wondered how you could have played better? In the Mathematics of Games and Gambling, we will examine a wide variety of casino games, contemporary games, and classic games as we try to better understand the underlying mathematics and strategy behind each game. The course is a hands-on course taught with the expectation that students will play the games and mathematically analyze the games covered in class.

Have you ever seen a YouTube video of a science experiment and wondered how it could possibly be real? Do you like to experiment and work with your hands? This course will utilize popular media to learn about aspects of chemistry. The main focus of the course will be the development a student-led chemical demonstration show for the college community that will occur late in the semester. This experience will also allow students to develop their science skills and to refine their communication skills through practice talks and preparation of scripts. The content of the course will be defined through the choices of chemical demonstration. Additional material for the course will be derived from the depiction of chemistry in the popular media (news, movies, books, and the internet).

We commonly hear that modern societies place disproportionate significance on money and material possessions - that we live in a “consumer society.” In this course we take an interdisciplinary approach to studying consumerism, drawing upon academic research from various theoretical and applied perspectives. We will examine how the ubiquitous presence of consumerism influences individual behaviors, social welfare, culture, environmental quality, economic performance, and public policy. We will study both the positive and negative impacts of consumerism on individuals and societies, with a focus on the United States. We will also explore our personal choices as members of a consumer society, considering how we can lead balanced and fulfilling lives.