THE UNIVERSITY SEMINAR

AT

SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

University Seminar serves as the entry point to the Slippery Rock University Rock Studies Program. With its small seminar setting and strong faculty-student interaction, the course promotes intellectual inquiry, critical and creative thinking, and academic excellence. Through varied content, the course introduces students to academic discourse and information literacy while exploring topics such as diversity and inclusion and global awareness. This course will set students along the path to becoming engaged with issues and scholarship important to a 21st century education while they learn about themselves and their place in the world.

At the completion of the University Seminar, students will be able to:

a. Demonstrate a commitment to intellectual rigor and academic excellence.
b. Produce ideas in written, digital, and spoken forms.
c. Engage with topics of diversity and inclusion.
d. Make local and global connections.
e. Evaluate information sources, distinguishing unsupported opinions and beliefs from researched claims and evidence.
f. Understand the interdisciplinary nature of the University Seminar, and how the course relates to the Rock Studies program, students’ chosen (or intended) majors, and lifelong learning.
ART 139 University Seminar: Art: Makers and Materials

Ms. Teresa Antonelis

This course will introduce students to visual artists who challenged the dominant ideas of their time, and who championed messages to challenge authority and embrace diversity and inclusion. The lives of these artists will be explored through examining their biographies in literature and film. The artists’ practices will be explored through hands-on application of their methods and materials. In a studio setting, including drawing, collaging, printmaking and sculpture, the art experience comes to life. Students are encouraged to express themselves in studio projects, as they learn about visual artists whose methods and messages paved the way for makers of culture today.

ART 139: University Seminar: Observation and Perception

Ms. Heather Hertel

Art and Science meet through observation. Learning how to see and understand are tools used by both artists and scientists. This course will utilize skill building in observation and perception to form awareness of self and one’s surroundings. Students will learn how to look outward and inward through recording in personal journals. We will routinely observe, meditate, sketch, write, discuss and research using the subjects from Leonardo’s Notebooks, such as botany, anatomy, architecture and inventions. We will learn to observe and interpret the physical and meta-physical world around us. By the completion of the course, students will develop a personal sketching and writing journal for self-reflection.

CRIM 139 University Seminar: Good and Evil

Dr. David Champion

This course will examine Ken Wilber’s “Integral Perspective” to understand and discuss aspects of crime, violence, and terrorism. The Integral Perspective encompasses multiple modes of knowledge and perception of the world, as well as human potential. Students will gain knowledge of how an Integral understanding can enhance their own learning.

DAN 139 University Seminar: Latin American Dance

Ms. Melissa Teodoro

While dances such as the Argentinian Tango, Colombian Cumbia, Cuban Salsa, or Caribbean Reggaeton may all seem like the right ingredient for a fun night out, they also hold layers of complex cultural meaning that deserve closer examination in order to grasp a more comprehensive picture of the dances within their socio-political contexts. This course will present dance as a reflection of a culture’s idiosyncrasies and its perception of race, gender and sexuality, but it will also examine dance as a producer of a culture’s identity. Through historic research, movement analysis, cultural examination and embodiment of choreographic principles, students will explore, experience and understand the body politics inherent in Latin American dance.
DANC 139 University Seminar: Magic and Mayhem: Metaphor and Meaning in Movie Musicals  
*Ms. Nora Ambrosio*

This course will introduce students to different metaphors and meanings in movie musicals, with a specific focus on how popular entertainment serves to illuminate issues in society in ways that are both relatable and timely. American musicals created for the screen from all eras, beginning in the late 1920s early 1930s to today, will be examined for topics relevant to a contemporary society, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and diversity and inclusion. Movie musicals have the power to inform as well as entertain, and this course will challenge students to think in new ways about this global phenomenon.

ELEC 139: University Seminar: Social Movements: Rise, Revolt, Repeat  
*Dr. Monique Alexander*

This course explores history, structure, and philosophies of landmark movements of accessibility over the last 60 years to argue for a novel pathway to support the school accessibility movement. While investigating social movements such as #MeToo, Montgomery Buss Boycotts, and food scarcity, this class will draw lessons learned from communities that have galvanized for better conditions and greater access to basic human needs to spark a movement in educational policy that will change the way we fight for better schools.

ENGL 139 University Seminar: Memory and Place  
(Where Are We Going? Where Have We Been?)  
*Dr. Mark O’Connor*

Imagine yourself in the middle of the timeline of your life, where you are right now, looking forward and looking backward. Where you *are* is on a cusp of your past and an unknown future, a hinge moment. Our presence in the world today—individual and global—and the decisions that we make, all depend on how we use memory to understand the past and guide us in the future. We are going to explore these ideas together. This course begins in the archives of Bailey Library, with place-based research exploring the history of university life at SRU, how college students before you lived, learned, and succeeded. Using the skills attained in the archives, you will broaden your study of memory and place to show how both are shaped by social and cultural expectations. Ultimately, you will conduct your own place-based research (e.g., your hometown, a significant building, or that abandoned mall you loved as a kid) and design a project. Most crucially you will be able to explain how your plans for your own future are linked with memory and place, as both ideas inform not only where you have been, but where you are going.

ENGL 139 University Seminar: Spies and Terrorists on Film  
*Dr. Bill Covey*

This English 139 section provides a way for students to think, speak, and write critically about how spies and terrorism are depicted in film. The course will set as its course for examination films made in various markets between the 1930s and today. Students will study major filmmakers and cinema texts, discuss ways that films communicate, read about historical and cultural contexts, and critically analyze written and visual texts.
ENGL 139 University Seminar: Truth, Beauty, and the 21st Century
Dr. Rachela Permenter
As you deal with the changes and challenges of the contemporary world, you may wonder if the pursuit of truth and beauty will prevail as a foundation of human cultures. We will consider, among many other questions, what the Navajos mean by a daily attempt to “walk in beauty.” And what about truth? How will you find it these days, when will you trust it, and how will you live it in your personal and professional lives? Students will keep journals, post Blogs, and make videos where you will keep track of occasions of beauty and truth and of your attempts to answer these questions.

ENGL 139 University Seminar: Improvising Your College Experience
Dr. Chris Kreiser
As you experience everything that is new about college—new courses, new friends, new academic expectations—you’ll often rely on what worked for you in the past: prior study strategies, high school-honed social skills, long-standing ways of thinking. Borrowing from these old procedures, you create new solutions. But how do we actually unite the known with the constantly changing unknown of college? More often than not, we just wing-it. We make it up as we go. We improvise. Our course explores what improvisation is across many different practices—music, theater, comedy. And we practice the many ways we can get better at it through readings, research, and in-class improv activities: all with the goal of understanding how you can become more creative within each new, required structure of your college life.

ENGL 139 University Seminar: The Social Construction of Identity
Dr. Erica Scott
Who are you? How was your sense of self-created? Are some aspects of your identity more important than others? Gender? Ethnicity? Class status? Sexual orientation? Nationality? Religion? Political beliefs? Physical abilities? This course will examine how identity is a socially and historically constructed concept, shaped by the cultural institutions that surround us, such as family, friends, education, organizations, and media. In particular, the course will focus on how media representations (images, words, characters, genres) influence not only our own identities, but also how we understand the identities of others. This exploration will include a variety of cultural texts, ranging from traditional texts, such as books, like Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Between the World and Me* to TED Talks like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “The Danger of a Single Story,” YouTubers like Laci Green, advertisements, social media, memes, etc. Course projects will include a visual argument, the making of a YouTube video, an analysis of a social media site, and the creation and maintenance of a semester-long Blog.

ENGL 139 University Seminar: We Are What We Eat
(What Food Reveals About Us and Our World)
Dr. Rochelle Hurt
Food is charged with significance on a personal level--mom's lasagna, homemade birthday cakes, feuds over the best pizza in town--but the social implications of food extend far beyond our personal lives. In this course, you will explore the hidden dimensions of food, including class, ethnicity, race, and region, ultimately connecting your experiences with food to the larger functions of food in the world. Classroom activities and assignments will focus on food terms, taboos, and traditions, asking you to research the history and evolution of some of your favorite
foods. The final project will offer you the opportunity to analyze a social or political food-related issue and to place yourself within the larger cultural contexts of food.

**ENGL 139 University Seminar: How Games Narrate Our Lives**  
(Examining How Games Effect Players, Communities, and Cultures)  
*Dr. John Silvestro*  
Over the past four decades, games have become influential cultural texts, shaping the ways players think, interact, and communicate. One of the ways games influence players is through the narratives they get players to work through. Game narratives situate players in complex situations and then ask players to make difficult decisions that shape those situations and oftentimes other players. For example, the board games *Monopoly* and *The Settlers of Catan* both ask players to create companies that directly compete with other players’ companies. One requires players to work with one another (*Settlers*), thus revealing to players ways to run businesses working with others, and the other requires players to bankrupt other players (*Monopoly*), demonstrating a completely different approach to running a business. In light of games rising influence and the ways their narratives effect players, this course will study through a range of methods a variety of games, unpacking the narratives of and the effects of those narratives of games. To examine how games narrate our lives, this course will first situate games as cultural texts, much like TV shows, movies, and novels. Specifically, the course will use literary and rhetorical frameworks to examine the narratives of games. Through these frameworks, students will study how game narratives invite players into specific, reflective contexts that make subtle suggestions about how we should act and think as well as how we should interact with other humans, aka other players. To accomplish this, students will first study and then write criticisms of several games, revealing their narrative arguments. Next, students will write an in-depth research project into the impact of a game of their choice. Lastly, students will write their own text-based game that centers around a narrative making its own point about how people should think, act, and interact.

**ENGL 139 University Seminar: The Songs of our Souls**  
*Dr. Frederick White*  
In this course, we discuss the allure of popular music to give meaning in our lives. Addressing aspects of origins, destiny, identity, and purpose, students will examine specific lyrics that proffer varied responses to these questions. As we ponder the meaningfulness of the lyrics—and the accompanying music—students will ruminate, discuss, and write critically about the songs we often unthinkingly accept, but which profoundly impact our purpose, identity, and even destiny.

**ENGL 139 University Seminar: Humor and Literature**  
*Dr. Tim Oldakowski*  
For as long as stories have been told, humor has been an essential part of our lives. Whether we read a humorous book, watch a comedic movie, or tell jokes, humor and comedy are inescapable parts of our lives. Students in Humor and Literature will be introduced to a wide variety of humorous texts from William Shakespeare’s works to the essays of Mindy Kaling. From the Algonquin Round Table to dad jokes- Humor and Lit will provide students the opportunity to read, listen to, and view all types of humorous texts as well as creating some of their own.
ENGL 139 University Seminar: Technological Predictions and the Present  
*Dr. Jason Stuart*
People love to predict the future. You predict any number of stable futures - futures where the work you do now, in college, creates possibilities for your adult life. And every day we read a new prediction for the advances in technologies and the new discoveries that will greet us in that future. But does technology advance faster than our ability to process its impact? This course looks at the predictions of the future by examining the problems of the present. We’ll read visions of the future told by prophets, inventors, writers, and academics, and ask who, exactly, gets to make these predictions. We’ll define the present pressing ecological, economic, and social issues, and compare them to the futures these predictions envision. We’ll see if our contemporary prophets more often get it right, or get it wrong, and who has to admit mistakes. Most importantly, we’ll examine what our bold visions of the future leave for the present to solve - and what future generations will have to fix. The world has never lacked self-proclaimed bold voices envisioning a better future through technological change; which voices are correct?

ENGL 139 University Seminar: Mystery—the Knowable and Unknowable  
*Dr. Timothy Rupert*
Mystery makes up the very heart of intellectual life. Time and again, the allure of mysteries proves ineluctable, energizing scholarly inquiry and facilitating academic achievement. What do we know, or think that we know? What lies within our cognitive grasp, and what hovers beyond it? In this course you will have opportunities to consider why we feel compelled to delve into mysteries of various kinds—literary, scientific, historical, philosophical—and how responsible thinkers approach mysteries both solvable and unsolvable.

ENGL 130 University Seminar: Driverless Cars  
*Mr. Patrick McGinty*
There is no shortage of debate about how and when autonomous vehicles will change American life. This course will place students in the proverbial driver's seat of these important social conversations. Students will create an evidence-based historical context for American innovation, assess regional news stories to evaluate the behavior of local AV companies in the Western PA community, and envision what AVs mean for the future of American life through creative presentations.

ENGL 139 University Seminar: “A” for Algorithm, “B” for Bias  
*Ms. Lauren Shoemaker*
Algorithms are increasingly being used to target us for advertisements, decide whether or not we are qualified for a job or a loan, label us high risk for insurance, or identify us a potential security threat. This course introduces interdisciplinary questions to address algorithms and bias. Whether it is through the personal data that we share in order to use free apps, or what we unknowingly reveal about ourselves through search terms, the pervasive presence of algorithmic tools challenges us to bring humanist questions to data science and instill the importance of scientific literacy in our pursuit of social equity.
ENGL 139 University Seminar: Protest Movements in the United States
Ms. Jessica Jopp
In this course we will explore several current protest movements in the US, situating them in an historical context. We will look at regional as well as national movements; explore the wide range of protest methods and subjects; and study a variety of texts. The Reacting to the Past game “Montgomery 1956: White Supremacy, Civil Rights, and the Bus Boycott” provides additional textual material for study. Some research questions we will explore include: What is the role of religion in protest? What role have college students played in protest movements? How do social media tools complicate or facilitate traditional methods of protest? How do we determine the effectiveness of a protest? All of these questions invite reflection on democratic engagement and the role of citizens in a democracy.

ENGL 139 University Seminar: Brave New Worlds (Utopian/Dystopian Visions)
Dr. Ryan Stryffler
Scarcely a month goes by without some new pronouncement of the future devastation of climate change, a new disease, or the looming threat of a nuclear war on the news. It may only be a slight exaggeration to say that our society is developing an obsession with the “end times” or a post-apocalyptic future. And yet none of these visions seems pleasant, as if we have lost the ability to view the future without a sense of impending doom. However, the tension between hopeful optimism for the creation of a better society and the fears of the emergence of a dystopian nightmare has been a part of the philosophical heritage of Western cultures for centuries. This course will explore various types of utopian/dystopian texts from a variety of cinematic, literary, historical, philosophical, political, and sociological perspectives. You will learn to use these discussions to create a framework in which to propose a model for a better social order for either the university, a local community, your home state, or our bigger nation.

ERS 139 University Seminar: Side Effects
Dr. Bonnie Siple
Consumers are flooded with marketing and advertising for products to cure the common cold and ease pain. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications and supplements are easily available from pharmacies to vending machines. As new college students become responsible for self-care of common illnesses and health conditions, it is important that you learn to make good decisions about what medications to take. Through this course, you will learn about OTC medications and other self-care remedies for common medical conditions. Specifically, you will explore the purpose of OTC medications, dangerous interactions, and potential side effects to understand how these products can be used safely and effectively.

ERS 139 University Seminar: The World Freaks Out
Dr. Jacqueline Williams
In today’s world, people freaking out about nothing happens all around us on a daily basis. Life is hard. People give up when they are unable to complete tasks or expect others to do it for them. How a person handles each situation will determine how they move forward in accomplishing life’s goals. This course will introduce students to recognize situations that may affect successfully achieving daily tasks and discover solutions to complete life’s short and long-term goals. Students will assess their grittiness, learn to set achievable goals, develop skills to accomplish goals, and improve perseverance when life becomes a challenge.
ERS139 University Seminar: There’s No App for That  
*Dr. Marketa Schublova*
Are you happy in real life, and not just on social media? This course explores how to survive college by staying healthy, decreasing stress, and improving self-esteem. How do we survive outside of our family and high school friends? How do we build meaningful relationships in college? How do we develop patience? Instant gratification affects our satisfaction. Learning patience is something that matters and takes time. We have to be patient to master new skills or build relationships. Are we too critical of ourselves and the world around us? How do we deal with failure? How do we make a positive impact? This course will challenge students to think how we affect the ones around us and how the environment we chose affects us.

GES 139 University Seminar: Wildfires  
*Dr. Stentor Danielson*
Recent wildfires in California have dominated the news, but fire is a major force shaping landscapes all around the world. In this class, you will get a global perspective on the role fire plays in ecosystems and human societies. We will examine the ecological effects of burning and suppression, cross-cultural differences in the use of fire, the relationship of wildfire to climate change, and measures to promote fire safety from the household to the national level.

HIST 139: University Seminar: The Power of Ideas  
*Dr. Lia Paradis*
This course will take a closer look at specific moments when revolutionary ideas transformed societies. Students will learn about these transformational events through elaborate role-playing games in which each student ‘plays’ a character who was actually there. Students will find themselves in New York in 1776 and in Paris with Impressionist painters, using research, critical thinking, creativity, and persuasive argument to shape the past.

HIST 139 University Seminar: Twisting History  
*Dr. Paula Rieder*
This course explores key moments in the past when a few individuals made decisions that have shaped the modern world. Students will engage in a series of elaborate role-playing games, set in ancient Athens and the Tudor court of King Henry VIII, to immerse themselves in the historical context and become the characters making those important decisions. Students will use research, critical thinking, creativity, and persuasive argument to engage with the past and, perhaps, twist history to make different choices.

INDP 139: University Seminar: #changetheworld  
*Dr. Alice Del Vecchio*
Do you look at the world and think ‘somebody ought to fix that’? This seminar is designed to prepare YOU to be that somebody! In this course you will be challenged to understand change – perhaps the only constant in life – and to identify in what way(s) you want to shape the future. We’ll start this journey by exploring the passion, genius, commitment, life choices and challenges of well-known change makers. Next you’ll learn about various theories and models of change that will provide skills to help you become a change maker. Finally, you will craft YOUR life plan outlining the difference you want to make, the skills and experiences required to prepare you and the strategies to fuel your passion to #changetheworld.
LIBR 139: University Seminar: An Era of Lies  
*Ms. Jessica Jordan*
Explore and discuss information about the cultural phenomenon of social networking, digital privacy, security, and information literacy. From cyberbullying to digital citizenship, lessons will help you to navigate the internet safely and effectively.

MUSI 139 University Seminar: Beethoven to Hip-hop: Music and Politics  
*Mr. Vern Miller*
For centuries, the history of music has been impacted by political forces, and music has, in turn, been used by political and social movements to unify and create change. In this course we will explore the connections between music and politics through the examination of music from the western classical tradition as well as the popular music, such as hip hop, of a variety of groups. Topics will include the effects of repressive regimes such as the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany on musical culture and creativity, musical nationalism, the use of music in social movements like the labor movement and the Civil Rights movement, and the role of music in protest movements.

PCRM 139 University Seminar: Food Justice  
*Dr. Rebecca Thomas*
Food justice has emerged as a lively area for interdisciplinary work in a world where modern food systems are responsible for both ecological and social considerations. Why, in a world that produces more than enough food to feed everybody, do so many – one in seven – of us go hungry? We each can play a role in facilitating a transition to a more just food system. Urban and regional food systems have been reimagined and proposed as alternatives to these externalities and vulnerabilities. This course explores these issues through an interdisciplinary lens and introduces frameworks for addressing them in and beyond our Slippery Rock University community.

PE 139 University Seminar: Disability Sport  
*Dr. Wendy Fagan*
This course will introduce students to disability sport and the Paralympic movement. Students will understand how the Paralympics differs from the Olympics and the Special Olympics and understand the impact of disability sport on people with and without disabilities. The students will examine the Paralympic movement and its impact on society, discussing such topics as diversity, inclusion, ableism, gender, accessibility, technology, and athlete classification. Students will have hands on experiences with disability sport and gain a better understanding of importance of sport in the lives of individuals with disabilities.

PE 139 University Seminar: Health in the Digital Age: Why do we treat our cellphones better than our bodies?  
*Dr. Randy Nichols*
This course will introduce students to a variety of individual and societal issues impacting our overall well-being and our ability to thrive in society. A specific focus on the impact the digital age is having on our overall well-being will be examined. We will also investigate why many in our society deny or ignore common evidence based health and wellness recommendations and together as a group we will attempt to create solutions.
RCTH 139: University Seminar: Humorship 101  
Dr. Colleen Cooke  
This course will introduce students to types of humor and how paying attention to the positive humor around us can positively impact our lives. Through the lens of positive psychology theory, humor theory, and laughter theory, students will recognize the humor in their everyday experiences and interactions. Laughter and humor are impactful forces in our health, well-being, and overall quality of life. This course will challenge students to think in new (maybe humorous and certainly positive) ways about world events, their own life situations, and the impacts of humor and laughter on the world and particularly those with whom they have regular contact.

SPAN 139 University Seminar: Café Hispano  
Dr. Gisela Dieter  
Have you ever wondered what’s behind all those Day-of-the-Dead sugar skulls? Or what’s with the rice and beans obsession? Or what’s the deal with the word “salsa,” is it something I scoop up with my tortilla chips or something I make a fool of myself trying to dance to? And what’s up with all the shoulder shaking and body twisting? Do Shakira’s hips actually not lie? This course will sort through these and other such relevant issues/questions as an introduction to the concept of cultural competence, and the ability to interact effectively with people of different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds within the context of the Hispanic cultures.

THEA 139 University Seminar: Horror Films: What are we afraid of?  
Dr. David Skeele  
This course will examine the major themes and motifs of horror cinema, with a focus on how these movies have served to reflect cultural anxieties and play on our deepest fears. We will answer the question: "What are we afraid of?"