



UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

## First-Year Seminar Course Descriptions

2023-2024

[www.du.edu/fsem](http://www.du.edu/fsem)

Below are the course descriptions, alphabetically ordered by faculty last name. All incoming First-Year students are required to register for a First-Year Seminar online during summer registration (the week of **July 24 – 28, 2023**). You will register for **ONE** First-Year Seminar course. Classes fill quickly, so have a few FSEMs in mind that you are interested in taking. Be sure to look at course conflicts to avoid FSEMs that conflict with major requirements and athletics practices.

*updated June 6, 2023*

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### **Charting Your Path: College as an Authentic Learning Journey**

Instructor: Paula Adamo, [paula.adamo@du.edu](mailto:paula.adamo@du.edu)

Course Description: College offers students the unique opportunity and privilege to dedicate time to self-exploration. This exploration starts from within—understanding first who we are, then moving outwards towards different majors and disciplines, and eventually choosing careers and diverse life paths. Through a variety of readings and activities, this class will create space for deep exploration. Informed by research from various fields such as education and psychology, we will reflect on who we are as individual human learners and as a community. We will interrogate concepts such as success, passion, and talent, and explore the crucial role of mindsets, joy, play, purpose, failure, and perseverance in our lives as authentic learners. Honoring our diversity as learners, this FSEM will employ an array of active learning and teaching approaches to stimulate your curiosity about yourself and the broader world—thus deepening your learning experience. Students will engage in individual and team work, and we will use readings, audiovisual materials, dialogue, oral sharings, presentations, and creative projects as tools to support learning.

### **The World Today: Global Affairs in Context**

Instructor: Kevin Archer, [kevin.archer@du.edu](mailto:kevin.archer@du.edu)

Course Description: A global pandemic, the fall of Afghanistan, the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, climate change, consumer price inflation, immigration, and political extremism are just a few of the many issues facing our world today. This course is designed to give students the tools necessary to critically evaluate and understand these issues in context. Using case studies and various social scientific approaches this course will engage students in the process of critical inquiry in such a way that they gain the ability to understand and impact the world in a more meaningful way. This course will be based on Critical Inquiry and a Case Studies approach. By the end of the course a first-year student will be able to:

- Contextualize global affairs

- Critically examine how to think about current global issues
- Understand how global issues impact their lives and the communities in which they live
- Debate the merits of various questions related to solving global challenges

### **The Strangle World of Quantum Physics and How It Affects YOU Every Day**

Instructor: Davor Balzar, [Davor.Balzar@du.edu](mailto:Davor.Balzar@du.edu)

Course Description:

End of the World in 2012 caused by solar neutrinos? It didn't happen. A cat is both dead and alive, an electron is both a particle and a wave, and a message that instantaneously propagates across the universe? Reality or fiction? It is true and the basis of many things that we use and encounter every day. From nuclear weapons and laser-guided bombs to "iGadgets" and computers, they exist because of the laws of quantum physics. The seminar will overview basic principles of quantum mechanics, the new area of physics that was born in 1900 by the Max Planck's postulate about the discrete nature of energy and developed mainly in the first part of the 20th century by Albert Einstein and other giants of the 20th century physics. Brilliant theories have later led to the inventions of a laser, GPS, computer, atomic clock, blue-ray player, smartphone, iPod, nanotechnology, and other things that we depend on every day. In a not-so-distant future we will get quantum computers that will dwarf existing machines in both power and speed. Possibilities are endless and are likely to make science fiction from Dick Tracy cartoons to Star Trek movies look not too imaginative. We will critically explore these fascinating topics through group discussions and term papers.

### **Seeking Beauty**

Instructor: Rick Barbour, [frederic.barbour@du.edu](mailto:frederic.barbour@du.edu)

Course Description:

"If we ignore the need of beauty, we find ourselves in a spiritual desert." - Roger Scruton Beauty matters. It integrates the unique and the universal, our most disparate selves. In Seeking Beauty, students will share their transformative, cathartic, and epiphanic experiences of beauty discovered through encounters with music, architecture, movies, craft, nature, painting, sculpture, photography, dance, athletics, literature, and poetry. Students will develop and present multiple solo performances that vividly communicate the visceral experience, essence, and immediacy of those encounters through intimate first-person spoken stories supported by visual and aural elements. The course aims to encourage and reward the ongoing practice of seeking beauty in the world, of opening oneself to the experience of truth, awe, wonder, and transcendence, and to equally encourage and reward the sharing of those experiences in honest and soulful ways with their peers.

### **With and Without Nature**

Instructor: Brad Benz, [bradley.benz@du.edu](mailto:bradley.benz@du.edu)

Course Description: Jim Harrison famously states that "to say 'nature writing' is to say water swimming." His point? Humans are nature, too. Using sustainability and interconnectedness as organizing principles, this FSEM explores the natural world, asking students to examine humanity's position with, against, and without nature. Students will read as eco-critics and write as green rhetors. The substantial reading list will include short stories, non-fiction essays,

memoirs, poems, and films. Students will also conduct regular field trips by studying a local outdoor green space, one they will visit regularly, researching the site in a hands-on manner, and recording their findings in a lengthy writing project – a multimedia naturalist's site journal. The site journal will ask students to study their site from a number of perspectives, including ones they may not already be familiar with (for example, historical, eco-feminist, and scientific).

### **Fat Chance - Probability and Games**

Instructor: Sara Botelho-Andrade, [Sara.botelho-andrade@du.edu](mailto:Sara.botelho-andrade@du.edu)

Course Description: Statistics and probability intersect our lives every day. For example, will it snow tomorrow? Or perhaps you're more interested in whether a particular stock is a good choice? Probability helps scientists make predictions and model complex real-world scenarios. In this class, we will use games, like craps and poker, to illustrate core concepts in probability. Along with the games and experiments, we will learn some basic coding in Python, which will be used to run simulations and calculations. With hands-on activities and projects focusing on real-world applications, the goal is to have some fun and learn some practical math along the way.

### **The American Road Trip**

Instructor: Russell Brakefield, [russell.brakefield@du.edu](mailto:russell.brakefield@du.edu)

Course Description: For as long as there have been roads to travel in this country, people have hit the pavement, stuck out their thumbs, stowed away, and headed west. Themes of adventure and exploration dominate the early cultural history of our country and remain central to American literature, art, film, music, and advertising. In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore the place of the road trip in American culture and in our lives. We will start by interrogating the complicated history of travel in this country, starting with that first, unruly road trip that was westward expansion. We will trace the impact of this history on our culture and politics today. Then we will use a variety of mediums—fiction and creative nonfiction, film, music, and academic scholarship—to study the impact of the road trip through twentieth century art and popular culture. We will explore the position of the road trip in our own lives as well, thinking about how our own personal journeys have shaped our identities. Assignments for this course will include reflective writing, narrative travel writing, presentations, and a creative project. By engaging with themes related to the American road trip, you will have an opportunity to reflect on the journeys that shaped you as a person, student, and creative thinker as you embark on the first leg of a new adventure here at the University of Denver.

### **Meet "Emily in Paris"**

#### **Discovering French Pop Culture**

Instructor: Virginie Cassidy, [virginie.cassidy@du.edu](mailto:virginie.cassidy@du.edu)

Course Description: U.S. TV Show Emily in Paris introduces French culture through the eyes of a young, American professional in Paris as she struggles to connect with the French, often failing to understand the complexities of the cultures shaping French identity. An artifact of American pop culture itself, the show also provides opportunities to reflect on one own's culture, for French and American viewers alike. This seminar invites you to join Emily in her discovery of what shapes contemporary French identity through the study of pop culture (arts, sports, cyberculture, music, cinema, food, etc.). You will explore how products, practices, and

perspectives the French encounter in everyday life reveal social changes and relate to global issues. You will also investigate how pop culture in France allows French-speaking communities to have a voice in the French cultural mainstream. Finally, the study of French pop culture will lead to questioning your relationship to American pop culture and evaluating how it contributes to your identity shaping. To pursue your investigation, you will experience pop culture "à la française" through various media as well as study academic articles. No prior knowledge of French is required for this course.

### **Athens or Beijing: Your World Big Enough for Both?**

Instructor: Victor Castellani, [vcastell@du.edu](mailto:vcastell@du.edu)

Course Description: China is important to everyone alive today, poised to become the dominant world power, while ex-imperial Europe seems in decline—like or unlike America? You may understand today's trends by exploring rivals' evolved thinking. We contrast ideals and lived experience ancient East and West to compare with those of revolutionary movements in rebellious British colonies and the French nation of late 1700s, two in 20th-century China—and Xi Jinping's ongoing "Third Chinese Revolution." How did ancient Chinese and Greeks resolve eternally conflicting claims of individual person and society, of family and state? Weigh personal liberty (and innovation) against social order (and stability)? What contrasted values have brought their heirs to think as we do about excellences of subject/citizen and of ruler? How has each civilization defined justice? Social justice? Human rights? We study "Classical" texts of ancient history and political theory, modern scholarly narratives and original documents, current headline news reports. You won't merely discuss facts and claims. You'll think and feel yourselves into heads and hearts of imagined persons quite unlike yourself who lived long ago or more recently during revolutionary upheavals that launched new versions of "democracy" and "republic." You'll write with their pens, speak with their voices.

### **Fun in Public: Intersections between Entertainment and the Political**

Instructor: Libby Catchings, [elizabeth.catchings@du.edu](mailto:elizabeth.catchings@du.edu)

Course Description: From NFL games to amusement parks, many national pastimes are public events – just as many public political events are themselves forms of entertainment (e.g., televised debate). Whether self-directed or spectacle, each constitutes a way of having fun in public space; this course will interrogate the role of entertainment in the public sphere, as well as the politics of the fun we have in shared spaces. Drawing on scholarly theories of play (Huizinga) and the public sphere (Habermas, Fraser, Warner, Arendt), news media, fiction (Doctorow), fansites, and trade publications (Funworld, Amusement Today), students will conduct critical readings, systematic observations at amusement parks, ethnographic fieldwork, and performances, with the option to collaborate with other students in their cohort. Assignments will include weekly reflections, a written exam, a group app design project, and a field-based inquiry to develop students' own evolving theory of the relationship between "fun" and "public" as DU students, consumers, and citizens.

**Intersectionality: Reimagining oppression, rethinking coalition**

Instructor: Santhosh Chandrashekar, [santhosh.chandrashekar@du.edu](mailto:santhosh.chandrashekar@du.edu)

Course Description: Perhaps no other concept captures the soul of feminism as much as intersectionality. Rooted in Black feminist thought, intersectionality is a theory of power and oppression that helps us understand how identity is dialectically constituted in relation to them. Its basic premise is that gendered oppression cannot be understood outside of its intersection with racial, sexual, class, and religious categories, among others. As such, it forces a centering of those subjects, especially Black women, whose experience of oppression is located at the intersection of different axes of oppression and should be the starting point for the development of any theory that seeks to understand social inequities. We will start by looking at the work of Black women that draw attention to the intersection of gender and race, among others, before moving to how intersectionality has been taken up by other feminists of color. Then, we will explore some of the controversies surrounding intersectionality, including its appropriation by white feminists and others, which decenter the Black feminist impulse. This class ends by making a strong case for intersectionality as a robust theoretical and ethical tool that can help us comprehend the world that we live in.

**Fracturing Fairy Tales: Moving Beyond a Simple Story**

Instructor: April Chapman-Ludwig, [April.Chapman-Ludwig@du.edu](mailto:April.Chapman-Ludwig@du.edu)

Course Description: This course is designed to examine the rhetorical and ideological changes grafted onto different redactions of classic fairy tales. The class examines the origins of fairytales and then uses that framework to analyze fairytale adaptations. We focus on addressing each tale's re-telling as historically and culturally bound, investigating the layers of meaning related to gender and familial relationships, class structure, and sexuality. The course focuses on three main fairytale units, each looking at multiple renderings of the fairytale through different mediums (e.g., artwork, movie, and music, etc.), and then applies theoretical lenses to examine the re-adaptations. For example, one unit might analyze the original version of Little Red Riding Hood, written by Charles Perrault in 1697 ("Le Petit Chaperon Rouge"), and then compare a 1908 version to discuss the meanings re-purposing based on audience and gender. Students will critically interpret these texts to uncover the forgotten origins, hidden meanings, and original purposes of these texts. Ultimately, the class engages students with texts and academic interpretation in a variety of ways, from analytical to socio-political to creative, to more deeply understand the cultural purposes of fairytales.

**Bathrooms as Political Spaces: A 4D FSEM**

Instructor: Sara Chatfield, [sara.chatfield@du.edu](mailto:sara.chatfield@du.edu)

Course Description: Bathrooms have been the site of intense political struggle throughout American history. Americans have clashed over racially segregated bathrooms, equal space for women, a right to rest breaks at work, toilets that are accessible for people with disabilities, and safe access for transgender individuals. In this class, we'll explore how courts, legislatures, and social movements have interacted to shape the politics of the bathroom around various issues, both historical and contemporary. We'll look at politics and policy around the country, but also at how these issues have played out (and are still contested) at the local level in Denver. Readings will include both academic and popular sources, and will be supplemented with short lectures,

films, in-class discussion, informal writing, guest speakers, and small group work. As a 4D FSEM, this course will combine academic content and intellectual growth with character development, personal well-being, and career readiness.

### **Why should I become an antiracist?**

Instructor: Frederique Chevillot, [frederique.chevillot@du.edu](mailto:frederique.chevillot@du.edu)

Course Description: We live in a richly multicultural society where our ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic histories, as well as life situations vary greatly. Changing demographics in our country, and in the world, will make future employers in any professional field want to work with individuals who have developed the skills to be successful practitioners of diversity, equity, and inclusion for all. Unearned and unchallenged privileges, unexamined assumptions, resistance to “good trouble,” unintentional prejudice and discrimination by many perpetuates oppression experienced by even many more. Learning to acknowledge one’s privilege, as well as the ways in which we unconsciously contribute to oppression, will empower us to appreciate diversity, work for equality, and practice inclusivity. This huge endeavor takes courage, hard work, and dedication; it requires intentional risk-taking, communication skills, and a desire to welcome discomfort for the better good. And above all, it concerns us all. In this FSEM, we will be reading at least two fundamental books: *How to Be an Antiracist* (2019) by Ibram X. Kendi and *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (2020) by Isabel Wilkerson. These personal, historical, and sociological explorations into the fabric of our society will require of all of us deep reflection and critical thinking skills. Through weekly readings and class discussions, daily journaling, short reflection papers, oral presentations, and a culminating Final Research Project, we will learn to examine our own assumptions and strengthen our personal antiracist practice.

### **TikTok and Social Media**

Instructor: Lynn Schofield Clark, [Lynn.Clark@du.edu](mailto:Lynn.Clark@du.edu)

Course Description: Can TikTok change the world? Or perhaps the question is: HOW is TikTok changing the world? And who holds TikTok accountable for its role in contributing to positive or negative change in our world? What is happening now that many states in the U.S. and several countries are banning TikTok? In this first year seminar course, we utilize TikTok as a platform for discussions about popular media practices, emergent systems of cultural authority, media ownership, and social, cultural, and political change, particularly change that centers young people and youth voice. Students learn about recent research on the role of TikTok and other new social media platforms in social movement building and in state surveillance, and discuss young social media influencers who have monetized this and other platforms as a career even as behind-the-scenes influencers have leveraged the same platforms for large-scale misinformation campaigns. We consider TikTok in relation to its sister technologies of Instagram, BeReal, YouTube, Discord, and Twitter, and also explore social media predecessors as well as open source and self-hosted social media alternatives. Students will write critical essays about contemporary social media phenomena they study and also will experiment with media production, producing a short advocacy video for sharing on TikTok or on a rival platform.

### **Finding Family: Kinship, Queerness, and Friendship in Early Christianity**

Instructor: Christy Cobb, [christy.cobb@du.edu](mailto:christy.cobb@du.edu)

Course Description: What makes a family? This course will explore the topic of kinship through the lens of early Christianity. While many Christians today posit that a religious family includes heterosexual marriage and children (the nuclear family), we will find that there are a variety of families represented throughout the history of Christianity. Through a close reading of sacred texts alongside archaeological data, we will consider evidence of single families, queer partners, enslaved families, and friends who function as family in the early centuries of Christianity. We also will consider the kinship found through monastic communities throughout the history of Christianity. Issues of gender, status, class, ethnicity, and socio-economic status will all be relevant to this course. Further, we will explore these various portraits of families while also reflecting about our own familial background and futures. For students entering college, leaving home and creating a new form of family (through friendships and relationships) can be complex. This course will engage both academic inquiry and personal reflection as we analyze early Christian families.

### **The Value of Higher Education**

Instructor: Paula Cole, [paula.cole@du.edu](mailto:paula.cole@du.edu)

Course Description: Higher education is often hallmarked as the path to economic success in today's economy. Does a college education result in better economic outcomes? Who enrolls in and graduates with a college degree? Should everyone have access to higher education? Who should pay the costs of college? This community-engaged learning course examines conflicts, disparities, outcomes, and solutions in accessing higher education within the United States. We will evaluate the benefits and costs of a college education and how they are distributed across individuals and communities. Additionally, we will critically explore the purpose of learning within our economic system. Finally, community-engaged learning will give us first-hand experience supporting the DU community and each other in reaching the goal of graduating.

### **History of Animation: Critical Watching and Critical Making**

Instructor: William Depper, [william.depper@du.edu](mailto:william.depper@du.edu)

Course Description: For over a century animation has thrived as a film-based art form and method of expression. It has become an important and prevalent part of our popular culture. By learning to critically watch animation through a variety of theoretical lens we can see the influences it has had upon our culture. We can examine changes that have occurred in the form and nature of the art form in response to the cultures and circumstances within which it was created. By creating simple forms of animation, we can further our understanding of the processes involved as well as explore ideas through a process of critical making. Students in this class will use readings, screenings, and written responses to investigate introductory critical theory, animation history, and basic film theory. Their findings will be used in a series of short animation exercises to explore how these ideas can be used to inform their making. Digital tools will be used to aid in the creation and editing of these short animations.

### **Mexican American History and Culture**

Instructor: Elizabeth Escobedo, [elizabeth.escobedo@du.edu](mailto:elizabeth.escobedo@du.edu)

Course Description: Mexican American history is both an integral part of US history and a unique subject of historical investigation. In this course we will explore the history of Mexican-descent people in the United States from 1848 to the present, thinking about the ways in which race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship shape(d) the lived experiences and identity formation of Mexican-descent people (both US-born and immigrant) in the United States. Together we will explore an array of historical sources—including photos, oral histories, songs, film, literature, and visual art—to understand how Mexicans and Mexican Americans have negotiated, influenced, and responded to the political, social, and economic circumstances that shape their lives in the United States. Throughout the quarter our class will also consider the ways in which the history of Mexican America appears in public sites of historical memory in the United States, and what the inclusion or exclusion of Mexican Americans in public sites of historical memory reveals about shared values, identity, and sense of belonging in the nation.

### **Latinx Futurism(s), SciFi, and Interactive Fiction**

Instructor: Rafael Fajardo, [Rafael.Fajardo@du.edu](mailto:Rafael.Fajardo@du.edu)

Course Description: In this course we will read/view/play LatinX Futurist (SciFi) short stories, graphic novels, films, and games. We will make non-linear, branching, interactive fictions in response to our readings/viewings/playings. This will be a laptop class. Students will be required to download and create with a specific software. Examples of works we will experience may include: *Sleep Dealer* (2008) by Alex Rivera, *Wakanda Forever* (2022) by Ryan Coogler, and *Lowriders in Space* (2014) by Cathy Camper and Raúl the Third. Interactive and Non-linear fictions from Latin America pre-date the existence of the worldwide web and digital hypertexts. Student will participate in extending this tradition into the 21st century with contemporary digital tools. Futurism(s) address questions about who gets to imagine the future, and who is present in visions of the future. We will look at recent and historical examples of LatinX populations imagining futures that include themselves.

### **Physics of Smartphone Sensors**

Instructor: Xin Fan, [xin.fan@du.edu](mailto:xin.fan@du.edu)

Course Description: Smartphone gradually integrates into our lives not only because it is a mobile computer, but also because of its various state-of-the-art sensors. These embedded sensors allow the phone to gauge where you are, which direction you face, how bright the light is, and even air pressure and electromagnetic field around you, which are otherwise difficult to perceive. Practically, you are carrying a multi-functional mobile lab in your pocket. In this course, we will take a close look at these different sensors, learning underlying principles and their limits. We will apply these sensors to some fun activities, such as mapping electric wires behind walls and tracing air flows in a room. Students are encouraged to design an iPhone or Android APP based on these sensors toward the end of the quarter.

### **Finding Feminism in the 21st Century**

Instructor: Lindsey Feitz, [lindsey.feitz@du.edu](mailto:lindsey.feitz@du.edu)

Course Description: In the 21st century, we might imagine that many of the trials and issues facing the women of yesterday have been left behind allowing feminism to move productively forward. But ... has it? What does feminism mean today and how has the past helped define the



future? What does it look like to be a feminist today? To answer these questions and more, we will watch, read, debate, and reflect over the history of U.S. feminism(s). We will also attempt to define feminism in the 21st century. Throughout the quarter, we will put theory into practice as we also explore 21st century feminisms and its intersections with contemporary social movements as we attempt to what does it mean to be a feminist at the University of Denver?

### **The Heart of Mathematics**

Instructor: Kelly Flaherty, [kelly.flaherty@du.edu](mailto:kelly.flaherty@du.edu)

Course Description: In this course, we will investigate multiple areas of mathematics using the textbook *The Heart of Mathematics* by Burger and Starbird. Most people think that mathematics is just "crunching numbers". It is not. We will see how beautiful and interesting mathematics really is. We will work in groups on interesting problems and get to see just how a mathematician needs to think.

### **Exploring the Ocean**

Instructor: Jim Fogleman, [Fogleman@du.edu](mailto:Fogleman@du.edu)

Course Description: We probably know less about what is under the surface of the ocean than we do about any other aspect of our planet. This course presents the techniques used to explore under the ocean surface from the beginning of recorded history, through the major developments in underwater technology, to the present. In the last 50 years, there has been a substantial increase in technology as well as a significant increase in public interest. This includes not only recreational scuba diving, but hard-hat (commercial) diving, free diving, and deep-water submersibles. The course also presents the human physiology associated with each technology. In addition, the course presents aspects of environmental issues. Ocean conservation issues include ocean warming and acidification (and their impact on marine life), the global decline of coral reefs, overfishing, the near extinction of large whales, shark finning, the effect of coastal recreation, pollution, the development and economy of marine parks, ecotourism, and deep water drilling for oil, among others. This seminar will not only capture student's interest but educate them relative to marine environmental issues on a global scale and provide them with opportunities to make informed decisions about their future and the future of the oceans.

### **Hierarchies and Concepts**

Instructor: Nick Galatos, [ngalatos@du.edu](mailto:ngalatos@du.edu)

Course Description: The notion of a concept is fundamental to all academic disciplines. In this course we will provide a mathematical study of formal concepts that will be based on our intuitive understanding of hierarchical orderings. Given a set of objects, say planets, and a set of attributes, say 'far from the sun' or 'big', we can construct a table/database with rows the objects and columns the attributes; in this table we mark, for example, the box that is in the row 'Jupiter' and in the column 'big'. If the table is large, it is hard to extract directly any useful information. We will describe a method to present the information in the table in a diagrammatic and visually appealing way that may then be used in drawing conclusions and making decisions about the 'raw' data in the table. The mathematical diagram that we construct is called a lattice and is simply a hierarchical ordering with nice properties. After studying the mathematical theory of lattices and hierarchies in general, we will subsequently apply it to study concepts in various areas, referring to examples in the social and natural sciences. For example, objects can be music composers and attributes can be genres of music. Every class meeting will consist of a mix of

lecturing and group work, experimentation with lattice-drawing software, discussion and student presentations. Although the course has absolutely no prerequisites, we will introduce and use mathematical symbolism and provide formal justifications for our claims. Apart from learning how concepts can be represented in a visual way and analyzed mathematically, the students will be exposed to formal and precise reasoning that avoids numerical computations.

### **Epidemics and Literature**

Instructor: Menglu Gao, [menglu.gao@du.edu](mailto:menglu.gao@du.edu)

Course Description: This course examines how epidemics have been narrated, studied, and imagined. Reading literary, scientific, journalistic, and scholarly works, we'll think about contagion and public health alongside topics such as environment, individualism, racism, inequality, biopolitics, and migration. We ask: How do science and literature interweave in representations of epidemics? How do literary imaginations of epidemics reflect on globalization, modernity, and development? How can our readings help us articulate and theorize phenomena we have encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic? Readings include Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, Ling Ma's *Severance*, and works by authors such as Georges Canguilhem, Bishnupriya Ghosh, Ari Larissa Heinrich, Megan H. Glick, Anjuli Fatima Raza Kolb. By the end of the course, students will:

- gain a comprehensive understanding of epidemics-related topics
- be able to analyze these topics critically
- master basic skills of textual analysis
- become more proficient in both academic and nonacademic writing

### **Work & Inequality in the Platform Economy**

Instructor: Jessica Garrick, [jessica.garrick@du.edu](mailto:jessica.garrick@du.edu)

Course Description: The “platform” economy—comprised of companies like Uber, Lyft, TaskRabbit, Airbnb—has been the subject of considerable controversy since its emergence. While supporters praise such companies as the icons of a new economy built on technological innovation, sharing, and flexibility, its critics question how much the gig economy is about sharing vs. survival and flexibility vs. precarity. They also point out that new technologies, such as those necessary for companies' platforms, require new policies to ensure the protection of individual and communal well-being. Such policies are hotly contested by platform companies. Students are often familiar with a handful of platform companies and they tend to view them favorably through the lens of consumers. I will build on this understanding--that gig companies offer something new and favorable--by peeling back the layers of what gig companies actually do and how they operate: What did they replace (or try to?) What were the structural conditions that allowed for, or facilitated their emergence? What are the consequences of the shift to platform work? What policies might ameliorate those consequences and what are the obstacles to achieve them? Essentially, this class will use an economic phenomenon that students are loosely familiar with as a window to use explore broader sociological questions about relationships between society and technology, changing forms of employment, and political struggles over material and ideal resources. While our main approach will be a sociological one, we will also draw on economic and business history, political science, philosophy, cultural studies, etc.

### **Memory: Self/Public/Community**

Instructor: Robert Gilmor, robert.gilmor@du.edu

Course Description: What's your first memory? What's it mean to you? How do our memories inform who we are? What memories matter the most? What do our memories tell us about ourselves and the world? How can we make sure that everyone's memories matter? Memory (the concept) and memories (what we each have) play a role in several academic fields, and consideration of memory can lead to important discussions and analysis that students will find useful regardless of their major or career goals. Our main focus will be the rhetorical nature of memory, and how the concept and ideas shape public discourse, and this seminar will explore the relationships between memory and several features of modern culture: everyday life, media, pop culture, and our identities as members of the DU community (students, staff, faculty). Through a range of small writing assignments, we'll consider our own memories and analyze images and artifacts, we'll explore the memories of others through memoirs, and we'll examine how memory informs understanding and thinking in a variety of areas. We'll close out the quarter with a DU-focused project in conjunction with DU's Special Collections and Archives: a look at stories of student life at DU throughout its history.

### **Emerging Technologies & Ancient Wisdoms**

Instructor: Esteban Gomez, esteban.gomez@du.edu

Course Description: Emerging Technologies and Ancient Wisdoms will provide students an opportunity to explore the ways in which non-Western worldviews, specifically indigenous knowledge concepts, can enhance the effectiveness of emerging technologies, like algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI). The course will begin with a review of "weak" and "strong" forms of AI, with an emphasis on how they are programmed as data analysis tools with specific tasks and values that are created by their designers. Attention will be placed on the ways emerging technologies, like AI and algorithms, have impacted our everyday lives, from online consumption behaviors to hiring practices. After reviewing how these emerging technologies have shaped our lived experiences, students will then explore some of the ethical concerns engineers, consultants, academics, and journalists have shared about AI and algorithms. While the growing appeal of these technologies are undeniable, what forms of oversight will be needed to ensure these programs are not encoded with structural biases? Finally, how might indigenous epistemologies be applied to address some of the limitations we find in the development of AI? To address this issue, students will explore core concepts like wisdom and ontology to better understand our relationship with emerging technologies.

### **Exploring Self through the Lens of Language Learning**

Instructor: Miho Hamamoto, miho.hamamoto@du.edu

Course Description: What does it feel like to be a language learner? Have you learned a different language or are you a multi-language speaker? We live in a diverse society with various cultures, languages, and values, and there are increasing multilingual and multicultural populations in the world. This course will serve as a general introduction to understanding how languages are learned including theoretical perspectives on second language acquisition, individual differences in learning language, and strategies for teaching and learning a different language. Through the lens of language learning, students will also reflect on and examine who they are as a person,

learner, and language speaker and enhance DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) practices in our personal and academic lives.

In this course, we will use readings, discussions, guest speaker presentations, creative projects, and experiential activities to explore language learning. No prior experience of learning a second/foreign language required.

### **Colorado's Rivers**

Instructor: Hillary Hamann, [Hillary.Hamann@du.edu](mailto:Hillary.Hamann@du.edu)

Course Description: Colorado is known as the “Headwaters State.” Four major U.S. Rivers--the Colorado, Rio Grande, Arkansas, & South Platte--begin in the Colorado mountains as snow and snowmelt that provides water resources for eighteen states and Mexico. Colorado’s rivers may appear as pristine mountain streams, but the history of the state’s development has had serious impacts on the quantity, quality and ecological functioning of our river resources. For example, past mining in Colorado left a legacy of 1300 miles of streams still affected by heavy metal contamination from more than 23,000 abandoned mines. With growing population and changing priorities, the future of Colorado’s rivers is uncertain. In this course we will use a systems-thinking lens to look at the impacts of past and present human actions on Colorado’s rivers. Through a combination of lectures, readings, local field excursions, and discussions, students will be introduced to the basic hydro-ecologic form and function of rivers. We’ll then critically examine human impacts (mining, dams, wildfires, recreation, urbanization, climate change) and discuss strategies for a sustainable future. Throughout the course, you’ll develop a sense of place in Denver and Colorado, and you will be introduced to skills and strategies to help you succeed in your time at DU and beyond.

### **Environmental Change and Human Health**

Instructor: Helen Hazen, [Helen.hazen@du.edu](mailto:Helen.hazen@du.edu)

Course Description: Health and environmental issues are constantly in the news: Where did Covid-19 come from? Will monkeypox develop into another pandemic? What impacts will climate change have on people? Does being outside in natural spaces have an impact on our mental health? Increasingly, issues of environment and health are being linked, with more and more evidence emerging to suggest that human disruptions to the natural environment carry significant health implications: climate change is changing the range of mosquitos that carry infectious diseases like malaria; deforestation and settlement of wildlands is exposing humans to animal pathogens such as the virus that causes Ebola; pollution causes thousands of premature deaths every year; loss of wildlands may be affecting our wellbeing.

In this class, we take the ideas of health and sustainability as starting points to explore the many ways in which environmental change is influencing disease patterns. We explore population change, emerging infectious diseases, biodiversity loss, agriculture, climate change, pollution, and the physical and mental health impacts of our increasingly urbanized lifestyles. As we explore this thematic material, we will spend time developing some of the core skills needed to succeed at the college level, including reading, writing, data interpretation, and presentation skills.

### **Sounds of Afrofuturism**

Instructor: Matt Hill, [matthew.a.hill@du.edu](mailto:matthew.a.hill@du.edu)

Course Description: The future is (mostly) uncertain. We (sometimes) know this. We often seem less certain that our pasts and presents are just as uncertain, but humans tend to desire and perhaps need a singular, cohesive story to explain our worlds. I invite you in this course to examine Afrofuturism as one way to revise the world and its histories through the sonic imaginary. We won't limit ourselves solely to the sonic (in fact the first few weeks won't specifically address the sonic), but the sonic imaginary will be our main mode of thinking and creating in the second half of our course. What I ask you to balance through our course is how we make meaning through both the textual (readings) and the textural (listenings, visuals, food, etc.). This latter distinction is one of convenience and will not cover all our bases. I hope to encourage you all to engage in thoughtful, productive dialogues in which we, as a class, try to come to some consensus about the possible meanings of Afrofuturism. Dissent is a more likely outcome, but we will spend time learning how to work with and encourage dissent in a productive manner. These dialogues will take part in class, in online and in off-campus spaces such as presentations and/or musical performances.

### **Topsy Turvy Worlds: Fiction of Strangeness**

Instructor: Joanna Howard, [Joanna.Howard@du.edu](mailto:Joanna.Howard@du.edu)

Course Description: Topsy Turvy Worlds is a contemporary literature course focused on works which are driven by magical or surreal turns, inverted realities, parallel worlds, fairy tale transformations, and underworld journeys. Topsy Turvy Worlds draw on the tropes of fairy and folk tales: magic potions, chance encounters with witches or conjurers, animated inanimate objects, talking animals and plants, plays within plays, and a blurring between fact and fiction. This is a praxis course combining literary studies and creative writing production: we will practice close reading and literary analysis and work on understanding fictional world building methods for generating fiction writing by focusing on this unique array of authors attempting to build convincing realist worlds, but expand the potential of those worlds through speculative or magical narrative choices to build worlds that explore alternate, unexpected ways to navigate difficult political, cultural, familial or financial circumstances. The novels included in the course will be Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*, Colson Whitehead's *Zone One*, Mona Awad's *Bunny*, Alexandra Kleeman's *Intimations*, Laura Van Den Berg's *The Third Hotel*, and Jesse Ball's *The Diver's Game* with supplemental materials from *Brother's Grimm*, Hans Christian Anderson, Franz Kafka, E.T.A. Hoffman, Jorge Luis Borges, Leonora Carrington, Shirley Jackson, Dante's *Inferno*, and scenes from the opera *Orfeo*.

### **Psychology of Global Connections: Exploring Identity, Culture, and Conflict**

Instructor: Sarah Huff, [sarah.t.huff@du.edu](mailto:sarah.t.huff@du.edu)

Course Description: This course will provide a close examination of how increasing global connectedness affects both individuals and social groups. Although the majority of readings will be drawn from the field of psychology, we will also examine relevant work from related disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. The course will be divided into three sections. In the first section, we will focus on identity, with special focus on how culture shapes identity and

promoting an increased sense of belonging. In the second section, we will discuss cultural factors that vary across the globe and how those factors have changed over time. Finally, the third section will explore how intercultural contact influences conflict and cooperation.

### **Art and Observation in Healthcare**

Instructor: Barbekka Hurtt, [barbekka.hurtt@du.edu](mailto:barbekka.hurtt@du.edu)

Course Description: Art is everywhere, even in health care, and being observant is a must for understanding art and treating a person. In today's healthcare scene, it is imperative for all providers from nurses to physicians to dentists to effectively communicate and connect with patients. Such a focus will improve a patient's trust in the provider and of the healthcare system. This means learning how to read body language, discerning the difference between description and interpretation, and being open to identifying one's own biases and perceptions of cultural, ethnicity, age, and gender contexts. Thus, this course focuses on developing observational skills through the appreciation of fine and contemporary art, videos, photography, and everyday interactions. We will visit museums and an arboretum and create our own art. This course will provide students not only the insight about the scientific basis of health care, but also the social and cultural contexts of human health that make up the art of medicine. In addition, students will learn to employ critical skills and competencies necessary for understanding and evaluating patient-provider interactions in health care situations, as well as to identify and learn how to observe and interact with others using a diverse, equitable, and inclusive lens.

### **Space, Place, Crime, and Criminal Justice**

Instructor: Alana Inlow, [alana.inlow@du.edu](mailto:alana.inlow@du.edu)

Course Description: This course will focus on the intersections of space, place, crime, and criminal justice while also introducing students to the rigors of college, different university resources, and the advisor/advisee roles. The course will incorporate in-depth readings of empirical studies as well as theoretical concepts as well as practical skills in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Undoubtedly, students will need to learn and utilize the arts of writing, communication, and critical thinking for future careers. GIS is also a skill that has wide reaching applications across industries and will be an added benefit to students' future job searches and/or application to graduate school.

### **Physics for Future Presidents**

Instructor: Steve Iona, [siona@du.edu](mailto:siona@du.edu)

Course Description: Many topics of social and political importance are directly related to science in general and physics in particular. This course will address basic physics concepts and knowledge so that these issues can be understood and discussed in a meaningful way from a scientific point of view. We will cover a wide range of physics topics such as energy, atoms, radioactivity, chain reactions, electricity, magnetism, space travel, and climate. The use of basic algebra, graphical interpretation, mathematical modeling, clear writing, and thoughtful discussion are expected. Regular short writing assignments are expected, and a thoughtful analysis of policy and scientific data will be part of most class sessions. The main objective of this course is to teach some basic facts about how the world works, from the viewpoint of physics. These facts are intended to inform your views on important developments and policies in the modern world. This will require you to learn new words, new ideas, and abandon some old ones. It will also require numeracy.

The course will provide multiple opportunities for you to express claims, evidence, and reasoning in a scientific fashion in response to written prompts, readings, and experiences.

### **Screening Latin America- Societies in Movement**

Instructor: Rafael Ioris, rafael.ioris@du.edu

Course Description: This is an introductory course to the experiences of Latin America primarily aimed at reflecting about the process of formation of present-day Latin American societies, and secondly at motivating students to reflect about the historical evolution of multi-racial, multi-cultural societies in general. The activities for the course are structured around themes dealing with the region's historical evolution and the present-day challenges of building a modern, developed and egalitarian society. All these themes provide the ingredients for the drama inherent in the histories of the countries of the region, a drama that filmmakers have depicted in a great number of movies treating important issues and events in Latin American history. One of the main goals of our investigation is to understand how this process of continuity and/or change has been wrought by the multiple social agents within the various parts of region. By watching, analyzing, and analyzing, orally and in writing, collectively and individually a series of films, documentaries, and videos made by Latin American, North American, and European filmmakers, we will both critically analyze the historical development of Latin America as well as the assumptions and biases, which go into the making films about the region. By taking part of this process, students will develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities embodying Latin American societies and the problems the region faces today.

### **Religion and Hip Hop Culture**

Instructor: Jason Jeffries, jason.jeffries@du.edu

Course Description: Understanding religion as the “Quest for Complex Subjectivity” or more simply the effort to make life meaningful in complex ways, this course explores the relationship between Hip Hop culture and religion. That is to say, this course is concerned with discussion of the ways in which Hip Hop culture discusses and provides life meaning in complex ways. This will be accomplished by: (1) discussion of the history and content of Rap Music; (2) examination of religion in rap music; (3) exploration of the religious sensibilities of rap artists; and (4) discussion of the implications of the connection between rap and religion.

### **[Im]migrant Stories: Theirs and Ours**

Instructor: Lydia Keff, Lydia.Gil@du.edu

Course Description: This course explores the different ways in which individuals displaced by emigration and exile have chosen to tell their stories. We will discuss texts by 20th and 21st century immigrants, migrants, and exiles to the United States (and back) in a variety of genres, from literary memoir and film to digital story and performance art. We will examine how these texts chronicle the intersection of cultures and to what extent they define a new culture with its own characteristics. We will also analyze the impact of social, political, economic, and cultural factors on the writer's self-definition as "hyphenated beings" and how these autobiographical texts fit within the broader frame of U.S. literature. For the final project, students will explore

their own stories of displacement (ancestral, familiar, individual or collective) in the form of a literary essay, short memoir, collection of poems, digital story, performed monologue (filmed), or documentary film.

### **Trash & (Zero) Waste in a Disposable World**

Instructor: Megan Kelly, [megan.j.kelly@du.edu](mailto:megan.j.kelly@du.edu)

Course Description: Anthropologist Robin Nagle observes that trash is an integral part of our daily lives; however, the effects of trash on our communities—from a local to a global scale—are oftentimes invisible (or at least ignored). One of the goals of this course is to make trash visible as an object of academic inquiry. In this course, we will observe our own habits of consumption and waste, confronting the trash that we produce locally in Denver and on the DU campus. We will also identify how our individual behaviors connect to collective social patterns and issues related to trash by uncovering what happens to our trash after we throw it away. This course will explore trash from multiple disciplinary perspectives—including anthropology, sociology, criminology, journalism, media studies, advertising, art, architecture, health, and education—through a wide range of academic and popular genres. Through the critical examination of these texts, as well as the networks and institutions that rely on and profit from the production of waste, we will understand how rhetorical strategies are used to promote mass consumption and disposable culture as clean and convenient. And ultimately, we will consider the various economic, political, and environmental implications of these rhetorics.

### **You are what you eat: a course in Food Chemistry**

Instructor: Michelle Knowles, [michelle.knowles@du.edu](mailto:michelle.knowles@du.edu)

Course Description: The goal of this course is to investigate molecules that we eat, what cooking does to them, and the science upon which we base nutritional decisions. In the past 50 years food has changed substantially and “food science” was invented. We will discuss what we eat, from food molecules to plant genetics, and do laboratory experiments to see what is really in our food. During the course we will cover how food goes from the farm to the table and our focus will be on the chemistry that occurs during food processing and cooking. As a community, we will design, discuss, and perform experiments where we can observe the physical and chemical transitions that occur when preparing food and, unlike a typical chemistry lab, we can enjoy eating our products. This course has a significant hands-on “lab” where we work as teams to test kitchen hypotheses so that we can solve mysteries like “Why do avocados brown?” and “Why should I care about the Maillard reaction and the formation of 2-acetylpyrroline?” By the end of the course, you will be able to write scientific papers, perform scientific literary research, and to intelligently discuss food chemistry topics.

### **Constructing Sexualities: Identities, Intersections, and Inequalities**

Instructor: Amie Levesque, [amie.levesque@du.edu](mailto:amie.levesque@du.edu)

Course Description: Sexuality is a significant part of human identities. In this course, we will examine the ways in which sexualities are constructed in our society through three units. First, we will look at the development of sexual identities and the meanings we assign to those identities within our society. Next, we will uncover the complexities of sexual identities as they relate to intersections of race, class, gender, place, and disability, examining the powerful connections between sexuality and our social location. Finally, we will explore sexualities through contexts of inequality, specifically through the narratives of marginalized sexualities and



privilege, as well as the policing of sexualities more broadly. Course materials and assignments will draw on the work of scholars who study sexualities, gender, feminism, embodiment, and queer theory.

### **Media, Power & Sexualization**

Instructor: Rachael Liberman, [Rachael.Liberman@du.edu](mailto:Rachael.Liberman@du.edu)

Course Description: In a contemporary cultural landscape, we often question: What is the relationship between the increased visibility of sexuality in media culture and our everyday lives? Recent scholarship suggests that we are experiencing a “sexualization of culture”; a process whereby sexual meanings are becoming more mainstream through mediated channels such as film, television and magazines. This course unpacks the “sexualization of culture” thesis and prompts you to think critically about the impacts of media messages on sexual knowledge and meaning-making practices. Readings will draw from scholars who support this thesis as well as scholars that argue that the current “sexualization of culture” argument relies on moral, rather than social or political, frameworks. In particular, this course focuses on developing media literacy skills, from an intersectional perspective, and explores issues such as the sexualization of girls; sexting and privacy; and pornification. You will have the opportunity to explore these issues in-depth and will be encouraged to develop their own critical stance through course discussions, in-class activities, screenings, and a final group project.

### **Crossing Over: Negotiating Borders and Latinx Border Identities**

Instructor: Sergio Macias, [sergio.macias23@du.edu](mailto:sergio.macias23@du.edu)

Course Description: Who am I? How do I see myself? How do others see me? Where do I fit? This FSEM probes identity and borders: movement across boundaries of geography, nationality, race, gender, sexuality, language, and culture. Through analysis and interpretation of cultural text (novels, short stories, slam poetry, comics, music, film, visual arts, social media) students explore dynamic dialogues and processes of U.S. Latinxs articulating their hybrid identities. Students read, interpret and analyze Latinx voices that exemplify border identities and experiences through discussion, writing, and community. We discuss the notion of inclusive excellence: the practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Fundamental course questions are: 1) how do diverse Latinx voices, including border identities, fit into American academia?; 2) what is the role of border identities in decolonizing academia institutions, inclusive excellence?; and 3) How can we move beyond good intentions, create meaningful change, and imagine other possibilities and futures? Topics include: cultural and political exchange along the U.S.-Mexico border; performance identity; transnational double-crossings through art, music and food; intersectional spaces; Chicanx and Latinx activism; (mis)identifications and coping with feeling othered; Latinx stereotypes and media representations; Latina reclamation of voice, body, and sexuality; the decolonization of masculinities; and others.

### **Contemporary Art: The Global and the Local**

Instructor: Sarah Magnatta, [sarah.magnatta@du.edu](mailto:sarah.magnatta@du.edu)

Course Description: This class introduces contemporary art through the lenses of the global and the local. We will explore how art functions within our society, and how artists, curators, and scholars approach their work. Topics include the art market, the politics of museums, censorship and public funding, and popular cultural representations of the artist. We also look at how contemporary artists are engaging with some of the most important issues of our day. This class

will make use of the wonderful collections and displays of art that Denver has to offer; these field trips will allow us to see the work in person and develop our own curatorial narratives.

### **Design Your DU: A 4D First-Year Seminar**

Instructor: Heather Martin, [heather.martin@du.edu](mailto:heather.martin@du.edu)

Course Description: When we were young, many of us were taught that adult life proceeds in an orderly and linear fashion, moving smoothly from one life stage to the next. Yet, most human lives are populated with tragedies and disruptions, unexpected joys and challenges. We may choose to fight against these uncertainties; or, we may delight in our beautiful and unpredictable journey. This FSEM is about transitions: how we understand and manage them; and how we can use them as opportunities to grow and thrive in lives of our own making. By taking a deep dive into our past, present, and multiple possible futures, we will learn about the art and science of change, and how to become agents in our own academic, personal, and professional lives. Students will map and explore their educational journeys—cultivating relationships, integrating learning across classes, and finding ways to improve their communities. Class activities and projects will engage current research and ask students to apply these concepts in real-world contexts.

### **The Human Condition: A Survey Course on the Expression of Human Emotion through the Arts**

Instructor: Joseph Martin, [jmartin@du.edu](mailto:jmartin@du.edu)

Course Description: This course studies the lives and works of civilization's masters of expressing emotion. We'll study music compositions, paintings, sculpture, and literary works, and see how geography, time periods, and personal crises influenced the way these creators of art expressed themselves. In seeking similarities in emotional expression across diverse time periods and different forms of art, we will strive to find a truth to these expressions that is timeless and helps us come to a greater understanding of how we, ourselves, express things artistically. Students will leave the course with a better understanding of how to approach art in a true sense of appreciation, and will be challenged to develop an artistic and intellectual curiosity to embrace a lifelong experience of growth in understanding art. Students will be guided on how to view art, and how to listen to music and formulate personal opinions about the pieces presented. Critical reasoning will be required to evaluate the effectiveness of each artist and to ultimately find a way to express your own emotional truth through expressive weekly assignments. Through the writing component, class discussions, and additional projects, students will have a broad range of experience to help them embrace the academic community here at DU.

### **"All We Have is Each Other": Challenging Narratives of Criminalization, Punishment, and Safety**

Instructor: Logan Middleton, [logan.middleton@du.edu](mailto:logan.middleton@du.edu)

Course Description: Our social worlds are saturated with narratives surrounding criminalization, punishment, and safety. Not only are these topics present everywhere from true crime podcasts to university plagiarism policies to the security checkpoints at the airport. So too do they shape dominant ideologies about law and justice, gender and race, life and death—as well as everyday people's lived realities. In this first-year seminar, then, we will unpack commonplace notions of

criminalization, punishment, and safety to better understand these concepts and what they do. Together, we'll consider the following questions:

- How and why have ideas about criminalization, punishment, and safety come to be?
- How do these notions permeate our media and structure our daily practices and habits?
- How can we develop critical orientations toward institutions that disproportionately criminalize and punish Black, Brown, Indigenous, disabled, trans, queer, immigrant, and/or poor people?
- What can safety really look and feel like?

In doing so, we'll cultivate more ethical, just, and humane orientations toward criminalization, punishment, and safety and explore how communities work together to keep each other safe.

### **Pirates: Sailors, science, and the Seven Seas**

Instructor: Keith Miller, [keith.miller@du.edu](mailto:keith.miller@du.edu)

Course Description: Pirates are a misunderstood lot. Villains to many, heroes to some, and hired mercenaries to others. Yet their stories, ones of adventures, battles, and treasure, capture the imagination of most. Science too, especially in the public domain, is often misunderstood. Why is that? I posit it is all about “your attitude.” This seminar will engage students to analyze pirates and their stories, to identify underlying science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) concepts hidden in their adventures and the pirates “way of life”. Inspired by films and readings, students will research selected scientific principles as well as discuss literature on informal science education. Students will play, yes PLAY throughout the course as they develop, test, and produce pirate-inspired science outreach activities for elementary school children. The study of piracy is engaging and interdisciplinary; thus, class discussions will not be limited to STEM. Each student will research a topic related to piracy throughout the course, presenting a summary of their research to the class in the final weeks. In a culminating class project, students will put their teamwork skills and collective knowledge to the test, building a “sloop” from simple materials that they will race across the swimming pool, competing for the ultimate title: DU’s fastest corsair!

### **Reading, Writing, Translating: A Triptych**

Instructor: Poupeh Missaghi, [poupeh.missaghi@du.edu](mailto:poupeh.missaghi@du.edu)

Course Description: With the development of new technologies as well as our recent global pandemic experience, our relationship with reading, writing, and translating has changed. These practices are not what they were in their traditional sense anymore, and yet they are still as important, if not more so, in our meaningful engagement with the world. It is through them that we can critically and creatively receive what we are offered in the form of various textual modalities and provide our own responses in individual and collective manners. Reading, Writing, Translating: A Triptych will be an overview of these practices, using a praxis approach to provide students with an opportunity to (re)visit them with fresh sets of eyes. The hope is that they can move away from taking these activities for granted toward a new impactful relationship with them. The course will help students to ask questions such as: What do these practices mean in our time? Who engages with them and in what ways? How are they in relation with one

another? What do they mean to me? How can I benefit from them in a way that best serves my trajectory as a student and a citizen in my personal and professional life?

### **From DNA to Diversity -and Beyond!**

Instructor: Julie Morris, [julie.a.morris@du.edu](mailto:julie.a.morris@du.edu)

Course Description: You are currently living in the midst of a revolution –a genetic revolution. Scan the news concerning any biologically related topic (from human health and disease, to agriculture, to endangered species conservation), and you will find a conversation about genes. These conversations are currently shaping procedure and policy that will have wide-ranging impacts on the future of medicine, food production, energy production, environmental stability, and possibly even the nature of human nature itself! Unfortunately, few people really understand what genes are or how they work. This seminar will explore the relationship of DNA and genes to each of these topics, and provide students with the basic information we will all need to successfully navigate this revolution. To frame this exploration, we will read a graphic novel entitled *The Stuff of Life*, in which Bloort 183 (an alien interplanetary biologist from the Glargal Royal Science Academy) attempts to explain Earthly genetics to his Supreme Highness Florsh 727, in an attempt to influence governmental policies on his own planet. Students will be asked to fact check Bloort 183's report, and produce any necessary updates and addendums.

### **Earth & Fire: The Science of clay and glazes**

Instructor: Mia Mulvey, [mmulvey@du.edu](mailto:mmulvey@du.edu)

Course Description: What is clay and where does it come from? How do glazes work? In this seminar we will investigate one of arts most ancient materials, diving into the science, creative applications and historical uses of the material. Starting with the periodic table, students will experiment in the glaze lab as well as apply their knowledge in a hands-on creative research project. Students will develop their understanding of the technical aspects of clay and glazes as well as the methods, histories and chemistries of firing. In addition to material science, students will craft their own functional artworks in which to apply their knowledge. The end of the term will culminate in a meal utilizing the objects created in the course. Students will work to develop the understanding and ability to manipulate materials as well as hone their creative voice by understanding and thinking critically about the world around them, all while having fun in the studio and gaining an appreciation for the power of art and science.

### **How Thingamajigs Work? Moving Beyond the Technical Lingo**

Instructor: Balasingam Murugaverl, [bmurugav@du.edu](mailto:bmurugav@du.edu)

Course Description: Intelligent devices are rapidly entering into our everyday life. We are constantly bombarded with technical lingo - intranet, GPS navigation, bandwidth, DSL, multi-media... Unfortunately, these jargons make it difficult to sort out important terms from technical trivia and contribute to the fear and ignorance towards technology that many people have. The aim of this seminar course is to ease students' fear of technology and improve their understanding of how modern technology works. How Thingamajigs Work is appropriate for students of any discipline who are just curious about how things work. The aim of this seminar course is to ease students' fear of technology and improve their understanding of how modern

technology works. When you learn how to do something, you have a skill, all you can do is use it the same way over and over. But when you understand how something works, you can reason and expand upon them infinitely, you simply own it intellectually.

### **Ancient Tragedies in Modern Life**

Instructor: Marco Nathan, marco.nathan@du.edu

Course Description: We all know the plays of the great Ancient Greek tragedians: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. We've all heard the epic stories of Iphigenia, Agamemnon, Oedipus, Medea, and their other mighty characters. We are all quite aware of the historical poignancy and artistic splendor of these timeless masterpieces. But what do they have to teach us about our own lives? What is their philosophical value? The goal of this course is to read some of the greatest literary works ever produced by humankind, but to re-interpret them in contemporary fashion. By integrating original plays with contemporary philosophical literature, we shall discuss the modern valence of these ancient classics.

### **Buddhist Meditation: Traditional and Modern Contexts**

Instructor: Benjamin Nourse, benjamin.nourse@du.edu

Course Description: This course explores the wide range of Buddhist meditations and their relationship to Buddhist ethical and philosophical teachings. We also investigate how these Buddhist meditations are currently being adapted for use in a variety of settings, from health care and psychology to education. These adaptations prompt questions about the nature of meditation. What is lost, or perhaps gained, when meditative practices are taken out of their traditional cultural and religious contexts? Is it appropriate to teach meditation in places like US public schools where other religiously-derived practices such as prayer have not been allowed in recent decades? Are recent scientific studies of meditation compelling enough to warrant wide-scale promotion of these practices? To help think through these issues, students will read about new research in neuroscience and psychology that suggests meditation can have profound impacts on the way we think and feel and can even change the functioning of our brains. We will also explore some of the debates that have taken place in news media and the popular press around the issue of meditation and its applications. Students in the course will also practice secularized forms of meditation, keeping a journal of their experiences and reflections.

### **Principle-based Leadership for 21st Century Business**

Instructor: Kathleen Novak, kathleen.novak@du.edu

Course Description: Some of the hardest leadership decisions are the ones that have moral or ethical stakes. The purpose of the course is for students to explore principle-based ethics to foster a high standard of ethic leadership in students, and ultimately beyond the campus and into the community. Through cases, speakers, exercises, and readings, students will work to develop their own definition of principle-based leadership.

### **Modern Classics of World Literature**

Instructor: Maik Nwosu, maik.nwosu@du.edu

Course Description: This course is a literary journey around the world – with some of the best literary texts as our tour guides or windows into different cultures and aesthetics. We will also examine how these literary works and the literary traditions that they represent engage one another in (a reconstructed) conversation across space and time. Central to these inquiries is the

idea of the “classic.” What is a literary classic, particularly a modern literary classic, and how does a work of literature become canonized?

### **Pop Culture in Africa**

Instructor: Trishula Patel, trishula.patel@du.edu

Course Description: This course will consider what “pop culture” looks like across the African continent throughout the history of the twentieth century up until the present, and what popular forms of media and expression look like in different countries and at different times. We will analyze the ways in which Africans have been both consumers and producers of mass media and artistic forms of expression, and how they have both been influenced by and driven trends in popular culture in the rest of the world. Through scholarly sources, primary documents, music, movies, photography, and TikTok, this course will introduce students to an interdisciplinary variety of methods for studying African history and societies, and the ways in which individuals and communities have used different forms of mass media to express their identities, politics, and connections to worlds within and beyond their daily lives. Through critical analysis of the history of popular forms of culture on the continent, and the connections created between Africa and the rest of the world, students will gain an understanding of what it means to be African in the modern world, and how African cultural practices have transcended and transgressed the boundaries imposed by the modern nation-state.

### **Who Do You Think You Are?: Performing Characters in Film and Literature**

Instructor: Anne Penner, anne.penner@du.edu

Course Description: Who Do You Think You Are is designed to give first-year students several learning opportunities. First, it will allow them to analyze and respond imaginatively and empathically to a range of characters in literature and film, thus coming to understand character as a critical storytelling element. They will think deeply about the essential elements of characterization through various young protagonists in popular films (such as Ladybird and Moonlight), as well as in novels, graphic novels, and plays (such as Fun Home and The Wolves). Second, they will write, share with the class, and revise a monologue in the first person for each of three different characters, either of their own creation or ones they’ve studied. And third, they will revise, rehearse, and present two of their monologues “in character,” practicing performance techniques, including of body and voice. They will be required to visit the Writing Center at least once to get guidance on their written pieces. Though this course fulfills all five Promises for the Future described in DU IMPACT 2025, it will most deeply investigate “The Promise of Creative Collaboration and Ethical Engagement.”

### **History of Colorado**

Instructor: Bill Philpott, william.philpott@du.edu

Course Description: What do Ute Indians have in common with plutonium warheads? The Pikes Peak gold rush with the Ku Klux Klan? Ski troopers, fur trappers, and Japanese farmers with sugar beets, “synthetic” trout, desegregation battles, and the Dust Bowl? They’ve all helped shape the history of the state you find yourself in. Whether you grew up here or are just now moving here, this course will help you feel more rooted in Colorado, more familiar with its rich history, and more aware of that history’s relevance to our own times.

### **True Crime Media: Justice, Journalism, or Just Entertainment?**

Instructor: LP Picard, [lauren.picard@du.edu](mailto:lauren.picard@du.edu)

Course Description: There's no denying that we are in the midst of a true crime boom. The 2010's have brought us prestige true crime dramas, like "Serial," "I'll Be Gone in the Dark," and "O.J.: Made in America." In the 2020's, true crime content has exploded on platforms like TikTok and YouTube. But this boom, with its tiger kings, forensic-file investigations, and murder make-up tutorials, has revealed more than just the marketability of the genre. It's shed light on our own dark obsessions, raising important questions about the blurry lines between reporting, unpacking, and sensationalizing. This seminar will explore the history and landscape of true crime entertainment, which goes back to at least the birth of modern journalism if not all the way back to the violence captured in early cave paintings. Our course will not focus on the crime itself but rather the stylized depictions of real events that make up the genre—podcasts, documentaries, episodic television shows, written texts, TikToks, and more. The task of our seminar is to examine the factors that shape these stylized narratives, to explore the effects they have on their audiences, and to unpack their ethical, rhetorical, and critical implications.

### **Biotechnology and Me**

Instructor: Yan Qin, [Yan.Qin@du.edu](mailto:Yan.Qin@du.edu)

Course Description: Biotechnology exploits living systems to develop tools and products that are useful in research, agriculture, industry and the medicine. The word "biotechnology" is not just a fancy and futuristic word that makes people think of science fiction movies, it can be heard from daily news and it brings innovative products to human community. This course is expected to help students build basic understanding about how biotechnology works and lead students to participate in the discussion of various topics. We will start with an introduction and historical overview of biotechnology discoveries. Students will learn the basics of DNA, protein and cells and get an understanding about the principles of genetic engineering. Then students will be introduced to various research and commercial applications of modern biotechnology in order to discuss the broader social, ethical, risk, and regulatory issues that arise from them. A range of topics will be covered including GMO foods, forensic biotechnology, molecular diagnostics, stem cell, gene therapy, the human genome project, and genetic testing. Students will participate in debates that have taken place in the wider community about ethics, human well-being, and public regulation in relation to these applications of modern biotechnology.

### **Contested "Americanness": Nation and Narration in Asian American Literature**

Instructor: Ping Qiu, [ping.qiu@du.edu](mailto:ping.qiu@du.edu)

Course Description: This course introduces students to themes and forms of what has come to be known as Asian American literature from the mid-20th century to the present. We practice close reading while exploring how these literary works challenge U.S. ideologies such as the melting pot and the American dream as they dramatize Asian American exclusion, incarceration, labor exploitation, discrimination, and diaspora. Some themes we will investigate include settlement histories of the ethnic communities, legal discourses of immigration, multiracial hierarchy, multiculturalism, neocolonialism, and imperialism. We will focus especially on coming-of-age stories, exploring their portrayal of familial strife between first and second-generation immigrants and how conflicts also occur within individuals: children are torn internally between

their dual cultures while parents suffer from displacement, trauma, and loss. Our close readings will also illuminate how characters' difficulties with national identity intersect with struggles concerning their assigned gender, sexuality, class, or religion, deepening their sense of alienation and alterity.

### **Tabletop Games: Define & Design**

Instructor: David Riche, david.riche@du.edu

Course Description: Games are as old as human civilization, dating back to ancient board games like mancala, senet, and the Royal Game of Ur. While some games have been lost, others (like chess) have endured for centuries. And while electronic games continue to evolve technologically and culturally, tabletop (board, card, analog...) games have experienced their own renaissance in recent years, drawing the attention of gamers and scholars alike. Nowadays, monster manuals, trading cards, and Kickstarter-sponsored board games are at the center of a vibrant international subculture. In this course, we will engage this subculture in four ways. First, we will define games by coming to terms with ludology, the study of play. Second, we will read games by unpacking their histories and themes. Third, we will play games by enacting their rules. Fourth, we will design games by creating and playtesting original projects. Students will think and write critically and creatively throughout the quarter.

### **Pandemic through the lenses of Literature and Arts**

Instructor: Murat Rodriguez-Nacif, murat.rodriguez-nacif@du.edu

Course Description: The events of the past three years have brought us face to face with our deep humanity. In this particular and difficult context, it is of the utmost importance to make sense of the pandemics, present and future, and literature and works of art can help us with that task. Literature and art provide us with guidance, hypothetical scenarios, creative thinking, empathy, and recognition. Furthermore, it can help us adjust our responses and engage in problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity for the benefit of the general public. We all know the COVID pandemic brought fundamental social and cultural changes, this is why I believe that we, as scholars and humanists, must provide academic and creative artifacts to help us navigate these and future pandemic events. Additionally, the pandemic has had unfortunate consequences beyond health. It has brought misinformation, fear, racism, xenophobia. As an Arts & Humanities scholar, it is also my duty to cast a light on the importance of reasoning skills that allow us to find truth, empathy, and make informed decisions.

### **What is Attention and Why Does it Matter?**

Instructor: Christy Rossi, Christy.Rossi@du.edu

Course Description: In this course we will work together to understand multiple aspects of attention including foundations of attention, individual differences related to attention, and applying concepts related to attention. Students will learn to find and read relevant research articles to help build our collective understanding about attention, and there will be frequent opportunities for active-learning. Many course topics can be directly applied to challenges faced by first-year university students, such as How can I apply my understanding of the limits of attention to better approach my coursework? and Is it beneficial to multitask during class so that I can both attend to the lecture AND get my lab report for another course done at the same time?



### **Designing Your DU: An Academic Exploration of Past, Present and Future Self**

Instructor: Nancy Sasaki, nsasaki@du.edu

Course Description: In a culture captivated by ubiquitous technology, it can sometimes feel like our existence is flattened into a series of selfies and snaps. Over time, we may come to wonder, Who am I really? And, in turn, What do I want from my college experience? By exploring narratives of our past, present, and future selves, we will engage meaningfully with issues of identity, career, and academic pursuit. This first year seminar focuses on these important areas of self-development: personal and professional; physical, emotional, and financial well-being; personal values and character; and intellectual growth.

### **Language Politics**

Instructor: Angela Sowa, angela.sowa@du.edu

Course Description: Think about all the “rules” you’ve learned over the years about the English language. Who decided what should be right or wrong? What effect do these decisions have on how we perceive race, gender, place, and other forms of identity? And what role does language play in our ever-evolving cultures? In this course, we will explore the relationship between language and the public perception of issues, movements, and identities, and we’ll consider the implications language use has in both personal and cultural contexts. By triangulating and critically assessing multiple types of primary and secondary sources, we will not only learn to engage with public conversations about language politics, but to also become critically aware of the power structures inherent in such discourses.

### **Reading Maps: Literature, Culture, and Cartography**

Instructor: Geoffrey Stacks, geoffrey.stacks@du.edu

Course Description: Maps are everywhere. You can find them on your phones, in your car, on TikTok. Cartography is an old technology, but it seems to have flourished in the twenty-first century. We rely on these helpful maps, but they do far more than give us directions. Maps affect how we see the world; they influence our understanding of culture, politics, and even our own identity. In this class, we will read literature and critical essays that explore the ways in which cartography not only describes the world but actually shapes it. Part of the class will focus on critical/philosophical writings about maps. These essays will look at how maps, which seem to be neutral, actually have authors and arguments and can change the way we move through the world, understand data, and think of ourselves. During the second part of our class, we will read a variety of literary works (short stories and poetry) that demonstrate the literary nature of cartography. What can literature and art teach us about becoming careful readers of cartography instead of passive, naïve consumers of a powerful technology?

### **Pacific Century: America and China's Competition for Global Leadership**

Instructor: Jing Sun, jing.sun@du.edu

Course Description: America and China are world powers with global responsibilities. How they cope with each other will shape the future of not only their own people but the rest of the world. With new leaders in both the White House and Zhongnanhai (the official residence of the Chinese president), will the two superpowers’ co-governing process be peaceful? What implications will this process bring to the people of these two countries? Can America retain its global leadership at a time when its leader propagates retrenchment from the global stage? Will

China try to fill the power vacuum left by an inward-looking America? These are just some of the questions we will examine in this class.

### **Communication & Adoption**

Instructor: Beth Suter, [elizabeth.suter@du.edu](mailto:elizabeth.suter@du.edu)

Course Description: Communication & Adoption explores complexities of adoption in public discourses and private communitive interactions. Course curriculum includes perspectives across the adoption triad—adoptee, birth family, and adoptive family. Issues of race, culture, identity, sexual orientation, trauma, and ethics are discussed in relation to domestic (US private and foster-care adoptions) and transnational adoption in transracial, single parent, same-race, two-parent, and gay, lesbian, and queer families. By the end of the course, students are expected to better understand:

- Historical and cultural contexts of adoption
- Issues of racial difference and sexual orientation in relation to adoption
- The interface of adoption and normalizing cultural ideologies about family
- Complexities of adoption-related identities
- Issues of trauma, grief, and loss related to adoption

Course curriculum is also designed to help students think in new and more informed ways about their own identities, relationships, and family(ies), as well as family in the United States and abroad. Students can expect to feel empowered to apply course knowledge to positively promote real-world adoption-related experiences, relationships, and conversations long after the course ends.

### **Envisioning Utopia through the lens of a sustainable well-being economy**

Instructor: Paul Sutton, [Paul.Sutton@du.edu](mailto:Paul.Sutton@du.edu)

Course Description: There is growing consensus that human civilization is facing profound challenges to its continued existence. Many of these challenges manifest as the inter-related problems of population growth, resource depletion, climate change, ocean acidification, and the 6th mass extinction in the history of the planet. This course will explore how our economic systems are causing these problems and how a radical transformation of our economic systems will allow us to achieve a sustainable and desirable future. This course will be taught in the spirit of this quote from Buckminster Fuller: “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”. The new model we will work to develop in this course is a vision for a sustainable well-being economy. The well-being economy we will envision will conform to three basic principles: 1) Exist within planetary boundaries (Environmental Sustainability), 2) Fairly distribute resources (Equitable Distribution), and 3) Efficiently allocate resources (Wise Rational Use). Students will use social media, presentatons, and written reports to communicate the results of their study, dialogs, and co-creations.

## **Manga**

Instructor: Michael Toole, michael.toole@du.edu

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to thinking, discussing, and being with interlocutors and texts in the college environment. Through the study of manga, Japanese comics, students will learn about the history of Japanese manga while also reflecting on key skills for participation in a college environment and as a global citizen: how to think and read critically, how to identify and evaluate credible information, and how to talk with others about topics of import. In this course, students will study the history and forms of the Japanese comic book. Students will be introduced to writings on comics theory and be able to understand and analyze the history of Japanese manga forms. The course is arranged around thematic units that offer intellectual structures to students through which they can think through the texts. Questions to be investigated include: Should we call premodern visual-verbal narratives manga? How is war recorded, remembered, and presented in manga? Does the gender or sexuality of a reader influence reading practices?

Readings will include manga by: Tezuka Osamu, Nakazawa Keiji, Takeuchi Naoko, and Yoshinaga Fumi. For a final project, students will prepare a graphic essay that incorporates critical methodologies learned in class with primary source(s).

## **Space, Place and Purpose: Creating Places that Support Us**

Instructor: Olivia Tracy, olivia.tracy@du.edu

Course Description: Spaces tell stories, and we create memories and narratives that turn spaces into places—narratives about ourselves, our values, our communities. When you visit a space where you’ve built memories—a skate park, a coffee shop—those memories and stories create a sense of place. When you visit a space where your culture or identities might be erased—for example, a government building—you might feel you don’t belong in that space’s story. When you begin college, you’re surrounded by new spaces, new emotions, and new possibilities for engaging with and understanding places to better understand your communities, your education, and yourself. In this FSEM, we’ll be thinking critically about the emotions and stories in spaces, the perceptions of exclusion or inclusion they communicate, the ways that they become “places,” and the ways we can cultivate places to support us in college. To do this, we’ll be analyzing, chronicling, and creatively representing places that have mattered to us in our lives before DU through videos, art, and written narratives. We’ll also be investigating, critiquing, and transforming spaces and places that we encounter on campus and in the surrounding community through journaling, written critique and analysis, and craft and artistic activism.

## **Geographic and Environmental Issues in Modern Cinema**

Instructor: Erika Trigoso Rubio, etrigoso@du.edu

Course Description: This course is designed to provide a critical analysis of pertinent films portraying a variety of issues. In terms of geography we will analyze culture, ethnic, political and migration issues. For environmental science, students will focus on landscape change, environmental degradation, and sustainability. In doing so, students will look at geography and environmental science as a subject of film aiming to understand how the landscape and environmental issues tell a story that impact humans. This seminar involves a weekly exploration

of different films, critical discussion, and a deconstruction of geographic routes and environmental elements.

### **Writing Across Media**

Instructor: Nicole Turnipseed, [nicole.turnipseed@du.edu](mailto:nicole.turnipseed@du.edu)

Course Description: How do you “read” an image? Have you ever “heard” an author’s voice in their writing? What avenues for persuasion and inquiry are afforded by your word processor? ...by the camera lens on your cell phone? ...by a graffiti stencil? In Writing Across Media, we’ll explore how we can utilize and create tools for understanding and communicating beyond the alphabetic. Our end goal will be to thoughtfully compose a set of multimodal texts that work together to spark change on an issue you find personally meaningful. To get there, we’ll begin by first cultivating our self-understanding and genuine curiosity about our worlds. Using theoretically grounded practices, we’ll test the affordances and limitations of a range of modes (linguistic, visual...), media (alphabet, photograph...), and technologies (pencils, Snapchat...). Our class time together will hinge on discussion and workshopping; we’ll work together to speak back to utilize and build on theory, while also serving as interested and generative audiences for one another in the process of composing. Along the way, we’ll develop a malleable toolkit for understanding and composing multimedia products while attempting to identify, and just as importantly challenge, implicit assumptions about media.

### **Exploring the Environment of Higher Education**

Instructor: Michele Tyson, [michele.tyson@du.edu](mailto:michele.tyson@du.edu)

Course Description: This course will serve as an introduction to understanding the social environments in which the system of higher education exists and the complexities of individual campus and culture. The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with today’s higher education landscape, interrogating the purpose of education and the role a college degree plays in society. The first third of the course (approximately 3-4 weeks) will be spent investigating the social, historical, political, and economic environments. The second third of the course (approximately 3 weeks) will inquire about the role of the college campus, broadly, on the “traditional” college experience using an ecological framework that centers and evaluates the physical, human, organizational, and constructed environments of institutions. The final third portion of the course (approximately 3-4 weeks) will examine the environments of the University of Denver and the effects of those environments on the individual student experience as well as the collective student body, with attention given to offering students strategies to maximize learning and development on their own college campus. In line with Inclusive Excellence, attention will be given to the impact of campus environments on diverse student populations, understanding the differences between how symbols of diversity, equity, and inclusion are identified and experienced in higher education in the United States context, as well as more locally - centering the University of Denver. Theoretical concepts will help explain, describe, and examine the college environments as a system and their impact on students, faculty, and staff.

### **Ciphers from ancient to modern times**

Instructor: Petr Vojtechovsky, [petr.vojtechovsky@du.edu](mailto:petr.vojtechovsky@du.edu)

Course Description: The purpose of ciphers is to make communication safe from eavesdropping. Ciphers have appeared around 500 BC, were widely use by medieval times, have been studied

systematically since the 1800s and resulted in the modern field of cryptography. Encrypted messages changed the course of history on several occasions. Many aspects of our society depend on secure encryption. It is expected that the importance of cryptography will continue to grow not only in online communication but also in the development of decentralized bookkeeping, currency alternatives and civic aspects of democratic societies.

In this course we will follow the historical development of cryptography. We will design ciphers, encrypt and decrypt messages and break ciphers using an online tool prepared by the instructor. The required mathematics is accessible and can be explained to any inquisitive first year college student. Most class meeting will be in the form of a seminar and active participation will be required. Students will form teams, each team will give a presentation on a topic (chosen by the instructor) related to cryptography, and also prepare and deliver a classroom lecture on a cipher of their choosing.

### **Networking Italian-Style**

Instructor: Rachel Walsh, [rachel.walsh@du.edu](mailto:rachel.walsh@du.edu)

Course Description: If you are interested in Italy, and are thinking about a future in Law, Business, Sports History, Communications, Music, Political Science or History, this is your FSEM! Networking and the exchange of personal, cultural and intellectual information has been around for centuries. Europe experienced a giant boom in networking activities in the eighteenth century. Italy in particular witnessed a variety of networks actively planting seeds for eventual political and geographical unification. This seminar explores differing notions of networking Italian-style during the eighteenth century, and it provides you access to the age of information exchange in three arenas: academies, periodical culture and salons. You will explore the universal nature of the period's literature, opera, and political writings and seek to answer why these works are relevant today. The seminar also provides training for Stanford University's web-based platform - Palladio - an innovative, research tool used to visualize complex, multi-dimensional data. You will discover and gather data while researching the cultural exchanges and networks of eighteenth-century Italy, and acquire the skills necessary to create visualizations of this research.

### **Coming of Age: A Personal and Literary Journey**

Instructor: Susan Walter, [swalter@du.edu](mailto:swalter@du.edu)

Course Description: This course focuses on both films and literary texts from the 20th century that fit into the Coming of Age genre. These works are from various writers and directors whose identities and life experiences vary widely. In addition to analyzing these cinematic and literary works, we will also dedicate class time to discussing self-identity and reflection as students embark on this exciting journey called college. Throughout the quarter we will weave together reflections regarding what we value as individuals and how we can shape our experiences in the coming years, while we also analyze how characters who lived in other timeframes and/or in different social and political contexts did the same. As we analyze the short stories, novels and films that comprise the bulk of the course content, we will consider the texts studied both as

cultural products of a particular historical and political context and as works of art. Some of the themes that we will explore during the quarter include: love and sexuality, mentors and role models, gender norms, cultural and racial backgrounds, and how they all come together to influence identity formation. The negotiation of individual desires and needs with social expectations and norms will also be explored in many of the texts. We will also spend some time exploring personal values, interests and strengths as a way to ground decisions regarding majors and minors as well as imagining what types of careers and work environments could be a good fit. Finally, the course will also include some contemplative practices such as meditation, intention setting and reflections. Students will learn about how mindfulness can aid in managing stress and anxiety as well as help us feel more present and focused and thus assist us in getting more out of class discussions, study time and life in general.

### **Mind-opening Social Sci-Fi**

Instructor: Ann Wehman, [ann.wehman@du.edu](mailto:ann.wehman@du.edu)

Course Description: Social sci-fi is a broad genre that explores controversial themes in novel contexts. This allows readers to step back from their day-to-day lives and safely ask themselves: “Is that right? Is that normal? What would I do?” The aim of this course is to use science fiction literature as a starting point to have open discussions about controversial topics and to use student-led debates to see the logic behind different points of view. In addition, students will have the opportunity to choose their own controversy, develop it into a short story, and present their take at the end of the term. Themes to be discussed include what makes us human, science vs. religion, terrorism, gender oppression, LGBT identity, social class, and unseen privilege as seen through the lens of aliens, robots, cybernetic enhancements, precognition, time travel, space travel, dystopias and apocalypses. This course is for science fiction and philosophy fans!

### **Your Brain on Music: What is it? Why do we love it?**

Instructor: Zoe Weiss, [zoe.weiss@du.edu](mailto:zoe.weiss@du.edu)

Course Description: Teenagers and young adults have a special relationship to music: one’s taste in music develops at this time and music preferences may become a fundamental part of emerging identity. The music you listen to now will likely remain important to you throughout your entire life! This power of music has fascinated thinkers for millennia, but the last thirty years has seen a dramatic expansion of music research within the fields of music cognition and music psychology. This course asks: What is music and how does it function in society? Is it unique to humans? How does it evoke emotions? How does it help create identity and foster community? What is music’s relationship to language? To culture? Through reading, writing, listening, and discussion, we will attempt to untangle music’s complex relationship to mind, brain, body, and culture.