

A Brief Guide to First-Year Seminars in the College of Arts & Sciences

First-Year Seminars, listed with the course prefix FSEM, are designed to improve your ability to analyze ideas and express them persuasively in oral presentations and in writing. All First-Year Seminars offer regular practice in the modes of intellectual conversation that are hallmarks of educated women and men. Faculty who teach these seminars would quickly add that these small discussion-based classes are a great way to begin your college education and experience the true joys of learning.

Fall 2009 First Year Seminars

FSEM 100.01 Communication and Contemporary Culture (Daniel Rossi-Keen)

The Seminar: How do the ways we communicate shape who we become? Why do we hold certain beliefs and reject others? How do the stories we tell ourselves and others become lenses through which we view the world? How do such stories impact our most important decisions and judgments? In hopes of thinking about these questions, this course offers an in depth exploration into the relationship between communication and various areas of human culture. Topics to be considered will include religious belief, morality, emerging technology, philosophy, and political life.

Regardless of the topic being considered, the goal is to understand and evaluate the assertion that communication is responsible for creating our most cherished beliefs and cultural practices. Particular attention will be paid to cultural artifacts and issues emerging within the last several decades.

Your Professor: Daniel Rossi-Keen is nearing the end of his first year as an Assistant Professor at Stetson University. Most recently, Daniel lived in Athens, Ohio, where he earned his Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Popular Culture. His research and teaching interests focus on the impact of religion and philosophy on human culture. In addition to his Ph.D. in rhetoric, Daniel also holds degrees in music, theology, philosophy, and women's studies. Daniel is the proud father of a six-year-old son, Owen, and his two-year-old twin siblings, Carmine and Maria.

FSEM 100.02 Writing & Wellbeing (Gail Radley)

The Seminar: Is writing good for your health? There's such a wealth of literature exploring illness--are writers instinctively moving themselves toward wellness when they write? Is it that same impulse that drives ordinary people to keep journals and diaries or write poems?

Recently, researchers have made the emotional and physical impact of writing on illness the focus of scientific study with remarkable results. Many writers describe their process as a sort of spiritual practice from which they gain insight.

The connection between health and spirituality in its various forms is yet another area receiving attention, from studies on the impact of prayer on healing to commentary on the similarities between mystic practice and circumscribed lives of the ill. Where do writing, spirituality, and wellness meet? This course will explore that intersection through a variety of texts, discussion, and written responses. In addition, students will

learn the sort of writing that has been found to be healing and have the opportunity to experience its potential.

Your Professor: Gail Radley received her B.A., independent studies with an emphasis in creative writing, from Mary Baldwin College and an M.A. in English from Stetson. Now a lecturer in the English Department, she focuses primarily on first-year courses, but occasionally teaches more advanced writing and literature courses. She is the author of 20 books for children and young adults, as well as various articles and short stories for adults. Having recently returned from giving a workshop at the Second Annual Writing and Wellness Conference, she is eager to share the research and knowledge backing what those who love to read and write have known all along: the written word is powerful medicine.

FSEM100.03 Thinking About Poetry (Terri Witek)

The Seminar: Why does poetry, one of the oldest art forms, not only survive but flourish in the 21st century? In this class we will consider how poems make meaning as strangely and as beautifully as the sky produces weather. We will read recent translations of famous works (Robert Pinsky's translation of Dante's *Inferno*) as well some famous revisions (the new version of Plath's *Ariel*) and consider the stunning and sometimes desperate measures poets take to tease what is real out of the artifice of language. Students will write analytically about poetry, attend readings by writers, and read some of their class favorites at the longest-running student reading series in Florida, *Poetry at an Uncouth Hour*.

Your Professor: Terri Witek is the author of three books of poetry, including her most recent, *The Shipwreck Dress* (2008), as well as a scholarly book about American poet Robert Lowell. She has a special interest in the connection between poetry and the visual arts. Her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in English are from Vanderbilt University. She directs the Sullivan Creative Writing Program in the English Department.

FSEM 100.04 Radicals, Rednecks, Revolutions (Mark Powell)

The Seminar: Much of U.S. culture is mass produced and consumed in like manner. Celebrity worship, twenty-four hour infotainment, Must See TV—all place a high value on materialism and conformity. But not everyone TiVos *The Hills* and routinely checks their Facebook account. This course will introduce students to the writers, thinkers, activists, preachers, farmers, and everyday people who have opted out of or struggled against the homogenization of life. Reading works by authors such as Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, Barbara Kingsolver, Elizabeth Gilbert, Janisse Ray, Jack Kerouac, and John Krakauer, we will encounter the shanty boat drifter Harlan Hubbard and 21st century pioneer Eustace Conway, explore the roots of environmentalism as a national movement, examine the radically different approaches to social change acted out by pacifist Catholic Workers and the anarchist Weather Underground, and consider utopian projects like The Farm and the strange quest of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters.

This course is writing intensive, and will conclude with a consideration of the value of “rocking the boat.” And with a visit to the Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp.

Your Professor: Mark Powell is the author of the novels *Prodigals* and *Blood Kin*, and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Breadloaf Writers' Conference. He attended the Citadel and has degrees in Creative Writing from the University of South Carolina and Religious Studies from Yale Divinity School.

FSEM 100.05: The Art and Politics of Fairy Tales (Jamil Khader)

The Seminar: Together we will explore the evolution of classic fairy tales (German, French, and Italian as well as various international versions of these tales) and examine how these classical fairy tales have been rewritten and revised by contemporary writers and filmmakers. With their spells, enchantments, disenchantments, prohibitions, and transformations, fairy tales have been either criticized for reproducing dominant patriarchal and middle-class capitalist ideologies or praised for inspiring people of all ages to resist, or escape dominant ideologies and look for fulfillment and emancipation.

How fairy tales offer hope and escape and how they awaken our sense of wonder and our belief in the miraculous will be a focus of our study. In exploring the perennial appeal of fairy tales, their socio-historical contexts, and their aesthetic (artistic) dimensions, we'll look especially closely at the role that Disney has played in popularizing and institutionalizing fairy tales in our own time.

Your Professor: Jamil Khader grew up in Israel, graduated from Penn State with a Ph.D. in English Literature, and worked for two years at a private university in Ankara, Turkey, before he came to Stetson. His teaching and research focus on postcolonial (Third World) literature, transnational feminism, and popular culture (science fiction, vampire fiction, fairy tales). His publications on these topics have appeared in various national and international literary journals including, *Ariel*, *Feminist Studies*, *MELUS*, *The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, and other collections. In addition to his courses in the English department, he enjoys teaching interdisciplinary courses, especially the *Introduction to Women and Gender Studies* and the Honors seminar, *Globalization and Human Rights*.

FSEM 100.06 Writers on Trial: When Books Offend (Karen Kaivola)

The Seminar: From ancient Greece to the present day, people have worried that fictional representations are (or can be) dangerous—corrupting influences on youth (especially) or on society itself. Indeed, Plato so feared that fictional representations distorted reality and our ability to perceive it truthfully that he proposed banning artists from his ideal republic.

Some have worried that imaginative fictions transgress, violate, or challenge conventional ways of understanding the world, while for others the primary focus is on representations of such culturally-sensitive subjects as race, gender, sexuality, and/or religion. In this course, we'll read and discuss novels—such as *Madame Bovary*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Lolita*, *The Satanic Verses*, and *Snow*—that have been, for one reason or another, in one context or another, perceived as offensive, dangerous, or corrupting. We'll also consider arguments—philosophical, legal, political, and cultural—that have been offered both for and against the circulation of controversial books and ideas. As we consider what's at stake in these debates, we'll also think together about the nature of fiction, representation, and the arts; about what makes some ideas seem dangerous or unacceptable at one place or moment in time but not another; and about the historical/cultural perspectives that shape us and our views of what is—or is not—acceptable to read, see, or think.

Your Professor: Karen Kaivola, Professor of English and Associate Dean in the College of Arts & Sciences, has taught at Stetson since 1991. She grew up on Bainbridge Island (a short ferry ride from Seattle), earned the A.B. at Georgetown University and the Ph.D. from the University of Washington. Her areas of interest include 20th century literature and the arts, Virginia Woolf, modernism and modernity, gender/sexuality studies, and

critical theory. In her pre-Stetson, non-academic life, she bicycled the Baja Peninsula, climbed mountains in the Pacific Northwest, and worked on a farm in Norway.

FSEM 100.07: How to be American: *Star Trek* and American Culture (Megan O’Neill)

The Seminar: “How to Be American” uses the television series and films as a springboard to discussing ongoing important questions inherent in the many American cultures: How do we balance the need to protect ourselves with our responsibility to value the beliefs and practices of others? In what ways do we interact with the unknown, and how does that reveal a uniquely American set of practices? How do we treat others, and how do we treat ourselves? Using *Star Trek* as a mirror for American beliefs and cultural practices since 1966, the class studies American growth and stagnation via one of our most popular and enduring mythologies.

Your Professor: Megan O’Neill has been the Director of the Writing Program at Stetson University since 1999, when she arrived here after a journey that spanned Nebraska, New Mexico, Washington, Oregon, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. With a Ph.D. in Language and Rhetoric from the University of New Mexico, she has focused on the history and theory of rhetoric, composition, and language; the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge; the mythological properties of *Star Trek*; and the intersections of writing with popular culture, which formed the focus of her first textbook. When she’s not teaching, writing, or reading, she can be found playing on the beach, snorkeling in the Bahamas, and dancing the Argentine tango (but not all at the same time).

FSEM 100.08: Concepts of the Human (Susan Peppers- Bates)

The Seminar: What constitutes the essence of a human being? Why do we deny the humanity of those unlike ourselves, even if the differences are small or superficial, like skin color? This course traces conceptions of the “human,” historically, in Western philosophy and literature. We will discuss the concepts of self, community, and nation as well as concepts of the “other,” those we see as strange, foreign, or even less human. Specifically, we will consider how the concept of the “Other” fosters fear and discrimination. In order to understand how discrimination works, its origins in Western culture and its enduring presence in modern American, we will use a multi-disciplinary approach, starting with materials representing Greco-Roman ethnocentrism and moving up to contemporary USA.

Your Professor: After earning a B.A. in English from Davidson College, Susan Peppers-Bates missed philosophy so much that she pursued her Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania. She specializes in early modern philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and feminist philosophy. She is interested in social justice and aspires to combat oppression through education. She has published on divine command theory and has a forthcoming book on a late seventeenth to early eighteenth century philosopher, *Nicolas Malebranche: Freedom in an Occasionalist World*. She is fond of blue-grass music, Battlestar Galactica, mystery novels, and knitting.

FSEM 100.09: The Search for Wisdom (Kandy Queen- Sutherland)

The Seminar: The search for wisdom is both universal and timeless. Ancient seekers believed that if one found and fit into what were considered the rhythms of life, then along with finding meaning in human existence, would come life’s blessings. Who doesn’t want the “good life” or hope for success! Other thinkers struggled with less positive views of reality. No matter how hard you try, sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, and sometimes you get sucker-punched! Alongside the sages of old, students will enter the human quest for meaning in life by looking to the wisdom traditions of

the ancient Near East including that of the biblical texts. We'll take a look at the practical views of proverbial wisdom, the worldview of the skeptics, and the theological struggle of those willing to question the nature of God. Our quest for the "good life" will likewise consider contemporary expressions of wisdom themes. Through introduction to the worldview of wisdom, to the understanding of wisdom as a social movement, and as language and literature, students will develop their own guide for attaining wisdom.

Your Professor: Kandy Queen-Sutherland holds the Sam R. Marks Chair of Religion and as a Professor of Religious Studies concentrates her work in the areas of Hebrew Scriptures and Women and Gender Studies. She brings to the classroom seven years of teaching experience in Europe and eighteen years at Stetson which include travel courses to Greece and Turkey, and most recently to Egypt, Jordan and Israel.

FSEM 100.10 Self and World (Greg Sapp)

This seminar is required for and limited to incoming first-year Bonner Scholars.

The Seminar: What does the term "individual" mean apart from "the community"? What does "community" mean apart from the concept of "the individual"? This seminar, designed specifically for incoming, first-year Bonner Scholars, will explore the relationship between these two concepts with a view to understanding how the community shapes the individual and how the individual can, and should, shape the community. We will think about issues pertaining to social justice and ask what responsibility the individual has for her or his own formation and what responsibility the individual has for the formation and well-being of the community. Service-learning in the community is central to this exploration.

Your Professor: After earning his B.A. from Stetson University, Greg Sapp went on to earn an M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and the Ph.D. in Philosophical Theology from the University of Virginia. He is particularly interested in the formation of Christian thought and doctrine. He has published articles and presented papers in the fields of doctrinal development, historical philosophy and theology, and religion and culture. His latest work is in the area of sports and religion. He returned to Stetson in 2006 and holds the Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility. He comes to us most recently from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, where he was awarded the 2005 Spencer B. King Distinguished Faculty Award.

FSEM 100.11 Turning Points in Drama (Julie Schmitt)

The Seminar: We will examine some of the major plays and critical writings that serve as significant turning points in cultural history. Since the Classical Greek Era, theatre has provided artists with opportunities to reflect and resist cultural values. Over a twenty-five hundred year span of theatre, we'll focus on those plays and movements that pushed boundaries and called out for change. In doing so, we'll examine the ways in which these plays were able to bring about change not only within the theatre arts, but within society as well. In addition, this class will also make excursions outside of the classroom to see live theatre productions.

Your Professor: Julie Schmitt received her Ph.D. from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She's been an active member of the theatre community as a director and performer for over 15 years. She teaches courses in the areas of theatre history, theatre theory, and dramatic literature. Having received her Bachelor of Arts from Stetson University, Dr. Schmitt is thrilled to now be teaching at the University which inspired her as a student.

FSEM 100.12: The Mysteries of Perception (Michael King)

The Seminar: We will explore, through discussion and in the laboratory, the best understandings of how our sensory systems define what we perceive about the world around us. Course material will include a variety of readings, films, and works of art that will allow us to explore the mechanisms of perception.

Your Professor: Michael King is a Professor of Biology and teaches *Introductory Biology*, *Neurobiology*, *Animal Behavior*, and *Endocrinology*. He earned a B.A. in Biology from Princeton University and a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from the University of Virginia and completed postdoctoral work at the University of Michigan. He is interested in how the brain processes sensory information and produces appropriate behavioral responses. His research, which has been sponsored by NSF and NIH grants, has focused on brain mechanisms underlying behavioral responses to taste input. Students regularly work with him on peer-reviewed scholarly papers and conference presentations. He chairs the Pre-Health Advisory Committee and serves as DJ for a show on GreenHat Radio, the campus digital station. In 2008, he received the McEniry Award, Stetson's highest recognition for excellence in teaching.

FSEM100.13 Ecology and Evolution (Cindy Bennington)

The Seminar: We will investigate Earth's biodiversity by considering the mechanisms responsible for the evolution of organisms, how living things interact with one another and their physical environment, and how humans have impacted those interactions. Students who enroll in this course should enjoy being outside in natural habitats. On Fridays we will frequently take field trips to local areas including Blue Spring State Park and Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge.

Your Professor: Cindy Bennington has conducted ecological research in Alaska, West Virginia, New Jersey, and Florida. At Stetson, she teaches ecological and botanical courses and actively engages students in her research in plant ecology. She has also involved Stetson students in environmental service-learning projects both on and off campus. She is a former chair of the University's Environmental Responsibility Council and is the current Chair of the Department of Biology.

FS100.14 Kitchen Chemistry: What's Cooking? (Ramee Indralingam)

The Seminar: This seminar takes a scientific approach to cooking and explores the chemistry of foods and the various techniques employed in gastronomy. We will focus on the nature of various foods, how they are made, and why they are made in that way in various international cuisines. We will try to understand why and when specific culinary habits began. A hands-on approach will be taken, in which experiments will be carried out to answer questions such as, "Can you taste foods if you simultaneously hold your nose?" and, "Is there any caffeine in decaffeinated coffee?"

Your Professor: Ramee Indralingam started teaching at Stetson after she received a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry from the University of Florida. She teaches general chemistry and analytical chemistry at Stetson, and she has also taught forensic chemistry in the Honors program at Stetson. She is interested in determining the volatile components of herbs and spices, and in developing new and innovative lab experiments for the curriculum. A recent success was in developing a technique to determine the amount of iron in the yolk of an egg. She regularly carries out her research with the collaboration of chemistry and biochemistry majors.

FS100.15 Energy and the Environment (Kevin Riggs)

The Seminar: One of the most important challenges facing the world in the 21st century is to identify and develop sustainable sources of energy in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living while also minimizing our impact on the environment. This seminar will discuss the science of energy production and usage for a variety of energy sources and energy conservation strategies, and also will examine the environmental advantages and drawbacks of each source or strategy. The science underlying the challenge of global climate change will also be discussed. While the seminar is discussion based and writing intensive, an introduction to the basic physical principles and skills necessary to understand the issues involved in energy systems and sustainability will also be presented, including physical units conversion and problem- solving techniques.

Your Professor: Kevin Riggs holds a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Minnesota and specializes in research on magnetic materials useful for magnetic recording and information storage. He also holds an M.S. in Physics/Musical-acoustics from Case Western Reserve University and has an active research program using laser-based holographic techniques to image the vibration patterns of musical instruments. He teaches many advanced courses for physics majors, but especially enjoys interacting with students from a wide range of backgrounds in his general education course on musical acoustics titled “The Science of Music” and his new first-year seminar titled “Energy and the Environment.” In his spare time, Dr. Riggs enjoys playing guitar in a Stetson faculty jazz quartet, the “Sage Quartet.”

FSEM 100.16 The West in Question (Eric Kurlander)

The Seminar: It is impossible to read a newspaper, follow a political campaign, or watch the nightly news without hearing how “western values” are under assault. Chinese economic might, Islamic terrorism, Russian autocracy-- “The West” faces numerous challenges. Such challenges are hardly new, of course. From the French Revolution to the Holocaust to the Cold War, “Westerners” have debated, fought, even killed each other in the name of “freedom”, “equality”, “nation”, “democracy,” and “Judeo-Christian” values. By analyzing major “questions” in Modern European History, this First Year Seminar will inquire whether “The West” possesses a coherent set of values or ideas and whether those ideas continue to have relevance at the outset of the twenty-first century.

Your Professor: Eric Kurlander (PhD, Harvard University, 2001) is Associate Professor of History at Stetson University. He teaches courses on Nazi Germany, The Holocaust, The Second World War, The French Revolution, Modern Europe, Imperialism, Nationalism, and Baseball. His forthcoming book, *Living With Hitler: Liberal Democrats in the Third Reich* (Yale University Press, 2009), examines the motivations, hopes, and fears of liberal democrats—Germans who best exemplified the middle-class progressivism of the Weimar Republic—to discover why so few resisted and so many embraced elements of the Third Reich. His first book, *The Price of Exclusion: Ethnicity, National Identity, and the Decline of German Liberalism, 1898- 1933* (Berghahn Books, 2006), describes how ethnonationalist (*völkisch*) ideologies gradually undermined the liberal parties in late-Imperial and Weimar Germany. He has held research and writing fellowships from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation; the German Historical Institute; the German Academic Exchange Service; the Krupp Foundation; and Harvard University’s Program for the Study of Germany and Europe. His current projects include a textbook, *The West in Question: Continuity and Change* (Pearson-Longman) and *Consuming Terror: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich*. In his free time, Kurlander enjoys parenting, reading, travel, sports, and popular culture (he is a huge fan of Bill Maher,

The Office, and the Chicago Cubs).

FSEM 100.17 The Voice of the People (David Hill)

The Seminar: We will examine the role of citizens in political decision-making. The main goal of the course is to explore whether or not average citizens have the capacity to understand complex political and economic issues and convey meaningful preferences to political leaders. We will explore readings on the topic of citizen input ranging from classics of political philosophy to contemporary cutting edge research on the nature of public opinion. Participants in this course will participate in the development and implementation of a Deliberative Poll, which is an alternative polling technique that involves bringing citizens together to discuss issues important to the local community.

Your Professor: David Hill received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Stetson and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Florida. He teaches courses in the areas of American politics and research methodology.

His research focuses on political behavior with a specific interest in the interaction between institutions and political participation. He has published articles in *American Politics Research*, *Electoral Studies*, *State and Local Government Review*, *American Review of Politics*, and *Politics and Policy*. In 2006 he published the book *American Voter Turnout: An Institutional Perspective* (Westview Press), which explores the impact of governmental and electoral institutional arrangements on turnout in American elections.

FSEM 100.18 Utopias in Fiction, Real Life, and Virtual Reality (William Ball)

The Seminar: This seminar allows students to explore the phenomena of utopias (idealized and intentional communities) created to show us a better way of life. We read and discuss distinctive works of utopian fiction. We study real world utopian communities (including some in Florida) and explore the reasons for their success or failure. Finally, we take on the role of participant observers by embedding ourselves in utopian communities on the internet, gaining first-hand experience with utopian experiments in virtual worlds.

Your Professor: Bill Ball is joining the faculty at Stetson this fall after many years as a faculty member in the political science department at The College of New Jersey. There he taught political philosophy, community politics, and research methods. He also worked with his students in supporting the civic life of communities around the college, most recently focused on sustainability issues. He indulged his techno geek side by directing the Interactive Multimedia Program at the college. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia along with a master's from Carleton University (Canada) and a bachelor's from Drake University. His hobbies include making short movies, building robots, and, most recently, becoming a Floridian.

FSEM 100.19 American Popular Culture (Emily Mieras)

The Seminar: Film, television, the Internet, advertising, music, news media, best-selling fiction--these are only some of the forms of popular culture that we encounter every day in the United States. Far from being "just entertainment," popular culture helps shape values, ideas, and attitudes in American life. This course highlights key moments in American popular culture since the 1940s, including such themes as youth culture, national identity, and conceptions of gender and the family. From the Cleavers to the Cosbys, from James Dean to the Brat Pack, from '50s rock-n-roll to rap, and World War II

V-Mail to Facebook, the popular culture of this era gives us insights into some of the assumptions that shape American values, policy, and social practice. Students will have an opportunity to pursue projects on topics that interest them and will learn strategies for successful and rewarding popular culture analysis. At the same time, students will hone their writing and speaking skills. This classroom setting is highly interactive, and we will work together to understand our texts and their significance for their times.

Your Professor: Emily Mieras enjoys teaching about popular culture because the class offers a chance to analyze cultural phenomena that we often take for granted and to figure out how they help create meaning in American life. She teaches a range of classes in American Studies on such topics as multiculturalism, consumer culture, and women's and gender history. She also teaches in the Women and Gender Studies program. Her A.B. is from Harvard, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in American Studies is from the College of William and Mary. Her current research projects include a history of college students' community service work in the Progressive Era and an investigation into contemporary planned communities in the United States.

FSEM 100.20 Deconstructing Difference: The Dialectics of Otherness (Kimberly Flinthamilton)

The Seminar: Why do people fear those unlike themselves? How far can we trace the history of prejudice? This course promotes awareness and value of diverse peoples by deconstructing the concept of the 'other' and the role it plays in fostering fear and discrimination. In order best to understand how discrimination works, its historical and literary origins in western culture, its enduring conceptual power, and its pervasive presence in modern America, a multilevel analysis is employed starting with the Graeco-Roman ethnocentrism, and moving into the modern USA.

Your Professor: After earning a B.S. in Classics and Biological Sciences from the University of Notre Dame, Kimberly Flinthamilton earned her Ph.D. in Classical Archaeology from Duke University. She is a palaeoethnobotanist by training and has excavated on several Iron Age sites in Eastern Crete. The Iron Age in Greece corresponds to the Homeric period, and of late she has begun to focus her research in identity and social inequality in the Homeric World. She also has a keen interest in justice and oppression in the modern world, especially regarding race and gender, and strives to increase awareness through her scholarship and teaching. In a recent monograph, she has studied "Slavery in Homer's *Odyssey*."

FSEM 100.21 American Freedom in Action (Glen Epley)

The Seminar: Free speech, freedom of religion, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, due process of law - all commonly recognized terms, but what do they mean in practice? Using public schools as the stage, we will examine American freedom through the lens of exciting legal controversies focused on U.S. Supreme Court decisions. Can students protest? Pray? Advocate illegal behavior? Be strip searched? Can a school post the Ten Commandments? Censor student publications? Teach intelligent design alongside evolution? Compel students to accept diversity?

We also think about the inevitable conflict between the twin pillars of the American experience: freedom and democracy. When individual freedoms clash with the desires of the majority, how are we to referee the disagreement? Should the majority always rule? Should the freedom of one be superior to the will of the many? Where do we draw the line between the two?

Anyone considering a career in law, education, religion, or politics – or anyone passionate about liberty – will love this hands-on study of America’s experience in defining individual freedom while preserving democratic order.

Your Professor: Glen Epley earned his Ph.D. from Duke and has been a sportswriter, high school history teacher, professor at three universities, deputy superintendent of a 55,000 student school district, and a senior executive for the world’s 6th largest insurance brokerage house. He is currently Professor and Chair of the Department of Teacher Education at Stetson where he teaches graduate courses in school law and school finance.

He has published on topics such as separation of church and state, due process in student discipline, censorship in schools, legal issues of child abuse, teachers and tort liability, *in loco parentis*, educational malpractice, and the constitutional rights of parents.

FSEM 100.22 Belief and Unbelief (Donald Musser)

The Seminar: Our topic centers on an investigation of the dynamics of faith, doubt, skepticism, agnosticism, and atheism. We will wrestle with a curious phenomenon of contemporary life: why has spirituality become popular, while, at the same time, unbelief has grown. A case study using the book *Evolution and Religion* will guide us to examine issues at the interface of faith and reason (science). The book’s author, Michael Ruse, a world-class philosopher, will join our seminar during a visit to Stetson.

Your Professor: Donald Musser has taught at Stetson for thirty-one years, focusing on theology and the relationships of religion to culture. Additionally, he has been an Air Force chaplain, a chemical engineer, and a pastor. His Ph.D. is from the U. of Chicago. Among his recent publications are *Mormonism in Conversation with Contemporary Christian Theologies* (co-edited in 2007); an essay, “Collision, Division, Conversation: When Mormon Scholars and Christian Theologians Talk” (2009); and *Tillich* (co-authored and forthcoming, 2010). He is an avid fisherman and gardener and has been known to cheer for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Spring 2010 First Year Seminars (a tentative list of proposed seminars)

FSEM 100 (Spring) South America Turns Left (Bill Nysten)

The Seminar: Since the turn of the century, eight of South America’s ten Spanish and Portuguese speaking nations have elected Left-wing presidents, some of whom are vocally anti-capitalist and anti-U.S. Twenty years ago, nine of the ten countries were governed by Center-Right or Right-wing presidents, and all ten were openly aligned with the U.S. How do we explain this massive and unprecedented political and diplomatic shift? What does it mean to the United States which has traditionally defined Latin America as part of its own “sphere of interest”?

Your Professor: Bill Nysten is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science. He earned the Ph.D., M.A., and M.Phil. in political science/comparative politics at Columbia University (New York) and an M.A. in Latin American studies and international economics at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (Washington, DC). His BA in political science was awarded by the University of California at Berkeley. His teaching and research interests focus on Latin American politics and

political economy (especially Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela), economic development, democracy, and democratization. He frequently presents his work at national and international conferences and has authored numerous articles and book chapters. His 2003 book, *Elitist Democracy vs. Participatory Democracy: Lessons from Brazil* (St. Martins/Palgrave) is based on research and interviews with leading political figures in Brazil. He is currently working on research in participatory democratic 'home styles' among Brazilian legislators. He is fluent in Portuguese and Spanish and plays a mean guitar in the faculty rock bands, "Two-Piece Chicken Dinner" and "My Dayglo Rehab."

**FSEM 100 (Spring) American Civil Rights Movement
(T. Wayne Bailey)**

FSEM 100 (Spring) American Environmental Issues (Paul Croce)

The Seminar: The course includes a history of Americans' relation with nature and an evaluation of the contemporary scene. Or, in other words: how did we get here, and what are we going to do about it? Many students (and citizens in general) have a general sense that there are environmental problems, but the issues seem either too distant or too big for anyone to do anything about them. This course is about empowering students to learn the facts on the ground and to glean the best practices that people in many fields are proposing. We will deal with The Three Whats: *what has happened* (in the human relation with the environment); *so what* (why should we care?); and *now what* (what's the next step?).

Your Professor: Paul Croce has been interested in nature since he was a child. As a little kid, he loved animals, wanted to learn about them, and got upset at the rising number of extinctions. As an adult, he is still concerned about the fate of the natural world, and does whatever he can personally. He is increasingly concerned about the way people with different ideologies talk right past each other rather than find solutions on what to do. As a professor in the interdisciplinary field of American Studies, he is committed to hearing out different values and different disciplines with something to say about environmental health. "No matter the field of study for those entering the course," he explains, "I work with students to foster an environmental awareness suited to a variety of majors—after all, in the twenty-first century, environmental issues will become a factor in every field of work." He holds a M.A. and Ph.D. from Brown University and is the author of numerous essays as well as the book, *Science and Religion in the Era of William James: Eclipse of Certainty, 1820- 1880* (UNC Press).

FSEM 100 (Spring) Getting Medieval (Tom Farrell)

The Seminar: From King Arthur to Grendel's Mother, from Sir Ulrich von Lichtenstein of Gelderland (*A Knight's Tale*) to Marsellus Wallace (*Pulp Fiction*), images of the Middle Ages permeate our culture. We will explore why the "medieval" has become so important to us, and what happens to ideas from another culture when we appropriate them. We will ask why, even though the word "medieval" has always been employed as an insult, we remain fascinated by an age both radically unlike us and deeply implicated in who we are. (To name two examples, the Middle Ages invented both the university and the concept of romantic love as we know it.)

Your Professor: Tom Farrell, with a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, remembers being fascinated with the Middle Ages since middle school. He does research mostly on the 14th century English poet Geoffrey Chaucer, but loves reading Old English poetry like *Beowulf*, anything in Middle English, Dante and other Continental writers of the Middle Ages, and almost anything else. He is also an active performer of Medieval

drama. In the rest of his life, Tom enjoys cycling, travelling, cooking spicy foods, and working with the West Volusia chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

FSEM 100 (Spring) The Mind-Bending World of Einstein's Special Relativity (George Glander)

The Seminar: Our perceptions of space and time are formed by our experiences with everyday objects which tend to be relatively slow moving. Einstein's theory of Special Relativity shows that those perceptions have to be thrown away when dealing with very fast moving objects. The entire theory arises from two simple postulates. This course explores Einstein's Special Relativity, examining its logical derivation and far reaching consequences. Basic high school algebra will be used in derivations and for solving problems. Writing assignments will focus on the integration of equations and prose that is used in many science and mathematics texts.

Your Professor: George Glander earned a B.A. in physics from Carleton College in Minnesota and a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He did a postdoctoral fellowship at Indiana University, and has been teaching undergraduate physics courses since 1991. His research specialty is Electron Diffraction, which allows the researcher to determine the geometric arrangement of atoms in the surface layers of a well-ordered solid. He has been fascinated with the simple beauty and bizarre consequences of Einstein's Special Relativity since he first studied it in an introductory physics course.

FSEM100 (Spring) Diversity in the 21st Century Classroom (Bette Heins)

The Seminar: In this course we will examine the meaning of diversity and its relation to global education. Through literature and film, we will discuss the broad definition of diversity, focusing on the study of race, ethnicity, language, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, and emotional and physical disabilities. All students will use field placements in local schools or non-profit organizations to provide practical experiences that will illuminate our class's major concepts.

Your Professor: Bette Heins holds the Nina B. Hollis Chair of Educational Reform in the Department of Teacher Education. She directs the Hollis Institute for Educational Reform and teaches educational psychology, exceptional student education, and classroom management. Her research interests include single gender education, reading issues, and classroom management. She writes that she loves teaching about diversity in the classroom and, in her words, she "celebrates deviancy on a daily basis."

FSEM 100 (Spring) The Promises and Perils of Religion in 21st Century Societies (Phillip Lucas)

The Seminar: This seminar is designed to help you think critically and intelligently about religion and its role in today's world. Religion serves both to heal and empower persons and communities and to promote violence in the name of God. This course examines key topics including religion and self-transformation, religion and violence, and freedom of religion as a human right. As a seminar, in most classes we will sit around a table discussing assigned readings and films. You will also gain experience in making professional oral presentations that present your viewpoints and in writing with persuasiveness and clarity. The goal of the seminar is to help you gain a greater appreciation for the complex role that religion plays today. Religion is a subject about which we will certainly not all agree, and I look forward to a lively and open discussion

of ideas and views.

Your Professor: Your Professor: Phillip Lucas received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His chief areas of research are new and minority religions, religious freedom, comparative spirituality, and American religious history. At Stetson, he teaches courses on world religions, American religious history, new religions, and the methods and theories of religious studies. In addition to numerous essays and presentations, he is co-editor of three books, *Cassadaga: The South's Oldest Spiritualist Community*, *Prime-Time Religion*, and *New Religious Movements in the Twenty-First Century: Legal, Political, and Social Challenges in Global Perspective*. He is also the author of *The Odyssey of a New Religion: The Holy Order of MANS from New Age to Orthodox*. Dr. Lucas is an avid amateur guitarist and enjoys traveling, gardening, and anything to do with the natural world.

FSEM 100 (Spring) "Arks and Islands" (Mary Pollock)

The Seminar: We will explore the future of biological arks (such as zoos) and islands (such as ecological preserves) by reading, writing, participating in class discussions, and visiting some local arks and islands. The issues are complex: in order to participate in political decisions affecting biodiversity, citizens of the twenty-first century need to understand the risks as well as the benefits of depending on zoos and preserves to maintain and rescue at-risk species. Assigned texts will include literary works, non-fiction readings, and films about species preservation. Written assignments include a journal or several standpoint analyses, in addition to a seminar paper which integrates first-hand observation with library research.

Your Professor: Mary Sanders Pollock, a Professor of English, has taught courses in literature, women & gender studies, and nature writing. Her Ph.D. is from the University of Texas at Austin. She has published books on Victorian poetry and animal studies. Her current research is about the literature of primatology—that is, the study of apes, monkeys, and lemurs. The reading list for "Arks and Islands" will include some of her favorite books!

FSEM100 (Spring) Freakonomics, Corponomics, Compassionomics (Ranjini Thaver)

FSEM100 (Spring) Water Wars (Kirsten Work)

The Seminar: What will be the future of conflict? Many ecologists, environmental biologists, sociologists, and political scientists agree that future conflicts are likely to be waged over water scarcity and the quality of water resources. Historians can point to many examples of conflicts in decades past that appear to have been purely political, but in fact were waged over water sources. Teasing apart the many angles of a water conflict provides a broader perspective of the workings of the natural world and human society. This course will examine the potential causes of water conflict through hands-on laboratory experiences of the water cycle, water movement, and water pollution. From these potential causes, geographical studies of water distribution, and sociopolitical studies of different regions of the globe, we will predict where future water conflicts are likely to occur.

Your Professor: Kirsten Work lived and worked in regions of vastly different water resources before settling at Stetson in 2000. Her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin educated her on the ecology of water in the Great Lakes land of plenty. Her M.A from the University of Washington introduced her to winter rainy seasons and salmon politics

in the Pacific Northwest. Her Ph.D. from the arid University of Oklahoma expanded her perspective on water rights with western water law. Finally, her postdoctoral position at South Florida Water Management District introduced her to the uniquely Florida juxtaposition of water scarcity and flooding. When not in class, she particularly enjoys watching fish and chasing turtles in nearby Blue Spring.

FSEM 100 (Spring) Medicines, Drugs, and Toxins (John York)

The Seminar: In modern society, individuals are bombarded with information about chemical compounds and their impact on human health and well-being. This information about compounds such as pharmaceuticals, drugs, environmental toxins, and nutritional supplements, is often difficult for people to interpret or understand. Sometimes, the scientific basis of such information is wrong or even purposefully misleading. In this course, students will explore the impact of selected chemical compounds on human health. Discussions will focus on the use of both man-made and natural compounds, investigating both their beneficial and harmful effects on individuals and society. Students will also explore how various classes of chemical compounds are viewed by people in our society and how these views are affected by social, political, and economic factors. Some topics to be discussed include: Drugs and Medicines; Poisons and Toxins; Foods and Nutrients; DNA and Genetic Testing/Modification.

Your Professor: John York received a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from North Carolina State University and worked as a chemical engineer for the DuPont chemical company in New Jersey. After realizing that teaching was his real calling in life, he obtained a degree in Secondary Science Education from the University of Wyoming, followed by a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry from the University of Minnesota. He teaches a variety of chemistry classes at Stetson, ranging from introductory General Chemistry to advanced classes like Biological Inorganic Chemistry. He is very interested in research involving the chemistry of metals in biological systems and in industrial processes, and actively recruits undergraduate students to participate in this research. In his spare time, he enjoys playing a variety of instruments and keeps especially busy playing bass guitar for the Stetson faculty jazz band the "Sage Quartet."

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