

**CRN#                      Spring 2020 APL 090, Integrating Democratic Education at Stonehill (IDEAS) Course Descriptions**

Students will be able to register for IDEAS classes on a first come, first served basis when Add/Drop begins. Students can enroll in only one IDEAS course for credit each spring. If you have questions, please contact the course facilitator(s) or Sarah Gracombe (sgracombe@stonehill.edu).

**40792    APL 090 A: IDEAS: Debunking Fake Science**

Facilitator: Marisa Anderson (2020)

What do *Frankenstein*, Bill Nye the Science Guy, and *Wall-E* have in common? All explore the representation of science and how science is communicated--or miscommunicated--within our culture. Starting with the potential origins of scientific mistrust, we will explore resources ranging from early Gothic fiction to modern media while unpacking concepts like the archetypal "evil scientist" such as in *Stranger Things* or Dan Brown's *Origin*. We will analyze these fictional examples along with some real-world examples, such as climate change, discussing how heavy jargon used by scientists can sometimes reinforce societal fears by leaving conclusions unclear and mysterious. A major goal of this course is to study effective science communication and to try to analyze with the class why these examples (and any other students bring to the table!) are so effective. Ultimately, our goal is to deeply consider how science can be better communicated without sacrificing the accuracy of the information in the process of making it more accessible.

**40793    APL 090 B: IDEAS: Dismantling Violence**

Facilitator: Jadaiya Stanley (2020)

Is sex trafficking happening only outside the United States or is this problem we are having right in the city of Boston? Each week in this course we will explore the different types of gender based violence (GBV) and dismantle the false claims society holds about GBV, such as the beliefs that domestic violence can only happen between married couples and that sex trafficking victims are usually not US citizens. We will consider GBV internationally, informed by research I conducted in Nepal, Jordan, and Chile. In addition, we will also look at GBV in the United States and its connection to patriarchy. Students will leave this course understanding the different types of GBV, how to serve as an advocate for victims/survivors, and how to educate others in the community about this human rights issue.

**40794    APL 090 C: IDEAS: Exploring Empathy**

Facilitators: Sarah Cavanaugh (2021) and Emma Foster (2021)

What is empathy (and what is it not)? How can we differentiate between empathy and similar but separate emotions, such as sympathy and compassion? Are people born with a fixed ability to empathize, or is this a skill we can grow and develop? Is it possible to have too much empathy? How do cognitive empathy, affective empathy, and empathic concern interact to shape our relationships with ourselves and with others? In this course, we will explore these questions (and many more) from philosophical, psychological, biological, and sociopolitical perspectives to try to grasp the intricacies of empathy.

**40795    APL 090 D: IDEAS: Comics and Politics**

Facilitator: Adam Wigley (2020)

From *Black Panther* to *Wonder Woman*, comic books and comic book films are increasingly becoming part of our media consumption. Many people dismiss these books and films as being just for kids or entertainment for the sake of entertainment. This IDEAS course is designed to help dispel this myth, trying to decipher various themes present in these texts. We will be reviewing many comic book movies from several companies and discussing the ideas posited in them, such as the role of drone programs and surveillance in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* and authoritarian governments in *V for Vendetta*. This will be an environment focused on [or fueled by?] student input, collaboration, and participation. The endgame of this course is to help students better analyze film, literature, and the world at large.

**40796 APL 090 E: IDEAS: Drugs and Society**

Facilitators: Rama Aldakhlallah (2020) and Samir Usuman (2020)

What has caused the drug problem in our country, and how do drugs affect both our bodies and our society? In this course, we will examine drug use and its effects from an interdisciplinary perspective, both scientific and social. We will explore the physical and psychological effects of common drugs such as depressants, opioids, hallucinogens, and stimulants on the human body. In parallel, we will examine the reputation of such drugs and how society's perspectives have shaped how these common drugs are perceived. We will explore the media's opinions around drug use and the way media can influence the ongoing drug epidemic for better and worse. A mix of activities will help students deepen their understanding of the topic, including a final project drawing on both science and visual art.

**40797 APL 090 F: IDEAS: Rethinking Mindfulness**

Facilitators: Nick Dunham (2020) and Kendal Hooper-Marsh (2021)

What is mindfulness and where do these practices originate? Can we find meaning in the unexpected? Why have some scholars used the word *psychedelic* to describe Sufi poetry? In "Rethinking Mindfulness: A Venture into the World's Mystical Traditions," we will explore these questions and more as we discover spiritual and religious expressions that are typically outside of the "Stonehill Bubble" through dialogue and hands-on experiences. Join us as we venture into mystical Islamic, Jewish, and Taoist traditions to see what they can teach us about ourselves and others, and how this relates to our understanding of mindfulness. While delving into these traditions, we will examine art, poetry, music, myths, and other unconventional forms of religious expression. Students will have the opportunity to explore topics about which they are passionate. Come and learn with us!

**40798 APL 090 G: IDEAS: LGBTQ+ Narratives**

Facilitators: Caroline Coady (2021) and Lizzie Riley (2020)

*The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which [they are] being educated.*—James Baldwin

Who dictates the stories we consume every day? How are our thoughts and beliefs about different groups shaped by those stories? This course aims to explore queer narratives through many different art forms, from Virginia Woolf to Keith Haring, avant-garde performance art to graphic novels. We seek to define what representation can be and discuss why it is important to be seen and represented. Throughout the semester, students will collaboratively investigate who is in charge of telling stories and become more confident in advocating for people whose stories are not told. In addition, students will develop a vocabulary conducive to assessing representative media and critiquing it. Ultimately, we will answer the questions: What LGBTQ+ narratives are told? Whose voices are missing from popular LGBTQ+ works? And what are the most effective ways to tell LGBTQ+ stories?

**40799 APL 090 H: IDEAS: Culture & Conspiracy**

Facilitators: Becca Fredey (2020) and Jacky Davis (2020)

Do you believe in the moon landing? Do you wonder how Amelia Earhart really disappeared? In "Tinfoil Hats: Culture & Conspiracy," we will use the study of various U.S. conspiracy theories to not only learn about the historical context of some of America's greatest mysteries but also to evaluate information and sources in this era of rampant misinformation. We will study the cultural doubt surrounding such events as the assassination of JFK, the supposed "New World Order," and even niche topics like Tupac's murder. Studying these conspiracies will challenge us to think empirically, improve media literacy skills, and evaluate the validity of various sources while forming opinions on controversial issues in US history and our current divisive political culture. Going "off the deep-end" with historical conspiracies is not only fun, it will provide a model for fact evaluation that we will carry into our daily lives as active consumers of news and media.

**40800 APL 090 I: IDEAS: Seeing Women's Health**

Facilitator: Karen Demarest (2021)

Have you ever wondered how aspects of sexism in different cultures affect women's access to proper health care? This class will analyze the correlation between social inequalities present today and health care disparities between men and women, as well as among women. The relationship between social stigmas surrounding women in different cultures and their physical and mental wellbeing will be heavily explored. Using collaborative discussion and research, we will analyze different social circumstances women are placed in and the various ways they are objectified. By exploring topics such as adolescence and vulnerability, reproductive rights, maternal care, and the negative connotations associated with aging, we can better understand how women cope in a world full of oppression.

**40801 APL 090 J: IDEAS: Refugee Responses**

Facilitator: August Tallmadge (2020)

"I am safe." The ability to say this is ordinary for many American's today. The security around us makes the hardship this world can offer feel removed from our daily lives; it can be hard to imagine going from fed to starved, from business-owner to homeless, from a well to a desert. In this course, we will explore the realities of these circumstances by learning about and comparing the Syrian and American refugee crises. This course will focus on how governments, citizens, and NGOs respond to these ongoing events. This class will be interdisciplinary and incorporate both discussions as well as guest lectures from experts in the field of refugee aid. Students of diverse political ideologies are encouraged to sign-up to enrich the class discussions and debates. At the end of the course, each student should be able to speak with confidence on the Syrian refugee crisis, how the country of Jordan has responded, the realities of immigration in America, and how major institutions, as well as individual college students, can impact refugees' lives.

**40802 APL 090 K: IDEAS: Optimize Your "A" Game**

Facilitator: Evaudie Paul (2020)

According to writer Brendan Buchard, "We can all achieve and enjoy long-term success. It just takes the right habits." What makes someone successful? What habits can help you achieve long-term success and vibrant well-being no matter your age, career, strengths, or personality? What even is "success"? This course is about helping people think of the ways through which they can integrate habits that can help them reach their "A Game" now and in the future. We will look at case studies of highly successful people such as Oprah and Fortune 500 CEOs to see what habits and strategies have enabled their success, as well as research on the psychology of habits. In class, we will have various discussions on the meaning of success, on the development of personal traits such as clarity, productivity, and courage, and ways to implement such traits through daily practices. Whether they want to get more done, lead others better, develop skills faster, or increase their sense of joy and confidence, students will be able to measure their progress and identify areas of improvement through valuable exercises and activities. The goal of this class is for students to better understand their thoughts and behaviors in order to enable growth, well-being, and fulfillment.