CORE AND GENERAL STUDIES

Every freshman will take the First Year Seminar (CORE 101) the fall semester of their freshman year. The First Year Seminar is composed of 2/3 shared content and 1/3 specialized content unique to the faculty member and course section. The first 2/3 of every First Year Seminar features shared readings and focus on the theme of "What is the Good Life" and other enduring questions. See Core 101 Sections (p. 6) for descriptions of the last 4 weeks of the semester and the instructor’s 1/3 specialized content.

CORE 3XX. Advanced Integrative Seminar. Students should take the Advanced Integrative Seminar after the First Year Seminar and before the Core Curriculum Capstone Experience, ideally during their sophomore or junior year. This course will foster advanced skills in the Christian liberal arts and the integration of faith and learning through an intensive focus on a complex topic requiring both interdisciplinary and integrative perspectives. The Advanced Integrative Seminar must be a course outside of a student’s major(s). It will challenge students to read, discuss, and write with rigor and increased maturity as they draw upon the resources of the Christian faith to address the content and questions of their seminar’s topic. These courses may meet the requirements of one or two of the categories in the Thematic Core. Resources will be available for faculty interested in team teaching this course. Prerequisite: CORE 101 First Year Seminar: Enduring Questions

Courses

Core Studies Courses

See CORE 101 sections (p. 6) for descriptions of the last 4 weeks of the semester and the instructor’s 1/3 specialized content. CORE 101 is a prerequisite to any CORE 300 AIS course.

CORE 101. First Year Seminar: Enduring Questions. (4 Credits)
This course introduces students to practices of integrative thinking by engaging challenging, theologically significant enduring questions in a seminar-style course organized around a theme tied to the faculty member’s specialty. The course will have three interrelated components: foundations for addressing the value and purpose of liberal arts education, focused study of the abiding liberal arts question “What is the good life?”, and exploration of a related perennial question chosen by the instructor. All components of each seminar will emphasize integrative intellectual practice and model the integration of faith and learning in the liberal arts context. Please note these descriptions are for the last 4 weeks of the course and do not describe the focus for 2/3 of the semester and the first 12 weeks of the course.

CORE 301. AIS: Human Trafficking: Causes, Consequences and Responses. (4 Credits)
This course examines the causes and consequences of human trafficking from diverse disciplinary perspectives, including political science, economics, history, theology and psychology. The course covers the definitions and historical development of sex and labor trafficking and critically reflects on diverse efforts to reduce trafficking in human beings, including Christian responses to slavery over time.

General Education: SHAR

CORE 302. AIS: Political Science Fiction. (4 Credits)
This course takes up important works of science fiction to engage on important themes in moral and political theory and the interrelation of philosophical reflection, imaginative literature, and theological commitment.

Tags: LE

General Education: SHAR

CORE 303. AIS: Making the Modern Middle East. (4 Credits)
This course introduces the modern Middle East drawing upon a variety of disciplinary perspectives including history, post-colonial theory, and religious studies. The historical and geographical scope of the course will be from the final decades of the Ottoman Empire to the formation of modern Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel. Special attention will be given to the cultural impact of imperialism and contemporary political and social trends in the region. Other course themes include European and American involvement in the Middle East, the growth of Islamic reform movements and Arab nationalism, Zionism, competing visions of womanhood in Islam and Judaism, religious fundamentalism (Christian, Islamic, and Jewish), and the history leading up to the Arab Spring. Our goal will be to understand how we as Christians can respectfully engage the Middle East in cultural encounters, whether through foreign policy, cultural productions, travel, humanitarian work, academics, missions, and so much more. (cannot satisfy HP secondary tag in transition gen ed).

Tags: GP, HP

General Education: SHAR

CORE 304. AIS: Christian Environmental Stewardship. (4 Credits)
Students will examine the biblical mandate for creation care and develop a personal response to the call for stewardship of land and creature. This course will provide students with a basic understanding of ecosystem biology and provide the framework for which students can understand the need for resources and the impact of resource extraction on human health, while providing a biblical and theological lens for developing an appropriate response.

Tags: SIP

General Education: SHAR

CORE 305. AIS: Spiritual Formation in Young Adulthood. (4 Credits)
Explores the development of faith during the years of emerging adulthood (18-29), focusing on the connections between Christian spiritual formation and the psychological and sociological dimensions of this life stage. Emphasizes the formation of faith within the context of emerging adult identity, worldview, vocation, morality, sexuality, and church participation.

Tags: SI

General Education: SHAR

CORE 306. AIS: Drugs, Society, and Religion. (4 Credits)
This course examines the psychological effects and neurobiological mechanisms of action of psychoactive drugs. Drugs are used in the treatment of psychopathological disorders, recreational substances of abuse, and in some cultures for religious rituals. This course is designed to provide undergraduate students interested in the mechanisms of action of drugs on the brain, how they are understood in different societies, and how they have historically been used for recreational and religious purposes.

Tags: SIP

General Education: SHAR
CORE 307. AIS: Cosmology. (4 Credits)
Cosmology refers to the scientific study of the large scale properties and history of the physical universe as a whole. Utilizing the methods of science, it seeks to understand the origin, evolution and ultimate fate of the universe. Cosmology also refers to philosophical inquiry into the history and general structure of the universe, especially with respect to questions of origin, fundamental elements, causality, laws and agency. Drawing upon these disciplines, this course aims toward formulating a fully informed, deeply integrated understanding of the world in which we live, move, and have our being. (cannot satisfy PI secondary tag in transition gen ed).
Tags: PI, SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 308. AIS: Engaging Arts in the City. (4 Credits)
A multi-arts experience and analysis course in Chicago (or other city) comprised of a series of site visits to art events/performances/organizations chosen for their embodied, authentic responses to life. Site visits may include professional or educational productions that have musical, theatrical, dance, visual arts, or any kind of collaborative arts focus. Through seminar presentations, discussions, and final projects, students will learn how to decode what inspires an artwork’s creation, and how to listen and respond to cultural and art modality otherness.
Tags: VPA
General Education: SHAR

CORE 309. AIS: Native Jesus: The Art & Literature of Native America. (4 Credits)
This course examines art and literature of Native North American communities, both ancient and modern, with a view to how such communities relate to the Christian tradition. How is Christianity rejected, appropriated, or transformed through Native American literature and art? What has Cahokia to do with Jerusalem? Following a historical overview, the course is organized geographically, covering all the major areas of Native culture on this continent (South, East, West, & North) culminating with our own region of the Midwest. Native artistic responses to modernity are also considered. Multiple area site-visits and meetings with Native Americans will enhance student investigations. (cannot satisfy LE secondary tag in transition gen ed).
Tags: LE, VPAV
General Education: SHAR

CORE 310. AIS: Social Network Analysis. (4 Credits)
This advanced integrative seminar is designed to give students the basic tools to ascertain if particular missionaries, based on their primary documents, were engaged in a “holistic” Gospel or one that conflated non-spiritual enterprises. Basic Greek tools, historical methodologies, and social network analysis (NodeXL) will be utilized in this course.
Tags: SI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 311. AIS: The Good in the Great Plagues. (4 Credits)
An interdisciplinary consideration of major infectious disease epidemics throughout history. This course is a survey and analysis of the impact that major infectious diseases have had.
Tags: SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 312. AIS: Native Chicago: American Indians in the Midwest. (4 Credits)
This course examines Native American communities from diverse disciplinary perspectives including anthropology, history, political science, and theology. Students will study the culture, social structures, and history of indigenous peoples in the Great Lakes Region from the development of human societies in North America to the twentieth century. Topics include: Early Indigenous Communities, Cross-Cultural Contact with Diverse Ethnic and Racial Communities, Native Responses to Christianity, Conflict and Collaboration in Colonial America, Indian Removal and Resistance, and Contemporary Issues such as Treaty Rights, Gaming, Cultural Preservation, and Education.
Tags: DUS, SI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 313. AIS: Sport, Faith, and Social Change. (4 Credits)
Sport and athletes have often been agents of social change, at times challenging norms and assumptions concerning identity, personhood, gender, race, and sexuality. In this class, we will examine how sport and moments in sport history has served as a public stage to perform dramas of social change leading to larger movement activities that impacted culture. Students will apply theories and explore research of mediated sports events to understand their impact and gain perspectives on how sports may be exploited to enact social change. This class will examine sport in three dimensions: as an artifact of our society and mediated history; as an arena where social, cultural, and political issues are contested; and as a vehicle for spiritual reflection and growth. We will examine how we can encounter the Holy in the midst of sports and its impact on developing a critical assessment of one’s values.
Tags: SI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 314. AIS: Economy & Society. (4 Credits)
Economic sociology has sought to understand the beliefs, norms and institutions that shape and drive the global economy. Markets, organizations, and individual economic actors cannot be understood outside of their social and cultural context. In interacting with texts primarily by sociologists and economists, in addition to historians, anthropologists, and political scientists, this class aims to use a broader social scientific approach to understand the relationship between economy and society, and the ways in which social networks, norms and institutions matter in economic transactions.
Tags: SI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 315. AIS: Social Network Analysis. (4 Credits)
This advanced integrative seminar is designed to give students the basic tools to ascertain if particular missionaries, based on their primary documents, were engaged in a “holistic” Gospel or one that conflated non-spiritual enterprises. Basic Greek tools, historical methodologies, and social network analysis (NodeXL) will be utilized in this course.
Tags: SI
General Education: SHAR
CORE 316. AIS: Sport Psychology. (4 Credits)
A survey of the theory, research, and applications of psychology pertaining to sports. This course will prepare students to: 1) discuss and understand the psychological factors that influence involvement and performance in sports, 2) apply psychological research and theories to one's own sports involvement as a participant (e.g., teacher, coach, athlete, etc.). The course will examine psychological variables that can hinder or enhance athletic performance, which may include attention, arousal, motivation, relationships, mental imagery, gender and diversity issues, eating disorders, and substance abuse. PSYC 101 suggested.
Tags: SI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 317. AIS: Media Revolutions from Gutenberg to Google. (4 Credits)
From Gutenberg to Google, communication technologies have changed how people work, live, think, interact, and collaborate. There have bound humans together in unprecedented ways, opening up new individual possibilities but also unleashing disruptive collective energies. Together we will explore how “new media” from the first printed books of the fifteenth century to the networked computing devices of the twenty-first century have shaped the modern world. This is an interdisciplinary course. We will learn about theories and methods different disciplines use to study the media and will develop critical tools for understanding our own ongoing digital and information revolution.
Tags: HP, SI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 318. AIS: Faith, Reason, and Politics in Islam. (4 Credits)
This course examines the development of Islamic political philosophy from its origins under Muhammed in the seventh century through to its central role in modern day politics throughout the world.
Tags: GP, PI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 319. AIS: Epic and Philosophy: From Achilles to Ahab. (4 Credits)
Students will engage with two monumental literary texts—the Iliad and Moby Dick—by using the tools of both the disciplines of literature and philosophy. Students will also read selections from the western philosophical canon (thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Nietzsche, Camus, Kierkegaard, and MacIntyre) that will be placed in conversation with these literary texts. These readings, and the discussions that accompany them, will center around certain perennial questions, especially those having to do with ethics and the good life: e.g., what (and who) is good and just and how do we know? Through a series of writing assignments that require the close-reading of literature and analysis of philosophical arguments, students will compare and examine their own understanding of these perennial questions from the perspective of their own faith. Finally, they will write a term paper that synthesizes their learning from both sorts of readings and that requires them to do further research.
Tags: LE, PI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 321. AIS: ‘Holla If Ya Hear Me’: Engaging Hip-Hop Culture. (4 Credits)
On August 11, 1973, a Jamaican-American named Clive Campbell hosted a house party at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx with little more than a couple of turntables and amplifiers. Music and cultural historians often regard Campbell's party as the founding event for what has come to be known as hip-hop. Almost fifty years later, hip-hop thrives as one of the most popular, yet controversial, forms of cultural expression in contemporary society with footholds in music, fashion, art, business, activism, and politics around the globe. From an interdisciplinary perspective, this course will examine the origins, themes, and social impact of rap music as an outgrowth of hip-hop culture. This course will prepare students to critically engage and evaluate popular forms of cultural expression with academic rigor and biblical principles.
Tags: DUS, VPAM
General Education: SHAR

CORE 322. AIS: What is Money Good For? - A Comparative Global Investigation. (4 Credits)
What is money good for? Why do some people have so much and others so little? Can a person deserve prosperity? How should we spend our money? How do our purchases shape who we are? Why should we give, and how? If you wrestle with these questions, you are not alone. People across the world find ways to answer these questions, and their diverse answers are likely to surprise, confound, convict, and also inspire us. In this course we consider a wide spectrum of responses to moral questions about money from the United States and around the world. We read works by Christians, anthropologists, and other theorists in order to craft more nuanced Christian responses to these questions. Along the way, we gain perspectives on cultural diversity and the causes of economic inequalities both within the United States and around the world.
Tags: DUS, GP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 323. AIS: Humanitarian Disasters and Recovery. (4 Credits)
Exploration of scientific and social understanding of humanitarian disasters including the causes of natural and human-caused disasters, approaches to prediction and mitigation, impacts on communities and societies, approaches to recovery and care, resilience, theological implications and the role of faith-based responders.
Tags: SI, SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 324. AIS: Black Bodies in Literature and Theology. (4 Credits)
Literature and theology are disciplines uniquely equipped to help us learn about and respond to the viscerality of race and racism in the United States. They help us engage the difficult stories of embodied people—people created in the image of God and redeemed by a savior who made the particulars of the visceral body his own. Through reading and discussion of contemporary African American literature and theology, we will acknowledge and lament sin against black bodies and look for healing and redemption. This seminar will help students consider the ways their own embodied experience is implicated in the conversation about race and racism in the United States as well as to receive and respond to the experiences of others in the community of the love of the Trinity.
Tags: DUS, LE
General Education: SHAR
CORE 325. AIS: Nature, Environment, and Society. (4 Credits)
An interdisciplinary exploration of contemporary environmental issues and problems. The understanding of the natural world will support the analysis of the role of society in creating, perpetuating and addressing these challenges. The role of personal and cultural responsibility for stewarding the natural environment will be emphasized. Field and classroom investigations will focus on the Black Hills context. Course fee $50
Tags: SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 326. AIS: Classics of Christian Devotion. (4 Credits)
This course examines the human longing for a relationship with God. Competing with this deep desire is the complexity of external and internal barriers. The best of Christian writers have recognized that this yearning for God must integrate both the interpretative and affective dimensions of awareness. Built on the foundation of differing methods of interpretation, this course is structured around the literary genres of narrative, visionary discourse, hymns, prayers, sermons, letters, autobiography, aphorisms and novels that both inform and transform the cultivation of intimacy with God. These classic texts are from both the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions. Since many contemporary Evangelicals are unfamiliar with their own spiritual heritage, this course compares and contrasts Evangelical spiritual texts with pre-eighteenth-century Roman Catholic and Protestant literature.
Tags: LE
General Education: SHAR

CORE 327. AIS: Propaganda and Image in Everyday Life. (4 Credits)
Propaganda techniques have saturated everyday life. By studying primary sources from ancient and modern authors, and applying the lessons of 20th century propaganda campaigns to today's public persuasion, students will critically engage distinctions between propaganda and ethical communication, between truth and image, and between the artificial and the real.
Tags: PI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 328. AIS: Mary, Mother of God. (4 Credits)
This course is a tour through twenty centuries of Christian perspectives on the Virgin Mary. Anchored in exegesis of Scripture, students evaluate church tradition as expressed through apocryphal, theological and devotional texts, with a special emphasis on visual art. Together we ask which aspects of the Marian tradition can be affirmed or celebrated, and which aspects should be criticized or rejected. Student projects examine historical theology, visual art and feminist concerns with an eye toward how the Marian tradition can enrich the church.
Tags: HP, VPAV
General Education: SHAR

CORE 329. AIS: Neurobiology and Spiritual Formation. (4 Credits)
Engages students in considering the nexus between the anatomy and physiology of the brain and the spiritual formation of human persons from a Christian worldview. Students will be required to examine how each of these disciplines informs the other, to learn a variety of epistemologies from different disciplines and apply them to this area, to intelligently critique research and applications, and to integrate neurobiological research with spiritual practices and formation of human persons.
Tags: SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 331. AIS: Ugaritic Language and Literature. (4 Credits)
This course is intended to introduce students to the language, history, and literature from the ancient ‘city-state’ of Ugarit. Language competency in Hebrew recommended.
Tags: HP, LE
General Education: SHAR

CORE 332. AIS: Women Writing Theology. (4 Credits)
This course explores works of literary and theological merit by women investigating ideas about God, the self, and society. Drawing on writings of women from different eras, cultures, and backgrounds, the course encourages students to dialogue with fiction and non-fiction writings, including novels, poetry, life writings, and systematic theologies, by women to understand better how women have communicated theological ideas through a wide range of literary and theological forms.
Tags: LE
General Education: SHAR

CORE 333. AIS: Country Behind the Curtain: Public Institutions & Private Life in the German Democratic Rep. (4 Credits)
During its 40-year history, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), aka East Germany, was divided from its western counterpart by ideologies, alliances and institutions - and, after 1961, by a fortifies border that came to symbolize the Cold War. Through interaction with post-1989 oral histories, prose and poetry from East German authors, and pre- and post-unification films, students in this AIS will explore the fundamental paradoxes between public institutions and private life in the GDR, wrestling with the central irony that private convictions and aspirations became a key factor in its dissolution.
Tags: HP, LE
General Education: SHAR

CORE 334. AIS: Race, Theology, and Place in Chicago. (4 Credits)
A theological investigation into Christianity and racial segregation in Chicago. This course explores the importance of geographical location for racial reconciliation, developing a vision for church unity rooted in place.
Tags: DUS
General Education: SHAR

CORE 335. AIS: The Holocaust and Contemporary Jewish Experience. (4 Credits)
Written and oral analysis of depictions of the Holocaust in various national literary and cinematic media and of contemporary Jewish authors in German-speaking countries; exploration of issues facing contemporary Jews in German-speaking Europe. Includes research paper.
Tags: GP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 336. AIS: Energy for the Future. (4 Credits)
An examination of the science, history, and social impacts of energy generation and use in the U.S. and global contexts; Christian perspectives on personal and societal decision-making regarding future energy generation and use.
Tags: SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 337. AIS: Justice, Law and Society. (4 Credits)
This course investigates traditions of thought on the nature of justice and law in society. It introduces students to general theories of jurisprudence and explores histories of legal traditions that are rooted in the ancient worlds of the Near East, Greece, and Israel and how they have influenced and differ from modern American contexts.
Tags: HP, PI
General Education: SHAR
CORE 338. AIS: The Physics of Sound. (4 Credits)
Basic concepts of sound and acoustics, including the following: vibrations, waves, instrument design, fundamentals and overtones, musical scales, harmony, noise, physical and physiological production, detection of sound waves, acoustical properties of materials and enclosures. Discussion and investigation of sound in the human context of psychology, physiology, neuroscience, and aesthetics, as well as how some areas of investigation of sound, such as human perception, are yet to be fully understood.

Tags: SP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 339. AIS: Remembering Africa's Oral Past. (4 Credits)
This course equips students to both appreciate and analyze how intergenerational communities on the African continent have preserved knowledge of their pasts through sophisticated and emotive musical traditions. The course's focus on musical and other oral sources empowers students to access the historical knowledge of communities which chose to invest their intellectual energy in song and poetry rather than written text, while also equipping students to appreciate how beautiful and intellectually complex music and poetry flowed from the particular historical experiences of composers and performers in Africa.

Tags: HP, VPAM
General Education: SHAR

CORE 341. AIS: Can Stress Promote Flourishing? The Effects of Stress on Brain and Behavior. (4 Credits)
The overall goal of this course is to help students understand how stress can promote flourishing. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the basics of brain function and how the brain manages the response to stressors, how stressors affect several aspects of behavior, and how to protect the brain from the negative effects of stressors. In addition, two underlying themes will emerge throughout the course, including a discussion on the nature of persons and the concept of both control and agency for the proper understanding of stress.

Tags: SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 342. AIS: Dante's Commedia as Poetry, Philosophy, and Theology. (4 Credits)
This course examines Dante's Commedia as an "encyclopedia" poem, a term that the Dante scholar Giuseppe Mazzotta has used to characterize the poem's educational ambitions. This is a poem with a deep intellectual program; it takes on many of the great philosophical and theological questions of its own time, and ours, too. What is the nature of the soul? What is just punishment? What is the highest good? Yet it does this not within the context of a philosophical treatise but an imaginative journey through the regions of the afterlife, taken by the poet himself. Our aim in this course is to analyze the poem in all of its overlapping dimensions - as a great poem of ideas, as a spiritual evaluation and testimony (a confession?), as a travelogues that doubles as a series of philosophical dialogues, as a mosaic of unforgettable images.

Tags: LE, PI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 343. AIS: Creation Care: Values and Virtues. (4 Credits)
An interdisciplinary consideration of philosophical thinking in the context of worldviews toward environmental issues and our relation to creation. The course will address historical and contemporary environmental issues in conjunction with values held in human-creation relationships historically and socially. Values held in Christian and non-Christian views and practices regarding the created world will be examined in light of the virtues that influence our awareness and responsive actions. Christian values and virtues in the context of Christian character will be considered relative to creation care. These considerations will cultivate academic and spiritual maturity by considering one's relationship to our Creator and creation. The course will also address theological underpinnings as they relate to the intersection of Christian faith and how one lives their life in light of a call to care for God's creation. BIOL 241 recommended.

Tags: PI, SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 344. AIS: Gender and Global Health. (4 Credits)
An interdisciplinary approach to using a gender lens to understand the global patterns of health and disease. While focusing on gendered inequalities, students in this course will describe and analyze how ecology, social class, and race interact with gender and impact the global burden of disease. Students will also consider how our Christian call to love our neighbor impacts our response to the disparities seen in the global burden of disease.

Tags: GP, SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 345. AIS: Water, the Essential Resource. (4 Credits)
An overview of our most important natural resource - water. Topics include occurrence, chemistry, physiological requirement for water, effects upon past and present civilizations, surface and groundwater flow, global water supply, water pollution, water exploration and extraction. Lab fee $35. Prerequisite: Any SP course.

Tags: SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 346. AIS: Diversity in American Theater. (4 Credits)
This course invites students to engage with questions regarding diversity in the United States through the lens of theater. By exploring various ways that American playwrights have grappled with diversity and by placing these plays within complex theological, historical, and literary contexts, students will be encouraged to reflect not only on patterns of injustice and inequality that they see represented but also on the unique power that drama has to help its audience to experience the world from someone else's perspective.

Tags: DUS, VPAT
General Education: SHAR
CORE 347. AIS: Technotechs: Media and Messages. (4 Credits)
This course examines the relationship between literary texts and the media through which they are conveyed. The course begins by considering the relationship between word and voice, our material being practices of oral storytelling and spoken word poetic performance. The second and longest unit of the semester examines the literary possibilities opened up by different forms of "the book" - including the illuminated manuscript, the printed book in the West, and the Torah scroll. The final unit examines how verbal artists are engaging with the digital technologies. Throughout the semester, participants will not only be consumers of media; they will also be makers: each unit will involve a "making" exercise in which we practice one of the techniques that we have been studying, including oral performance, letterpress printing, and digital storytelling.

Tags: LE, VPAV
General Education: SHAR

CORE 348. AIS: Wheaton College as an Institution. (4 Credits)
This course examines Wheaton College as an institution and an organization. This includes examining how the college developed over time and its organizational structure and logic. We will consider how social forces from American society, including religious movements and race, class, and gender, as well as internal decisions affected the College. The final project involves analysis of primary and secondary sources in the Special Collections, Buswell Library.

Tags: DUS, HP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 349. AIS: Babies: Prenatal Development, Birth, and the Newborn. (4 Credits)
In this course, we will draw from biological and psychological research to engage in an in-depth exploration of prenatal and newborn development. We will cover influences on prenatal development, changes to the mother and fetus throughout pregnancy and prenatal development, a variety of considerations around childbirth, physical development and functioning in the newborn, and the early parent-child bond. We will also explore childbirth practices around the world. Students will be encouraged to integrate a Christian perspective with a variety of other scientific and popular perspectives on pregnancy, birth, and babies.

Tags: SI
General Education: SHAR

CORE 351. AIS: Cults, Power, and Politics. (4 Credits)
This course examines how cults influence, and are influenced by, politics. We will discuss the structure of cults and the psychological/relational manipulation of cult members. The course will then shift toward how state regimes use cult personalities to further entrench their positions of power using examples from North Korea, China, and Russia. Additionally, we will discuss how religious cults have threatened political structures using examples from the Münster Rebellion, Branch Davidians, Peoples Temple, Scientology, and many others. Finally, students will evaluate warnings of cult behavior in religious and political structure as well as judge Christian practices of discernment and intervention.

Tags: GP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 352. AIS: Applying Cognitive Psychology to Educational Practice. (4 Credits)
An interdisciplinary seminar that examines how findings from cognitive psychology can be used to improve learning in educational settings. Specific cognitive processes such as working memory, long term memory, metacognition, and language processing will be discussed as will specific tasks in educational settings such as math and reading. This course will also emphasize theological perspectives on cognition, learning and teaching.

Tags: General Education: SHAR

CORE 353. AIS: Biology and Politics. (4 Credits)
This course is an interdisciplinary consideration of the biological basis of political attitudes and behavior. It leverages concepts from genetics, neuroscience, endocrinology, physiology, and psychology to study political phenomenon, introduces students to key methodological techniques and research findings from the field of biology and politics, and challenges students to evaluate the biology and politics research agenda from a Christian perspective.

Tags: SI, SIP
General Education: SHAR

CORE 101 Sections

Neuroscience & Faith
Recent research in neurobiology has been reported in newsstand magazines and popular books, and at times, this research seems to indicate that we are nothing but our neural connections. This research documents connections between brain function and mental health, personality, emotions, and relationships, among other things. How does neurobiology, though, intersect with our Christian faith? Is research in neurobiology explaining faith away? Can someone be a committed Christian and embrace scientific discoveries in brain research? Is it possible that spiritual disciplines, such as meditation, prayer, and worship have an effect upon the neural structures in our brain? In addition to examining texts from authors such as Augustine, Wright, and Endo, students in this First Year Seminar will examine correlations between neurobiology and spiritual formation for the purpose of embracing the breadth of liberal arts learning, worshipping the Creator and Author of all things, and learning about the interconnectedness between our neurobiology and spiritual practices.

What is Justice?
What is justice? What does it mean for a society to be just? And how should we respond to injustice? This section of the First Year Seminar will take up such questions as we consider what it means to live "the good life" with and for others. Beginning with Isaiah's exhortation to "seek justice," we will explore different ways that writers and artists have understood the concept, and we will consider case studies from South Africa and the United States that illustrate what (in)justice looks like in practice. Guides on our journey together will include Plato, Augustine, Shakespeare, Weil, King, Tutu, Krog, and many others.

Cosmology and the Good Life
Students will explore the question "How is cosmology connected to the good life?" in this section. Historical, theological, scientific, philosophy of social science and cultural criticism readings will be used to explore how all cosmologies are either explicitly or implicitly intertwined with a conception of the good life. Students will start by investigating traditional Chinese, Japanese and Hindu cosmologies and the form of the good life these cosmologies presuppose. Next, they will look at how astronomers
learn about the cosmos and learn about contemporary scientific cosmology. Students will then be in a position to explore what vision of the good life is intertwined with contemporary scientific cosmology in American society. Finally, drawing on the entire semester students will explore whether there is an alternative to the contemporary American/scientific cosmology default conception of the good life.

Living with More Rhythm
The good life is filled with rhythm. We find rhythm in human artistic expression (music, film, dance), in persuasive communication (public voice, relationship coordination) and life balance (spiritual disciplines). If we lack rhythm, then we probably are lacking some of the joy and fulfillment available to us through our personal expressions, our relationships, or our faith in Christ. To explore rhythm, we will enjoy reading about, and experiencing, “rhythm and blues” music, film editing, persuasive strategy, and various spiritual disciplines.

Good Life & Communication
The word “communication” comes from the Latin root communis, or common. It represents a very old discipline that dates from ancient speakers and philosophers to the new technologies and innovators that are changing our world. Communication shapes our lives by developing a common or shared understanding of who we are, what we believe, and what is our place in this world. It studies relationships and messages across interpersonal, small group, organizational, and public contexts. It first teaches us how our perceptions of self and others formulate identity. It teaches us how to develop and sustain relationships with others as we build common understanding through encoding and decoding symbolic behavior (verbal, nonverbal, and visual) that creates meaning. It teaches us what is appropriate (i.e., the rules of interaction management) as well as what is effective (i.e., how to achieve our relational goals). This understanding builds community between people, bridging the differences between individuals and cultures as we listen to their voices. Ultimately, communication leads us to empower the voices of others and in the process, learn how to sustain and share the Good Life.

Can Politics Be Civil?
This section will examine the relationship between civility and democracy, an important theme in politically divisive times. In particular, we will explore the questions: “How do we treat each other well in political communities?” and “How can we engage in politics with civility and respect?” To help us wrestle with these questions, the focused readings in this seminar will examine the nature and purpose of political communities and discuss specific research findings in moral psychology, sociology of race, and political communication that affect how, when, and where people engage in politics. We will use the lens of virtues and vices to identify sinful patterns to avoid and to point us toward God-honoring ways to debate political questions and seek human flourishing.

Creativity & the Good Life
What does it mean to be a creative human being? Students will reflect on how being made in the Image of God imbues us with creative capacities, allowing us to participate in the process of making all sorts of things, immaterial and material. In a real sense, what we choose to create will direct our energies toward the kind of life that we will live. Some of the corollary concerns that this seminar will examine are as follows. Is creativity a gift given only to some and not to others? Does it need to be cultivated, and if so, how? Are there risks involved in exercising creative potential? In what ways is our potential as humans tethered to our embracing of creative capacities? What is a biblical foundation for creative expression? This seminar will provide both a conceptual and practical opportunity for students to define and clarify personal creativity.

Who Am I?
The perennial question, “Who Am I?” will be approached from an identity development perspective. This draws on research and writing from fields like developmental psychology, family systems theory, theology, and community art to understand identity development. A major value in answering this question will be to consider development in context. Thus, how the individual interacts with various outside factors must be considered. The course will include readings and discussion on race, gender, culture, family dynamics, and membership in community.

How Do We Help the Poor?
“How best can we do good for the poor?” From a Christian point of view, we are more like God and also more truly human when we give rather than receive (Acts 20:35), when we are generous (2 Cor. 9:7), and when we consider others before ourselves (Phil. 2:3). Showing love and fulfilling our duties to others are essential aspects of the Good Life. As Jesus said, we will always have the poor with us (Mark 14:7; Matt. 26:11), and it is fundamental to Jesus’ mission to bring good news to the poor (e.g. Matt. 11:5; 19:21; Luke 4:8; 14:13; 18:22; 19:8). Therefore, one way to practice the Good Life is to care for the poor. Yet, while this important value is simple at its core, it is also complex to put into practice. We must start with love for God and neighbor and a spirit of grateful obedience to God. Yet, to answer the question, “How best can we do good for the poor?” (cf. Mark 14:7), we must consider many issues related to people’s individual needs and how societies function on multiple levels, informed by Scripture and also by all of the humanities and social sciences that give insight into the human condition.

Relationship to Creation
What is our real place in and relationship to His Creation? Beyond core assignments, the distinctive theme for this section comes through supplemental readings of diverse types to give focus on the Lord’s great creative genius in this earthly home. What is it that thrills our hearts in the presence of mountains, beaches, forests, deserts, streams, oceans, and among the grand variety of living things? What can Scripture with its theological history, the testimony of scientific exploration, and the constant interaction of humanity with all Creation mean to us and our lifestyles? What is the current state of God’s good Creation in relationship to the industry and aspirations of His image bearers? Join us if you love the wonders of the outdoors, and especially if life and earth science are realms that stimulate your imagination. Science can be very sterile or intimidating if considered without application to our practical and aesthetic sensitivities. Living on this planet without a proper appreciation for how it functions in God’s design is unwise. The seminar will bring together many aspects of living and study to help us realize what the Creator considers the “good life”.

Diversity & Community
Our course will study human flourishing in the context of community. “In what ways is human flourishing defined by and rooted in community?” “How can we flourish given the challenges and realities of our differences?” Individual and group identities are often based upon the intersection of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic resources, and race. What the good life entails and who may pursue it are profoundly influenced by a sense of the differences between individuals. Men and women in other historical and cultural contexts often defined the good life in strikingly different ways—particularly in their emphasis on the centrality of community to human flourishing. In this seminar, students will examine the question of living well in diverse communities through a series of case studies on cross-cultural encounters in early North America. Topics include American Beginnings: Columbus and the Taino, After the Mayflower: Pilgrims and the Wampanoag, Salem Divided: War and Witchcraft in a New England Community, and Carolina Risings:
Bondage, Freedom, and Revolt in Stono and Charleston. In doing so, they will engage with course materials that draw upon the insights of several disciplines including history, anthropology, theology, and environmental studies.

**Culture & the Good Life**

How do our cultures shape our understanding of The Good Life? The ways we experience and define The Good Life (Buen Vivir; eudemonia, magandang buhay) are never just products of an individual mind or a solitary encounter with God and scripture. They are always, and necessarily, produced and experienced in a socio-cultural context. This First Year Seminar will engage in a critical, but positive, understanding of the ways people in various cultural contexts think about “The Good Life,” relating these ideas to scripture, tradition and the U.S. context. For us as much as anyone who has ever lived, our communities shape with us our ideas and practices that allow us to make such formulations. Throughout this seminar, and particularly in the final four weeks of the Instructor’s Choice material, we will draw on sociocultural anthropology and related disciplines to encourage a culturally engaged and socially particular interrogation of what it means to live The Good Life.

**Sexuality & Identity**

Increasingly, sexuality is considered the “master dimension” that defines and establishes the foundation or core of human identity. Confusing messages abound in our culture about our sexual identities. Embedded in this cultural shift are disjointed and under examined understandings of the nature of sexuality. Our focus question will be “How do our sexuality and relationality shape human identity and personhood, and hence shape our experience of the good life?” In answering this question, we will address two important focal topics: First, we will attempt to step back and ask how we can we begin to understand sexuality and relationality from a Christian perspective, and, on that basis, understand the proper role of sexuality in shaping and conditioning human identity and affecting our understanding of the good life. Second, we will look at interdisciplinary perspectives in understanding sexuality, with a primary focus on the social and natural sciences, to explore how these perspectives enhance and challenge a Christian perspective on these topics, and how a Christian perspective might shape our understanding of social and natural scientific perspectives on these topics.

**Christian Community**

This seminar introduces students to the Christian Liberal arts by engaging in enduring questions in a theologically informed way. Essential biblical and theological content will ground the investigation of enduring questions, the liberal arts, vocation, and character formation. The seminar will begin by investigating the perennial liberal arts question, “What is the good life?” This seminar will then engage the particular enduring question, “How can Christian community exhibit the character of Christ?” We will examine the narrative character of the Christian community, the competing narratives of Church and the world, and end with the practical aspects of Church and social engagement. This examination will be grounded in the biblical affirmation that Christians are called to exhibit the character of Christ and a biblical and theological account of Jesus’s life and ministry. We will consider seriously the reality that human beings are formed by the narratives we encounter and in which we enter. By entering the narrative of God in Jesus, students will explore how the Christian Church differs in both practice and telos from the dominant secular paradigms. In doing so, we will address the narrative character of communities, the Incarnation, moral authority of Scripture, the moral limits of a secular polity, virtue ethics, and the Church and social polity.

**Living in God’s Creation**

Humans are unique in creation. We are like the rest of creation in that we are created beings. At the same time we are different from the rest of creation in that we have the image of God as part of our nature. This position places both privileges and responsibilities on humankind regarding the environment in which we live. Sin produces disordered relationships between people and God, between people and each other, and between people and the rest of creation. Cultural, political, economic, and interpersonal problems resulting from human’s fallen nature are all played out within the context of our physical environment. The environment is influenced by these problems and at the same time shapes the problems. From Genesis to Revelation God provides guidance on how humans should live in the environment. Our ability to live well in creation hinges upon our understanding our Biblically mandated roles relative to the environment as well as considering the practical reasons for caring for creation. This First Year Seminar will use the lens of a Biblically and theologically informed view of the natural and human influenced environment to expand our consideration of “the good life”.

**Justice, Mercy & Good Life**

The question, “What is the Good Life?”, is organized around Micah 6:8. “He has told you what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?“ This seminar will ask: How are acts of justice, compassion, and humility an essential part of our journey of faith, i.e., the Good Life? It is my goal for the course to cultivate in students the ability to think and actively engage in the seeking of justice and compassion while serving God's Kingdom with humility. Students will explore readings from various disciplines as they relate to justice seeking, shalom, and ethics, e.g., political scientists, theologians, philosophers and psychologists. Students will also explore their own developmental stories of family and community as influential in their ability to act in just, compassionate, and humble ways. Delving deeper into the Micah 6:8 call requires students to grow intellectually (with regard to understanding issues of justice and injustice), emotionally (as we explore compassion rather than sentimentalizing the poor), and spiritually (humility as formed by the Holy Spirit). Students will explore how advocacy for justice is both a spiritual discipline and a vocational vision.

**What is Love?**

This seminar will take up the particular enduring question, “What is love?” We will examine various forms of love, including: romantic love, familial love, friendship, love of neighbor, God’s love for us and our love for God. This examination will be grounded in the biblical affirmation that “God is Love” and a biblical and theological account of God’s love for humanity. This perennial question “What is Love?” will complement the theme of the First Year Seminar “What is the good life?” by encouraging students to consider how love directed outside of oneself toward a friend, a spouse, a child, a neighbor, and God is essential to the “good life” – a life in which a person, by God’s grace and call, is turned away from sinful self-preoccupation to love for others. The main text unique to this seminar will be C.S. Lewis’s classic book, The Four Loves.

**Can War Be Just?**

The perennial question organizing this FYS will be “Can war be just?” This question asks students to press to the very center of what it means to live well, both as individuals and together within political communities since every political community claims the right (and not just the power) to use lethal violence in defense of its interests and (ostensibly) its citizens. We will ask what it could mean for war to be just and whether we as Christians can ever be just warriors or if we should abjure “the sword:”
Ultimately, the beauty that will save the world is the (shocking) beauty of culture that has sold out to the power of politics, finance, and celebrity. and the potential to remake the church as a compelling alternative to a as it is unmistakable. Beauty holds the power to transform the individual and beauty but also beautiful texts; in this seminar, you will encounter beauty. grace in our day-to-day life. This venture will involve reading texts about in philosophy, its revelatory role in theology, and beauty as a means of that beauty plays in the good life, we'll explore its centrality in the arts, its perpetual questions as: "What is beauty?", "What does beauty tell us such perennial questions as: "What is beauty?", "What does beauty tell us about reality?" and "What, if anything, is it there for?" Recognizing the role of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), are images of Jesus acceptable? What about images of God the Father or God the Holy Spirit (Deut. 4:15)? In the 21st century, we are saturated by images like never before – and they are not all holy. As Christians, should we resist these images or embrace them? Should we recover the best images from Christian history, or should we make new ones?

Where Do We Come From? God's Universe Within
Our question leads us to explore the influence of past events in the history of the cosmos, Earth and life on the human body and mind. Our two primary books are God's Universe by Owen Gingerich and The Universe Within: Discovering the Common History of Rocks, Planets and People, by Neil Shubin. Gingerich, a Harvard University astronomer and Christian, explains how the mainstream scientific enterprise and subsequent interpretations complement Christian understandings of divine action and the biblical accounts of origins. Shubin, a University of Chicago paleobiologist, writes from a mainstream scientific perspective and perceptively interprets the world we know, including our bodies, in the context of discoveries from astronomy, geology and paleobiology. Shubin asks questions like, "Where did the elements in our bodies come from?" "Why is there so much liquid water on Earth and not on other planets?" "Why do we live by the day-night clock in our bodies?" Both books introduce readers to the scientists, men and women from many different cultures, who were responsible for breakthroughs in knowledge of the history of the cosmos and life. Additional articles further elaborate concepts of divine action, the methods, authority and purviews of science and theology as ways of knowing, and historical and contemporary examples of scientific discovery.

Accounting for Nature's Beauty
As Fyodor Dostoevsky once remarked, "Beauty will save the world." What could he have meant by this enigmatic claim? This seminar seeks to such perennial questions as: "What is beauty?", "What does beauty tell us about reality?" and "What, if anything, is it there for?" Recognizing the role that beauty plays in the good life, we'll explore its centrality in the arts, its surprising role in the sciences, its relationship with truth and goodness in philosophy, its revelatory role in theology, and beauty as a means of grace in our day-to-day life. This venture will involve reading texts about beauty but also beautiful texts; in this seminar, you will encounter beauty. It provides, we'll discover, a window onto a reality that is as transforming as it is unmistakable. Beauty holds the power to transform the individual and the potential to remake the church as a compelling alternative to a culture that has sold out to the power of politics, finance, and celebrity. Ultimately, the beauty that will save the world is the (shocking) beauty of the cross; day-to-day, it is the beauty of a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Who is God?
"Who is God?" is a foundational question for human existence, for only when we rightly know God can we rightly know ourselves and God's creation. Scripture reveals many names for God, but in the New Testament, "Father" takes pride of place. This class explores the Old and New Testaments as well as church history and theology to understand what Christians mean when we call God "Father." We then explore familial dimensions of the story of salvation: God's partnering with a mother, Mary, to bring his Son, and Christians' identity as sons and daughters of God. This FYS invites you to grasp in a deeper way the character of God who is our Father.

Biology & Glory of God
"How does the biological world declare the glory of God?" is the perennial question for this proposed seminar. This question will be answered in four ways: "It reveals His power", "It reveals His wisdom", "It reveals His love", and "It includes humans made in His image". By exploring these four answers, students will appreciate how living within this biological world reveals aspects of God's nature and therefore contributes to the "good life", living for God's glory in fellowship with Him.

Good Life in the Media Age. Can The Good Life Be Virtualized?
In this interdisciplinary First Year Seminar, students will be introduced to a wide variety of classical, Christian, and liberal arts authors and perspectives. Additionally, students will be introduced to a new interdisciplinary social science calling itself Media Ecology, which studies the effects of media and technologies on the human biological, social, and cultural environment. Using this new tool of social science will offer students fresh perspectives and interpretations on some of the enduring questions that humanity has been asking itself for centuries.

What Is Matter?
What is matter? More specifically, how does our understanding of matter (i.e. the "stuff" of the physical world) shape our vision of the Good Life and contribute to its pursuit? As chemists we will focus particularly on how our mastery of atomic and molecular theory has enabled a reshaping of our modern ideals of the Good Life. Humans have always wrapped their understanding of the natural world into their bigger visions of life, so in the first week we explore some history of thought regarding the nature of matter and how those alternate visions impacted other areas of culture. In the second week we read a detailed case study of one scientific discovery that helped us arrive at our modern understanding of matter—the dispelling of the phlogiston myth. This will help students appreciate how science is done and how entrenched ideas of the world can be hard to break. In the final two weeks we use Andy Crouch's work on culture-making as a backdrop to discussions of how modern visions of the Good Life have been shaped by the capabilities and creations of chemistry. We will examine two case studies from modern society and science: DNA technology and plastics.

Studying the Physical Universe
Students in this section will investigate the question "why is understanding the physical universe essential to the good life?" Readings will introduce students to questions and perspectives that examine the relationship between the physical universe and the good life, including investigating what areas of the human experience science can and cannot address. Next, students will read and discuss differences between observation and experimentation and how these practices shape the experience of being human and pursuing a good life. Finally, the last week of the course will guide students through forming an integrated, holistic
perspective of the good life that gives adequate and relevance place for
the physical universe.

**Spiritual Disciplines**

When thinking about the good life, people today are inclined to first think
about what possessions are needed in order to have such a life. We have
been trained to think that we are what we have or what we consume.
However, we get a much different answer from the ancient world. To
paraphrase Aristotle, "We are what we repeatedly do." The good life, then,
is more determined by our habits than by what we possess. The Christian
tradition acknowledges this emphasis on habit and habit formation and
also emphasizes the importance of the heart. "Above all else, guard
your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23). The
selected theme builds on the overall topic of the good life and Christian
discipleship. Specifically, we will survey "How do Christian spiritual
practices contribute to the good life?" We will explore how Christians
have understood the development of virtues and the disciplines that
promote them as vital to the good and full life. Accordingly, students
will be introduced to several classic Christian spiritual disciplines that
promote habits for flourishing.

**What is an Individual?**

The perennial question—What does it mean to be an individual?—
provides students the opportunity to consider how beliefs, assumptions,
and narratives concerning personhood and identity influence our
understanding of "the good life." Key questions will be based on an
understanding of the term individual as "indivisible," or part of a larger
whole, as well as "distinct from others." Readings will consider how
philosophers, theologians, writers, and artists have thought about
individuality in terms of embodiment, the shaping power of culture, and
the rise of humanitarian movements that emphasize our sympathetic
attachments to both local and global communities.

**The Value of Creativity**

What is creativity? This course will consider the nature of creativity by
exploring the following questions through readings, discussions,
writing assignments, experiential learning, and related projects. How
does the current interest in creativity compare with past views of
creativity? Do beliefs about creativity influence one's creativity? How
have educational experiences impaired or invigorated creativity? How do
various disciplines view creativity & what can be learned from this? How
do our spiritual practices affirm or challenge our notion of creativity? How
do our views of creativity influence our role in our various communities?
How does our view and definition of vocation invite or ignore cultivating
various forms of creativity in our lives?

**Modern American Families**

"What is the ideal modern American family?" This course explores how
American families have changed over time and how those changes
have influenced our understanding of "the good life." When and why did
American men and women shift from courtship to democracy? What have
been the changes to men and women's roles in home and society? How
and why did the ideal American childhood move from a useful childhood
to a more protected childhood free from work? How did the rise of the
middle class and mass media contribute to increasingly controversial
debates about gender roles, reproduction, parenting, dating, femininity,
and sexuality? We will consider how the politicized public debate about
gender and family was at the heart of the 20th-century culture wars while
also shaping our own current assumptions about love, family, dating,
sex, marriage, and more. As students learn the history of these debates,
they will be prompted to grapple with their experiences and expectations
related to the family and the good life.

**Character Formation and the Good Life**

How can we live robust, flourishing, happy lives? Ancient Greeks
philosophers and Christian faithful agree that cultivating virtues and
avoiding vices is essential for happiness. Virtues are acquired habits of
excellence in areas of human life that are important and challenging, such
as gaining wisdom and understanding, dispensing justice, loving your
neighbor, and contributing to the good society. Virtues such as practical
wisdom, humility, generosity, compassion, self-control, and love help
us to achieve these important goods. Insofar as virtues are taking up
permanent residence in us, we are being conformed to Christ-likeness.
Christians are also called to avoid or conquer vicious traits, such as pride,
anger, greed, that diminish us as persons and are counterproductive to
our flourishing. Indeed, your character, who you are in your innermost
being, is a unique blend of good and bad character traits. The process of
sancification whereby we are transformed into new creatures in Christ,
requires that we cultivate virtues. Indeed, the apostle Peter says, "make
every effort to add to your faith virtue" (II Pet. 1:5). Why? So that we may
be conformed to the divine image. This class will explore the nature of
virtues and vices: how to cultivate the former and avoid the latter.

**What Does It Mean to Be Human? Soul, Mind or Brain?**

There are a variety of ways of exploring this question, as a neuroscientist,
the instructor will be framing it within the history and development
of brain science. Our understanding of what it means to be a human
being has been profoundly impacted by research on the brain over the
last two centuries. The primary thesis for the section is that there has
been a movement in the culture from 'I have a soul', to 'I have a mind',
to 'I am a brain.' Included are readings on how our knowledge of brain
abnormalities/pathologies (i.e. Alzheimer's Dementia, tumors, etc.)
contributes to our understanding of what it means to have value as a
human being, and what it means to flourish. In the last 30 years, however,
advances in brain imaging technologies have enabled us to look inside
the "black box" of the mind and have challenged the way we think about
what it means to be human and if human flourishing can be reduced to a
matter of neurological eudemonia.

**Diversities in Good Life - Is the Good Life Culturally Specific?**

Is the good life culturally specific? Taking the questions and themes from
Weeks 1-6 as a springboard, this course will consider whether specific
cultures, traditions, and historical contexts help shape ideas of the
good life in different communities. Students will discuss texts grounded
in American, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese experiences to explore
possible, culturally and historically specific differences in grapples with
the good life as well as similarities across time and space.

**How Should We Face Death?**

Any answer given to the question, "What is the good life?" will be linked to
the question of how we face the end of that life. After all, it makes sense
that a good life will lead to a good death. So how should we face death?
What kind of spiritual, emotional, and physical preparations should we
make for death? What is the proper Christian approach to death, given
its relationship to sin (Genesis 2:17, 3:19)? How does the fact that death
has been defeated by Jesus Christ change our approach to death (1.
Cor. 15:53-57)? And what does the reality of death teach us about the
meaning of life?

**How Do We Love "the Other"?**

The concepts of "the Other," "otherness," “othering” have taken root in
diverse academic disciplines (sociology, psychology, literary criticism,
and more). The Bible provides us with crucial accounts of Christ
demonstrating the love of the Other, the sick, the outcast, the profane,
and the foreign. While our love of Christ compels us toward the love
of the Other, the capacity to empathize (even though it seems innate)
is a trained skill. This seminar is based on a premise that the use of
the imagination is a spiritual discipline for learning to love the Other in
different contexts. Through discussions and projects, students will take
on the challenge of seeing the world from the viewpoint of the Other,
those who are distanced from them racially, historically, geographically,
culturally, gender-wise, etc. We'll explore such topics as the role of
storytelling, literature of witness, nature as the Other in myth and fantasy,
and why translation matters. Our reading/viewing list will include Maus
(graphic memoir) by Art Spiegelman, I Could Tell You Stories (essay)
by Patricia Hampl, Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind and Princess
Mononoke (animation) by Hayao Miyazaki.

How Should We Live in Time?
Faced with too many good options, students often wonder what metrics
to apply for choosing temporal activities or managing the anxiety of
the choice. And the stakes of the choices—the good life itself—are high. In
this seminar, students will reflect on ideas and theories about time and
human experience of time from theology, physics, music, philosophy,
literature, psychology, and history. We will reflect on the phenomenon
of time and how we experience it, not merely seeking the ideal planner or
the productivity manager, but the God who, as Karl Barth famously wrote, in
Christ "has time for us."

Why Do We Suffer?
To answer the query of "What is the good life" we must also wrestle with
the reality of suffering and ask how suffering is for Christians a way
to live the good life. The question of why we suffer also raises related
questions, which are significant for coming to a more adequate way of
asking about suffering particularly in a Christian context. Some of
the questions that will be addressed in the final weeks of the semester are:
(a) What is evil and what is the origin of evil? (b) Why might God allow
suffering? (c) How does suffering fit into (and why is it central to the
Christian story? and (d) How should we respond to our own and others' suffering?

What is a Thriving City?
Students will consider what it means and takes for human communities,
and especially cities, to thrive. They will examine various notions of the
common good, explore the ways in which it is pursued and achieved
or neglected and undermined, and integrate relevant resources from
Scripture and the Christian tradition in critiquing and constructing a
vision of thriving cities. This question complements the FYS's theme
question of "What is the Good Life?" by revising the social and community
dimensions of that question, by expanding on those dimensions to
determine the conditions for and endowments required for living the good
life together, and by giving concrete expression to the discourses,
institutions, and practices that advance or hinder the pursuit of the good
life in community.

How Do We Live Well in Community?
This perennial question that students will pursue at the end of this FYS
will be anchored by Marilynne Robinson's novel "Home", which will be
placed within the context of scripture, theology, and works from other
disciplinary perspectives as students explore various challenges within
community, particularly the loneliness of singleness and the dangers of
racism.

How Do Power and Tragedy Shape the Good Life?
An exploration of how expressions of Power - be they individual, cultural,
political, or divine - and experiences of tragedy shape and challenge the
Christian pursuit of the Good Life.

Where is the Good Life? Places Matters
The perennial questions for this course are: "Where is the good life?"
and, "How do I live well there?" These questions ground the FYS theme
of "What is the good life" in a particular place, Wheaton, IL. Together,
we will attend to place, exploring the relationships between people,
institutions and creation that have created Wheaton (and, to some extent,
Chicago). Students will begin to develop a thick understanding of this
place, enabling them to seek the good of the places - the people, creation,
the built environment, the relationships between those - to which God
calls them after Wheaton.

Chivalry and the Good Life
What is the relationship of chivalry to the good life? How have the
medieval ideals of chivalry (honor, loyalty, bravery, courtesy, romantic love,
obedience to authority, protecting the weak, et al.) influenced or been
reinterpreted as the ethics of the good life in a postmodern, post-Christian
society? This portion of the First Year Seminar seeks to answer these
questions by first, exploring the origins of courtly values in literature
adapted from Old French textual predecessors for Middle High German
audiences in the literary romances written by Swabian medieval poet
Hartmann von Aue, and, secondly, by comparing those ideals to the
questions of what it means to live a good life. Students will read the
texts by Hartmann von Aue in English translation as well as articles from
secondary literature on specific aspects of these works.

Happily Ever After? Good and Evil Lives in the Fairy Tales of the
Brothers Grimm
Over two centuries after Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm first published their
collection of fairy tales, images and tropes from those tales remain
omnipresent, from the fictional "Storybrooke" to the very real Cinderella's
Castle at Disney World, and from "Tangled" to "Into the Woods." "Happily
ever after" is not a mere cliché, but instead a powerful phrase that
summons images of glass slippers, poisoned apples, and big, bad
wolves. Even more importantly, it also completes the sentence that begins
"And they lived..." serving as the capstone of stories about the lost who
are found, the lowly who are raised up, the poor who become rich. In
this FYS section, we'll explore how both familiar and lesser known fairy
tales from the Brothers Grimm define "happily ever after" in relation to
the good life. In reflecting on the enduring cultural, moral and spiritual
resonance of these products of German Romanticism, we'll discuss the
tales themselves, theoretical studies and essays on the fairy tale genre,
and selected adaptations in popular media.

Freedom and the Good Life
Freedom is, quite obviously, a central feature of American life, and
democratic life more generally. But the question of what it means to
live as a free person has long occupied theologians, philosophers, and
a wide range of other thinkers as well. This seminar will prod students
into thinking more carefully about what it is we mean when we talk about
"freedom" and the degree to which freedom matters for our lives as
Christians and members of a distinct political community.

Emotions and the Good Life
Humans are created to be whole beings who experience a variety of
emotions as they interact with the world around them. How does our
understanding of emotions contribute to our understanding of well-
being, including spiritual well-being, and vice versa? In this course, we will
explore both psychological and theological understandings of emotions
in human experience, including theories of emotion, the development of
emotion and its regulation, the ways in which we understand emotional
functioning to be healthy or maladaptive, and emotions in the Bible and
in Christian thought. Through the exploration of these topics, we will seek
together to better understand how our emotions can enable us to richly
engage with our environments and with God and help us live “the good
life.”

**How Do Our Memories Shape Our Understanding of the Good Life?**
This course will examine how memory and autonoetic consciousness
relate to human experience. We will discuss how our memories, and the
way we think about our memories, contribute to our perception of the
good life.

**How Do We Think Well in Ways that Contribute to the Good Life in
Christ?**
We rarely spend time thinking about thinking, yet our thought patterns
powerfully influence our perception of reality, often contributing to
or detracting from human flourishing. This insight raises a central
question, which we will tackle in this seminar: How do we think well in
ways that contribute to the good life in Christ? To address this broader
question, we will wrestle with four more specific questions: How does
our mind process information, how do we think well in the midst of
polarized perspectives and constant distractions, how do we think well
despite the cognitive biases we all face, and how do we think well in
light of the gospel message? To tackle these questions, we will look at
interdisciplinary research and writings from cognitive, moral, and political
psychology, philosophy, and theology.

**What is the Role of Christian Fasting in Whole Person Spirituality,
and How Does that Shape Our Understanding of the Good Life?**
When believers think about fasting, the tendency is to view it as a difficult
ancient practice that should be avoided or practiced only in painful
moments. It turns out, however, that in addition to its spiritual benefits,
over seventy years of biomedical studies suggest that fasting is good for
the whole person. From anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, to memory and mood
improvements, scientific literature documents potential health benefits
of fasting. The good life isn’t always about possessions and acquisitions,
after all, Jesus cautioned that “life does not consist in an abundance
of possessions” (Luke 12:15). Sometimes, as in the case of fasting,
the good life is enhanced by Christian practices that teach restraint
and self-discipline in order to consecrate oneself to God. Accordingly,
selected theme will not only highlight health benefits of fasting, but will
introduce students to the broader place of Christian fasting in whole
person Christianity.

**How Does Memory Relate to the Good Life?**
Students will consider the ways in which individuals recall and retell their
personal stories, and the ways in which they understand themselves
as part of a community with a collective identity built on a version of
shared memory. Students will be challenged to consider how the past
is represented in the required texts, especially Confessions and Silence.
Then during the final weeks of the class, we will turn to contemporary
Spain as a case study. Students will explore the perpetual controversies
surrounding cultural memory of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and
Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) as depicted in a few literary and film
examples, and how portrayal of the past continues to impact Spaniards’
understanding of their identity. Students will draw connections to their
own personal, cultural, and spiritual memory and identity, and articulate
how the “Good Life” can be built on a proper view of the past.

**What Does it Mean to Convert?**
The philosophical tradition has a long standing interest in the problem
of conversion. Why do people convert? What happens to a person when
conversion occurs? Is there any continuity between the person who
exists pre- and post-conversion? This set of questions complements
the FYS’s more general interest in “the good life” by raising the issue of
how we come to value what we value. After visiting a range of classical
and modern responses, the course ends with two works by philosopher-
thelogian Søren Kierkegaard: “Philosophical Fragments” and “Fear
and Trembling.” In these texts we receive both a powerful theological
challenge to the traditional narrative of conversion and a model for how
we should relate to our values in light of the fact that they are - in some
strong sense - a product of grace.

**Why Do We Write and Read Stories?**
This enduring question will provide an entrée for students into
considering the role that the arts (particularly literature) play in their
moral, intellectual, and spiritual development. Through works ranging
from Aristotle’s “Poetics” to Dorothy Sayers’ “The Mind of the Maker,”
students will be asked to consider why human beings have been created
to be mimetic creatures, and to ponder what we get out of our continual
exposure to fictional representations of our lives here.