

FYEX 103-107 Course Descriptions

Spring 2025

FYEX 103 Soundtrack of the Revolution

This course examines how social and political dissent are artistically expressed through music. Students will explore American social movements of the 20th and 21st centuries within the areas of racial, gender, sexuality, and economic justice by examining popular protest songs.

FYEX 103 Harry Potter and Society

'Harry Potter and Society' is an engaging quarter-long FYEX course designed to delve into the profound impact of the Harry Potter series on contemporary society. Each week, students will explore a different facet of this cultural phenomenon, beginning with an introduction to its societal significance. Topics include the business and marketing aspects of Harry Potter, its role in education, the art of its storytelling, the psychology of its characters, the historical and real-world influences on the series, its exploration of social issues, and its enduring legacy. Through critical analysis and thoughtful discussion, students will gain a deep understanding of how literature, particularly fantasy fiction, can shape and reflect the values and challenges of our world today.

FYEX-103 Femme Fatale-Honors

From Salome to Mata Hari to Taylor Swift, from Edgar Allen Poe to film noir to Gone Girl, the archetype of femme fatale has been an object of fascination among artists for millennia. Whether she is the protagonist of her story, the villain, or something in between, the idea of the seductive yet dangerous woman reveals to us cultural biases about what a woman can and should be. This course will examine the femme fatale figure across a broad range of visual art, literature, and film in order to analyze how gender expectations have (or have not) changed over time and place throughout history, as well as the penalties that women who cross those lines have suffered.

FYEX 104: Intro to Appalachian Studies: Understanding the Heart of Coal Country

The coal industry is emblematic of Appalachia. Poor whites struggling to make a living digging coal from the depths of the earth is at the heart of regional stereotypes. This interdisciplinary and collaboratively taught course will search beyond the popular stereotypes and delve into the history of the coal industry within the region and its socioeconomic and environmental legacy. Throughout the course, faculty from multiple departments will explore the topic of coal and Appalachia from the perspective of their disciplines as a means to introduce students to a multifaceted approach to regional studies.

FYEX 104 The Quiet Zone

Welcome to the Quiet Zone: Buckhannon, WV rests on the edge of a federally designated area known as the National Radio Quiet Zone. This 13,000 square-mile quiet zone protects the work of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Green Bank, WV, and requires all residents within the area to live with limited electronic devices and WiFi connectivity. Journalist Stephen Kursczy describes Green Bank as a “town suspended in silence.” This course explores the unique experiences of the communities residing within the National Radio Quiet Zone, and local West Virginia history, through the reading of Kursczy’s book, *The Quiet Zone*, based on his popular study of the region between 2017 and 2020.

FYEX 104 African Diaspora in West Virginia: Craft, Music, Dance, and Literature

In West Virginia, there is a rich culture of arts created by generations of Appalachians of African descent. This course is an exploration of those arts. Through craft, dance, music, and literature, we will discuss the historical, social, and political expression of the part of the African diaspora in Appalachia situated in Upshur County and West Virginia.

FYEX 104 The Politics of the Walking Dead

Welcome to The Politics of the Walking Dead! In this course we will examine introductory-level concepts of Political Science by looking at them through the scenario of a zombie apocalypse. We begin the quarter-length course by learning a bit about the zombie genre, then move into our discussion of *The Walking Dead* comic and television series, and finally wrap up by looking at *World War Z* as a what-if case. Along the way we consider some of the big areas of study in Political Science: International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Public Policy. As you will see we also will be watching episodes and films from the zombie genre so if you are squeamish this may not be the course for you.

FYEX-104 Around the World in 14 Days – Honors

This course uses film as an introductory study of geography, political science, economics, anthropology, and history. We will view films such as *The Darkest Hour* for Great Britain (Europe-History and Political Science), *Lion* for India (Asia-Geography), *A Perfect Famine* for Malawi (Africa-Economics), *A Blank on the Map* for the Pacific (Papua New Guinea-Anthropology), *FOR SAMA* for Syria (Middle East-Political Science), and *Avalon* for US (North America-History and Anthropology), *The Crossroads: Inside US-Mexico Trade* (US-Mexico-Economics, History, and Political Science). Each member of the class will choose their own film for analysis to close out the quarter.

FYEX-105 Faith and Doubt at the Movies

This course uses the medium of film to explore questions of faith and doubt. Students will develop a basic film literacy (the ability to recognize and interpret a movie’s visual composition, sound elements, and narrative structures), while also examining doubt and faith as enduring realities of our being human.

FYEX 106 Board Game Biology

Games imitate life. In this class, we will explore the science of life imbued in board games. Specifically, we will explore the biology behind the popular board game Wingspan! While building an aviary to attract birds, we will examine biological topics such as habitat, diet, nesting, behaviors, and naming of birds. This course will introduce you to the experimental inquiry lens as you take a deep dive into the biology of a birding board game.

FYEX 106 Evidence Based Test Taking Strategies

This one credit hour course will introduce students to an overview of college level test-taking strategies, and foundational concepts of math, science, reading, and grammar. Students will evaluate scientific evidence supporting the effectiveness of a variety of test-taking strategies, stress management, and test-taking coping skills, and apply these strategies in their own learning. Topics presented include, but are not limited to, math calculations and conversions, college level review of science, grammar. Students will identify a variety of ways to study and take tests. There will be an emphasis on grammar and writing skills. Students will be introduced to stress management and coping skills for the college student. Students will focus on summarizing, and identifying the primary ideas, objectives, and themes of articles.

FYEX-106 How to Survive Zombie Apocalypse through Books, TV & Science

This 8-week course explores the intersection of fiction, science, and ethics, using the concept of a zombie apocalypse as a lens to examine real-world issues. Students will analyze popular media portrayals of zombie outbreaks, investigate the science behind contagion and societal collapse, and critically evaluate governmental and social responses to crises.

FYEX-106 Understanding Substance Use Disorders

West Virginia has the highest drug addiction rates of all the states in the US. Death rates from overdose have exceeded 100,000 individuals in 2021. For many of us, the impact effects both family and friends. This course is an introduction to basic substance use disorders. The course is designed to give students interested in substance abuse, an introductory understanding of how they affect the central nervous system and how they are currently treated. We will explore an overview of drug addiction and social ramifications, the neurobiology and cellular mechanistic effects in the central nervous system (CNS), and the impact recovery has on the CNS.

FYEX 107 Beyond the Binary

In this class, we will ask how useful the gender binary is in the 21st century. As gender expands beyond fifty options on Facebook and people include their pronouns in their bios, we ask how much two mutually exclusive categories can really tell us about human identity and experience. If you've ever wanted to know more about pronoun usage, non-binary identity, how many letters are actually in the lgbtqi+ acronym, or how you yourself might identify in terms of gender and sexuality, this is the course for you!

FYEX 107 Humorous Media and Social Change

Humor is a cultural entity, representative of the dominant ideologies within a culture. In this course, we will analyze the representation of humorous media content to examine how it affects our perceptions of others and current social issues. Through the observation of types of humor, such as parody, satire, satirical news, sitcom, stand-up, and sketch comedy, we will discuss what makes us laugh while watching movies and television shows, as well as how the genre might be used to advocate for social change.

FYEX 107: Are You Prepared to Save a Life?

In this course, students will apply standard health care practices to develop the basic knowledge and skills necessary to save lives in health care emergencies. Health care emergencies covered will include sudden cardiac arrest and narcotic overdose. Students will learn skills including the appropriate uses of CPR/AED and Narcan training, as well as the trends in community and public health that affect the occurrence of these health care emergencies. Certifications will be available upon the successful completion of the course.