What’s New in the Curriculum for 2024-25?

Whether completely new or a revamped favorite, these are some of the new options you’ll see in this year’s course offerings.

**English**

**English IV: Migrant Stories (GESC) (New!)**  
*term course/seniors*

Humans migrating to new places, new countries, and new continents is a story as old as time—not just something for the current news cycle. In this course, we will read the stories of individuals and groups who have journeyed to new places—often out of a desire for a better life but just as often because of involuntary displacement or the need to escape horrific circumstances. Of course, with this change of region, country, or continent comes not only some form of severance from the old place and the old culture but the need to cope with the strangeness of a new country and culture. Consequently, many of the questions we will ask of these texts will concern personal identity—how much is it tied to place? Does a new country or place mean a new identity? What does it mean to reconstruct one’s life in a new place? Migration is not a narrow or isolated experience—there’s a broad range of groups who have experienced and written about this experience—from Irish immigrants fleeing the 1840s Irish famine to the Great Migration in the early-to-mid-20th century to modern migrants fleeing poverty and political strife in Central and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Potential texts might include Wilson’s *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, Adiche’s *Americanah*, Cisneros’ *House on Mango Street*, Nayeri’s *The Ungrateful Refugee: What Immigrants Never Tell You* or *The Penguin Book of Migration Literature*.

**CL English IV: Magical Realism (GESC) (New!)**  
*term course/seniors*

Magical Realism is a form of literature that collapses the boundary between the fantastical and the ordinary, forcing the reader to see “reality” through new eyes. Closely associated with 20th Century Latin American authors such as Gabriel García Márquez and Jorge Luis Borges, Magical Realism has attained a truly global reach, as writers and artists from around the world have employed it to reflect and refract deeper understandings of society. This course will explore Magical Realism in its Latin American context and across cultures, in prose, poetry, and film. Beginning with the works of Márquez and Borges, the course will attempt to isolate a set of characteristics that define magical realism. From there, students will explore how other authors have experimented with magical realism around the world and compare how those artists have utilized magical realism in their own ways. From the works of Lin Manuel Miranda to Kazuo Ishiguro and Jesmyn Ward, the class will see how the threads of magical realism can connect Latin America and the wider world and how place and genre can open a broader understanding of the ways artists manipulate reality to develop meaning. Prerequisite: permission of the department.
CL Senior Writing Seminars

In addition to the English offerings above, interested and motivated seniors may consider a one-term, college-level course focused on writing in another disciplinary context.

Senior Writing Seminars are intimate, engaging courses taught across subject areas that focus on writing as a primary mode of inquiry, developing student skills in written expression, rhetorical analysis, and effective communication. Along with cross-disciplinary content, students in these courses explore a range of written genres, engaging closely with questions of audience and purpose. With an emphasis on process, students revise and reflect on their writing, developing transferrable skills for communicating across disciplines. These courses are taught at the college level, and students should expect challenging levels of dialogue, research, and writing.

Seniors and postgraduates must take two terms of English as well as a third term of coursework from either the English offerings or this list of departmental writing seminars. Students participating in the Innovation Trimester are not eligible to earn English credit for a CL Senior Writing Seminar.

CL Senior Writing Seminar: Guided Humanities Research
(History, Philosophy & Religious Studies)
term course/seniors

This course provides students with opportunities to develop and refine college-level skills for inquiry, research, analytical thinking, and writing as they complete a research project in the humanities. Students will engage in sustained, significant, mentored research that draws on previous academic courses, such as United States History, experiences gained from work in their communities, or through the Norton Family Center for the Common Good and the Alvord Center for Global & Environmental Studies. Possible topics may include: race and democracy in South Africa; sociology and politics of mass incarceration; history of the American college; food deserts in the United States; and gender in contemporary African American fiction. Along with intensive independent research and writing, students will participate in frequent collaborative activities such as peer review, discussion, and group projects. Prerequisite: permission of the departments

CL Senior Writing Seminar: Communicating Science (New!)
(Science)
term course/seniors

At the intersection of observation, experiment, and narrative lies the realm of scientific writing. In this course, students will grapple with various forms of scientific communication—from the precise language of technical journals to the relatable prose of popular science. They will learn to adapt complex topics for various audiences, craft persuasive arguments rooted in evidence, and communicate clearly through data presentation and visualization. This course is not confined to one scientific discipline but will explore a variety of topics which might include public health, particle physics, astrobiology, or cybernetics. At times, students will choose the scientific topics...
that most intrigue them for their written pieces. For instance, one student might write an abstract distilling a groundbreaking paper in particle physics, while another pens a persuasive article for the public on the need for increased funding to address mosquito-borne disease. This course not only develops key writing tools for students eyeing a future in scientific research but also opens doors for those writers who wish to bring the magic of science to broader audiences.

Prerequisite: permission of the departments

**CL Senior Writing Seminar: Algorithms, AI, and Us (New!)**
*(Computer Science, Design Thinking, and Entrepreneurship)*

*term course/seniors*

Computers and computing have had such an impact on the modern world that it’s easy to overlook the breadth of their influence. This course invites students to do the opposite: closely examine the role and impact that computers have on the human world. The course operates from the premise that it is imperative to understand not only how technologies function, but also how they interface with the ways we work, learn, play, and socialize. Our primary mode of exploring these questions will be through an older technology – prose writing. We’ll begin by defining what algorithms are and how they feed off data. We’ll then turn and examine specific categories of technology and how they impact parts of what it means to be human. Topics might include social media algorithms, fitness and health monitoring, algorithms in finance, and artificial intelligence. We’ll also explore the ethical questions surrounding computing such as algorithmic bias, the attention economy, and questions of data privacy. In fitting with the PHI’s drive to “make something and make a difference”, the writing in this course will all engage directly with audiences that have direct stakes in the content of the course. Examples of this might include engaging authors about their work, reaching out to legislators, writing amicus briefs for current court cases, or connecting with local community members or organizations through writing. Familiarity with programming or previous coursework in computer science is not required. Prerequisite: permission of the departments
History, Philosophy & Religious Studies

**Introduction to Religious Studies (PPR)**  
*(Replacing Religious Diversity in Contemporary America)*  
*term course/freshmen and sophomores*

Join us on our journey to explore some of the most profound questions that have intrigued humanity for millennia. This course delves into the core inquiries of religious studies: what is the purpose of human existence, what do we know about the origins of the universe, how do we interpretate religious texts, and how might we address the mysteries of life and death? A special focus of the class will attend to students’ development of their definitions of a good life; in other words, what does it mean if we live a life full of meaning? The course will examine these questions and additional frameworks through the experiences and beliefs of both explicitly religious and explicitly secular thinkers. Not only will students develop their abilities to think critically and communicate effectively, but also will increase their interdisciplinary thinking, cultural awareness, and reflective skills.

**Comparative Religion (GESC) (PPR) (New!)**  
*term course/juniors and seniors*

How do we reconcile the competing claims of world religions? Should we dissect them in search of historical origins and political influences? Should we agree to disagree and live in pluralistic ecumenical bliss? Do we reject all as unprovable personal truths? After an introduction to thinking about religion across traditions, this class will address such questions through survey and analysis of beliefs, practices, and artistic principles of two world religions. Pulling on the works of traditional authorities, practicing western academics, monks, and saints, the course foregrounds the metaphysical and experiential foundations of faith. Students will trace how duties, contemplative methods, and art derive from understandings of truth, selfhood, and human purpose. By the close of the term, students should be prepared to approach interfaith dialogue with charitable subtlety, noticing similarity in religious difference, finding difference in apparent similarity, and appreciative of the rigorous sincerity of humanity’s attempts to live true.
Social Science

CL Social Science Seminar: The U.S. Presidential Election *(Returning for fall 2024)*

*fall term/juniors and seniors (offered in presidential election years only)*

How are our leaders elected? Does the election process produce the best candidates and the most desirable ends? Why do so few eligible voters exercise their right on Election Day? Do the American people really have a voice? What role does money play? How does the news media affect the election process? While addressing these questions and others, this course explores the major domestic and foreign policy issues of the campaign and the candidates’ positions on each. Students engage in extensive campaign research and/or take part in a modified mock election process here on campus. At the end of the term, students will thoroughly analyze the election results, drawing conclusions and making predictions for the coming presidency. Prerequisites: United States History or CL United States History; permission of the department

Computer Science, Design Thinking, and Entrepreneurship

Problem Solving for Engineering *(Returning)*

*term course/juniors and seniors*

Students will be exposed to concepts and problem solving techniques taught in typical civil and mechanical engineering curricula. They will also develop computer-aided design skills that will enable them to put these concepts into practice using resources in the Pearse Hub for Innovation. Projects may include using structural design software to analyze and build trusses, designing and testing custom gear boxes and kinematic mechanisms for transforming motion, and testing the properties of various engineering materials. Formal engineering design methods will be used to identify and solve the given problems, providing students with an understanding of what it means to pursue a college degree and career in engineering.

Introduction to Computer Science: Robotics *(Returning)*

*term course*

This hands-on, experiential term course exposes students to concepts and problem solving techniques taught in typical electrical, computer, and mechatronics engineering curricula. Students will learn about the scientific principles that enable complex systems to measure and act on key information about their environment. Students will learn to use analysis software and integrated development environments in tandem with practical experiments that teach them the basics of analog circuits, numerical representation in microprocessors, and digital logic. Students will apply their newly acquired knowledge to solve more complex problems that may include analog music synthesis, designing hardware that can solve basic mathematical problems, and controlling motors with both analog circuits and microprocessors to respond to a variety of measured inputs. Projects require students to become familiar with formal engineering design
processes and the tools and resources in the Pearse Hub for Innovation. The course is intended to complement Problem Solving for Engineering and provides students with a fundamental understanding of how engineers designed computers to do what they do. This course prepares students to take CL Computer Science.