

FRESHMAN TUTORIALS – FALL 2022

In the fall, every freshman enrolls in a tutorial. This class, limited to about fifteen members, encourages your participation in small-group discussions that will challenge you intellectually and suggest the kind and quality of educational experiences characteristic of the liberal arts at Wabash College. Instructors select topics of importance to them and ones they judge to be pertinent to student interests. You need not have had previous experience with the topic in order to sign up for a particular tutorial. Although the topics, often interdisciplinary and non-traditional, vary among the tutorials, all students engage in common intellectual experiences and practice both written and oral self-expression. Reading, speaking, research, and writing assignments, of course, will vary with individual instructors, but the goals of every tutorial remain the same: to read texts with sensitivity, to think with clarity, and to express one's thoughts with precision and persuasion - all in terms of each tutorial's particular subject.

FRT-101-01: *Is the Future Here Already? Explorations on the Worlds(s) to Come*, E. Poffald

FRT-101-02: *Science Fiction*, C. Healey

FRT-101-03: *Power for the People – Energy Resources in a Changing World*, G. Ross

FRT-101-04: *Fighting Aggression -- Lessons from World War II*, S. Himsel

FRT-101-05: *Run for Your Life!*, A. Trott

FRT-101-06: *History and Cinema*, Michelle Rhoades

FRT-101-07: *(Just Give Me That) Rock and Roll Music*, R. Royalty

FRT-101-08: *The Card Shark*, E. Dunaway

FRT-101-09: *On Setbacks and Success: How to Pursue "Failure" in the Service of a Better Life*, R. Horton

FRT-101-10: *Me, My Self, and My Brain*, N. Schmitzer-Torbert

FRT-101-11: *Martyrdom: What Is Worth Dying For?*, J. Jay

FRT-101-12: *The Meaning of Life, Part 1*, D. Nelson

FRT-101-13: *Homer's Iliad: Heroes and Gods*, M. Gorey

FRT-101-14: *How Musical is Man?*, J. Makubuya

FRT-101-15: *Beyond Flannel, Friends, and Frosted Tips: The Nineties in Retrospect*, J. Cherry

FRT-101-16: *The American Horror Film: Societal Subconscious*, M. Weedman

FRT-101-17: *Burden of the Masked Vigilante: The Popular Culture of Batman*, J. Whitney

FRT-101-01: Is the Future Here Already? Explorations on the World(s) To Come

Esteban Poffald is a native of Chile and has been teaching at Wabash since 1985. He enjoys teaching mathematics, reading, soccer, and listening to music.

The Metaverse or the Dark Web, gray goo or nanomedicine, malevolent or friendly AI, The Singularity or the Jetsons, Utopia or Dystopia? An exploration of visions of the future through the lenses of fiction writers, scientists, social commentators, and others.

In a world with an accelerating rate of scientific and technological progress, the near future is envisioned by many as being full of great promise, but also of grave dangers. In this tutorial we will analyze some of the scientific and technological possibilities for the future, while considering the perilous human, economic, social and political ramifications of "progress."

FRT-101-02: Science Fiction

Cara Healey teaches Chinese language courses and a variety of Asian Studies courses on history, literature, film, and culture. Her research focuses on Chinese science fiction, and she is an active translator of Chinese literature. In her spare time, Dr. Healey enjoys reading science fiction and fantasy.

What can science fiction teach us about our world today? About our past? Our future?

This tutorial will explore science fiction's varied potentials: to mirror reality or imagine possibilities, to reinforce norms or challenge assumptions, to interrogate our humanity or marvel at the universe. Through analysis of fiction, film, essays, and other media, we will touch on themes such as space exploration, alien encounters, ecological catastrophe, virtual reality, empire, identity, and more. Students will also create their own work of science fiction in a medium of their choice.

FRT-101-03: Power for the People – Energy Resources in a Changing World

Gaylon Ross is an experimental physicist who also teaches courses in astronomy and chemistry. Between his two stretches as a college professor, he spent a dozen years managing a manufacturing plant in Crawfordsville. He enjoys music and movies from all eras and genres, Canadian fishing and good cigars, and he sings tenor in his church choir.

Humans have learned to harness energy since the dawn of civilization for warmth, for sustenance, and to improve the quality of their lives. In the process, our capabilities have advanced to almost unimaginable realms. But what exactly is energy, and how do we manipulate it for our benefit?

In this course, we will look at the history of energy usage from agriculture to electricity, the steam engine to nuclear power plants, and we will address many questions of importance today: Are oil, coal, and natural gas really becoming scarce? Must we curtail the use of these fossil fuels due to their impact on global climate change and America's vulnerability because of our reliance on foreign sources? Are there alternative energy sources that are reliable, sustainable, and economically viable? Will fuel cells and fusion reactors be our future long-term solution? And are electric cars really all they are advertised to be?

Whether you consider yourself a science student, a skeptic, or a seeker of sage advice, this class will guide you in separating the facts from the hype and prepare you to make informed decisions regarding responsible energy usage.

FRT-101-04: Fighting Aggression -- Lessons from World War II

Scott Himsel is a lawyer who loves to hear good arguments on both sides of every question. He also loves to apply lessons from the past to help resolve the most difficult questions we face today.

Russian leader Vladimir Putin has attacked Ukraine, intentionally killing civilians including children, attacking hospitals and schools, and causing millions to flee as refugees. Should the United States send troops to fight in Ukraine? If not, should we impose a no-fly zone? Arm Ukraine? Bolster the defenses of other Eastern European nations that border Russia? If we don't take such steps, will we embolden Putin to invade other nations? If we do take such steps, will we spark World War III? So much is so uncertain. Indeed, the Ukrainian struggle is evolving so quickly that the questions we ask in this course may change by the time it begins in August. Where do we look for guidance about how to answer such difficult questions? What qualities of character and leadership do we need as the world seems to be shifting to a time of greater danger? Many have compared Putin's aggression against Ukraine to Hitler's aggression during World War II. Can we draw lessons about what we should do today from the successful alliance that President Franklin D. Roosevelt ("FDR") and Winston Churchill built to fight Hitler? That alliance won World War II and kept the peace in

Europe for over seventy years until Putin invaded Ukraine earlier this year. This is the very alliance Putin now seeks to destroy. We will also explore how Eleanor Roosevelt (“ER”) fought to promote universal human rights and inclusion for religious minorities, racial minorities, and women during World War II and how she embedded those values into the United Nations. Putin also seeks to demolish this legacy. FDR, ER, and Churchill not only led their nations to victory despite terrible odds. They also overcame great personal difficulties that would have ended the careers of lesser persons. We can learn much by delving into the history of their time.

FRT-101-05: Run for Your Life!

Adriel M. Trott is chair and associate professor of philosophy. She qualified for the Boston Marathon in her first marathon in December 2021 and is running the Chicago Marathon in October 2022. She trains with the Rogue She Squad, a virtual all-female training group with two coaches. She specializes in ancient Greek and contemporary political philosophy.

The topic of this tutorial is running. American Olympian runner Steve Prefontaine said, “To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift.” In this course we will read, write, and run about running. We will think about how running is a metaphor for college life and for life in general. Running well requires honest self-examination, knowing one’s purpose, pushing one’s edge, consistently showing up to do the work, figuring out what the race requires, learning to recover and fuel well, being a good fan, and doing other supporting work to be able to run well when the time calls for it. Being a good student –and maybe even a good person – requires *the same things!*

In this course, we will think about what this looks like for both running and being a good student. We will read about running as what we were born to do in Chris McDougall’s *Born to Run*, about strategies for improving our mental game that will help in the classroom as well as on the roads and the track in Kara Goucher’s *Stronger*, and about how the wrong incentives can be damaging in Matt Hart’s *Win at All Costs: Inside Nike Running and Its Culture of Deception*. We will listen to podcast episodes of a great running podcast “Running Rogue,” and we will go for regular runs together.

If the runner has to ask, “What does the race require?” in order to train effectively, the student also has to ask, what does success in this course, in this area of study, on this exam, on this paper, in this major, and at Wabash College require? Nike coach Bill Bowerman said, “Everything you need is already inside.” And yet, he trained his athletes hard. This class will be about finding what is inside and thinking about what is required to cultivate it in running and beyond.

FRT-101-06: History and Cinema

Michelle Rhoades teaches History and enjoys teaching European history and travel.

Students in this tutorial will explore the relationship between film and history. Naturally, we can view history in motion pictures as a backdrop to the story or actions of the main characters. This is useful for general educational purposes (WWII happened) but what if that history is wrong? When the past is altered and a film becomes very popular, we can still learn a good deal about the society that viewed that film. Choices made by documentary filmmakers can offer interpretations of the past that are incomplete but valuable for understanding viewers’ perspectives. Students in this tutorial will read about 20th century European history, view films, and discuss how well the films represent the past. Motion pictures and documentaries screened in the course will address the Holocaust, Weimar Germany, WWI, and WWII.

Films screened for class may include “Inglorious Bastards,” “The Sorrow and the Pity,” “Night and Fog,” “Sophie Scholl,” “Casablanca,” “All Quiet on the Western Front,” “Life and Nothing But,” “Joyeux Noël,” “The Officer’s Ward,” “Paths of Glory,” “Behind the Lines,” or “Dawn Patrol.” All films will be shown during class time with discussion to follow.

FRT-101-07: (Just Give Me That) Rock and Roll Music

Bob Royalty has taught at Wabash College for over 20 years. He teaches courses in history, religion, and music. Professor Royalty has led immersion trips to Turkey, Israel/Palestine, England, and, most recently, Rome, Italy. His hobbies include hikes along historical trails such as Hadrian’s Wall in Great Britain, birdwatching, cycling, and cooking.

The history of rock music—rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and soul music—in the 1950s and 1960s is a social and cultural history of Great Britain, the United States, and in many ways a newly globalized world. The story of rock and roll is a story about race and civil rights; World War II and Vietnam; youth and pop culture; religion, civil disobedience, new demographics, affluence and the economy. Every doo-wap, backbeat, riff, and jam carries a rich story to be uncovered.

This tutorial will study the cultural history of rock and roll, from its African-American roots in rhythm and blues to the emerging super groups of the late 60s and early 70s. We will use both history and musical analysis to better understand this powerful social and cultural movement of the mid-20th century. We are tentatively planning to travel at the end of the semester to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland (subject to administrative approval and health/safety conditions) as the capstone of the class.

FRT-101-08: The Card Shark

When Eric Dunaway was a high school student, he was told by a prolific Physics teacher that every young man must know how to do two things before he graduates college: drive a stick-shift and play poker. Eric is proficient in both and wants to help others learn more about them too. He teaches classes on economics, strategy, and more!

The world is poker, not chess. We are often confronted with situations where we must make decisions without all of the information we would need to do it perfectly. This tutorial will explore just how to make those decisions well by learning about various card games. Our focus will primarily be on No-limit Texas Hold ‘Em, but we will also explore Blackjack, Uno, and Euchre, to name a few. Be ready to learn more about how our minds form beliefs, how they respond to decision-making under pressure, and also math.

FRT-101-09: On Setbacks and Success: How to Pursue “Failure” in the Service of a Better Life

Bobby Horton teaches psychology, coaches soccer, and spends any free time he has carting kids to and from swimming pools and soccer fields.

Failure is regarded by some as the enemy, as something to be avoided, as “not an option.” On the other hand, many successful people and companies regard failure as an important, even necessary, step along a road to progress. In this class we will explore our own and others’ views of “failure” and its link to success. We will talk to members of the Wabash community: faculty, staff, and other students; read from a variety of genres (fiction and non-fiction books, philosophical essays, scientific papers, etc.); and write a lot, in the service of summarizing information, analyzing texts, and expressing our own experiences and thoughts. As we work, we will keep an eye on (1) how we can rethink setbacks as less about “failure” and more about a process of

continuous progress and (2) how reimagining, and even pursuing, “failure” can improve a student’s Wabash career and can put him on a path towards his most fulfilling and productive life.

FRT-101-10: Me, My Self, and My Brain

Neil Schmitzer-Torbert teaches psychology/neuroscience, and enjoys science fiction and graphic novels.

Imagine you’ve created a machine that is able to make an exact, physical copy of any object. However, the process of making the copy requires that the machine destroys the original. So, if you put your phone in and turn on the machine, the phone is instantly vaporized. But, in another compartment you find an exact duplicate of your device. Such a machine would be quite interesting, but we might imagine that it has little practical value.

However, what happens if **you** step into the machine, and turn it on? You are instantly (and, let’s assume painlessly!) vaporized, and out of the second compartment steps your exact duplicate. Who is this duplicate? Does he think he is you? If he does, then are you actually dead? What if the machine malfunctions and you are not vaporized: are you and your duplicate both “you”? If you then kill your duplicate, was there in fact a murder? What if he kills you?

In this class, we will take these types of thought experiments seriously, and use them to look carefully at the problem of self, and what it means to be a person. Through works of science fiction, philosophical thought experiments, and stories about the lives of humans with brain damage, we will try to locate our “I”, our sense of self. We will also look at how gender, sexuality and other accidental facets of ourselves impact our personal identity. Finally, we will look beyond our own selves to examine other kinds of persons, such as aliens, artificial intelligences and genetically modified humans, who we might share the world with someday.

Some of the texts we will read include Brok’s *Into the Silent Land*, selections from philosophical approaches to the self, and a number of science fiction short stories and novels (such as *The Mote in God’s Eye* and *Ancillary Justice*), and watch several films in the course, including *The Thirteenth Floor*. Throughout the course, we will look at the state of current research, to better assess which science fiction futures are likely to become reality in our lifetimes.

FRT-101-11: Martyrdom: What Is Worth Dying For?

Jeff Jay is a professor in the Religion department. His passions include teaching, reading, thinking, writing, studying Gandhi, vegetarianism and teetotaling. He loves to spend time with his feminist partner and play with his unwieldy children, carrying them in tow as he trains for feats of physical endurance, running and biking abandoned country roads, hiking in pathless woods and swamps, swimming in open water, especially the ocean, and sublimating.

What is worth dying for? We will probe this question studying the history of martyrdom, broadly understood, thinking about the values and projects for which people give their lives, stretching through time and around the globe. Our trek will take us from ancient Greece to contemporary Tibet, through the amphitheatres of the Roman Empire to modern San Francisco, New York City, Russia, Myanmar, and many places besides. We will encounter philosophers, playwrights, novelists, a fisherman, a salesperson, an interior designer, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, soldiers, non-violent resisters, and others. Our inquiry will bring into focus major questions: What are the values and commitments on which people willingly stake their lives? How do people think about the nature of death, the dying process, or the afterlife? Why do people fear death, how do they overcome (or fail to overcome) this fear? What personal costs or voluntary self-suffering might serious commitments to love, justice, freedom, and religion exact? Is

dying worth it? Should dying for a cause be valorized or not? When? Why? Why not? Philosophies, stories, speeches, plays and other texts, along with films, documentaries, and live drama will animate and drive our discussions.

FRT-101-12: The Meaning of Life, Part 1

Derek Nelson is a professor of religion who is pretty good with a chainsaw and a meat-smoker. The highest academic achievement he has to his credit is earning a passing grade in Physical Chemistry... in Swedish, when he studied abroad as a member of '99.

Some might think that “What is the meaning of life?” is a laughably impossible question. But it might be that *not* asking such questions is far worse than asking them and failing to perfectly answer. What kind of life is the best one to live? What does it mean to live well, and to live a life rich with meaning? We will explore these questions by reading classical and contemporary texts about significant elements of human life, including wealth, love, vocation, justice and death. We will not be able to satisfactorily answer these questions, but our motto will be from Irish playwright Samuel Becket, “Ever tried, ever failed. No matter. Try again, fail again. Fail better.”

FRT-101-13: Homer’s *Iliad*: Heroes and Gods

Professor Gorey came to Wabash in 2019, after varying stints of time in Chicago, DC, Seattle, Pennsylvania, and Tacoma. He works on Greek and Roman poetry and philosophy (particularly the ancient theory of atomism), as well as the reception of classical antiquity in 16th and 17th century Portuguese and Spanish literature.

What makes a hero? For thousands of years, epic poetry provided a vehicle for ancient societies to explore essential human questions, such as the nature of heroism, the obligations of individuals to their communities, and the balance between free will and fate. Over the course of the semester, we will read Homer’s *Iliad*, the oldest epic poem from Ancient Greece and one of the most famous literary depictions of warfare ever recorded. By following the trials and tribulations of the Greeks and Trojans in their ninth year at war, we will grapple with questions of honor, justice, gender, and memory that continue to reverberate in modern literature and culture. As we come to better understand the world of Homer’s *Iliad*, we will develop and strengthen our skills in close reading, strong writing, and effective speaking.

FRT-101-14: How Musical is Man?

James Makubuya, Associate Professor of Music, is by profession both a teacher and performing musician. He has been in the Music Dept. at Wabash College since 2000. With a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology, he focuses on the research, performances and exploration of diverse global world music cultures and ethnic groups from all Continents.

Regardless of what continent, country, county, city, town or village people may be in, chances are that 95% of the time they are there, they are more likely than not to hear two different types of sounds. Some of those sounds could be described either as noise or as music. In this tutorial, one of the first questions to be discussed is the difference between the two. Furthermore, in scholarly terms, music has been referred to as a universal phenomenon. But although it is universal, its meaning is not. So, among the many additional questions we shall address in this tutorial is how and why different cultures interpret and perform music differently.

The tutorial will then move on to address and examine some of the many questions either directly or indirectly answered in John Blacking’s book. Among those questions are: What is music? What are the different genres, types, and styles of music? What are the different ways of generating musical sounds?

What makes humans musical? Why do people or humans make music? What is the role and power of music in the lives and/or cultures of people? “How” and “by whom” the musical sounds are globally produced. A combination of using the readings, listening to audio tracks, and watching video clips will collectively help the students to develop the analytical and discussion skills that will help them to address the theme “How Musical Is Man”. For this tutorial, the ability to read music is not a requirement. The only two requirements for this class are: (i) a curious ear, and (ii) a curious mind.

FRT-101-15: Beyond Flannel, *Friends*, and Frosted Tips: The Nineties in Retrospect

Jim Cherry is an Associate Professor and Chair of Theater at the College, as well as the Coordinator of the Film and Digital Media Minor. He directs students in theater production at the College, and teaches a variety of courses, with topics ranging from the films of Alfred Hitchcock to the contemporary New York theater scene.

“Here we are now / entertain us”

We look back at the 1990s today with a deep sense of nostalgia for a seemingly-simpler time: AOL! Tamagotchis! Brick-sized Cell Phones! By today’s standards, it feels like a period of relative peace and security in the United States, one situated between two momentous collapses: The Berlin Wall in 1989 (which effectively ended the Soviet Union and the bipolar world order) and The World Trade Center in 2001 (which began the Global War on Terror and led to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan). It was a time that cultural critic Chuck Klosterman has recently described as “a period when the world was starting to go crazy, but not so crazy that it was unmanageable or irreparable.”

Many of the issues we grapple with today can be seen in their nascent forms in the 1990s. The impeachment of Bill Clinton, the scorched-earth tactics of Newt Gingrich, and populist rhetoric of Rush Limbaugh pre-sage our fractious, tribalist politics. Domestic terrorism commanded the newly-minted “24-hour news cycles” following the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. The mass shooting at Columbine High School ignited a nation-wide debate about gun control and mental health before the carnage of Virginia Tech, Parkland, and Sandy Hook. The complexity of race relations in America were underscored by the O.J. Simpson trial, Rodney King verdict, the L.A. Riots, and the rise of hip hop as a dominant popular musical form. The 90s were a period of optimism about a technological future when the analog gave way to the digital, and the internet existed before social media. At the same time novels (Nick Hornby’s *High Fidelity*, José Saramago’s *Blindness*), theater (Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*, Tracy Letts’s *Bug*), films (*Pulp Fiction*, *Hoop Dreams*), and music (gangsta rap, grunge, electronica) saw characters and artists grappling with knee-jerk cynicism, systemic poverty and racism, fear, apathy, and the construction of identity and reality. In this class, we will examine the last decade of the twentieth century as a historical period, filled with portents of the challenges seen in the first decades of the twenty-first.

FRT-101-16: The American Horror Film: Societal Subconscious

Matthew Weedman is a sound and video performance artist performing around the country at theaters, multi-media festivals and museums. In addition to his performance work Matthew has exhibited his sculptural, photography and installation work at art institutions throughout the country. Matthew was raised in a small cornfield town in Illinois and now lives in down the street from Wabash with his wife and two daughters.

This course will examine the ways and methods that American horror films have uprooted social issues and anxieties in ways that mainstream cinema would never have been allowed. Why is the horror film so resilient? Why are we attracted to films designed to make us uncomfortable and anxious? We will dissect the methodology of these films in terms structure, style and layering of content. Each film will target a specific social issue such as class, gender, race, consumerism, masculinity, health and the existential threat of the

everyday. Above all we will learn while having as much fun as possible. Note: this course will require watching films with adult situations and images.

FRT-101-17: Burden of the Masked Vigilante: The Popular Culture of Batman

Julian Whitney is an Assistant Professor of English at Wabash College. His area(s) of research and teaching include British Romanticism and law and literature. Outside of class he enjoys playing electric guitar, learning Japanese, and playing Japanese role-playing games such as Final Fantasy.

The mythology of the Caped Crusader remains ubiquitous in American popular culture with the recent release of Matt Reeves's film, *The Batman* (2022). Batman the character is a provocative, if not complex, individual with a complicated history of motives and relationships. He has infiltrated every area of our American cultural apparatus from comic books to movies, television shows, video games, soundtracks, action figures, and costumes. Likewise, Batman media has also contributed to discussions about family and foster care, politics and corruption, love and obsession, and chaos vs. order. This course will focus on Batman's representations across different genres and mediums as we attempt to probe the question: who is Batman and what purpose does he serve? We will examine several iconic graphic novels ranging from *Batman: Year One* and *Batman: The Long Halloween* to *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *The Killing Joke*. We will also survey Batman filmography over several decades by comparing Tim Burton's gothic-inspired characterization of Batman in *Batman Returns* to Christopher Nolan's grounded interpretations of the character in *The Dark Knight Trilogy*. Course assignments will range from several analytical papers, quizzes, and oral presentations, to composing your own Batman story and writing a research paper on some element of Batman culture.