

FYS 1001 FIRST YEAR SEMINAR

Interdisciplinary Humanities: Nature, Freedom, and Survival

Instructor: Dr. Kieran Aarons
Email: kaarons@govst.edu

Class Meetings: M+W 1:30–2:45
Office Hours: M+W 10:00–11:30

Room: B2203
Office: E2540

Course Description

FYS 1001 introduces systems-thinking approaches to understanding literature, history, and philosophy in an interdisciplinary context. This course emphasizes cultural, historical, philosophical and environmental impacts of complex systems to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the world around us, and encourages transferability of these strategies to other academic and personal contexts to help foster lifelong learning and innovative solutions to life's challenges.

Prerequisites and Restrictions

There are no prerequisites to this course. Students transferring to GSU with more than 29.9 units of credit are not eligible to take this course.

Instructional Activities

The mode of instruction for this course is a combination of close reading, lecture, discussion, and both formal and informal writing, supplemented by web-based tools, with an emphasis on student participation, peer support, and instructor feedback.

Intended Audience

This course is a general education course in interdisciplinary humanities and is intended for all first-year students to complete in their first semester of coursework.

Student Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate current cultural challenges or problems facing humans today from historical and philosophical perspectives.
2. Explain key terms related to human culture, the physical, and natural world.
3. Explain and evaluate diverse philosophical perspectives on contested societal matters.
4. Generate evidence-supported arguments, which reflect sound interpretation of societal and ethical issues.

Texts

All required and optional texts are available through our course Blackboard page. For in-person class sessions, I ask that you please print out all PDF reading assignments and have them with you. For online sessions, the choice is yours, although I recommend you print them in order to take notes more effectively. Reading for this course requires careful attention and critical engagement, so schedule your time accordingly. It is very important that you keep up with the schedule.

Assignments

Short essays (x3)	45%
Peer review	15%
Forum posts	20%
Short presentations	15%
Participation	5%

Grading Rubric

A	100-93	C	77-73
A-	92-90	C-	72-70
B+	89-88	D+	69-68
B	87-83	D	67-63
B-	82-80	D-	62-60
C+	79-78	F	59-

Note: Students in danger of receiving an F are advised to withdraw from the course prior to the withdrawal deadline.

Late Policy

Late and missed assignments are permitted only in cases of documented illness, family emergencies, or natural disaster, and only if you alert the instructor about it (in person or via email) in a timely manner.

Forum Writing

Each week I will give you a few questions related to our readings. As you read for the week, think about these questions and do your best to answer them in a paragraph or two (roughly 500 words). These are not supposed to be hard: just read carefully, reflect a bit, and write fearlessly. Forum posts are due before the start of class on the day listed on the syllabus, and are to be submitted via Blackboard. They are graded credit/no credit.

Short Presentations

Each student will give two short in-class presentations. These should take approximately 10 minutes. Your task is (1) to focus on, and explain, one important passage or key concept from the reading; (2) to formulate two critical questions or comments that will promote class discussion. Presentations are graded on a Complete/Incomplete basis. You must email me at least one day in advance to let me know what topic you plan to present upon. See Blackboard for further details.

Short Essays and Peer Reviews

Instead of a comprehensive final exam, you will write me three short papers (~2000 words each, or roughly 4 pages). For each paper, we will conduct a peer review process, which forms part of your grade for the assignment. More guidelines will be given on Blackboard.

Email & Blackboard

Set up your GSU email account and check it daily; also check our course Blackboard website at least once weekly.

Schedule

UNIT 1 NATURE AS TELEOLOGY

Thesis: Theory of natural social types

Week 1:

Dates: Monday August 30th Wednesday September 1st
Work: Blackboard Introductions None

Texts: FYS 1001 Course Syllabus Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, Ch. 1-5

Week 2:

Dates: Monday September 6th Wednesday September 8th
Work: No class - Labor Day Forum Post
Texts: None Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, Ch. 6-8, 12-13;
Chamayou, *Manhunts*, Introduction, Ch. 1

Resistance: Belonging is a battlefield

Week 3:

Dates: Monday September 13th Wednesday September 15th
Work: Forum post Short Presentations
Texts: Chamayou, *Manhunts*, Introduction, Ch. 2-3 Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians* (selections)

9/13 is the last day for students to drop with a refund

Week 4:

Dates: Monday September 20th Wednesday September 22nd
Work: Forum post Short presentations
Texts: Las Casas (cont'd) Chamayou, *Manhunts*, Ch. 4
Enzensberger, "Las Casas, or, a Look Back into the Future" Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, Ch. 1

Threshold: Anti-blackness and social death

Week 5:

Dates: Monday September 27th Wednesday September 29th
Work: None Short Essay #1 Peer Review
Texts: Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (selections);

Optional: Aarons, "Feminism, Afropessimism, and the History of Predatory Power"

Short Essay #1 Due Friday Oct 1st, 11pm via Blackboard.

UNIT 2 FREEDOM THROUGH ARTIFICE

Thesis: The construction of political equality

Week 6:

Dates: Monday October 4th Wednesday October 6th
Work: Forum post Short presentations
Texts: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 13-15 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 17-18

Week 7:

Dates: <u>Monday October 11th</u>	<u>Wednesday October 13th</u>
Work: Forum Post	Short Presentations
Texts: Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i> , Book I	Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i> , Book I (cont'd)

Week 8:

Dates: <u>Monday October 18th</u>	<u>Wednesday October 20th</u>
Work: Forum post	TBD
Texts: Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i> , Book II, III (Ch. 1-3)	TBD

Resistance: Social contracts from below

Week 9:

Dates: <u>Monday October 25th</u>	<u>Wednesday October 27th</u>
Work: Forum post	Short presentations
Texts: Mills, <i>The Racial Contract</i> (selections)	Pateman, <i>The Sexual Contract</i> (selections)

Threshold: Democracy in Chéran

Week 10:

Dates: <u>Monday November 1st</u>	<u>Wednesday November 3rd</u>
Work: Forum Writing	Short Essay #2 peer review
Texts: Film: <i>Walking Toward Autonomy</i> Campbell, "Rebellion, Autonomy, And Communal Self-Government In Cherán"	Ashanti Alston, " Black Liberation and the Zapatistas "

Short Essay #2 Due Friday Nov 5th, 11pm via Blackboard.

UNIT 3**'POSTHUMANITIES': ENTANGLEMENT, DEPENDENCY, SURVIVAL**

Thesis: Another experience of nature, another idea of dependency

Week 11:

Dates: <u>Monday November 8th</u>	<u>Wednesday November 10th</u>
Work: Forum post	Short presentations
Texts: Coccia, <i>The Life of Plants</i> (selections); Roethke, "Moss-Gathering"; Kohn, <i>How Forests Think</i> (selections)	Kohn, <i>How Forests Think</i> (selections)

Week 12:

Dates: <u>Monday November 15th</u>	<u>Wednesday November 17th</u>
Work: Forum posts	Short Presentations
Texts: Kopenawa, <i>The Falling Sky</i> (excerpts)	<i>The Falling Sky</i> (cont'd)

Week 13:

Dates: <u>Monday November 22nd</u>	<u>Wednesday November 24th</u>
Work: Short Presentations	No class – Thanksgiving Holiday
Texts: Tsing, <i>The Mushroom at the End of the Earth</i> (selections)	Tsing, <i>The Mushroom</i> (cont'd)

Resistance: Constructing a new world in the path of the old

Week 14:

Dates:	<u>Monday November 29th</u>	<u>Wednesday December 1st</u>
Work:	Forum post	Short presentations
Texts:	Ross & Mauvaise Troupe, <i>The ZAD</i> & <i>NoTAV</i> (selections); Short films: <i>Everything's Coming Together</i> <i>While Everything's Falling Apart</i> (2017); <i>I had never come to the ZAD</i> <i>before</i> (2018);	Ross & Mauvaise Troupe (cont'd)

Threshold: Staying with the Trouble

Week 15:

Dates:	<u>Monday December 6th</u>	<u>Wednesday December 8th</u>
Work:	Short Presentations	Short Essay #3 Peer Review
Texts:	Haraway, " Making Kin: An Interview " Film: Story Telling For Earthly Survival (selections)	

Short Essay #3 Due Saturday, Dec 11th, 11pm via Blackboard.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

Disability

GSU is committed to providing all students equal access to university programs and facilities. You may be eligible for academic accommodations if you have a documented physical, psychiatric (anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, AD/HD, post-traumatic stress, or others) or a neurological disability such as a learning disability, autism or TBI. You must register and provide documentation with [Access Services for Students with Disabilities \(ASSD\)](https://www.govst.edu/disability-services/) (<https://www.govst.edu/disability-services/>) before faculty members are required to provide appropriate accommodations. For more information or to register, please contact ASSD at assd@govst.edu or 708-235-3968. To aid in creating an accessible learning environment for students with disabilities contact ASSD during the first week of classes.

Title IX

Consistent with GSU Policy 78, Title IX and Anti-Sex Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Policy, Title IX regulations make it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories, such as race, national origin, etc... The University has a duty to prevent harassment, post policies against it, to investigate complaints, and to take prompt action to stop harassment when it occurs. Contact the Governors State University Title IX Coordinator to report any incidents at titleixofficer@govst.edu or call 708.534-4100 and ask to speak to the Title IX Coordinator. For more resources, visit: govst.edu/TitleIX/.

Emergency Preparedness Statement:

In case of emergency, the University's Alert System will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the myGSU portal. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Procedures posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University's emergency management plan, information about how to update your contact information, and the Campus Safety Booklet can be found at <http://www.govst.edu/emergency>.

Academic Honesty Statement:

Students are expected to fulfill academic requirements in an ethical and honest manner. This expectation pertains to the following: use and acknowledgement of the ideas and work of others, submission of work to fulfill course requirements, sharing of work with other students, and appropriate behavior during examinations. These ethical considerations are not intended to discourage people from studying together or from engaging in group projects. The University policy on academic honesty appears in the catalog appendix, which can be found on the website at http://catalog.govst.edu/content.php?catoid=8&navoid=673#Academic_Honesty.

COVID-19 Statement

Everyone on campus is required to wear face coverings while in campus buildings, regardless of vaccination status. Students are required to follow the same directives as all people coming to the GSU campus. Signs detailing the face covering and social distancing requirements are posted throughout the campus and must be followed. Any student who fails to follow required safety procedures including the posted procedures for COVID 19, or comply with university employee instructions are considered to be violating Student Conduct Rules (Policy 4 Student Conduct Policy) and is subject to disciplinary action which may include removal from a class, cancellation of a class or removal from campus. Updates related to COVID-19 and the most up to date safety information are available on the COVID updates and the Campus Operating Plan at govst.edu/COVID-19/. Students are asked to self-report symptoms or diagnosis of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, difficulty breathing) or close contact with someone who has a lab confirmed or presumptive COVID-19 diagnosis using the COVID-19 Reporting Form found on the COVID-19 webpage govst.edu/COVID-19-students. If you are ill or have symptoms, stay home and notify your instructor so that appropriate course completion arrangements can be made. Students with disabilities who require accommodations should contact disability services at <https://www.govst.edu/disability-services/>. Students, who are impacted by COVID 19 and need adjustment to class requirements, are responsible to send a written request to the instructor as soon as possible for approval.

Student Health & Well-Being

As a student, you may experience situations or challenges that can interfere with your learning and personal well-being. These might include strained relationships, stress, unstable housing situations, hunger, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. GSU has many resources to help with these or other issues you may experience. Free, confidential mental health and medical services are available on campus by contacting the Counseling & Wellness Center at 708.235.7334 or <https://www.govst.edu/wellness/>. Assistance with personal difficulties, including hunger and housing instability, is available by contacting GSU4U at <https://www.govst.edu/gsu4u>. Help is always available.