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# History

## Required Courses

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### WORLD HISTORY **GESC**

*year course/freshmen and sophomores*

This course seeks to destabilize a Western narrative of world history by encouraging students to analyze and question why and how people construct their worldviews. This course also introduces students to the discipline of history, specifically thinking historically at different chronological and geographic scales. Students will learn to analyze diverse primary and secondary sources, recognize and grapple with multiple perspectives, reflect intentionally, craft arguments, and clearly communicate their thinking. This course satisfies the world history diploma requirement and fulfills a Global & Environmental Studies Certificate course requirement.

*Either of the following two courses will satisfy the U.S. history requirement. CL United States History is available to students by departmental permission. Both options in U.S. history include writing an original research paper.*

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### UNITED STATES HISTORY

*year course/juniors*

Throughout this course, students will work with essential questions as they seek to create a more equitable narrative of the “American experience” that prioritizes diverse and historically marginalized voices and perspectives. Students approach the study of history by doing the work of historians as they engage with primary and secondary sources, conduct research, and work collaboratively with one another to develop original interpretations in analytical and narrative form. While the course introduces an expanse of content, students also participate in a series of “deeper dives” for a more concentrated focus. By studying historic sources side-by-side with contemporary issues from the 21st century, students better understand how history impacts the present. Prerequisite: World History

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### CL UNITED STATES HISTORY

*year course/juniors*

The expectations of this course are set at those of a first-year undergraduate skills-based seminar course in American history, with a focus on the craft of history, including sustained analysis of historical sources, frequent writing, and original inquiry and thinking. Students will participate in student-directed discussions, work with a variety of primary and secondary sources, develop independent research skills, and display a high level of engagement in all areas of the course. The course surveys American history chronologically up to the present and raises questions about what fair and equitable narratives of American history can and should entail. This course is not designed to prepare students for the AP United States History exam. Prerequisite: World History; permission of the department

## History Electives for Sophomores

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### CIVILIZATIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD **GESC**

*term course/sophomores*

This course on ancient history is designed for sophomores who are interested in continuing their study of history for one term. This course explores the histories of premodern societies which have most commonly been deemed “classical,” focusing on the multicultural worlds of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Along the way, students will question what it means to be classical and will challenge traditional narratives rooted in limited understandings of Greek and Roman history. Through group discussions, reflective writing, and thesis-building exercises, students will learn to analyze and interpret ancient primary sources, identify themes and issues related to the study of ancient societies, and appreciate cultures removed in time from our own by thousands of years. Students will also learn to understand and evaluate how narratives about the ancient world have been used and misused in the present. The course will culminate in student-led case studies of other classical civilizations from around the world, such as the Mayan, Aztec, Japanese, Chinese, Nubian, or South Asian societies. Pre-requisite: World History. *New sophomores who receive credit at admission for World History are strongly encouraged to take this course.*

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### MODERN AFRICAN HISTORY: RIOT, REBELLION, AND FREEDOM **GESC**

*term course/sophomores*

No single course can cover more than a sliver of the complexity and variety of a continent as diverse as Africa. This course will examine the development of outbreaks of violence in Africa in the movement toward independence and freedom in the post-colonial period (1950s to 1980s). Through learning about some of the economic, social, religious, and political roots of these disturbances, students will in turn garner a better understanding of the continent today. Topics of study may include Hutu extremism and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the Suez Canal crisis in Egypt, and apartheid in South Africa. Focusing on these events and others will unravel the complex and challenging, yet vibrant and resilient, history of this continent. Prerequisite: World History

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### ADVANCED SEMINAR: HISTORY OF THE PRESENT **GESC**

*term course/sophomores*

This seminar follows a dynamic approach to exploring the interrelatedness of the past and the present in order to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary global issues. Topics of study may be influenced by ongoing political, economic, and environmental issues, as well as other important social factors such as race, class, and gender. Each issue that the students and instructor choose to investigate will ask students to seek out and apply relevant historical context, to identify and formulate historical arguments, to use other key historical thinking skills, and present their work in a variety of formats. As part of the course, students will be encouraged to research contemporary issues and seek to engage authentic audiences with their findings; in so doing, they will learn to pursue engaged citizenship. *New sophomores who receive credit at admission for World History are strongly encouraged to take this course.*

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### CL EUROPEAN HISTORY **GESC**

*year course/sophomores*

This course analyzes significant cultural, economic, political, and social movements in Europe from 1450 to the present. By presenting the relationship between major themes and trends in European history, students consider the role each played in shaping the development of contemporary institutions, traditions, and conflict. Topics include Reformation and Enlightenment, absolutism and revolution,

industrialization and imperialism, war and diplomacy. In addition to providing a basic narrative of events and movements, the goals of CL European History are to develop an ability to analyze historical evidence and historical interpretation, and to express historical understanding in writing. This course is not designed to prepare students for the AP European History exam. Prerequisite: World History; permission of the department

## History Electives for Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

### THE MIDDLE EAST: A HISTORY OF PEACE AND CONFLICT **GESC**

*term course/juniors and seniors; sophomores with permission of the department*

The Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the longest and most intractable conflicts in the world. Through frequent discussions of Middle Eastern current events, this course will explore the importance of the region to the three monotheistic faiths, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of Zionist and Arab nationalist movements. Particular attention will be given to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the U.S. entanglement in the Middle East since the Cold War, and efforts by the international community to resolve this dispute. Students will gain a better understanding of the dynamics and complexity of conflict in a region characterized by instability. Prerequisite: World History

## History Electives for Juniors and Seniors

### GENOCIDE: MEDIA, REMEMBRANCE, AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY **GESC**

*term course/juniors and seniors*

This course seeks to examine genocide from historical, philosophical, and religious contexts, with special significance on the role of the media in shaping the narrative. Students will begin by learning a foundational understanding of the United Nations and the definition of "human rights," before investigating how genocide has become possible, and even ignored. The course will challenge students to consider the intersection of international law, media, and historical memory in examining selected atrocities, including some lesser-known, from the early twentieth century through the present day. They will explore both primary and

secondary sources, such as newspapers, social media, essays, book excerpts, radio transcripts, and films. Ultimately, we hope students will appreciate the complex and nuanced approach to the study of genocide, armed with the tools to ensure that "never again" really means never again. Prerequisite/Co-requisite: United States History or CL United States History

### HISTORY OF SPORT IN SOCIETY **GESC**

*term course/seniors*

This course will allow students to examine their own perceptions of the role of sport and athletic competition throughout history, as well as in their own lives, through an examination of events from the first Olympic Games of Ancient Greece and the WWI "Silent Night" soccer truce to the Cold War's "Miracle on Ice" and the rise of basketball in the former Yugoslavia. Athletic competitions have served as a backdrop for larger global issues, and the inspiration for myriad diverse works of literature; thus, poetry, short stories, personal narratives, and longer works will be read and discussed in this course. Students will also investigate these writings in a manner that encourages them to grapple with the significance that athletics have come to play for both the individual and society through the lenses of race and gender. Each student will also conduct an independent research project.

### GERMANY AND THE HOLOCAUST **GESC**

*term course/juniors and seniors*

This course investigates the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi state, the implementation of the Holocaust and its aftermath. To understand the roots of antisemitism, the course begins with a look at Europe's Jewish population over the past five centuries, and continues with a serious examination of the political, social, and economic factors following World War I that made Hitler's rise to power possible. The course analyzes Nazi racial and political policies, Germany's involvement in World War II, and the mass annihilation of Jews and others. Students examine the role of bystanders and rescuers, resistance movements, the aftermath at Nuremberg, and the lasting legacies of the Holocaust today. Prerequisite: World History

### CL HISTORY SEMINAR: THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

*term course/juniors and seniors*

The American Civil War was a defining moment in American history. This course examines the

causes of the conflict, the war itself, the period of Reconstruction up to 1877, as well as the meanings of the conflict today. Topics discussed in the course include the political developments in both the North and the South, the crisis and trauma of slavery, the participation of Black Americans in the war, the social and cultural history of the conflict, and, of course, military developments of the war. Students will read a mix of primary and secondary source material. Prerequisites: United States History or CL United States History; permission of the department

### CL HISTORY SEMINAR: IMMIGRATION AND ETHNICITY IN THE UNITED STATES **GESC**

*term course/juniors and seniors*

This seminar course provides a detailed examination of both the immigrant experience and the reception of the immigrant in the United States since the nineteenth century. It will consider the causes of immigration, the social, cultural, and economic adaptation of various groups, the development of ethnic group identities, and changing American policy and attitudes toward immigrants and ethnic groups. Areas of studies may include, but are not limited to, the journeys of the following groups: Irish, Italians, Asians, Latinos/as, and Middle Easterners. Class readings and research of micro-history will investigate the personal experiences of these various ethnicities. Prerequisites: United States History or CL United States History; permission of the department

### CL HISTORY SEMINAR: RACE IN AMERICAN HISTORY

*term course/juniors and seniors*

CL Race in American History is a college-level course that aims to explore the complex and often difficult topic of race in the United States. Through this course, students will learn about the origins of the concepts of race and racism and how they have influenced the thoughts, actions, identities, and experiences of people living in the United States. The course will examine themes such as institutional racism, whiteness, the model minority myth, as well as the intersectionality of gender and class. Students will have opportunities to chart the changing nature of race in American society and to assess the extent to which progress has been made in dismantling racialized institutions. This course is essential for anyone seeking to understand the role of race in American history and how it continues to impact society today.

Prerequisites: United States History or CL United States History; permission of the department

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### CL HISTORY SEMINAR: TOPICS IN MODERN EAST ASIAN HISTORY **GESC**

*term course/juniors and seniors*

Students enrolled in this course will view the modern progression of East Asian nations and people from 1900 to the present on their own terms. Beyond its focus on the development of students' active and evidence-driven engagement in dialogue and debate, this course is designed to teach students advanced research and writing methods that build upon those skills introduced in the World History and United States History curricula. Through an analysis of the region's cultural, religious, social, economic, and political development — and the connections between the diverse people living in the region — this course aims to contest and disrupt stereotypical portrayals of East Asia by providing students with theoretical background, a holistic perspective, and specific case studies. Prerequisites: United States History or CL United States History; permission of the department

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### CL SENIOR WRITING SEMINAR: GUIDED HUMANITIES RESEARCH

*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

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## Philosophy and Religious Studies

Any of the following PPR-designated courses may be taken toward fulfilling the two-course philosophy, psychology, and religious studies diploma requirement. At least one course must be from philosophy and religious studies, and at least one course must be taken in the junior or senior year.

### Philosophy and Religious Studies Electives for Freshmen and Sophomores

Students who complete either of the introductory courses listed below are eligible to enroll in the department's upper-level courses as freshmen and sophomores.

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### INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY **PPR**

*term course/freshmen and sophomores*

At its core, philosophy probes the most fundamental questions about the nature of the world and our place and role within it. The tradition of philosophical thought extends back at least 2,500 years as some of the greatest thinkers have endeavored to make sense and find meaning in our lives. Modern philosophy can be viewed as the systematic attempt to make explicit certain aspects and assumptions that are implicit in our experience, beliefs, values, and rational thought processes as well as the attempt to organize those insights into a comprehensive, internally consistent world view that encompasses the large issues of what there is, how and what we can know, what things have intrinsic value, how ought one lead one's life, and what are the properties of personhood. This course explores critical philosophical questions in three general areas: theory of knowledge, the philosophy of mind, and ethics. Readings, podcasts, and documentaries from major contemporary philosophers as well as an exposure to some of the most significant philosophers from the past, serve as springboards for discussion. Students should learn to think critically and express themselves clearly in

writing and conversation as they reflect on the coherence and consistency of their beliefs and various philosophical positions.

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### INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES **PPR**

*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 interpret 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.

### Philosophy and Religious Studies Electives for Juniors and Seniors

The following courses are open to all juniors and seniors. Freshmen and sophomores may enroll in these electives after having completed either of the department's introductory courses.

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### ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY **GESC** **PPR**

*term course*

Facilitating the revolutionary transition from a mythological to a rational worldview, ancient philosophers were the first to ask important questions about the nature of reality and the way in which human beings experience the world. Many of these questions are still being asked today. After surveying the metaphysical and epistemological musings of the pre-Socratic philosophers, students hear Socrates defend himself before an Athenian court against charges of religious heterodoxy and corrupting the minds of the young, watch while Plato constructs an ideal society based on reason, and consider with Aristotle the most rational approach to the good life. While discussing these primary texts, students also address



other topics including the nature of reality; the sources and limitations of human knowledge; the nature of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful; social contracts; the nature of government; and piety, justice, and virtue.

### THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE GESC PPR

*term course*

This course offers a philosophical investigation of the problems of knowledge and mind: What do we know? What can we know? To what extent is our knowledge determined and/or limited by the constitution of our mind or brain? The course confronts early on (as did modern epistemology) the radical skeptic's challenge that we can never be justified in our claims to know an external world, and then examines possible foundational principles of evidence and reasoning proposed to overcome that challenge. Some of the following topics are considered: the nature of scientific method, the problem of induction, the nature and justification of causal claims, principles of justification assumed in inferences from sense experience to reports about physical objects, philosophical theories of perception, the nature of consciousness, the mind-body problem, and the impact of modern neurological research and the challenge to knowledge posed by the problem of implicit bias. The assignments include readings from historical and contemporary philosophers as well as readings, podcasts, and documentaries focused on the intersection of epistemology, cognitive science, and neuroscience.

### TOPICS IN ETHICAL THEORY GESC PPR

*term course*

Some of the earliest and most important questions to engage philosophers dealt with the moral nature of human behavior. What is the basis of moral judgment? What makes a right action right and wrong action wrong? Is normativity a matter of consequences or a matter of custom, duty, or rights? Is what's right for me necessarily right for you? Or what's right for us necessarily right for them? Using a collection of readings from both ancient and modern philosophers, as well as various secondary sources, this course familiarizes students with the terms and implications of this discussion as well as introducing them to a number of normative ethical theories ranging from ethical egoism and ethical absolutism to utilitarianism and Kantian ethics. Additionally, students will reflect on and seek to articulate their own ethical frameworks. Lastly, students will endeavor to understand what light these normative ethical theories can shed on practical considerations and contemporary topics like animal rights, human equality, environmentalism, abortion, euthanasia, and absolute poverty.

### TOPICS IN LOGIC PPR

*term course*

To make explicit our implicit principles of reasoning, this course introduces modern deductive and inductive logic, including propositional and predicate logic and techniques

of formal proof. Students examine principles of logic and evidence, the foundations of our systems of knowledge. They come to understand the distinctions between validity and truth; between the actual, the logically possible, and the logically necessary; and between inductive versus deductive logic. Finally, students learn some of the traditional informal fallacies of relevance, ambiguity, and insufficient evidence. The course includes a brief introduction to key issues and readings in the theory of knowledge in order to give the proper philosophical setting and significance to the foundational logical principles.

### PHILOSOPHY OF NONVIOLENCE GESC PPR

*term course*

History tells tales of hatred, greed, enmity, and violence between one group of human beings and another. Fortunately, the better angels of our nature prevail on occasion and advocates appear who bear witness to another way of achieving justice and peace in a world of finite resources. What makes it possible for some groups to work together in harmony and what leads other groups to hostility and violence? In various religious and social contexts, how do people seek and mete out justice upon other people, upon other sentient beings, and upon the world around them? This course will explore the development of philosophies and religious beliefs that contend with and justify degrees of violence and nonviolence. Ideas discussed in



the course are those of Albert Camus, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Peter Singer, Jamaica Kincaid, Mahavira, Rumi, Jesus, and Socrates. A student can expect to discuss these topics and how they intersect with categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, and the environment.

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### COMPARATIVE RELIGION GESC PPR

*term course*

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.

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### LITERATURE OF THE BIBLE PPR

*term course*

Mark Twain once humorously characterized a classic as a book everybody talks about, but nobody reads. Twain would undoubtedly be surprised to learn that the Bible has become such a book. As American society has grown more secular and diverse, biblical literacy among Americans has plummeted. When understanding so much of American history, politics, and culture is predicated upon a familiarity with the literature of the Bible, knowing little or nothing about it can be a real liability. The purpose of this course is to address this deficiency. Students will read generous portions of the literature of the Bible, develop an appreciation for its artistry or poetics, and explore the ways it has been used to enrich the narrative world of American rhetoric, poetry, drama, art, and fiction.

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### RELIGION, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY PPR

*term course*

This course examines the various ways in which religion, gender, and sexuality intersect across different cultures and historical time periods. Students analyze theologies, texts, and communities of religions using a comparative approach to gain insights into their concepts of gender and sexuality. Topics are covered in a case-study format by comparing two or more sources in these religions: the Abrahamic faiths, Buddhism, Hinduism, and spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples in the United States. Sample topics include:

- The Divine: Is the primary deity of this religion viewed as male, female, or beyond gender distinctions?
- Creation myths: What do the creation myths of various religions tell us about gender roles and sexuality?
- Authority: Are the primary religious leaders for this religion of a particular gender? Which religions have allowed women to also begin to step forward as spiritual leaders?
- Society: How do the key religious texts refer to people in society, and do they foster gender equality or inequality? What do the religious texts prescribe regarding gender roles in the home and in society?
- Rites and Rituals: Which religious practices are differentiated on the basis of gender in religious texts and practices?
- Regulating bodies: What do various religious traditions say about modesty, dress, and reproductive rights?
- Empowerment: How have people marginalized for their gender found empowerment within various religions?
- LGBTQ+: To what extent have those in the LGBTQ+ communities been embraced or excluded by various religions? How and why is sexuality a central area of religious attention, in both the past and present?
- Popular conceptions: How do religious conceptions of gender and sexuality spill over into culture?

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### SKEPTICS AND BELIEVERS: FAITH AND RELIGION IN A SECULAR WORLD PPR

*term course*

The April 8, 1966, *Time* magazine cover famously asked, "Is God Dead?" Written by an urban intellectual elite enchanted with science and technology and almost blind to the central role religion was currently playing in the Civil Rights Movement, the article that followed offered a provisional "yes." The world, it was thought, was on the cusp of a new secular era. The death of God and the end of religion was just a matter of time. It is not often that bright, educated people read the signs of the times so poorly. Today, religion continues to play an important role in every country and in almost every area of human experience, from economics and politics to culture and morality. This course will explore the reasons for its continuing relevance and the various ways it has been, and continues to be, challenged by philosophy and science.

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### INDEPENDENT STUDIES IN HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND/OR RELIGIOUS STUDIES PPR

*term course/seniors*

Students who have fulfilled both their history and philosophy, psychology and religious studies diploma requirements may undertake an Independent Study Project. The student must arrange for a project advisor from within the department, **submit a written proposal**, and obtain approval from the academic advisor, project advisor, department head, and dean of faculty.