

***Basic Course Syllabus and Description
FYOS 1001 (Version 1.02, 11 January, 2021)**

**subject to change at any time*

Title:

“America’s Devastating Divorce from Science” - An Odyssey for both Non-Science and Science Majors Alike

Description:

In modern times, America’s pre-eminence in science and technology was unquestioned. America was the leader, the beacon of hope, the most admired and envied nation in the world, due, in large part, to science, technology, education, and the belief that these were the cornerstones of freedom and democracy. This is no longer the case. As eloquently detailed by historian Finitan O’Toole, “The world has loved, hated and envied the US. Now, for the first time, we pity it”. To a large degree, this condition has resulted from an inflexible dismissal of logic and reason, what Professor Isaac Asimov referred to as “the false notion that democracy means that “my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge””. Scientific fact is increasingly undermined by misinformation, denial, ignorance, and ideology, with devastating consequences for our society and country. The title of this Odyssey is from an article by Dr. Naomi Oreskes, a History of Science Professor at Harvard University. This Odyssey will begin with an overview of the genesis of scientific exceptionalism in America, followed by an examination of the origins of its decline, and then an analysis of current events that have exacerbated the “divorce”. It should appeal to students interested in recent events of the past few years and how these have affected each of us individually and as a society.

Class Time/Place:

Tuesdays, ~~3:30—4:45 pm~~, 3:55 – 5:10 pm (COVID time) Room 451, Chemistry Building

Instructor:

Professor Jeffrey L. Urbauer

Office: Room 671 (labs, rooms 674, 675), Chemistry Building

Phone: 542-7922

Email: urbauer@uga.edu

Office Hours: any time (by appointment)

Course website: <https://urbauerlab.uga.edu/fyo>

Dr. Urbauer’s research interests are in structural biology, protein biophysics and NMR spectroscopy. His other professional interests include misinformation and public policy. Previously he held appointments at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Kansas. At the University of Kansas he was awarded the Outstanding Educator award by the Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society.

The goal of the course is to explore issues related to a rejection of scientific findings, rational and logical thought, and expert opinion, by groups and governments, and a greater acceptance of misinformation, ignorance, and irrationality. The origins and consequences will be examined.

Email Communication:

The instructor will **ONLY** email students at their official UGA email addresses. The instructor will **NOT** email students at any other addresses (i.e. Gmail, Yahoo mail, etc.), and will not reply to emails sent from such addresses.

Course Attendance Policy

The University of Georgia guidelines for attendance can be found at the following link: (<http://bulletin.uga.edu/bulletin/ind/attendance.html>).

Attendance policies are at the discretion of the instructor. Attendance in this course will be monitored.

Class begins at 3:55 pm. Students who arrive between 3:55 pm and 4:05 pm will be considered late, and they will be assessed 1/2 of an absence. Two (2) such instances of arriving late will constitute one (1) absence. Students who arrive after 4:05 pm will be considered absent. Likewise, leaving class ten (10) or less minutes before the end of the class period will be equivalent to a late arrival (1/2 of an absence). Leaving class more than ten (10) minutes before the end of the class period will count as an absence. Leaving the classroom for any inordinate amount of time during class will also count as an absence.

More than one (1) absence will result in a decrease in the final course grade by one +/- increment of a letter grade for each 1/2 (0.5) of an absence. For instance, if, at the end of the course, a student has earned a letter grade of 'A' (4.00 grade points) overall, but has 1.5 absences, then the final grade will be 'A-' (3.70 grade points). If a student has 2 absences but otherwise a grade of 'A', the final grade will be decreased to 'B+' (3.30 grade points). If a student has 2.5 absences but otherwise a grade of 'A', the final grade will be reduced to 'B' (3.00 grade points), and so forth. No more than 4.5 absences will be allowed. If a student accrues more than 4.5 absences, this will result in automatic withdrawal from the course. If the withdrawal is before the midpoint deadline, the grade will be "WP". After the deadline, the grade will be "WP" if the student is passing, or "WF" if the student is failing. Absences include those that may prove to be excused.

Course Assignments

Event Assignments - Each student in a FYO course is required to attend 3 "events". A calendar of these events, and a description of each, can be found under the 'EVENTS' tab on the First Year Odyssey web site:

<https://fyo.uga.edu/BrowseEvents.aspx>

For our FYO, one required event is the screening of the film of "Merchants of Doubt". A date and time for this screening will be scheduled.

For our FYO, students will then choose any two other events, in addition to the film screening event. There will be one writing assignment for each of these three events (see below).

Reading Assignments - There will be regular reading assignments. Sometimes, these will be specified, but, most times, not. It will be up to each student to find appropriate material to read and study to be prepared for class discussions

Writing Assignments - There will be six (6) writing assignments. There will be a writing assignment for each of the three 'events' (see above). Each will be approximately 1/2 of a page (using a standard format as described below), which is 28 lines (not including header information). These are to be analytical, critical, reflective, and evaluative, in content. This will be discussed in detail in class, but mere synopses of the material are not acceptable. Likewise, there will be three writing assignments for topics discussed in class. The topics will be chosen by the students. The writing will be analytical, critical, reflective, and evaluative. Summaries or synopses of topics are not acceptable. Like the event assignments, these will 1/2 of a page using the standard format.

Event writing assignments will be due one (1) week after the event. The writing assignments for topics discussed in class will be due one (1) week after the discussion. Assignments not turned in by the deadline will result in a grade of zero (0) for those assignments. If you are interested in attending an event on a date that conflicts with this policy, you need to explain that to me beforehand.

No hand-written writing assignments will be accepted. **The text of all writing assignments will conform to a standard format: 1 inch margins all around (top, bottom, left, right), 11 point Arial font, single spaced.**

In Class Discussions – Each week, students will read either assigned material or material appropriate for the topic chosen by the student. Typically, students will report back to the class, often as parts of groups, in a manner appropriate for a discussion of the topic/material. The goal is to have meaningful discussions that lead to a better understanding of the topic, in a supportive and friendly environment.

Course Materials

There is no assigned text for this course. Materials will be available via the internet or handed out by the instructor.

Grading

Grading will be A-F, based on event assignments, reading assignments, writing assignments, in class discussions and in class participation, and attendance.

<u>Writing assignments</u>	50%
<u>In class participation</u>	50%

Attendance - More than one (1) absence from class will result in a decrease in the overall course grade as detailed in the 'Course Attendance Policy' section above.

All writing assignments will be included in the calculation of the grade. As stated above, simple summaries or synopses of the events or reading assignments are not acceptable, and will result in a failing grade for those assignments.

Class participation rubric (from Denise C. Mewborn):

- **A Outstanding Contribution**: Insightful and thoughtful comments, questions, and or reflections, demonstrating a careful analysis of the material. (not just a “reading” or synopsis of the material, but an analysis)
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- **B Adequate Contribution**: Comments are accurate but not particularly insightful or thoughtful. Demonstrates an understanding of the material but not necessarily a very deep or careful analysis.
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- **C Marginal Contribution**: Makes little contribution to the class discussion or does a poor job of summarizing/analyzing material. Has read the material, but made no attempt to think about or analyze it.
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- **D Unacceptable Contribution**: Minimal contribution to discussion, comments are perhaps not clearly related to the topic at hand, or comes to class having not completed all of the readings.

Goals of the First-Year Odyssey Seminar Program

Goal 1: Introduce first-year students to the importance of learning and academics so that we engage them in the academic culture of the University.

Goal 2: Give first-year students an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with a faculty member to encourage positive, sustained student-faculty interactions.

Goal 3: Introduce first-year students to the instruction, research, public service, and international missions of the University and how they relate to teaching and learning in and outside the classroom so that we increase student understanding of and participation in the full mission of the University.

Tentative Topics and Presentations

A tentative course outline is below. *In the spirit of a true odyssey, this outline may change during the semester, depending on the will and interests of the students and instructor.*

Potential Topics

- Science in America: Why Science?
- Anti-vaccine controversies
- Viewing and discussion of the film “Merchants of Doubt”
- Misrepresenting science
- The war on science in the USA (and Canada?)
- COVID-19 misinformation and propaganda
- The BIG LIE

Potential Presentations

- UGA Study Abroad program
- Research resources training
- CURO/Honors program
- UGA Career Center

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at:

https://honesty.uga.edu/resources/documents/academic_honesty_policy_2017.pdf

Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

All students in this and all courses at UGA must abide by the UGA policies on academic honesty:

"The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the university community. *A Culture of Honesty*, UGA's academic honesty policy and procedures, was developed to serve these goals. All members of the academic community are responsible for knowing the policy and procedures on academic honesty".

Briefly, according to the policies, academic honesty means "performing all academic work without plagiarism, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, giving or receiving unauthorized assistance from any other person, or using any source of information that is not common knowledge without properly acknowledging the source".

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi. Every course syllabus should include the instructor's expectations related to academic honesty.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with Professor Urbauer, who will discuss with you ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with the Disability Resource Center (Voice: 706-542-8719 or TTY: 706-542-8778) and notify Professor Urbauer of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. A plan to best coordinate your accommodations can then be developed. The website for the disability resource center can be found at: <https://drc.uga.edu>

FERPA NOTICE:

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at: <https://apps.reg.uga.edu/FERPA/>

UGA NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY:

The University of Georgia ("the University") is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, University System of Georgia policy, and University policy, the University prohibits harassment of or discrimination against any person because of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status by any member of the University Community (as defined below) on campus, in connection with a University program or activity, or in a manner that creates a hostile environment for any member of the University Community. Incidents of harassment and discrimination will be met with appropriate disciplinary

action, up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the University. The full policy can be found at: <https://eoo.uga.edu/policies/non-discrimination-anti-harassment-policy>

CAMPUS CARRY (HOUSE BILL 280, “HB280”):

For information about House Bill 280, commonly known as the “campus carry” legislation, which became effective July 1, 2017, please refer to information and guidance provided by the University System of Georgia at: <http://www.usg.edu/hb280>
Students are free to contact the UGA Police Department concerning the enforcement of HB280.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES:

- *If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.*
- *UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).*
- *If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.*
- *Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.*