

***Basic Course Syllabus and Description
FYOS 1001 (Version 2.20, 22 August, 2022)**

**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, 2:20 – 3:35 pm Room 1251, iSTEM-2 (STEM II)

Instructor:

Professor Jeffrey L. Urbauer
Office: Room 2254 STEM-2 (iSTEM II)
Phone: 542-7922
Email: urbauer@uga.edu
Office Hours: any time (by appointment)

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.

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

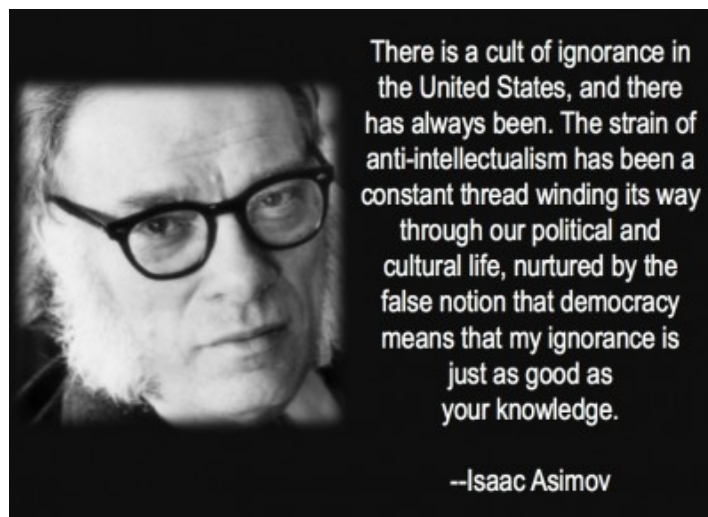
A tentative course outline is below. *In the spirit of a true odyssey, this outline may change during the semester, depending on the will and interests of the students and instructor.*

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?)
- misinformation and propaganda
- gerrymandering
- THE BIG LIE
- how societies and civilizations collapse

Potential Presentations

- UGA Study Abroad program
- Research resources training (libraries)
- Special Collections Library
- CURO/Honors program
- UGA Career Center



Course Outline

The *rough* 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. Bolded items represent topics of discussion. ***For each of these there will be reading, and for some of them writing, assignments.***

1. Tuesday, Aug. 23 **-Organization**
2. Tuesday, Aug. 30 **-What is Science/Science in America?**
3. Tuesday, Sep. 6 **-Discussion of “Merchants of Doubt**
4. Tuesday, Sep. 13 **-Research Resources Training** (Ian Thomas, Science Library)
5. Tuesday, Sep. 20 **-Document Exploration, Russell Special Collections Library**
- with Jill Severn, Archivist
6. Tuesday, Sep. 27 **-Audio/Visual Exploration, Russell Special Collections Library**
- With Mary Miller, Librarian
7. Tuesday, Oct. 4 **-Anti-vaccine controversies**
-with short Study Away presentation, (Office of International Education, Alyssa Johnson)
8. Tuesday, Oct. 11 **-“Not a Scientist”: Misrepresenting Science**
9. Tuesday, Oct. 18 **-The War on Science and Democracy in the USA**
10. Tuesday, Oct. 25 **-How Societies, Democracies, and Civilizations Collapse**
-Gerrymandering presentation by Julian Fortuna, gerrymandering activist
11. Tuesday, Nov. 1 **-“Why are you here”: Universities and a liberal arts education**

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". You can view this documentary on the website 'Documentary Mania' (<https://www.documentarymania.com>).

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 five (5) writing assignments. There will be a writing assignment for each of the three (3) 'events' (see above). Each will be approximately 1/2 of a page (using a standard format as described below), which we will define as 25 lines of text (not including header information). These are to be 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 two (2) writing assignments for topics discussed in class. The topics will be chosen by the students. The writing will be reflective, evaluative and analytical. 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. **No writing assignments will be accepted after 5:00 pm Tuesday, November 8.**

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.

Writing assignments

50%

In class participation

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.

Electronic Devices

No laptop computers, tablet computers, cell phones, iPhones/iPods/iPads, PDAs or other electronic devices are allowed to be in operation in the classroom. All such, or related, devices must be turned off before entering the classroom, and must be off of the desktop during class (in a bookbag or on the floor). There may be exceptions for in-class presentations.

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.

Students who arrive late to class by up to 10 minutes or less will be assessed 1/2 of an absence. Two (2) such instances of arriving late will constitute one (1) full absence. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late will be assessed a full absence. Likewise, leaving class

ten (10) or fewer 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.

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICIES

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".

The entire policy can be found in the following pdf file:

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

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".

Suspected violations of the policies will be reported by the course instructor to the Office of the Vice President for Instruction, in accordance with the stated procedures for resolving matters of alleged academic dishonesty.

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.*

COURSE MATERIALS:

All course materials are the sole property of Dr. Urbauer. The course materials (lecture notes, handouts, videos, exams, any recordings, anything else) can be used by the students enrolled in the course, but not distributed in any way. They may not be given to any individuals not enrolled in the course, they may not be posted to any web sites or distributed to anyone not enrolled in this course or any other entity. Doing so will constitute a violation of the Academic Honesty policies. This includes any special materials and/or recordings made during class.

CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION FOR FALL 2022 CLASSES

A few clarifications and reminders for Fall 2022 (as of August 18, 2022):

Classes are to be taught in person.

Please see Resuming Classes in the Fall message (<https://ovpi.uga.edu/teaching-and-learning-continuity/resuming-classes-fall-22/>) for info on in-person instruction, attendance policy, course syllabus, etc.

If an Instructor Tests Positive for COVID:

Please encourage the instructor to follow the latest CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p0811-covid-guidance.html>) regarding isolation.

If the instructor requests temporary online instruction, please send me (mmomany@uga.edu) an email with "Covid positive request" in the subject line. Include the following information in the body of the email: Instructor Name; Classes (Class Number/CRN/Days); and dates teaching remotely during isolation (use actual calendar dates, these must align with CDC guidelines and so will typically be 5 days).

These requests must go to the Office of Instruction from the Dean's Office (me for Life Sciences), not from departments. The approvals typically come within hours. If an extension is necessary due to continuing symptoms, send an update to me and I will get permission from Office of Instruction.

If a Student Tests Positive for COVID:

If a student reports a positive COVID test, please encourage the student to isolate following the latest CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p0811-covid-guidance.html>). The UGA Coronavirus response page (<https://coronavirus.uga.edu/>) states that UGA now treats COVID-19 as we do any other infectious disease. Please accommodate students who are ill or isolating like other illnesses. Instructors have flexibility in how they accommodate ill or isolating students, but please understand that in person instruction is the expected class format.

The Office of Instruction just sent the following clarification on the role of the Student Health Center in student absences from class. You may share this with your faculty if you think it is helpful.

Some professors are requiring a positive COVID test result/medical excuse from the Health Center to be considered in connection with absence from class. As a reminder, the university's class attendance policy (<https://provost.uga.edu/policies/academic-affairs-policy-manual/4-06-class-attendance/>) states, "Students who receive treatment at the University Health Center will

receive verification of the date and time of their visit to the Health Center. No medical 'excuses' are provided. Only instructors have the authority to excuse students from class."

Students who need to be absent for an extended period of time should be directed to Student Care and Outreach (<https://sco.uga.edu/>) for support and assistance. Students who need access to testing (i.e. they do not have an at-home COVID test) and/or need medical assistance should be directed to the University Health Center (<https://healthcenter.uga.edu/>).