

COS 50:

MULTIPLE SITES AND SOURCES OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- Seminar Discussion
- Social and Political Commentary
- Scientific Investigation
- Imaginative Inquiry
- Field Explorations

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the Idea of the Human

Core Seminar News

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Faculty from Across the Campus Join COS

The Core Seminar Program welcomes five new faculty members from across the campus to our team of instructors this fall.

These new members are Caroleen Sayej from Political Science, Susan Baglieri from the School of Education, James Knight from Respiratory Care, Arthur Pennisi from English, and Joseph Reister of the Academic Advisement Center.

One of the unique features of the Core Seminar is that its faculty come from virtually every part of the Brooklyn Campus. Multiple sections are offered at the same hours to allow faculty cohorts to collaborate and thus provide students with a genuinely multi-disciplinary experience.

This semester, for instance, Knight, Baglieri and Pennisi are

partnering in a cohort focusing on human rights. In their field activities, students are visiting different "ethnic enclaves" in the New York City area as an explo-



From left to right: Rochell Isaac, Arthur Pennisi, Sue Baglieri and Joseph Kaminski discuss Field Activities at a COS workshop.

ration of flourishing human diversity. They also plan a joint session to screen and discuss the

film "Hotel Rwanda" as a representation of some of the worst human rights violations the world has seen.

Caroleen Sayej, whose departmental home is in Political Science, is working with her cohort for students to investigate our national elections. Their students are visiting museums and political exhibitions related to the elections. They will even conduct their own political debates.

In a similar cross-disciplinary collaboration, Joseph Reister, whose graduate education was in International Affairs, is working with William Burgos, a scholar of literature, to have students investigate international crisis management and response and the idea of "the American Dream."

New Cultural Alliances

The Core Seminar Cultural Alliance Program, now in its second year, is expanding to include the Museum of Modern Art. Students and Faculty in COS 50 now have access to tickets for admission to this very popular New York institution.

In addition, the program is continuing the cultural alliances established last year with the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, and the New York Transit Museum. Any member of the LIU community can take advantage of the wealth of these Brooklyn Institutions

simply by presenting an LIU ID at the visitor center to obtain free admission.

This initiative is an outgrowth of the field activities undertaken by students in the Core Seminar Program.

Super Heroes



Professor Lichtman's superhero alter-ego, "Gata Terrestrial"

By Courtney Frederick

Last semester Elizabeth Kudadjie-Gyamfi from Psychology and Celia Lichtman from Foreign Languages and I teamed up with our COS students to delve into the world of popular culture. We explored the idea of the superhuman by asking what our superheroes, heroines and supervillains tell us about ourselves and our society.

Our subtheme in the Idea of the Human allowed us to raise

questions about the cultural power of visual rhetoric, the psycho-social implications of superheroes in comics and film, mythology, art and consumerism, and even gender issues in popular culture.

Our superhero theme took our classes into the arena of animé and manga. In one field activity, we visited the Brooklyn Museum's concurrent exhibitions of the artwork of Takashi Murakami in @MURAKAMI and a collection of historic

Japanese woodblock prints in Utagawa: Masters of the Japanese Print, 1770-1900. We explored how artists incorporate heroism and popular culture into their work.

As a creative, active-learning component to the course, we all used the online program HeroMachine to create our own superheroes. Students also developed their superhero's dossier, examining along the way their own symbolic and rhetorical choices.

"Part of being human is that we strive for ideal social arrangements despite our imperfections."

Utopia and the American Dream

This semester, students in the Tuesday evening sections of Core Seminar are exploring the political and imaginative ideas of utopias and the "American Dream" with Professors William Burgos and Joseph Reister.

This subtheme within the Idea of the Human encourages students to think about the basic political, economic and

scientific realities that frame our imaging of what human society might be like.

William Burgos reports that his students first thought of Utopias as science fiction, but have now come to see that part of being human is that we strive for ideal social arrangements despite our imperfections.

Reister reports that his stu-

dents have been especially engaged with the differing ideas of the American Dream, because most are either first or second generation Americans themselves.

Later this semester, both sections will explore these themes as they relate to climate change by screening and debating the film *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Place and Displacement

We all have a sense of place. It is what distinguishes raw space from a place where we feel at home.

This semester, Celia Lichtman and Alan Grose are exploring this sensibility in their sections of COS 50.

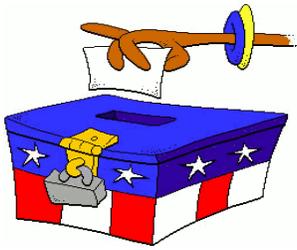
Beginning on a small scale, they ask how humans transform the rooms they inhabit to make them fitting setting for various kinds of activities. For instance, how can we shape our classroom space to be appropriate places for the learning and exploration undertaken in COS 50?

On a larger scale, their seminars will also explore the sense of place with the Brooklyn Campus and the Ft. Greene neighborhood before moving on to the ways science and the artistic imagination help us to understand the natural world as a place for human beings.

The Bridge between the Humanities and Pratt Buildings



Exploring the Elections



By Sara Campbell and Amy Robinson

This semester we are partnering in a cohort with Professors Constance Woo and Caroleen Sayej to explore the theme of “Appearance

and Reality.” Naturally, in our current election season, the subject of campaign imagery and rhetoric seemed an important topic to explore.

Building from our different disciplinary backgrounds as the instructors for this cohort, our students will examine the language, imagery, and drama of the elections. For the field exploration in our sections of Core Seminar, students will visit election-related exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of the City of New York, and

the “Get Out the Vote” poster campaign at AIGA (the American Institute of Graphic Arts). Students will also use their museum work as a basis for creative responses to this landmark election.

Whatever their future careers, participants in this field exploration and joint discussion will benefit from honing their skills of observation, analysis, and communication. As first-time voters, students will hopefully also take with them a heightened awareness of this civic privilege.

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The Museum of Sex

Professor Claire Goodman decided to shake things up a bit this semester with a field trip to the exhibition “Action: Sex and the Moving Image” at the Museum of Sex in Manhattan.

Goodman’s cohort’s sub-theme within the Idea of the Human is “Subversion,” and students were asked to focus in their exploration of this exhibit on how different

cinematic ways of presenting sex and gender often seek to “subvert” the *status quo* and what this might tell us about American culture and society. After visiting the museum on their own, the class will then have a follow-up discussion about their observations.

Goodman reports that the response from students was extremely positive, although it ran the

gamut from “I never knew such a place existed—it’s about time!” to “My mother wouldn’t like it, so please don’t tell her.”

“Sex is what students are thinking about all the time anyway, so I decided to put the topic normally relegated to the locker rooms right into the Core Seminar curriculum!” says Professor Goodman.

Call for Student Submissions

The Core Seminar Newsletter invites submissions from students to report on their experiences in Core Seminar.

Did you have a unique experience or make a surprising discovery in the course of your inquiries in Core Seminar? If so, please share it with the rest of the Brooklyn Campus community!

Submissions might focus on your experience in any aspect of COS 50. This might include your field activities, joint sessions, research related to your seminar papers or even creative work you did in exploring of the Idea of the Human or the sub-themes investigated by your class. How did that experience shape your education here on the Brooklyn Campus?

Your submission might be anywhere from 100 to 250 words. Including images related to your experiences is highly encouraged!

Please submit them either to your Instructor or directly to the Core Seminar office in the Pratt Building, Room 510.



Try your hand at writing for The Idea of the Human!

COS 50: The Idea of the Human

1 University Plaza
Pratt Building 514
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Phone: 718-780-4379
Fax: 718-780-4059
E-mail: alan.grose@brooklyn.liu.edu

Core Seminar is a three-credit interdisciplinary course providing a common intellectual experience for undergraduate students of all disciplines. The Seminar explores what it means to be human through shared readings, discussion in the Seminar and in Joint Sessions with other sections, field explorations, and multiple forms of writing.

The Idea of the Human: Core Seminar News is edited by Alan Grose, the Administrative Coordinator for the COS Program. We welcome submissions of ideas or notes on unique COS experiences from both faculty and students from the program.

Assessment Focus on Field Activities

By Alan Grose

The Core Seminar Program is continuing to develop its assessment efforts this year with a new focus on the experiential learning components of the course. This year the specific focus will be on the field activities undertaken by students in the course, and next year our focus will turn to joint sessions.

To launch this assessment focus, the program held a special workshop at the beginning of the Fall Semester. Faculty were invited to discuss the field activities they were planning for their classes. They were encouraged to envision the learning activities students would undertake during their field experiences and then to consider how assignments might be constructed to reflect that learning.

At the end of the semester, instructors will all compile a portfolio of the field activities from the semester. These portfolios will reflect on the practices that each instructor found most effective, with samples of



Professors Amy Robinson, Constance Woo and Sara Campbell plan field activities at the workshop on September 2.

stronger and weaker student submissions. At the program level, we will ask how effective field activities are at addressing the cognitive skills objectives embraced by the program.

The program continues to refine its assessment of student writing. As a Writing Intensive (WI) course, students are required to undertake multiple forms of writing, including a research essay.

Earlier this semester, faculty gathered for a forum to discuss short writing assignments. We discussed the strengths of some of the best student submissions and then reflected on how we might both revise our assignments and rearticulate the objectives of these assignments so that other students might become more intentional in developing those strengths.