

**BEL 1015**  
Section-Specific Descriptions  
(Alphabetical by Instructor's Last Name)

**Mindful Learning: Strategies for College Success and Personal Growth | Jamie Adam**

In today's fast-paced academic environment, mastering not only the course material but also the art of effective study, time management, and personal growth is crucial for achieving success in college and beyond. This course offers a comprehensive approach to student success, integrating mindfulness principles with practical strategies for academic excellence and personal development. Through a series of interactive lectures, discussions, and hands-on exercises, students will learn how to cultivate mindful study practices that enhance focus, concentration, and retention. They will explore various techniques for managing time effectively, including goal setting, prioritization, and overcoming procrastination. Additionally, students will gain insight into the principles of self-care and stress management, fostering a healthy balance between academic responsibilities and personal well-being.

**Artistic Revolution | Jim Al-Shamma**

Artistic expression is integral to the human experience as a way of knowing, as a means of processing what it means to be human. Periodically, the avant-garde has found it necessary to challenge tradition and to invent new forms of expression. How do we know the world through art, and how and why does artistic revolution happen, specifically in the visual arts?

**Strange Things You Should Know | Mark Anderson**

A Philosophical circus featuring some of the wildest, weirdest, and most profound people and events in intellectual-spiritual history.

**Creation, Myth, and Radiohead | Barry Ballinger**

This section of First-Year Seminar will supplement "Ways of Knowing" by exploring the relationship between J.R.R Tolkien's "Secondary World" and Michael Polanyi's "Tacit Dimension." Together we will define knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, and knowledge application through the "the secondary world" of J.R.R. Tolkien, "the formation of objects" of Michel Foucault, and tacit knowledge of British rock band Radiohead.

**Denying the Holocaust | Doug Bisson**

This course will explore the larger theme of "ways of knowing" by acquainting students with the methods of historians and showing how the latter use written documents, eyewitness testimony, photographs, physical evidence and demographic data to demonstrate that the Holocaust actually occurred.

**Love | Noel Boyle**

Love is powerful, yet we cheapen it with empty sentimentalism. Love is personal, yet we reduce it to ideological and theological creeds. No topic is more important than love. Yet, we've made it almost impossible to consider love as a serious academic topic. And so few have. The situation is unacceptable and our course objective is to help change it. What is the nature of love? How does love relate to beauty, truth, or justice? How, who, and why should a person love?"

**Cosmology Episodes | Austin Brown**

In this course, we tackle the theme "Cosmology Episodes." A *cosmology episode*, as defined by Karl Weick, refers to a moment "when people suddenly and deeply feel that the universe is no

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longer a rational, orderly system ... I've never been here before, I have no idea where I am, and I have no idea who can help me." (Wieck, 1993, p. 633-634). These are not moments of "I forgot to turn in the assignment that was due today." They are moments of *existential collapse*, when experience disproves or disrupts the fabric of who you are, how you live, or what you know the world to be.

**Intuitive Eating: Understanding a Healthy Relationship with Food | Caitlyn Browning**

This course will examine the 10 Principles of Intuitive Eating and how they can help repair or maintain one's healthy relationship with food. Understanding and implementing these principles will have lifelong benefits by providing food freedom. As a first-year college student, it is important to find ownership in one's own food decisions in a manner that is healthy for physical health and, more importantly, mental health. This course will explore the many food decisions we make daily and how they can aid in success academically, personally, socially, and vocationally.

**How to Lead When You're Not in Charge | Trenay Perry Bynum**

We will read and discuss leadership focusing on the question: How do I lead when I'm not in charge? Using your cell phone's camera, you will create a digital storytelling project for an in-person and digital exhibition related to leadership. This class will incorporate the use of Twitter and Instagram.

**Harry Potter and the Hero's Quest | Ann Coble**

This class will address ways to approach critical thinking and analysis using the Harry Potter series. Students will read 4 Harry Potter books and watch 3 Harry Potter films, as well as reading the First Year Seminar Anthology that is common to all FYS classes. Students need to be aware that this class has a heavy reading load.

**Ways of Knowing: Life Power, and the Death of God | Manuel Cruz**

The seminar seeks to unravel this thorny paradox: How can the modern experience of life, power, and desire cultivate, yet also undermine the meaningful possibility of faith and spirituality as a way of life? To approach this paradox, the course will examine the fundamental desires of human beings. Is the human desire for happiness, justice, and love meaningful? Is true life found in a desire for power and domination? Do science and technology fulfill our natural desire to know and understand life? What kind of knowledge or experience could satisfy our desire to know who we are? Moreover, what's God got to do with it?

**Comedy and the Truth | Mary Cunningham**

Jokes don't have to be true to be funny. What value do comedy and laughter have for us as pursuits that aren't directed toward truth? This class will investigate the difference between truth and non-truth, the value of truth-seeking, and the appropriate place for non-truth in our world.

**Music Makes a Difference | Don Cusic**

Students will examine songs and artists and investigate the story behind each song and artist. Songs selected will have a connection to social justice, political movements and issues of equality, class and race. For each song and artist the question will be asked: "Did music make a

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difference?"

**Dealing with Different | Francis Daniel**

Research shows that Diversity can have a very positive effect on organizational performance through broader talent pools, perspectives, and creativity. The same is true for individuals. Broadened exposure to different people and ideas both challenges and enriches our worldview. This course explores how we deal with and benefit from differences.

**Having a Mind of Your Own | Jimmy Davis**

Much recent public discussion has focused on the appropriateness of certain academic content in schools. In this FYS class, as we interrogate the broad FYS theme of "ways of knowing," we'll also explore contemporary questions about what you should and should not be allowed to know.

**Listen to Women | Jane Duncan**

With an aim toward intersectionality, this course will use podcasts, opinion-editorials, essays, book chapters, vlogs, blogs, and other online media produced by women to examine the various ways women tell their stories. The class is designed to be highly interactive and requires curiosity, objectivity, and evidenced-based analysis. Students will be provided curated lists of materials to start but will also contribute to the materials that are utilized and analyzed for Ways of Knowing.

**Applied Curiosity and Metacognition | Blake Dunshee**

What are students and faculty aspiring toward in higher education? In addition to the FYS anthology, we will further explore the "Ways of Knowing" theme through supplemental readings designed to glimpse into each other's minds. Together we will explore what it means to be thriving members of a university community.

**I Never Thought of It That Way | Lucy Watson Fredrickson**

This section of FYS will focus on how different aspects of life (politics, history, culture) can influence our everyday lives, how we make decisions, and ultimately what we believe about society and people. Encountering this theme will enhance your understanding of "ways of knowing" by asking you to critically think about how you know what you know and to consider different perspectives.

**The Art of Creativity | Paul Gatrell**

What is Art? What is creativity? How do you approach creating and artmaking? We will explore how every person is a Creator and an Artmaker.

**Moving Pictures | Richard Gershman**

Storytelling is an ancient art. Our methods have evolved as technology has evolved from sitting around a campfire to surrounding ourselves with the images and sound of motion pictures. Films by using evocative imagery can make us laugh, cry, jump out of our seats, or stare in wonder. As part of this course, we will examine what we know and how we know it through the narrative tradition of film.

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**Exploring the World of Fashion and Ways of Knowing | Priscilla Gitimu**

The world of fashion is fascinating, dynamic, and global. Yet, fashion allows us to express our individuality and creativity. In this class, we will explore intriguing contemporary topics in the world of fashion. We will also discuss important ways of knowing as prescribed in the Belmont Anthology book.

**The Pros and Cons of Marxism | Charmion Gustke**

In this section of First-Year Seminar, the core themes examined in the anthology will be supplemented with an examination of the pros and cons of Marxism. Marxism, the material analysis of class struggles, offers many insights into the social thought behind the power relations structuring our current social, political, and cultural challenges. Karl Marx understood the way in which economics affects all aspects of our lives. There is virtually no facet of our daily life that is not somehow shaped by the material realities of the world in which we live. But Marxism, like any theory or philosophy, has its shortcomings, and for many, cannot encompass the vast territory spanning across our global capital market. To what extent Marx was correct in his delineation of capitalism will be for you to determine.

**The Other – Us vs. Them | Maria Hilmarsdottir**

This course will explore the larger theme of “ways of knowing”, accompanied with a further consideration on the manifestation, role and meaning of ‘the other’ in the visual culture through the ages.

**Know Thyself | Kate Holland**

Inscribed over the door of the oracle at Delphi in Ancient Greece were the words “know thyself.” In this section of FYS, in addition to the common Anthology, you will explore various texts that will challenge what you think you know about yourself, society, and your role in society.

**The Art of Possibility | Michael Janas**

When you're stuck with a seemingly-impossible problem, the best way to get unstuck is to shift your perspective. Your perspectives shape your possibilities. To reconstruct how you perceive the world, you must first be willing to challenge your beliefs and assumptions. In this class we will explore possibilities and how to apply them to transform your perspectives.

**Political Dystopias: Real and Imagined | Susan Jellissen**

In light of the broad course theme, “Ways of Knowing,” this particular class addresses the general issue of political power. Famed political scientist Hans Morgenthau defined political power as “control over the minds and actions of others.” As such, have you ever wondered who really rules you? Where your ideas about things come from? Whether there are hidden agendas at work? Why those who question official narratives are demonized as “conspiracy theorists”? We attempt to answer these questions through a survey of literature and film.

**Tell Your Story | Dustin Keller**

The power of stories and storytelling has become an integral part of our everyday lives. Science has shown we are drawn to fictional stories and imaginative story tellers. This course will unlock the secrets and the allure of "The Storytelling Animal" Be prepared to create and tell your

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story in this class.

**Creativity and the Christian Artist | Carla Lahey**

In this section, we'll examine "Ways of Knowing" through faith and the arts. Alongside the FYS anthology, students engage in creative exercises and readings by artists who make connections between their creative work and their Christian faith, including musician Andrew Peterson, visual artist Makoto Fujimura, and author Madeleine L'Engle.

**"Reflections as a Way of Knowing" | Virginia Lamothe**

"Reflection as a Way of Knowing," a dynamic and engaging course designed to kickstart your college journey with critical thinking, vibrant class discussions, and intensive writing. In this seminar, we will explore how we learn from reflection while drawing insights from diverse sources, including course readings from the First Year Seminar Anthology, the powerful documentary 13th, and C. S. Lewis's thought-provoking novel Till We Have Faces. These insights will not only enrich your understanding but also have practical applications in your future academic and professional life.

**Education and the Self | Arpita Mandal**

"Education and the Self invites an exploration on the necessity of intellectual curiosity, humility, and dialogue. One of the inquiry of the course explores how education shapes the self. In our class, we will pay close attention to how our intellectual journey evolves over the course of the semester as we partake in interdisciplinary discussions "

**Comedy and Critique | Carla McDonough**

In this section of First-Year Seminar, the core theme and FYS Anthology readings are supplemented with a focus on the literary genre of Comedy. This theme will enhance your understanding of "ways of knowing" by examining the intellectual engagement required to get a joke and how comedy enriches our lives. George Orwell once commented that "every joke is a tiny revolution," indicating there is something important going on when we engage in comedy. bell hooks has argued: "We cannot have a meaningful revolution without humor. . . . Humor is essential to the integrative balance that we need to deal with diversity and difference and the building of community." These comments show that comedy is a social act as well as a political and personal one. Comedy can flirt with the tragic (hence the oft-cited formula that comedy is tragedy plus time). Comedy can deflate as well as defang the powerful and the dictatorial. It is a coping mechanism, a critique, a release, an escape, a displacement, sometimes a weapon, and it requires a high level of intellectual engagement to create and understand.

**Critical Thinking and Self-Efficacy | Natalie Norman Michaels**

This FYS section's focus will be on one's own perceived self-efficacy (or confidence) when approaching something new, like college, public speaking, and/or performing; relating this to various readings. Four areas of discussion: Reflective Critical Thinking, Knowing to Synthesis, Test-Taking Strategies, Cultural and other Differences, and One's Own Perceived Self-Efficacy.

**The Art of Gathering and Belonging | Adam Perez**

In this course we will explore how gatherings help shape our identities, perspectives, and

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feelings of belonging in the world. In gathering, we have a chance to know and to be known.

**Thinking For Yourself | J. Mark Phillips**

The primary theme of the course is “ways of knowing,” a broad theme that can go in multiple directions, each of which increases the recognition, appreciation, and capacity to use multiple ways of justifying or defending claims to knowledge. Knowledge is a critical aspect of human life, and the pursuit of knowledge is the reason that universities exist. Therefore, the best way to start a university education is to learn about different kinds of knowledge claims, how to construct them, and how to evaluate them.

**Perspectives of God, Ourselves, and Others | Christy Ridings**

What shapes our story? How do we understand ourselves mentally, emotionally, and spiritually? How do we listen to the stories of others? This course will explore the significant aspects that contribute to our own personal narratives as well as how those narratives fit into a larger story.

**Strengths, Leadership, and Influence | Bonnie Riechert**

Who are you, and how can you make your best impact? Your core personality includes talents and strengths unique to you. Discovering and developing your signature strengths can help you reach your full potential. You'll identify your leadership style, develop your influence, and communicate with greater confidence.

**Disinfo & Conspiracy Theories | Dan Schafer**

Today's world is full of false conspiracy theories and other forms of disinformation. When people believe untrue things, they make poor decisions, support bad policies, and find ways to justify discrimination, oppression, racism, and violence. Students will learn how to identify false claims and unmask those who spread them.

**Getting to Know You | George Shannon II**

If someone were to ask the question "Who are you?" how would you reply? Would you simply provide your name or descriptive characteristics about yourself? If you were to use descriptors, what would they be? Where are they derived from? This course, through the text *Ways of Knowing*, will be an exploration of self-discovery to find out who you are at the core and how we can connect to the world around us.

**-Isms and -Phobias | Michelle Shaw**

Isms and -Phobias are biased beliefs and behaviors based on stereotypes, fear, and ignorance. Using the FYS anthology and other course readings, we will talk about how these dangerous viewpoints show up in our society and how language is used to activate these positions.

**China Through Films and Stories | Zexi (Jesse) Sun**

Capitalizing on the theme of cross-cultural engagement, this FYS section offers a historical introduction to modern China. Beginning with the required Anthology, we will interrogate popular images of China in the U.S., interpret a plethora of films and stories, and conclude with a cultural comparison between the U.S. and China. Prior knowledge about China and the Chinese language is beneficial but not assumed. Reading intensive.

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**Folklore as a Way of Knowing | Sue Trout**

In this course students will be introduced to various "ways of knowing" the world in which they live and navigating their university experience. We will focus on folklore, a way of storytelling often not studied in college. Our work will focus on the living traditions, rituals, stories, and customs of a community passed through generations. We will look at the ways in which folklore shapes our identity, our values, and our understanding of others.

**I Understood That Reference: Ways of Knowing Through Pop Culture | Meg Tully**

The primary theme of the course is "ways of knowing," a broad theme that can go in multiple directions, each of which increases the recognition, appreciation, and capacity to use multiple ways of justifying or defending claims to knowledge. Knowledge is a critical aspect of human life, and the pursuit of knowledge is the reason that universities exist. Therefore, the best way to start a university education is to learn about different kinds of knowledge claims, how to construct them, and how to evaluate them.

While it's common to hear things like, "It's just a movie; you're looking too deeply into it," this course will examine the ways pop culture artifacts—including everything from movies and TV, celebrities, music, memes, and influencers—shape our existence. We will cover topics like Jennifer Lawrence and celebrity cool girls, intense fandoms, and the new rules surrounding "spoiler culture" that impact how we craft our identities. This course will utilize the FYS Anthology, as well as supplementary readings, videos, and podcasts to examine how popular culture shapes our ways of knowing and existing. This class is designed to examine and highlight mediated texts that often remain unquestioned and the considerable impact they can have on ourselves and the world.

**Students Today Changemakers Tomorrow | Bernard Turner**

The world is confronted with social problems that are mounting and the importance of social justice is evident more than ever before. We need a pipeline of new leaders that will bring new courage and new vision that results in advocating for transformational change. Your generation is poised to make such a change in the world. Your journey begins now with this class to gain new insights, new skills, and new outreach efforts to make impactful changes in line with your passion. FYS at Belmont is the foundation to listen, reflect, learn, plan, problem solve, and act so your voice will be heard on critical issues that affect the quality of life for others and yourself.

**Democracy, Snobbery, Aesthetics, and Politics | Thomas Cowley Williams**

Why are we often so eager to pass judgment on other people's taste in art and culture? Do those judgments undercut our belief in equality? Do they reflect a deeper, more troubling undercurrent of elitism beneath our democratic pretenses? This course examines debates about taste in the context of democracy. We will discuss the history of taste and criticism and their role in public life, and we will look at the ways they have been shaped by class, race, gender, and politics. Finally, we will look at the recent decline of critics as gatekeepers, and we will discuss the significance of taste and criticism in an age of political polarization and civil strife.