Find the questions that captivate you, and I promise that you will discover your path to a creative and fulfilling education. Each of the Thinking Matters courses here asks important and enduring questions and will show you how such questions are tackled at a university. I urge you to embrace these and other exciting opportunities in your freshman year to explore, to get inspired, and to create your own vision for the next four years and beyond.

—Harry Elam, Freeman-Thornton Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
Olive H. Palmer Professor in the Humanities
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**ANY QUESTIONS?**

website: approaching.stanford.edu  
email: approaching@stanford.edu  
phone: (650) 723-7674

**HOW TO USE THIS COURSE CATALOG**

- Read the descriptions of the Thinking Matters, ESF, ITALIC and SLE courses and programs
- Rank your preferences for your Thinking Matters requirement by filling out Form 5, online at approaching.stanford.edu
- Make sure you have submitted this form, as well as the remainder of your forms, online, by 5:00 pm, Monday, June 10

**TO LEARN MORE**

ABOUT THE PROGRAM  
thinkingmatters.stanford.edu

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Campus photos courtesy of the Stanford News Service, Visual Arts Services, and the University Archives.
Tradition

For almost 100 years, Stanford has introduced new students to the intellectual life of the University through required courses designed especially for freshmen. *Thinking Matters* represents the most recent innovation in this long tradition. Along with acquiring the tools of critical inquiry, students engage actively with diverse topics and approaches to answering fundamental questions and solving real-world problems.

*Thinking Matters* demonstrates Stanford’s commitment to a liberal education at a research university. This means that students are expected to explore fully their potential academic interests and to develop the qualities of mind necessary for success in whatever specialized field they might undertake. A liberal education also fosters openness to new ideas and perspectives while enabling students to make conceptual connections across many fields of study. This first-year requirement, along with the writing requirement and freshman seminars, ensures that all students establish a solid foundation for advanced study.

Transition

*Thinking Matters* provides a common point of transition to Stanford as you join with the rest of the Class of 2020 in academic exploration and development. The curriculum introduces you to new ideas, while faculty lectures and small-class discussions generate fresh insights leading to personal and intellectual growth. The shared freshman experience encourages the formation of friendships that can last throughout your college years and beyond.

Choosing among the options for fulfilling your *Thinking Matters* requirement is the first of what will certainly be many challenging decisions you will make about what courses to take at Stanford. You can select from 23 *Thinking Matters* courses on diverse topics in humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields; seven ESF (Education as Self-Fashioning) seminars; and two residential programs, one in the humanities (SLE) the other in the arts (ITALIC).

"Thinking Matters courses are filled with freshmen experiencing the same thing and it is easier to feel comfortable and confident."

"Not only do the classes encourage participation, they also have prepared me to participate and to be active in other classes."

Students in *Empathy* learn about smartphone VR in section.
For most of you, high school presented a prescribed pre-college curriculum, and you therefore had very little opportunity to develop academic decision-making skills. As part of the transition to Stanford, take the time to be mindful about deciding what you want to study. Ask yourself: Do I follow my gut reaction? Do I conduct research and analyze the results pro and con? Do I talk about my preferences with family and friends? Am I drawn to the familiar or the unknown? Why is the topic or instructional format important to me?

The goal of this decision-making exercise, consistent with the goal of the Thinking Matters requirement, is to develop a reflective self-awareness through practicing the art of self-questioning. There is no single right choice. You can take more than one Thinking Matters class, and you can also change your mind! You will receive a preliminary assignment based on the preferences you submit in Approaching Stanford. You can sign up for a second course or submit a change request beginning in August and continuing throughout the year.

“Typically the subjects are things that I would not have had the chance or might not have chosen to investigate otherwise in my time at Stanford.”

Transformation

THINK like a Stanford student.

Thinking Matters expands and enhances the unique intellectual vitality that every new student brings to the Stanford community. Getting comfortable with ambiguity, disrupting set thought patterns, and participating in productive respectful disagreements—all of these are part of the Thinking Matters experience. What emerges from this process are self-confidence, self-discovery, and transformative capacities for thinking and learning.
Instructions for completing your Approaching Stanford forms:

This table provides a quick summary of the three options for fulfilling the Thinking Matters requirement: Thinking Matters courses, Education as Self-Fashioning, and the Integrated Learning Environments (ITALIC and SLE). On form 5, rank your top four preferences for each quarter. In early August you will receive a preliminary assignment to one of your top ranked choices.

Option 1: Thinking Matters courses

Please select your top four course preferences for each quarter on form 5. Over 95% of students receive one of their first choices. You will be able to change your preliminary assignment beginning in early August. There is space in all of the Thinking Matters courses to accommodate shifts in student interests and schedules.

Option 2: ESF

If you rank this as one of your top four choices in autumn on form 5, you must also fill out form 6, where you will rank order the seven ESF seminars by preference.

Option 3: ILE

To be considered for the ILE programs, you must rank ITALIC or SLE as your first choice for autumn, winter, and spring quarters on form 5.

ESF photo by L.A. Cicero, Stanford News Service.

OPTION 1: Thinking Matters courses

- 23 courses
- For 1500+ freshmen
- 4 units
- Offered in autumn, winter, and spring quarter
- Satisfies THINK and WAYS requirements

Thinking Matters courses are meant to develop your critical thinking. You will find yourself asking questions that you may never have thought to ask or in ways that you had never asked them before. The forms of inquiry and objects of study in Thinking Matters are diverse, from interpreting the work of James Baldwin to studying the universe to assessing just war theory, but they are all concerned with the how as much as the what of knowledge.

We will use your ranked preferences to reserve space in one of your favorite (i.e. top two) Thinking Matters courses in either Autumn or Winter or Spring. In other words, we want to ensure that you will fulfill the one-course Thinking Matters requirement with one of your highest-ranked choices.

Structure of Thinking Matters courses:

- Lectures, ranging from 40 to 90 students, are taught by Stanford faculty from a range of humanities, science, engineering and social science fields as well as the Schools of Law, Earth, Energy and Environmental Science and Medicine. Students are given the opportunity to engage with professors, ask questions and be exposed to new subjects and new forms of inquiry.

- Small discussion sections are led by teaching fellows holding doctorates who have been chosen in a highly competitive national search. Students learn to think through a problem collectively and debate ideas with other highly-motivated Stanford students.

- Tutorials with teaching fellows offer personalized attention to students individually and in small groups. This allows students to receive in-depth feedback on their assignments and projects as well as develop the habits of mind that lead to independent and original thinking.
OPTION 2:
Education as Self-Fashioning (ESF)

- 7 seminars
- For ~210 freshmen
- 7 units
- Offered in autumn quarter ONLY
- Satisfies THINK, WR1 and WAYS requirements

The Education as Self-Fashioning (ESF) program is offered only in Autumn quarter and satisfies both the Thinking Matters and the WR1 requirement. ESF is a set of linked seminars related to the general theme expressed in the course title. Seven seminars each with a different focus meet separately as small classes led by the faculty; all ESF students also come together for a plenum session or large lecture each week. Each seminar coordinates writing instruction with the course theme in specially designated writing sections. If you rank ESF among your choices in Autumn quarter on Form 5, please be sure to rank-order the individual seminars on Form 6.

Structure of ESF:

- Seminars of 15 students with Stanford faculty
- Writing sections of 15 facilitated by a writing instructor who integrates writing instruction and assignments with seminar topics
- Lecture or plenum meeting required every Friday for all ESF students

OPTION 3:
Integrated Learning Environments, ITALIC and SLE

By integrating the academic and residential experience, ILEs offer a comprehensive approach to liberal education across the entire year. One of the stated aims of residential education is to help students connect their curricular and residential lives, to create a culture in which ideas and inquiry are a part of the daily fabric of life.

Immersion in the Arts: Living in Culture (ITALIC) is a residence-based program built around a series of big questions about the purposes of art and its unique capacities for intellectual creativity. It fosters close exchanges along faculty, students and guest artists in class, over meals and during excursions to arts events. ITALIC satisfies the Thinking Matters requirement, WR1, and four Ways requirements. This comprehensive approach to liberal education is a three-quarter course sequence so you must rank it as #1 on the Autumn and Winter and Spring course lists on Form 5 if you want to be considered for this option.

Structured Liberal Education (SLE) offers the experience of a small liberal arts college to about 100 freshmen each year who live in the residence where the classes meet. Faculty from across the university give SLE lectures in the dorm and often join students for dinner afterward. SLE integrates the study of humanities classics and writing instruction and satisfies both the Thinking Matters requirement and the Writing and Rhetoric Requirements (WR1 and WR2) and four Ways requirements. This comprehensive approach to liberal education is a three-quarter course sequence so you must rank it as #1 on the Autumn and Winter and Spring course lists on Form 5 if you want to be considered for this option.

ESF students in How to be a Public Intellectual.

Nathan Large, an ITALIC student, performs in the Rodin Rotunda at the Cantor Center for his ITALIC final project.
Thinking Matters and the WAYS

About the WAYS

Ways of Thinking/Ways of Doing (WAYS) is the name of Stanford’s innovative general education breadth system. Thinking Matters courses provide an excellent approach to satisfy at least one WAYS breadth requirement. The WAYS breadth requirement emphasizes both “thinking” and “doing”—that is, teaching you how to view the world differently, how to conceptualize it from various angles, and how to use those new intellectual capacities in new ways. Second, it emphasizes synthesis and integration—individual WAYS should not be seen as separate, but part of an overall intellectual profile and set of complimentary capacities.

Please visit ways.stanford.edu for more information.

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Autumn, Winter, and Spring Quarter Residential Integrated Learning Environments

- Immersion in the Arts: Living in Culture (ITALIC)
- Structured Liberal Education (SLE)
Immersion in the Arts: Living in Culture (ITALIC)

ITALIC is an arts-minded, residence-based academic program for freshmen. Using art as the frame for discussing big ideas, freshmen who participate in this year-long academic program will be part of a tight-knit community, living together, attending classes, and making art in Stern Hall’s Burbank House residence. ITALIC is built around a series of big questions about the historical, critical, and practical purposes of art. The yearlong experience also fosters close exchanges between students and faculty, guest artists, and scholars, outside of class over meals, in hands-on arts-making workshops, and on excursions to arts events.

In ITALIC you will look closely at the integration of arts across the university and in the world outside, examining how art can illuminate or challenge existing categories of knowledge—history, politics, culture, science, medicine, and law. Immersed in the arts, you will analyze major works of the visual, performing and filmic arts, sharpen your perceptual skills, and tap into your own class of creative expression. Turning an aesthetic lens on life’s ordinary and exceptional features, ITALIC asks: How do the arts provide new ways of thinking about our world and ourselves?

ITALIC is a rich mix of students with a wide range of academic interests including the sciences, pre-med, engineering, computer science and the humanities, as well as music and the visual arts. Previous art experience is not necessary, but facility in one or more art forms is welcomed. For students who already enjoy working with visual media, sound and music, film and theater, digital art or comics, ITALIC provides a stimulating environment for expanded work and a place to deepen one’s art fluency. ITALIC is about grounding the ways art already exists in one’s life, and gaining new expertise in exploration, experimentation, and creativity across a diversity of artistic and academic disciplines.

Residence-Based Learning

All lectures, sections, workshops and guest talks take place in a cluster of specially-designed on-site seminar and practice rooms dedicated to Burbank residents. Intellectually stimulating conversations often carry on from class to the dining room and back to the dorm late at night, where they morph into jam sessions or collaborative projects in the art studio. Events with visiting arts critics, scholars and artists develop these dialogues even further.

A Year-Long Exploration of the Arts and Their Place in Our World

At the center of the ITALIC experience are three major areas addressed by the three-quarter course sequence:

Autumn Quarter:
Why Art?

What is this category we call “Art?” Our focus is on how a range of art works, work on us – neurologically, aesthetically, theoretically, historically, culturally. How does the artist take material from daily life and turn it into an expressive medium? What happens in our brain when we engage with a painting or a song? How does a movie create its sense of immersive excitement? How and when does the body become the medium of art in dance? How does art have the capacity to move us—affectively and at times also physically—toward insight and action?

Course Material and Artists Explored in Previous Years


Winter Quarter:
Gravity and Levity

How does art engage with issues in the world in ways both weighty and playful? This quarter focuses on how artists use parody, humor, satire, and irony to probe profound and often troubling issues. Difficult art can also be met with spectator responses of derision, teasing and disrespect. Why? Through art we engage with the imaginary, confront our anxieties, rehearse ways of being in the world, and tour our darker sides. Classes argue for the serious in humor as well as the seriousness of the unserious.
Course Material and Artists Explored in Previous Years


Spring Quarter:
Why NOT Art?
When is art perceived as a danger to society; how has it been regulated? How do we make sense of art when it crosses the boundary into things that are not traditionally considered art? What is the relationship between art and science or art and design or art and popular culture? This quarter questions what happens when art exceeds traditional categories of art, when it appears to become something else – propaganda, marketing, or otherwise “not art?”

Course Material and Artists Explored in Previous Years


A World of Art, and the Arts on Campus
ITALIC students experience the performing and visual arts in the Bay Area and on campus. The program provides tickets to ballets, operas, concerts, as well as to museums and gallery visits. Artists will be invited to Stanford, not only to perform, but also to meet and dine with the students of ITALIC.

Foundation for Undergraduate Education:
ITALIC develops critical reading, writing, and speaking skills that prepare students for excellence in their subsequent studies. Students receive individualized writing instruction all year long from ITALIC instructors. In seminars, students learn effective ways of contributing to discussions and of disagreeing with fellow discussants in a respectful and productive way. We create an environment that fosters intellectual energy and high levels of achievement. We hope our students will bring this energy to their later classes and will continue their achievements by pursuing honors and research grant funding at Stanford.

Faculty Director
Janice Ross (Theater and Performance Studies)
Professor Ross works in Dance Studies, with a particular interest in the social and cultural importance of dance historically and in the contemporary moment. Her research interests include Dance in Prison and Ballet in Soviet Russia, subjects that have more in common than one might think.

ITALIC OVERVIEW

Residence: Burbank (all-frosh)

Students: 44

Weekly Structure:
• 120 minutes of class time twice per week, divided between 15-student discussion sections and 44-student lectures
• Two 110-minute writing sections (one quarter per year)

Units: 16
• 4 in two quarters; 8 in the quarter with intensive writing instruction

Requirements fulfilled:
• Thinking Matters
• WR 1
• Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry (Two Courses)
• Creative Expression
• Engaging Diversity

Geoff Nuttall, violinist for the St. Lawrence String Quartet, teaching ITALIC students in Burbank house.
Structured Liberal Education (SLE) is a challenging and supportive year-long program that offers entering students a coherent path through the freshman experience. The small student population, the residential setting, and the renown of the faculty have, for over 40 years, combined to make SLE the college experience within the university. Focusing on great works of philosophy, religion, literature, painting, and film drawn largely, but not exclusively, from the Western tradition, the SLE curriculum places particular emphasis on artists and intellectuals who brought new ways of thinking and new ways of creating the world, often overthrowing prior traditions in the process. These are the works that redefined beauty, challenged the authority of conventional wisdom, raised questions of continuing importance to us today, and—for good or ill—created the world in which we still live.

Residence-based Learning
SLE freshmen live and learn together in the three houses (one freshman and two 4-class) within East Florence Moore Hall, where they are mixed with about an equal number of non-SLE freshmen and upperclass students. All the SLE lectures, small-group discussions, films, and student plays take place in the lounges and classrooms of the residence hall. The physical concentration of SLE activities fosters close relationships among students as well as between students and instructors. Freshmen in SLE develop friendships that sustain them throughout their college years as well as an attachment to the SLE program that keeps them coming back as sophomores, juniors, and seniors to serve as writing tutors and mentors.

Intellectual Community
SLE draws students into a life of ideas in an atmosphere that emphasizes critical thinking and interpretation. SLE’s year-long chronological structure, extending from the ancient world to the present, offers students a broad and deep engagement with the ideas and works that have shaped our world. Shared readings promote vigorous exchange in the classroom setting, in the dining room at mealtime, and in the dorm late at night. Each week culminates with a film chosen as a counterpoint to the written texts studied in lectures and discussion sections.

Distinguished visitors to campus often come to SLE for tea or pizza lunch with students. Recent visitors have included the former prime minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Senator Russ Feingold, writers Tim O’Brien and Sebastian Junger, and poet Louise Glück. Special events take SLE to San Francisco for the opera, museums, and theater. In addition, each quarter students organize and produce a play, which not only concludes the term with great fun for everyone but also offers an additional vantage point for viewing the period under study.

Preparation for the undergraduate career
More intensively than any other program for entering students, SLE develops critical reading, writing, and speaking skills that prepare students for excellence in their subsequent studies. Students receive individualized writing instruction all year long from SLE instructors and upper-class writing tutors. In seminars, students learn effective ways of contributing to discussions and of disagreeing with fellow discussants in a respectful and productive way. As a consequence, SLE students are remarkable for the intellectual energy they take to their later classes and are regularly over-represented among undergraduates winning academic honors and research grant funding at Stanford.

The SLE workload is approximately equal to two Stanford courses each quarter, so it constitutes a significant portion of a student’s academic load (students enroll in SLE for the entire year). Students take two to three additional courses each quarter, so they have no difficulty combining this coherent program of liberal education and skills development with courses in any

**SLE OVERVIEW**

Residence: East Florence Moore

Students: 96

Weekly Structure:
- **3 hours of lecture** (Tuesday afternoon and evening and Wednesday afternoon)
- **4 hours of small-group discussion** (Wednesday and Thursday, late afternoon)
- **Weekly film series** (Thursday)

Units: 24
- **8 each quarter**

Requirements Fulfilled:
- Thinking Matters
- WR 1 and WR 2
- WAYS
- Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry (2 courses)
- Engaging Diversity
- Ethical Reasoning
sector of the university. SLE students go on to major in all the academic disciplines, from engineering to social sciences to humanities, so some are doing SLE with calculus and chemistry while others are doing SLE with introductory economics, foreign language, or history.

Students envisioning a science or engineering major will gain in SLE a broad and coherent view of literature, philosophy, and the arts that they otherwise would pick up in unrelated courses that can leave large gaps in their understanding. Students envisioning a major in humanities or social sciences will gain an incomparable foundation for more advanced study. Because the thrice-weekly lectures are given by faculty members drawn from the various humanities and social science departments, students end the year having become acquainted with some 70 professors, which is an invaluable aid to selecting follow-up classes and even to choosing one’s major.

Because SLE stretches across three quarters and involves the workload of a double-course each quarter, it fulfills numerous requirements that all Stanford students must satisfy in order to graduate. As a consequence, students who enroll in SLE not only receive optimal instruction in classic works of philosophy, literature, and art but also gain greater choice and flexibility in the sophomore, junior, and senior years because they have met so many of the university’s requirements in the first year.

Is SLE right for you?

If you were to ask alumni of the SLE program what they value most about the experience, the top three answers would be: the opportunity to study great works with some of Stanford’s finest faculty members and in the company of their peers, the many conversations that take place outside of class (whether over a meal or in the hallways late at night), and the dramatic improvement in their writing because of SLE’s intensive, three-quarter approach to writing development. If you find yourself attracted to the residential learning experience and the great books curriculum, then SLE may be right for you. SLE students go on to major in all disciplines in the university, with roughly a third of each class going into the three main fields of study at Stanford: humanities, social sciences, and science or engineering.

(Note to varsity athletes: Because of conflicts between practice schedules and the SLE class schedule, varsity athletes are not able to take SLE.)

Representative authors and readings
(not a complete listing)

**Autumn Quarter:**
Homer, Sappho, Aeschylus, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Zhuangzi, Confucius, Hebrew Bible, New Testament

**Winter Quarter:**
Augustine, The Koran, Dante, Rumi, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Descartes, Rousseau, Flaubert

**Spring Quarter:**
Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Eliot, Woolf, Kafka, Brecht, Vertov, Beauvoir, Sartre, Fanon

Faculty Director

Joshua Landy
Joshua Landy is the Andrew B. Hammond Professor of French, Professor of Comparative Literature, and co-director of Stanford’s Initiative in Philosophy and Literature. His research and teaching focuses on the intersection between philosophy and literature, with particular emphasis on the question of pragmatics: whether and how novels, poems, plays, dialogues, and films (such as those of Proust, Mallarmé, Beckett, Plato, and Fellini) can contribute to a well-lived life.

Above: An end of the year photo of Students in the SLE program 2014-2015.
Autumn Quarter: 
Education as Self-Fashioning

The Active, Inquiring, Beautiful Life

Chinese Traditions of the Self

The German Tradition of Bildung or How to Become a Global Citizen

Recognizing the Self and Its Possibilities

The Transformation of the Self

Unintended Consequences

The Wind of Freedom
Education as Self-Fashioning

Let [the student] be asked for an account not merely of the words of his lesson, but of its sense and substance, and judge the profit he has made by the testimony not of his memory, but of his life.

— Montaigne

What is the meaning and purpose of a liberal education?

_Education as Self-Fashioning_ is a unique opportunity offered only in the Autumn quarter, since its aim is to introduce entering students to a liberal education. The courses provide you with an opportunity to work closely with a faculty member in a seminar-style setting while simultaneously completing your first-year writing requirement. In _Education as Self-Fashioning_, we consider writings about education by intellectuals working in various fields, with the aim of articulating different ways that education can be used to structure one’s thinking, one’s self, and ultimately one’s life as a whole. You will grapple with this issue in dialogue with fellow students and faculty from across a wide range of disciplines—from the humanities and social sciences through the natural sciences and mathematics.

The three components of ESF are described below. ESF counts as a 7-unit course.

1. **A seminar** with a faculty member that meets once per week for at least 75 minutes. Participating students will enroll in one of these, taught by a faculty member from the featured discipline (or disciplines, in the case of team taught seminars).

2. **A section** with a writing instructor that meets for sessions of 110 minutes twice per week. The discipline of writing plays a central role in the process of fashioning yourself as you liberally educate yourself. Writing is a means of understanding what you have read, of thinking for yourself, and of developing a coherent set of aspirations and values. All ESF courses are writing intensive for these reasons.

3. **A lecture series** that will meet weekly on Fridays, sponsored by ESF, featuring prominent intellectuals (from Stanford or elsewhere) lecturing on the nature and meaning of liberal education. These lectures are required for students enrolled in ESF, but they will also be open to the public. The lectures will constitute an ongoing, campus-wide conversation about the aims of liberal education.

**ESF OVERVIEW**

**Weekly Structure:**
- Seminar with a faculty member (once per week for 75 minutes)
- Section with a writing instructor (twice per week for 110 minutes)
- Lecture Series

**Units:** 7

**Requirements Fulfilled:**
- Thinking Matters
- WR 1
- WAYS, varied depending on seminar
ESF: The Active, Inquiring, Beautiful Life

Moving through history from the Rome of the Emperor Hadrian, to the city-states of Renaissance Italy, to the 18th century republic of the United States, we will examine how self-made men fashioned themselves and their surroundings by educating themselves broadly. We will ask how a liberal education made their active careers richer and more transformational. We will also take up the great debate on whether a liberal education or vocational training is the surest path to advancement. We will engage this debate through the works of W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington but consider today’s struggle over the same issues — a struggle that engrosses both highly industrialized and developing societies. This course satisfies the Ethical Reasoning (ER) WAY.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Selected texts from:
Marcus Aurelius
Baldesar Castiglione
Thomas Jefferson
John Stuart Mill
Cardinal John Henry Newman
W.E.B. Du Bois

Blair Hoxby (English)
Professor Blair Hoxby studies the literature and arts of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, with a special interest in the persistent influence of classical civilization.

Caroline Hoxby (Economics)
Professor Caroline Hoxby evaluates the effects of educational policies and analyzes the economic principles underlying our primary, secondary, and university school systems.

ESF: Chinese Traditions of the Self

How do ideas take shape in a civilization that developed without any significant contact with the “West”? What do concepts of education and self-improvement look like in a land that had no knowledge of Judeo-Christian or Classical Western traditions? In this class we explore thinking about the self and its cultivation that took root and flourished in China. Chinese civilization was centrally concerned with issues of the self, but it developed methods and ideals of cultivation that have no obvious parallel in the European tradition. We will be concerned primarily with two clusters of Chinese thought and expression. First, we will look at major philosophical traditions (Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism) to see how they structured thinking about education and self-cultivation. The three “schools” of thought staked out different ideals for the self that provided China with range and flexibility in concepts of personhood. Second, we will examine Chinese aesthetic traditions, especially those of qin music, calligraphy and painting, to understand how the arts were used as a platform for self-cultivation and to communicate the artist’s essential nature to others. The course also gives attention to the gendering of concepts of the self and to the tradition of martial arts as self-discipline and self-strengthening. Students should emerge from the course with an understanding of how a major civilization located outside Western traditions developed its own answers to these questions of universal human concern. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretative Inquiry (AII) and Engaging Diversity (ED) WAYS.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Selections from:
The Analects of Confucius
Zhuangzi
The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch
Iron and Silk (on martial arts training)
Music for One or Two (on early thinking about qin music)
Chiang Yee, Chinese Calligraphy
James Cahill, A Pure and Remote View: Visualizing Chinese Landscape Painting

Ronald Egan (East Asian Languages and Cultures)
Professor Egan’s research is on the literary traditions of China and their relationship to intellectual history and to calligraphy and painting. He has also worked on women’s history and supernatural tales.
ESF: The German Tradition of Bildung or How to Become a Global Citizen

This course considers education not as training in external knowledge or skills but as a lifelong process of development and growth in which an individual cultivates her or his spiritual, cultural and social sensibilities. This concept of education—education as a formative and transformative process in the development of the self—is called Bildung in German and has a long tradition reaching back to the Middle Ages. The term first appears in the writings of the mystic Meister Eckhart who defines it as self-composure which he regards as a crucial stage in our spiritual development. The concept of Bildung takes on a secular meaning in the Reformation, when Ulrich von Hutten first coined the phrase that has become Stanford’s motto: “Die Luft der Freiheit weht” (“The wind of freedom is blowing.”). What he meant is that the cultivation of oneself leads to the freedom of thought, freedom to act, freedom to assert oneself as an individual, freedom to access knowledge, and freedom to determine one’s own role in society. This idea of education as an internal and transformative process is central to debates in the nineteenth century—both in Germany and the United States—in which self-reflection is seen as key both to the cultivation of an individual’s identity and to her or his role as a member of society. In this course we will read reflections on education as self-fashioning by some of the greatest German thinkers spanning from the Middle Ages to the present. We will also enjoy some contemporary parodies of such reflections. These readings and our discussions will help us to understand Stanford undergraduate education as a transformative process of self-realization in our global society. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretative Inquiry (AII) WAY.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Selected texts from:
Meister Eckhart
Ulrich von Hutten
Martin Luther
Immanuel Kant
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Wilhelm von Humboldt
Johann Gottfried von Herder

Kathryn Starkey (German)

Professor Starkey’s research and teaching interests include medieval literature, material and visual culture, gender & sexuality, and narrative theory.

ESF: Recognizing the Self and Its Possibilities

Some philosophers have argued that we have privileged and direct access to our inner selves. If this were true, it would make self-knowledge perhaps the easiest sort of knowledge to obtain. But there are many considerations that mitigate against this view of self-knowledge. Consider, for example, the slave who is so oppressed that he fully accepts his slavery and cannot even imagine the possibility of freedom for himself. Such a slave fails to recognize his own capacity for freedom and autonomous self-governance. Though the slave is perhaps the extreme case, many people, it seems, fail to recognize the full range of possibilities open to them. In this course, we shall examine both some of the ways in which one’s capacity for self-recognition may be distorted and undermined and the role of education in enabling a person to fully recognize the self and its possibilities. What constrains the range of possibilities we see as really open to us? Contrary to the Cartesian, we shall argue that full self-recognition is an often a hard-won achievement. And we shall ask how education might function to give us a less constricted and more liberating sense of the self and its possibilities. We will consider such questions through the lens of philosophy, literature and psychology. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretative Inquiry (AII) and Ethical Reasoning (ER) WAYS.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Selected texts from
Rene Descartes
Leo Tolstoy
John Stuart Mill
WEB Du Bois
Simone De Beauvoir
Jean Paul Sartre
John Gilbert (contemporary psychologist)

Kenneth Taylor (Philosophy)

Professor Taylor writes about mind, language, and value, and can be heard every week on the public radio show “Philosophy Talk.”
ESF: The Transformation of the Self

Socrates famously claimed that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” Socrates and other ancient thinkers examined themselves and found that they did not match up to their own ideals. They thus set out to transform themselves to achieve a good and happy life. What is the good life? How do we change ourselves to live a good and happy life? How do literature and philosophy help us to understand ourselves and to achieve our social, ethical, and personal ideals? In this class, we examine the lives and ideas of Socrates and Augustine. Both struggled to live a good and happy life. Both urged people to transform themselves into better human beings. The first half of the course focuses on the Athenian Socrates (as represented by Plato). Socrates rejected traditional Greek ideals and proclaimed a new kind of ethical goodness; he was put to death by the Athenians for proclaiming these radical ideas. The second half focuses on the North African Augustine, an unhappy soul who became a “new man” by converting to Christianity. These thinkers addressed questions and problems that we still confront today: What are the ingredients of a happy life? Do we need to be good and ethical people to live happily? Is there one correct set of values? How do we accommodate other people’s beliefs? Is it possible to experience a transformation of the self? How do we change ourselves to achieve our higher ideals? This course satisfies the Ethical Reasoning (ER) WAY.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Plato, Early Dialogues
Plato, Symposium
Augustine, Confessions

Andrea Nightingale (Classics)
Professor Nightingale has worked primarily on Greek and Roman philosophy and literature. She has also written on the philosophy and literature of ecology (in the modern and postmodern periods).

ESF: Unintended Consequences

Unintended consequences are outcomes that are not the ones foreseen and/or intended by a new product, action or decision. Some unintended outcomes are very surprising, and would have been hard to predict. Others seem completely logical in hindsight and leave people wondering why they were not anticipated. For instance, when the first biofuel mandates were imposed in the EU, little did policy makers realize it would lead to a rise in palm oil production, which in turn led to tropical deforestation, undoing any of the possible positive impacts of increased biofuels use. In hindsight it is easy to see this potential negative impact, yet at the time the decision was made, the EU leadership was blind to it. Not all unintended consequences are negative. Aspirin, for example, was developed to relieve pain, but was found to also be an anticoagulant that can lower the risk of heart attacks. In this class, we will study several known positive and negative unintended outcomes in health, energy, politics and societies. To understand them, we need a holistic approach and a broad perspective. We will draw on engineering, the humanities, the natural, social and earth sciences, law, economics, medicine, and of course on data science, to find answers. Drawing on all Stanford’s liberal education has to offer, we will then together predict outcomes of new and controversial ideas. WAYS certification pending.

Margot Gerritsen (Energy Resources Engineering)
Professor Gerritsen is interested in computer simulation and mathematical analysis of engineering processes. She is currently the Director of the Institute for Computational and Mathematical Engineering (http://icme.stanford.edu) and specializes in renewable and fossil energy production.
ESF: The Wind of Freedom

Stanford’s unofficial motto, “The Wind of Freedom Blows,” (engraved in German on the university seal), invites us to ponder freedom in the context of education. What is the relation between freedom and the liberal arts? Does studying free your mind? Does free will even exist? If so, how does education help you develop its potential? This course will look at various authors—from antiquity through the 20th century—who have thought about the blessings, burdens, and obligations of human freedom. Beginning with Eve in the Garden of Eden, we will explore how exercising freedom in your personal choices and conduct not only determines your fate as an individual but carries with it a measure of responsibility for the world. We will place special emphasis on the implications of such responsibility in our own time. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry (AII) and Ethical Reasoning (ER) WAYS.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Cardinal John Henry Newman, Preface to The Idea of a University
Genesis, The Fall
Sophocles, Antigone
Plato, The Apology
Pico della Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man
Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
Emerson, “Self-Reliance and The American Scholar”
Fuller, Woman in the Nineteenth Century (excerpts)
Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (excerpts); “Existentialism is a Humanism”
Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (excerpt)

Robert Harrison (French and Italian)
Professor Harrison has written four books on a diverse array of topics, ranging from Italian lyric poetry to man and his relationship with the environment and is the host of weekly radio talk show, Entitled Opinions (about Life and Literature), which airs on Stanford’s radio station KZSU FM 90.1.
How do you capture thinking?

In 1902, Auguste Rodin showed it through his iconic bronze sculpture of a seated nude male figure deep in meditation. *The Thinker* can be found at the Cantor Art Center at Stanford to greet the class of 2020.
Autumn Quarter *Thinking Matters* Courses

- Breaking Codes, Finding Patterns
- Empathy
- Evil
- Race in American Memory
- Spirit of Democracy
- Stories Everywhere
- Sustainability Challenges and Transitions
- What is Love?
Breaking Codes, Finding Patterns

Why are humans drawn to making and breaking codes? To what extent is finding patterns both an art and a science?

Cryptography has been used for millennia for secure communications, and its counterpart, cryptanalysis, or code breaking, has been around for just slightly less time. In this course we will explore the history of cryptography and cryptanalysis including the Enigma code, Navajo windtalkers, early computer science and the invention of modern Bayesian inference. We will try our own hand at breaking codes using some basic statistical tools for which no prior experience is necessary. Finally, we will consider the topic of patterns more generally, raising such questions as why we impute meaning to patterns, such as Biblical codes, and why we assume a complexity within a pattern when it’s not there, such as the coincidence of birthdays in a group. This course satisfies Applied Quantitative Reasoning (AQR) and Formal Reasoning (FR) WAYS.

Susan Holmes (Statistics)
Professor Holmes’ main areas of interest are computer intensive methods in data mining and multivariate statistics, especially the simulation methods such as the bootstrap.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Simon Singh, *The Code Book*
Scarlett Thomas, *PopCo*
David Kahn, *The Codebreakers*
*A Beautiful Mind* (film, dir. Ron Howard)
Pierre Berloquin, *Hidden Codes and Grad Designs*

Alberti Cipher Disk, 1467. Augusto Buonafalce.
Empathy

How do we know and understand another person by 'walking in their shoes'? How does knowledge of another's experience and circumstances enable us to make moral decisions and take moral actions? And why is empathy all the rage today?

This interdisciplinary course, which explores the humanities, sciences and arts, will introduce a range of ways of thinking about empathy and the related qualities of sympathy and compassion. It will take us on an intellectual investigation from Jesus’ teaching of parables in the first century CE to the work of the eighth-century Buddhist monk Śāntideva on compassion to Enlightenment philosophy to Silicon Valley’s adoption of empathy in the twenty-first century. The main focus will be on the modern period (from the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries), and you will be asked to approach different genres of text through the lens of empathy. You will be asked to think through how the arts may especially cultivate empathy – the visual arts, poetry, novels, and drama, focusing especially on the work of playwright and actress, Anna Deavere Smith. A significant component of the course will be the composition of your own creative project – such as a short film, a podcast, a dramatic or musical performance or the writing of poetry, to name just a few possibilities – designed to elicit empathy. You will also read and assess scientific research in psychology, neuroscience, biology and artificial intelligence that explores whether empathy is learned or instinctual, universal or particular to certain contexts. In addition, you will use the latest Virtual Reality tools, developed at Stanford, to see if that is one way to experience and cultivate empathy. This course satisfies Creative Expression (CE) and Engaging Diversity (ED) WAYS.

Jane Shaw (Religious Studies)

Jane Shaw is Professor of Religious Studies and Dean for Religious Life. She is the author of several books on religion in the modern period.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759)

Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail (1963)

Anna Deavere Smith, Twilight Los Angeles, 1992 (1994)

Selected parables from the New Testament


Śāntideva, The Bodhicaryāvatāra (8th century)

Evil

What is evil? Are we naturally good or evil? How should we respond to evil?

There are many books and courses that focus on the good life or the virtues. Yet despite their obvious apparent presence in our life and world, evil and the vices are rarely taken as explicit topics. We will read philosophical and literary texts that deal with the question of evil at a fundamental and abstract level and then use other readings that help us focus on more practical issues concerning evil. In exploring the issue of evil, we shall also confront questions about the objectivity of morality, the nature of human beings, how society should respond to evil, and the nature and purpose of punishment. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry (AII) and Ethical Reasoning (ER) WAYS.

Chris Bobonich (Philosophy)
Professor Bobonich works on the history of Greek philosophy and is interested in questions that, if they can be answered, are not fully answered by the sciences.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morality
Goethe, Faust
Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents
Rousseau, A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality
Hobbes, Leviathan
M (film, dir. Fritz Lang)
Race in American Memory

How have Americans’ memories of the Civil War involved understandings of race? How has American national identity evolved since the Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery?

In 1865, the peace treaty was signed at Appomatox and the war came to an end, but the battle over memory and national identity had just begun. Stories told from different perspectives—past and present—shape our understanding of the conflicted heritage of race and identity in American culture. Our analysis of personal essays, novels, poems, paintings, photographs, and films will give us insight into how race has shaped national debates about freedom, citizenship, and changing notions of personal and collective identity. Each generation reinterprets past events and institutions in light of its own experiences: the stories we choose to tell about the past can shape not only our understanding of the present, but also the kind of future we imagine and strive to realize. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretative Inquiry (AII) and Engaging Diversity (ED) WAYS.

Shelley Fisher Fishkin (English and American Studies)
Professor Fishkin is the Joseph S. Atha Professor in the Humanities. Her research on race and American literature has been featured twice on the front page of The New York Times; she has long been fascinated with the ways in which literature and the arts can illuminate chapters of the past. Her books include Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African American Voices, Lighting Out for the Territory, and Feminist Engagements. She is Director of Stanford’s American Studies Program and co-director of the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project at Stanford.

Allyson Hobbs (History)
Professor Hobbs teaches courses on American identity, African American history, African American women’s history, and twentieth century American history. She has won numerous teaching awards including the Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Prize. She has appeared on C-Span and National Public Radio and her work has been featured on cnn.com and slate.com. Her first book, A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life, examines the phenomenon of racial passing in the United States from the late eighteenth century to the present.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of a Slave, Written by Himself (1845)
Solomon Northup, Twelve Years a Slave (1853); Twelve Years a Slave (film, dir. Steve McQueen)
Mark Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885)
W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction (1935)
Sherley Anne Williams, Dessa Rose (1986)
The Birth of a Nation (1915, film, dir. D.W. Griffith)
Spirit of Democracy

What has led to the success of democracy around the world? What have been its problems, and what has stymied its further spread? Can technology improve democracy? How much of a challenge is economic inequality to the viability of democratic decision under modern conditions?

This course provides an overview of the challenges and aspirations facing ideals of democracy. It deals both with competing visions of what democracy might be, and their actual realization not only in the US but around the world. We will begin with the debate over the American founding and move eventually to the “third wave” of democratization in the late 20th century as well as its more recent retrenchment. The problems of democratic reform are continuing and recurrent around the world. Democratic institutions are subject to a living dialogue, and we intend to engage in these debates at the level of democratic theory and at the level of specific institutional designs. The course will include a practical experiment in “deliberative democracy” focused on democratic reform. This course satisfies the Social Inquiry (SI) WAY.

Larry Diamond (Hoover Institution and FSI)
Larry Diamond is Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, where he directs the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law. He is the Faculty Co-Director of the Haas Center for Public Service and author of The Spirit of Democracy and other works on global democratic development.

James Fishkin (Communication)
James Fishkin holds the Janet M. Peck Chair in International Communication at Stanford where he also directs the Center for Deliberative Democracy. He is the author of When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation and other books.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Bruce Cain, Democracy More or Less?
Larry Diamond, The Spirit of Democracy
Robert Dahl, Polyarchy
James Fishkin, When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation
Francis Fukuyama, Political Order and Political Decay
James Madison et al., The Federalist
Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy
**Stories Everywhere**

*Do we perceive the world through stories? Are we made of stories? Can we make sense of the world without narrative?*

The telling of stories is not just a form of entertainment but an essential human activity that moves and persuades us, compelling us to action and reflection. In this course, we will probe how moral, cognitive and historical forces give stories their power. You will be introduced to the basic theory and art of storytelling, enabling you to understand and master the fundamentals of narrative structure, plot, and character. This will allow you to practice producing your own stories through both interpretative and creative writing assignments. The class will also give students the chance to participate in various story-making activities and work with the Stanford Storytelling Project, San Francisco StoryCorps, School of the Arts and the Stanford Innocence Project to create assignments that would be useful to both private and nonprofit organizations. *This course satisfies the Creative Expression (CE) WAY.*

**Adam Johnson (English)**

Adam Johnson won the 2015 National Book Award and a 2013 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and he is evangelical about the transformative power of storytelling. Johnson is the author of short stories and novels and loves spontaneous, collaborative storytelling. In this course, students will learn that how a story is told can reveal even more than what a story contains. To this end: he (I) is (am) still trying to decide if this (my) brief biography (story of me) is best written in the first- or third-person point of view!

**Blakey Vermeule (English)**

Blakey Vermeule writes and thinks about cognitive science and human artistic expression. She has come to appreciate how deeply the stories we learn about who we are (from our families, our churches, synagogues, and mosques, our media, our surroundings) shape our sense of identity; and in turn how the stories we tell can immeasurably shape the world we find.

**SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL**

- O’nan, *Last Night At The Lobster*
- Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*
- Sharma, *Family Life: A Novel*
- Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*
- *Groundhog Day* (film, dir. Harold Ramis)
- *Cave Of Forgotten Dreams* (film, dir. Werner Herzog)

From www.exercisesinstyle.com/exercises/ Matt Madden
Sustainability Challenges and Transitions

What is meant by ‘sustainability’? What are the most critical sustainability challenges facing us in this century? How do we balance the needs and desires of current generations with the needs of future generations?

The term “sustainability” seems to be everywhere. Businesses, cities, nongovernmental organizations, individuals, and universities use the term to characterize decisions that make sense for the well-being of people as well as our environment and resources. Beyond the popular use of the term is an emerging field of study that focuses on the goal of human well-being – not just of people here, today, but around the world and across generations. The goal of this course is to engage you in critical thinking about what is needed to address sustainability challenges and to encourage your critical thinking as you help create integrative solutions that draw on different kinds of knowledge. We will examine some of the major problems of sustainable development, grapple with the complexities of problem solving in human-environment systems, and participate in the design of effective strategies and policies for meeting sustainability goals. You will learn to holistically analyze real-world case studies, and develop informed arguments about sustainability solutions geared toward specific audiences. This course satisfies the Scientific Method and Analysis (SMA) WAY.

Margot Gerritsen (Energy Resources Engineering)
Professor Gerritsen is interested in computer simulation and mathematical analysis of engineering processes. She is currently the Director of the Institute for Computational and Mathematical Engineering and specializes in renewable and fossil energy production.

Jeffrey Koseff (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
Professor Jeffrey Koseff is the founding Co-Director of the Stanford Woods Institute, and a Senior Fellow at the Institute, and the Campbell Professor of Engineering. His research and teaching focuses on the interaction between physical and biological systems in natural aquatic, near-coastal environments.

Pamela Matson (School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Science)
Professor Matson is the Dean of the School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Science, the Goldman Professor of Environmental Studies, a Senior Fellow at the Woods Institute for Environment, and the McMurtry University Fellow in Undergraduate Education. She teaches and carries out research on a range of sustainability challenges related to food production and global climate change.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL


Readings from scientific and popular literature
What is Love?

Is love a spiritual or a bodily phenomenon? Is the concept of love timeless or ever changing? How does thinking about love lead us to ask other important philosophical and social questions?

In this course we will examine the classical roots, medieval developments, and modern permutations of Western ideas of romantic love. With the goal to think critically about representations of love in our own culture, we consider some of the foundational love books of the Western tradition including Plato’s *Symposium*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Gottfried’s *Tristan*, Dante’s *Inferno*, Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, and Marguerite Duras’s *The Lover*. Examples of modern permutations of the idea of romantic love that we will view as a class and discuss include the films, *Brokeback Mountain* and *Her*. This medieval and modern material provides a basis for exploring the fundamental question of whether and how we might distinguish between spiritual and physical desire. We will also consider how medieval and contemporary writers deal with the relation of love to sex, power, money, marriage, and gender. For the final project we ask students to engage creatively with the questions raised by the course. Past projects include documentary films, comic books, plays, poems, dance, and many other forms of creative expression. *This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry (AII) and Engaging Diversity (ED) WAYS.*

**Kathryn Starkey (German Studies)**
Professor Starkey’s research and teaching interests include medieval literature, material and visual culture, gender and sexuality, and narrative theory.

**Robert Harrison (French and Italian)**
Professor Harrison has written five books on a diverse array of topics, ranging from Italian lyric poetry to man and his relationship with the environment and is the host of weekly radio talk show, Entitled Opinions, which airs on Stanford’s radio station KZSU FM 90.1.

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**SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL**

- Plato, *Symposium*
- Ovid, selections from *Metamorphoses*
- Gottfried von Strassberg, *Tristan*
- Dante, selections from *Inferno*
- Giovanni Boccaccio, selected tales from the *Decameron*
- *Brokeback Mountain* (film, dir. Ang Lee)
- *Her* (film, dir. Spike Jonze)
“Thinking Matters makes us recognize that things in life are not black or white and that we need to take into account different perspectives on a topic when analyzing it. This is true when discussing, writing, or just expressing our opinions. I believe Thinking Matters helps us understand how complex issues really are.”
Winter Quarter *Thinking Matters* Courses

Belief

How Does Your Brain Work?

Justice and the Rationing of Medical Care

Rules of War

Thinking through Africa: Perspectives on Health, Well-Being, and Development

Understanding China through Film

Why So Few? Gender Diversity and Leadership

WOW! World of Words
Belief

Why do people believe in God? What does it mean for people to experience the supernatural? How do we understand belief in God? How do people convey experiences that are by definition extraordinary to others?

In this course we will focus primarily on the Christian tradition to answer the big (and unanswerable) question as to why people believe in God. Some scholars argue that belief results from direct experience, such as visions or moments of transcendence, that testify to God’s existence. Others suggest that belief in the supernatural is better explained by the way the human mind has evolved or people’s experience of the social world. In this class, we will pair literature on Christian mysticism, religious experience, and prayer with readings from modern psychology and anthropology. We will look at the dominant answers provided by each discipline. For example, belief might result from our sensory experience of the world, or it might have developed as part of our cognitive apparatus in response to fear. Our aim is to show how different disciplines can work together to cast light on a basic question of human existence. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretative Inquiry (AII) and Social Inquiry (SI) WAYS.

Tanya Luhrmann (Anthropology)
Professor Luhrmann is an anthropologist who studies the way people experience God and also the way people with psychosis experience voices in different cultures. She is the Howard H. and Jessie T. Watkins University Professor and the author of When God Talks Back.

Jane Shaw (Religious Studies)
Professor Shaw is an historian of modern religion. She is the author and editor of several books, including Miracles in Enlightenment England and Octavia, Daughter of God: The Story of a Female Messiah and her Followers.
How Does Your Brain Work?

How do the biology and chemistry of the brain create the mind that lets us talk, walk, laugh, love, learn, remember, and forget? What can neuroscience say about what makes us human? How can we ask questions about the brain that are observable, testable, and answerable?

The human brain is the most complex organ we know. To understand the biology of brain function, this course will use highly interactive lectures and discussions to examine the validity of common beliefs about the brain, discuss how the brain and the nervous system are organized, how individual elements of the brain function, and how together these units produce action. The brain, like all other biological structures, has evolved over time in response to natural selection by adapting to diverse behavioral and environmental constraints. We use evolutionary comparisons to illuminate important questions about brain function, including what the origins and consequences of brain damage are, how and where drugs act, and how you collect, interpret, and understand information about the world. You will learn both how the science of the brain has emerged through understanding important experiments and observations and how you can formulate and test your own experimental questions about the brain. *This course satisfies the Scientific Method and Analysis (SMA) WAY.*

Russell D. Fernald (Biology and Human Biology)
Professor Fernald’s research focuses on how social behavior influences the brain. He has received a Javits award from NIH, the Rank Prize in Vision and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has also received several awards for his teaching at Stanford including a Bing Fellowship, Dinkelspiel Award for distinctive contribution to undergraduate education, the Cox medal for fostering undergraduate students interest in research and is the Mimi and Peter Haas University Fellow in Undergraduate Education. His research is focused on how behavior changes the brain.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Watson and Breedlove, *The Mind’s Machine*
Justice and the Rationing of Medical Care

Is there a right to a basic level of health care? Are there limits to how much should be spent on health care? How should resources, like human organs, be allocated? What obligations does the U.S. have regarding health care in resource-poor environments, such as underdeveloped nations?

We live in a world of constrained resources. Nowhere are these constraints more controversial and significant than in health care where lives literally hang in the balance of the decisions we make. This course will provide students with the tools to address these questions through the theoretical framework of justice and ethics. We will address the question of allocation at the level of health policy and health economics before applying the concepts to the institutional and bedside level. Using real world examples, you will actively engage in debating controversial topics such as organ transplants and how to assign scarce ICU beds. Using both empirical data and the framework of ethics, you will be asked to consider how a health care committee, or a hospital, or an individual doctor might make decisions. This course satisfies the Ethical Reasoning (ER) WAY.

David Magnus (School of Medicine)
Professor Magnus is Thomas A. Raffin Professor of Medicine and Biomedical Ethics and Professor (Teaching) of Pediatrics, and the Director of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Bioethics and Past President of the Association of Bioethics Program Directors. He is co-Chair of the Stanford Health Care Ethics Committee.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Case studies
John Rawls, selections from Theory of Justice
Jennifer Prah Rugger, selections from Health and Social Justice

Surgeons at work. Photo by John Urban for ReSurge International via Flickr.
Rules of War

When, if ever, is war justified? How do we determine what limits, if any, govern how wars are fought and who may be killed? How are ethical norms translated into rules that govern armed conflict? Are these rules still relevant in light of the changing nature of warfare?

We will examine seminal readings on just war theory, explore whether ethical values can and do govern our judgments about war, investigate the legal rules that govern the resort to the conduct of war, and study whether these rules remain viable in the context of wars today. We will examine alternative ethical frameworks, competing disciplinary approaches to war, and tensions between the outcomes suggested by ethical norms, on the one hand, and legal rules, on the other. Students will engage actively with these questions by participating in an interactive role-playing simulation, in which they will be assigned roles as government officials, advisors, or other actors. The class will confront various ethical, legal, and strategic problems as they make decisions about military intervention and policies regarding the threat and use of force in an international crisis. This course satisfies the Ethical Reasoning (ER) and Social Inquiry (SI) WAYS.

Scott D. Sagan (Political Science)
Professor Sagan served as a special assistant to the Director of the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before coming to Stanford and is now the Caroline S.G. Munro Professor of Political Science and a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation and the Freeman Spogli Institute.

Allen S. Weiner (School of Law)
Professor Weiner served as an attorney in the U.S. State Department for over a decade before joining the Stanford faculty and is currently the Director of the Stanford Program in International and Comparative Law, and Co-director of the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations
McGeorge Bundy, “The Decision to Drop the Bombs on Japan”
The UN Charter
The 1949 Geneva Conventions
What is human well-being? How do we define it? How do we measure it? What do we mean when we talk about certain parts of the world as ‘developed’ and others as ‘underdeveloped’ or ‘developing’? How do improvements in human well-being come about? What happens when some people become much better off and others do not?

In this course, we will use African experiences, past and present, to think critically and reflectively about concepts whose meaning we all too often take for granted: not only well-being and development, but also wealth and health, equality and inequality. Using the tools and techniques of four different disciplines -- history, anthropology, public health, and engineering -- we will tackle essential questions about the meaning of well-being and the indices by which we measure it; the role of politics in the development process, the importance of historical and cultural contexts; the complexities of humanitarianism and global health; and the sometimes unanticipated challenges that individuals, institutions, and societies face when they seek to promote development and improve human well-being. This course satisfies the Engaging Diversity (ED) and Social Inquiry (SI) WAYS.

James Campbell (History)
Professor James Campbell is the Edgar E. Robinson Professor of History. His research and teaching focus on both African American and African, particularly South African, history. His books include *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* and *Race, Nation, and Empire in American History*.

Duana Fullwiley (Anthropology)
Trained as a medical anthropologist, Professor Fullwiley is a Faculty Fellow in the Program in Science and Technology Studies. Focusing on genetic conditions in Africa and the African diaspora, her research details how cultural, historical and economic realities shape people’s disease experiences and expressions. Her work also emphasizes that these same societal forces similarly influence the production and practice of science and medicine — as cultural systems themselves.
Understanding China through Film

How did China move from an imperial and colonized country to an independent modern nation? How did the Chinese people transform their tradition, create new ways of life and values, and move toward modernity? What can film tell us about the most significant events in modern Chinese culture and history?

We will learn about major social and cultural transformations in modern China through film. We will analyze films as a window on the ongoing narrative of a people making history and responding to changing circumstances of revolution, reform, political movements, and modernization. Students will study film images as an art that is intertwined with ordinary people, their lived experiences, cultural habits, moral values, and political consciousness. The course will highlight four major periods: the May Fourth New Culture (1919-1930), the socialist era (1949-1966), the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and the reform era of globalization (1978-present). We will learn to be sensitive to film as a visual and dramatic medium that brings to life Chinese history and culture.

Professor Ban Wang (East Asian Languages and Cultures)
Professor Ban Wang is the William Haas Professor in Chinese studies and professor of comparative literature. He is also the Yangtze River Chair Professor at East China Normal University. In addition to his research on Chinese and comparative literature, he has written on English and French literatures, psychoanalysis, international politics, and cinema.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
William Phillip, Film: An Introduction
Chris Berry, China on Screen
Films:
Stage Sisters (1964). Depicts two opera singers’ divergent life paths; one is self absorbed and individualistic, the other revolutionary and committed to national liberation.
To Live (1994). Portrays a family surviving through political turmoil, especially the Cultural Revolution.
Hero (2002). The attempted assassination of the first Emperor tells us much about political unity and China’s rise in the globalized world.
Why are there so few women leaders and what is the cost to society for women’s underrepresentation in positions of power? How can organizations and individuals increase women’s leadership and be more inclusive of the diverse people that make up our society?

Women make up half the population and have earned more than half of all the undergraduate degrees in the U.S. since the early 1980s; yet women comprise only 17% of US Congress, 4% of Fortune 500 CEOs, 16% of the board of directors of major corporations, 22% of tenured faculty at Stanford, and less than a fifth of law firm partners. For women of color, these numbers are considerably lower. Yet, research shows that gender diversity increases the creativity and innovation of groups. In this course, we will directly address the questions of why there are so few women leaders and what can be done, at an organizational and individual level, to increase their representation. Using the lens of sociology, we will think critically about leadership, influence, power, status, gender stereotypes, mentorship, and negotiation. Once we understand the mechanisms underpinning the lack of women leaders, we will discuss and critique potential interventions. A unique aspect of this course will be to apply some of the scholarly research on gender and leadership to our lives outside the classroom. We will be using modules based on those used in businesses schools and corporate executive training. Students will develop practical, real-world skills to increase their own leadership capacities by working on projects and taking part in interactive sessions on negotiation and team dynamics. This course satisfies the Engaging Diversity (ED) and Social Inquiry (SI) WAYS.

Shelley J. Correll (Sociology and, by courtesy, Organizational Behavior)
Professor Correll’s research is in the area of gender and organizational dynamics. She works with companies and universities to create environments where all people can fully thrive.
WOW! The World of Words

Who decides what words mean? Who makes up slang? What constitutes taboo words and ‘bad language’?

Words are the key to understanding the minds and ideas of a people, and by tracing the biographies of words we are able to discern how the world was, is, and might be perceived and described. We trace how words are formed, and how they change in pronunciation, spelling, meaning and usage over time. Students will learn to analyze what words reveal about status, class, and race and how the language of men and women are critiqued differently within our society. We will explore what happens when languages become endangered or die and what we lose in the process. Finally, students will be asked to create new names for things, from a “refrigerator” to “Google”, and meet with the Facebook Branding Team. Together, the class will learn how to collect, research, and define words and create our own Farm Manual: A Handbook of Stanford Freshmen Language. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretative Inquiry (AII) and Engaging Diversity (ED) WAYS.

Sarah Ogilvie (Linguistics)

Elaine Treharne (English)
Professor Elaine Treharne, FSA, FRHistS, FEA, is the Roberta Bowman Denning Professor of Humanities, Professor of English, and, by courtesy, of German Studies at Stanford. She is the author or editor of more than two-dozen books and fifty articles on Medieval Literature and Language, including most recently Living Through Conquest: The Politics of Early English, 1020 to 1220.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Sarah Ogilvie and Elaine Treharne, WOW CAPP: An Interactive WOW Coursebook and Portfolio Pack.
Spring Quarter *Thinking Matters* Courses

- The Cancer Problem: Causes, Treatments, and Prevention
- Century of Violence
- Food Talks: The Language of Food
- Inventing Government: Ancient and Modern
- Reading the Body: How Medicine and Culture Define the Self
- Thinking About the Universe: What do we know? How do we know it?
- What is Progressive about Progress?
The Cancer Problem: Causes, Treatments, and Prevention

How has our approach to cancer been affected by clinical observations, scientific discoveries, social norms, politics, and economic interests?

Approximately one in three Americans will develop invasive cancer during their lifetime; one in five Americans will die as a result of this disease. This course will expose you to multiple ways of approaching the cancer problem, including laboratory research, clinical trials, population studies, public health interventions, and health care economics. We will explore the role of scientific research in revealing the genetic basis of cancer. We will also discuss the development of new treatments for cancer as well as measures to screen for and prevent cancer, including the ongoing debate over tobacco control. Using cancer as a case study, you will learn important aspects of the scientific method including experimental design, data analysis, and the difference between correlation and causation. You will learn how science can be used and misused with regard to the public good. You will also learn about ways in which social, political, and economic forces shape our knowledge about and response to disease. This course satisfies Applied Quantitative Reasoning (AQR) and Scientific Method and Analysis (SMA) WAYS.

Joseph Lipsick (School of Medicine)
Professor Lipsick’s career as a poet went astray when he found a job at the unemployment office working in a laboratory, fell in love with research, and eventually became obsessed with understanding how mistakes in our own genes cause cancer. He is a professor of Pathology, Genetics, and Biology.
Century of Violence

What is modern about modern mass violence?

The course explores the evolution, varieties and logic of mass violence in the modern era. It examines social, political, ethnonational, revolutionary and religious violence, and efforts to curtail them. The course begins with the emergence of genocide as a modern, international issue; proceeds with colonial and imperial genocides in late 19th century Africa and in the early 20th century Ottoman Empire and WWI; the rise of eugenics and Nazi and Nazi-inspired racial exterminations; communist-induced mass violence in the Soviet Union and Asia; ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia; the recent genocides in Rwanda and Sudan; international terrorism and counterinsurgency; and attempts to confront crimes against humanity in international courts and institutions. This course satisfies the Social Inquiry (SI) WAY.

Amir Weiner (History)
Professor Weiner specializes in the history of totalitarian regimes, surveillance, World War II, and the former Soviet Union.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness
Yuan Gao, Born Red
Eugenia Ginzburg, Journey into the Whirlwind
Ernst Junger, Storm of Steel
Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz

Holocaust Memorial in San Francisco Lincoln Park. Photo by Waldemar Zboralski
Food Talks: The Language of Food

How does the language we speak influence how we think? Can the way we talk about food influence how it tastes? What do food migrations and the names for foods tell us about globalization?

In this course, we look at the ways we talk about food as a window into history, psychology, culture and economics, drawing many examples from East Asian food and culture as a point of contrast with foods and cultures that may be more familiar to each of you. We will think critically about language and taste as well as explore the hidden meanings and influence of the language that surrounds us. You will analyze the language of food through menus, recipes, Yelp reviews, TV food shows, as well as the history and etymology of food words. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretative Inquiry (AII) and Social Inquiry (SI) WAYS.

Dan Jurafsky (Linguistics)
Professor Jurafsky is chair of linguistics and professor of computer science. His research focuses on computational linguistics and its application to the social and behavioral sciences, as well as the linguistics of Chinese and the linguistics of food. He is a 2002 MacArthur Fellowship recipient.

Yoshiko Matsumoto (East Asian Languages and Cultures)
Professor Matsumoto is professor of East Asian languages and cultures (and by courtesy, linguistics), and coordinator of the Japanese language program. Her research investigates systems of language in use, from knowledge of grammar to expressions of identity. She is a recipient of the Humanities & Sciences Dean’s Award for Distinguished Teaching.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Dan Jurafsky, The Language of Food (selections)
George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By
Takao Suzuki, Words in Context: A Japanese Perspective on Language and Culture
Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations (selections)
Susan Strauss, “Cross-Cultural Look at Food Commercials in Japan, Korea, and the United States”
Inventing Government: Ancient and Modern

How might the study of the successes and failures of democratic and republican government in ancient Greece and Rome help us to fix what is broken in our own political systems?

Democracy and republic are ancient names for revolutionary approaches to government of, by, and for citizens. Today, almost every state proclaims itself to be a democracy, a republic—or both. Democratic and republican revolutions transformed ancient Greece and Rome—and later transformed the modern world. We explore how political thinkers, from Machiavelli to Madison and Mill, used the lessons of ancient politics to design bold new systems of government. We will analyze what is broken in modern government (corruption, polarization, gridlock), how it broke, and how the tool kit of ancient political history might help us to analyze and repair the damage. This course satisfies the Ethical Reasoning (ER) and Social Inquiry (SI) WAYS.

Josiah Ober (Political Science and Classics)
Professor Ober teaches courses and writes books and articles on Greek history, political thought, and what the ancient theory and practice of citizenship could teach leaders of modern organizations.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Aristotle, Constitution of Athens
Thucydides, Peloponnesian War
Cicero, On Offices
Tocqueville, Democracy in America
Mill, On Representation
Reading the Body: How Medicine and Culture Define the Self

How have our perceptions of what is considered normal/abnormal; beautiful/ugly; infected/uninfected changed over time? How do these changing medical and cultural representations of the body reflect larger societal shifts? How does illness change our perceptions of our bodies and our identities?

Viewed through the lens of medicine, the body is a text that offers clues to health and illness, yet clinical readings are never entirely objective. Culture informs and distorts how we discern, accept, reject, and analyze our bodies. Looking at literary, medical, ethical, and anthropological texts, we ask how representations of the body affect the way we experience illness, embody gender and racial identities, and understand our rights (or lack of rights) to control our own bodies. We will critically examine our perceptions about the body and debate some of the most complex and sensitive issues surrounding the body, from the ethics of medical research trials to end-of-life decisions. This course satisfies the Engaging Diversity (ED) WAY.

Cari Costanzo (Anthropology)
Dr. Costanzo’s teaching and research examine gender, discourses of identity, and contemporary urbanism. She is currently conducting an ethnographic study of life in a freshman dormitory.

Abraham Verghese (Internal Medicine)
Dr. Verghese is a physician who has written two medical memoirs and The New York Times best-selling novel Cutting for Stone. His research focuses on the physician/patient relationship, and the ritual of the bedside exam.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Franz Kafka, A Hunger Artist
Anne Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down
Leo Tolstoy, Death of Ivan Illych
Paul Kalanithi, When Breath Becomes Air
Thinking About the Universe: What do we know? How do we know it?

What is the origin and ultimate fate of the universe? Can we know what came before the universe? Are there ultimate limits to human knowledge about the universe and are we reaching them?

Cosmology (the study of the universe) raises profound questions about us, our place in the universe, and about the limits of our knowledge. It was only in the 20th century that cosmology developed from metaphysical and theological speculation to become an observational science and a recognized part of physics. In this course, students will explore questions about the Universe, its beginnings, its structure, its extent, its fate, from several perspectives—philosophical, experimental, and theoretical. We will discuss current research and the ongoing debates about the laws of nature on subatomic scales and the perplexing questions they raise regarding the universe and the limits of scientific inquiry. This course satisfies the Scientific Method and Analysis (SMA) WAY.

Peter Graham (Physics)
Professor Graham is a theoretical physicist focused on discovering the fundamental laws governing the smallest and largest scales in nature.

Peter Michelson (Physics)
Professor Michelson is an experimental physicist who leads an international team of physicists and astronomers who have developed and use instrumentation to observe the very high-energy Universe.

Thomas Ryckman (Philosophy)
Professor Ryckman is a philosopher of science interested in conceptual change in the physical sciences.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL
Jeremiah Ostriker and Simon Mitton, Heart of Darkness: Unraveling the Mysteries of the invisible universe
Karl D. Popper, “Conjectures and Refutations”
Thomas S. Kuhn, “Values, Objectivity, and Theory Choice”
E. McMullin, “Indifference Principle and Anthropic Principle”
Wilkinson Microwave Anistropy Probe NASA website: “Introduction to Cosmology”
Bernard Carr and G.F.R. Ellis, “Universe or Multiverse?”
G.F.R. Ellis, “The Multiverse, Science and Ultimate Causation”
What is Progressive about Progress?

Where and when did we start believing in human progress? Does progress imply that history has a particular direction or end-goal?

Much of our everyday thinking about politics, society, and history depends on some implicit or explicit concept of progress. Where and when did we start believing in human progress? Does progress imply that history has a particular direction or end-goal? Have we reached a point where we need to replace the idea of progress with that of sustainability? These are some of the questions this course will raise as it looks at how ideas of progress inform western thinking about science, history, evolution, and politics. It will engage with thinkers who argued in favor of the idea of progress as well as thinkers who attacked its presumptions. Reading and critically evaluating philosophical, scientific, and literary texts, we will investigate the different consequences of our residual belief in progress, as well as the consequences of our possible abandonment of that belief. This course satisfies the Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry (AII) WAY.

Adrian Daub (German Studies)
Professor Daub works on nineteenth and twentieth century German literature, philosophy and music.

Robert Harrison (Italian)
Professor Harrison has written five books on a diverse array of topics, ranging from Italian lyric poetry to man and his relationship with the environment and is the host of weekly radio talk show, Entitled Opinions (about Life and Literature), which airs on Stanford’s radio station KZSU FM 90.1.

SELECTED COURSE MATERIAL

Voltaire, “Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations”
Vico, selections from The New Science
Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenement?” and “Towards Perpetual Peace”
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel, The Communist Manifesto
August Comte, Introduction to Positive Philosophy
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland
Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents
Martin Luther King, selections from Speeches
John Gray, selections from Heresies: Against Progress and Other Illusions
Isaac Asimov, Foundation
Marilyn Frye, “Some Reflections on Separatism and Power”
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Thinking Matters courses offer you the opportunity to select among a wide range of topics, as you join with the rest of the Class of 2020 in a common freshman experience. Each course addresses important questions and problems, and demonstrates how thoughtful consideration can address them. Your freedom to choose from among these courses signals that it is your responsibility to structure your liberal education. Stanford invites you to identify your top priority, and you will also have the opportunity to enroll in more than one Thinking Matters course during your freshman year.

—Russell Berman,
Director, Thinking Matters Program, Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities