"Gender Equity"

In March 2017, The US Women's Hockey team demanded "Equal Play, Equal Pay", or they would boycott the World Championship Games. A temporary deal was reached and they won the World Championship. The US Women's Soccer Team has made the same demand; in 2015 the final game of the Women's World Championship, won by the United States, became the most watched soccer match in US history, more viewers than for the US Men's team. Still, neither team is paid as much as the men's teams are. Fair? The Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was originally introduced in 1923. It did not pass Congress until 1972, when it was sent to the States for ratification. What happened? It has not been ratified. What is going on? Should there be Gender Equity? What does that mean? How do we and the rest of the world approach this issue? Is there a "best" solution to the issue of Gender Equity?

"Social Injustice"

Social injustice involves unfair practices being carried out against a group or an individual that is part of a group. It is often comprised of a range of activities, including the suppression, abuse, isolation, misuse, and, in certain instances, annihilation of a group. Often these activities are supported by a government and affirmed by legal statutes. U.S. history alone offers many occurrences, including slavery, the taking of Native American lands, imprisonment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, exclusion of Chinese immigrants in the late 19th century, and in the early 20th century, the forced sterilization of those who were deemed "feebleminded and socially inadequate." Why does social injustice exist and is there a remedy? Where is social injustice being practiced today? What's the best way to battle social injustice? Should we even care about it? Can it be stopped or is it something we should simply accept, and if we do, is there a price to pay for such acceptance? (Small-group initiated media or performance projects will be required.)

"The Role of Civility and Empathy in Society"

Several recent studies have shown that civility and empathy in America are on the decline. Some have argued that this decrease is due to the increased use of technology in society. In this First Year Seminar, we will explore this wicked problem by asking questions such as: What are "civility" and "empathy"?

What is the meaning of community? What does it mean to be a part of a civil and empathetic community? How can people collaborate to build a more civil and empathetic community? What is the role of technology in a civil and empathetic society?
"Causes and Effects of Homelessness among Individuals and Families"

What causes homelessness? What does homelessness cause? Homelessness can be understood as both a result and a cause of various individual and system-wide factors, best examined using an interdisciplinary approach. This First-year Seminar will examine issues related to homelessness among families and individuals at individual, agency, and system levels. Students who take this course will learn about homelessness and related issues through a multidisciplinary lens including topics in Social Work, Psychology, Childhood Studies, Sociology, Political Science, and Public Management. Students will engage in learning about this social problem from multiple angles and complete a student project to better understand the causes and affects of homelessness on individuals within the broader context of agencies and society.

"Understanding the ‘Other’ in a Polarized America”

We live in a polarized society as a quick scan of any media outlet will demonstrate. How do we understand what “others” in society are experiencing? Often times, people’s beliefs are foreign and prevent us from appreciating their perspective. Yet, these beliefs are a foundation of our identity and the choices that we make. This course will investigate the wicked problem of creating a more empathetic society through understanding the “other”. Some potential questions for analysis are: How does identity shape our choices? How can we identify the perspectives of people who we cannot identify with? What steps can we take to create a better society? What role does fear play in a polarized society?

"The Fragility of American Democracy"

Can a benevolent dictator save the day? Do we need the discipline that would be imposed by an American Fuhrer? Is it time to replace American democracy with something else? These questions have been asked over the course of US history not only by those on the fringe of society, but even in the mainstream. This FYS will use history and the social sciences to explore issues of American democracy sometimes leading towards extremely undemocratic notions.

"The Pollinator Crisis"

Many plants, including a wide range of crops, depend on insects to help them reproduce (by pollination). In recent years, concern has been rising that pollinators – such as bees – are in serious decline, and that this, in turn, will affect our lives. This wicked problem has both scientific and social components, and in this First Year Seminar we will explore questions including: Are we in the midst of a pollinator crisis? What information do we need to evaluate this claim? What are the environmental causes of pollinator declines and what are the possible costs? What can we do to conserve these animals and the services they provide us?
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CRN 11286 IS-1111.10 Meets: MWF 9:05 am - 9:55 am Instructor: C. LeBlanc
Location: Hyde Hall 115

"Fake” News and Public Distrust of the Media"

According to Gallup, Americans’ trust in the news media has fallen steadily in the last 20 years. Some have argued that this increased distrust threatens the very notion of democracy that our country is built upon. In this First Year Seminar, we will explore this wicked problem by asking questions such as: What is the purpose of news in a democracy? How is trust developed? What do we mean by “fake” news? Are there ways to distinguish “fake” from “real” news? What role does technology play in the level of public trust in the news? What can we do to increase public trust in the news media?

"Silver Tsunami in Rural America"

How can we retain young people in the region? How can we attract young people from outside the region? How can we make our region more attractive to young families? Answers to these questions could help revitalize rural areas of the country that face an aging population and a declining economy due to demographic challenges, often called as “Silver Tsunami”. This FYS will bring in social sciences, data analytics, and business disciplines together to explore these demographic/economic issues and possible solutions.

CRN 11336 IS-1111.13 Meets: MW 4:30 pm - 5:45 pm Instructor: D. Lee
Location: Hyde Hall 113
China and the US have a love/hate relationship. Disagreements abound, yet the two countries depend on each other, especially economically. The current administration claims the main problem of the U.S. economy is Big Trade Deficits, which is mainly with China. Can the US and China overcome the differences to become close friends and collaborators? In order to explore this wicked problem and we will ask the following questions: How do the US and China compete and rely on each other economically? Can protectionism cure the trade deficit with China? Are there unfair trade barriers causing trade deficits between the US and China? Is America losing its competitiveness? Do Trade Deficits mean lost jobs? Is the trade deficit between China and the US a drag on Economic Growth? How does China manage its currency? And finally, as wages and other costs in China are on the rise, can the Middle Kingdom maintain its dominance as the world's largest manufacturer?

Questions about equity arise when discussing the over 50 million children that attend public prekindergarten-12th grade in the United States. During this seminar, we will explore the factors that influence access to quality public education. Together we will explore various questions that emerge from class discussions about this wicked problem such as: What does equity mean in education? How have history, society, and politics influenced equity in public schools? What suggestions have educational reformers made to address this issue? Then we will consider ways that we might take action to address these concerns.

Sustainability is a complex term used to describe a system or organization that describes its environmental, social, and economic impacts. What does sustainability really mean, and how do we decide what our goals should be? How can we work together to achieve them? Together we will explore the concept of sustainability and its applicability to our own lives and our community. The discussions, fields trips, and projects we engage in will help us determine how different groups can work as a community to define and achieve sustainability and we will apply that knowledge on our own campus.
"Finding paradise: How can places improve their qualities of life"

This course explores ideas about changing the world for the better. A higher quality of life may mean a clean water source for some people, or a three-day weekend for others, but the general quest for a safe, peaceful, and rewarding life is universal. We will tackle general questions: What makes the world a better place? What are we actually working for? Can we all live in a world of plenty? And the students will tackle their own questions: What makes me feel content? What do I dislike doing? What would I do with a million dollars? This course uses ideas from philosophy, environmental and social studies to question the pursuit of a better world on an individual and global scale.

"Who's In? Who's Out? Immigration in America"

The topic of immigration in our country often stirs up strong emotions and heated debates. Some argue that immigrants are ruining the economy and making our communities less safe, while others argue that as a nation of immigrants we should continue to welcome newcomers and recognize their positive contributions to our society. In this First Year Seminar, we will explore this wicked problem of immigration by asking questions such as: Why do people migrate? What impact do immigrants have on the destinations they move to? What impact does their absence have on the places that they left? Should we expect immigrants to become Americanized? What are appropriate immigration policies at the international, national, and state level? This course looks at migration broadly conceived and its relation to culture, politics, security, health, and the environment.
"Peace at Home and Abroad, Can We Get There?"

We generally assume that conflict and violence are intrinsic to human nature, exist within our own minds, our families, our work place, and local and global communities. We take a multi-disciplinary look into the nature and causes of conflicts, the possibilities for conflict resolution, and the foundations of peace.

In this First Year Seminar we will explore this challenge from a variety of perspectives by asking questions such as: What is peace? How do we achieve it? What roles can activism and advocacy play in attaining peace? What are the determinants of violence and non-violence in various conflict situations? How do we develop the knowledge, skills, and values that empower us to resolve conflicts peacefully? How and why do we encourage students to study peace and conflict, both within the self and between people? How would studying peace influence societies?

"Voting and Voter Suppression"

Our Democracy is based on electing officials who represent us. The concept of “one man, one vote” is an integral part of our understanding of the process and our belief in our system. But do we indeed have “one man, one vote”? Are those in charge of the election process manipulating our election system to benefit themselves or their Political Parties? The wicked problem we will investigate is guaranteeing an unbiased electoral system. How do we stop fraudulent voting? Is it a problem? Can we have a Democracy if people aren’t participating? Democracies in other countries experience 75-95% turnouts for elections. Our turnout for the 2016 Presidential election was around 55%. What does that mean for our belief in our system? We will explore the many aspects and meanings of voting.
"The Problem with Stuff"

We live in a society with a “Stuff Problem.” Planned obsolescence, a marketing strategy that was developed in the 1920’s, defines what and how often a consumer buys a product. The idea was to design products to break as a certain point – even though they could last much longer. In this First Year Seminar we will explore this problem by asking questions such as: How do companies seduce us to buy more things? What is its impact on our society, our environment, our climate? How does this impact our daily lives and the lives of those in the future? How might we act locally to address this problem? What can we do to increase public awareness of our society’s “Stuff Problem?”

CRN 11592 IS-1111.27  Meets: MW  5:30 pm -  6:45 pm  Instructor: J. Guilmett
Location: Rounds Hall 322

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CRN 11595 IS-1111.28  Meets: MWF  9:05 am -  9:55 am  Instructor: K. Elvey
Location: Hyde Hall 439B

“Drug Use in the US”

From current issues in marijuana decriminalization and legalization, to heroin overdose deaths across the US—and the epidemic in New Hampshire in particular—to the cost of mass incarceration, you have been effected by America's drug policies. In this First Year Seminar we will explore the relationship between drugs, the law, and society. In order to explore this wicked problem, we will be asking questions such as: why are drugs illegal? Is addiction really something to be concerned about? How can we solve the issue of drug use in the US, either nationally, or locally? Why has heroin taken over the northeast and what steps can be taken to solve this wicked problem?

CRN 11596 IS-1111.29  Meets: MWF  10:10 am - 11:00 am  Instructor: K. Elvey
Location: Hyde Hall 334E

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"Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery"

There has been increasing attention to human trafficking nationally and globally since the turn of the century, however, in many ways this is a very old problem of commodifying and exploiting vulnerable populations. In this First Year Seminar, we will explore the origins of this wicked problem and ask questions such as: What is human trafficking and why does it exist? Who is most at risk for victimization? Do victims chose this life? What is the role of personal responsibility in determining if an act is human trafficking or not?

"Food, Food, Everywhere; Yet Not a Bite to Eat - Hunger and Food Waste"

This course will explore how we feed ourselves, paying particular attention to the dilemma of too little food, too much food, and how this affects the health of people and planet. Students will investigate current practices in food production, composting, bio-digestion, emergency food services, nutrition intervention programs and waste diversion initiatives. Considering local, regional and global case studies of hunger and food waste students will delve into the complexity of this wicked problem. By connecting with multiple stakeholders on and off campus students in this course will develop action oriented projects to address the negative impacts of hunger and food waste.

The course requires participation in a full day field trip and 5 independent service hours.

"There Ought To Be A Law! Or Not?"

Why are there laws? Do laws impact us from a personal point of view, or a societal point of view? Have we gone too far in protecting the few at the expense of the majority or not? Are there laws that seem "unfair" in terms of who they impact? Special attention will be paid to topics that have impact on multiple academic disciplines here at the University to help students make connections between fields of knowledge and cross discipline points of view. Additionally we will look at the variables in society that have generated the need for laws. A significant level of analysis is expected as opposed to simple presentation of facts and theories.
"Child Abuse:

Each year millions of cases of child abuse are reported in the United States. In this course you will be utilizing interdisciplinary thinking and the cluster based educational experience to define, investigate, and examine existing and potential solutions to this pervasive and devastating issue. You will engage in various methods of inquiry including critical thinking and design thinking, and will become skilled in Information Literacy as you work on a project as a team with students in the class or in the community to pursue those aspects of this topic which you find most relevant and engaging.

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"Art and the Natural Environment"

Interested in Art? And/or interested in the Natural Environment? This hands-on project based class will question how art can bring awareness and change to environmental issues including climate change action and endangered species loss, to name a few.

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"How can we impact the increasing cost of higher education and the high dropout rate of students?"

The cost of going to college has increased at a rate of about four times the rate of inflation over the last 30 years. The problem is compounded by the low graduation rates, only 59% will earn a degree in 6 years, and much fewer will graduate in the expected four years. What are the causes driving these factors? What can be done to improve the results? This course will explore the complexity behind rising costs, low retention and graduation rates across the nation.

"Are there two sides to social justice?"

Social justice is a term that is bandied about in grassroots movements all over the world. Often when groups are demanding social justice there is a person or people who have been treated unfairly by society. Recently, this term has been ascribed to more liberal or left-leaning causes than conservative ones but that has not always been the case. The concept, if not the words, has at various times in history been used by both liberal and conservative causes to demand equitable treatment. The question is who defines injustice? If you support a pro-life ideology are you entitled to think of your cause as socially just or is social justice solely the purview of liberal thinkers? What are the desired outcomes of social justice? Who decides? In this class we will work to define social justice and use critical thinking skills to consider a variety of injustices and how we as thinkers and activists can think about reimagining our world.

"Is the industrial model of education still viable?"

For more than a century the model of public education has mimicked that of the factories that were the initial impetus to remodel public schools. Subjects are taught in isolation without any connection to each other. Each subject is taught for approximately 50 minutes, and success is largely measured through output. The question is if this model of education is still viable in a 21st century world? Despite the evidence that learning for longer periods of time, integrating content, and progressing when content is mastered, not on an artificial construct such as age or days of attendance are much more conducive to real learning the industrial model of education prevails as the primary model of education not only in elementary and secondary education but on into higher education. Do we need to rethink how we teach, what we teach, both, or neither? Are schools failing to prepare students for the future or are our expectations too high? If we do need to revise the educational model, what should it look like? Should efficiency or effectiveness be our primary concern?
"Entrepreneurship as if the planet mattered"

Do you have a “big idea” or an “audacious goal” and like to work in cluster teams? Whether you are in art or zoology, this interactive class teaches “lean start-up” so that social and business entrepreneurs can face our planet’s wicked problems. From coders/web/apps to climate change, from village development to world peace, from new food sources to new art and design, we are looking for ‘treps (entrepreneurs) who have passion and want to make a difference in the challenges that face your generation. This seminar requires no previous knowledge—only great ideas and lots of enthusiasm—and every major is welcome. As learning outcomes, you will identify opportunities, design and validate value propositions, build “prototypes” (pretend-prototype), devise business models, and create storytelling. Learning activities include online/face-to-face, collaborative, problem-based and project oriented, design thinking and games, as well as readings. Everyone participates in a Pitch Duel in front of a live audience and judges at the end of the semester.

6/1/2017