

Undergraduate Catalog of Courses

Volume 2017 2017-2018

Article 26

2017

Collegiate Seminar

Saint Mary's College of California

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Recommended Citation

Saint Mary's College of California (2017) "Collegiate Seminar," *Undergraduate Catalog of Courses*: Vol. 2017 , Article 26.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.stmarys-ca.edu/undergraduate-catalog/vol2017/iss1/26>

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COLLEGIATE SEMINAR

In their four Collegiate Seminar classes, Saint Mary's students and faculty, through reading and discussion, explore the great writings that have shaped the thought and imagination of the Western world. In Seminar, students develop skills of analysis through critical reading, critical thinking, thoughtful interpretation and respectful communication. Over time, through this process, they learn to read and discuss important texts with increased understanding and enjoyment.

Classes meet around a seminar table in small groups so that each person can participate actively in the discussion. The faculty discussion leader poses questions about the texts to challenge the students to develop, through the process of careful reading and discussion, defensible interpretations of their own. Students state opinions and uncover assumptions; they present evidence to support their positions or to defend them against objections; they respond to other students' views, developing points in greater detail, exploring contradictions and ambiguities. Working together in a spirit of cooperation, students learn to reflect upon and refine their ideas. In addition, through substantial writing assignments, students deepen their inquiries into the texts, developing theses supported by cogent analysis based on textual evidence. Their experience with discussion and writing develop skills that Saint Mary's students use throughout their lives.

Entering transfer students enroll in **Seminar 102** and take **Seminar 103** and **104** thereafter.

Students matriculating as freshmen are subject to the College's Core Curriculum requirements (see Program of Study). Collegiate Seminar courses comprise a substantial portion of the Habits of Mind requirements. Students are required to take **Seminar 1, 2, 103,** and **104,** as follows: **Seminar 1** in Spring of the first year, **Seminar 2** in Fall of the second year, **Seminar 103** in either long semester of the third year, and **Seminar 104** in either long semester of the fourth year.

COLLEGIATE SEMINAR GOVERNING BOARD

Ellen Rigsby, Director, *Communication*
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Michelle Stone, *Adjunct in Seminar*
Joseph Zeccardi, *Center for Writing Across
the Curriculum*

GOALS OF THE COLLEGIATE SEMINAR

Collegiate Seminar fosters a genuine sense of collegiality and intellectual community by providing an authentic forum for students to meet and partake of a common experience—the reading and discussion of shared texts under the guidance of faculty from all disciplines. Its participants engage in collaborative dialogue with texts whose ideas shape our world. Through careful reading, shared inquiry, and writing, students improve their skills of analysis and communication. During this process students will develop increased appreciation for these great ideas, and grow in their intellectual curiosity, becoming life-long learners and thinkers. Students will be exposed to a variety of ways of knowing, encouraged in their search for meaning, and learn to accept ambiguity while aiming for clarity.

COLLEGIATE SEMINAR VISION STATEMENT

Collegiate Seminar seeks to engage Saint Mary's students in a critical and collaborative encounter with the world of ideas as expressed in great texts of the Western tradition in dialogue with and exposure to its encounter with other traditions. Thereby students become part of the Great Conversation. The Program seeks to help them develop as curious, thoughtful members of an intellectual community. Designed to serve the College's goals of a liberal education, the Program strives to put students in possession of their powers to think clearly, critically and collaboratively, and articulate their ideas effectively—powers that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Seminar Specific Learning Outcomes: As a result of their participation in Collegiate Seminar, students will grow in their ability to:

1. Understand, analyze, and evaluate challenging texts from different genres and periods.
2. Comprehend the intellectual threads that connect works both backward and forward through history.
3. Relate the works studied to their own experience and to notions of authentic humanity.
4. Reflect on prior knowledge and assess one's own process of learning.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking within Seminar is grounded on the processes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation necessary to read with understanding. Through careful reading, listening, and reflection, which lead to a solid understanding of the texts, critical thinking allows students to make perceptive insights and connections between texts, Seminars and ultimately their life experiences. Critical thinking within Seminar also includes skills that allow for sound judgments to be made when multiple, competing viewpoints are possible. Seminar is a place where reading critically is transformed and integrated into a habit of mind, providing students with the tools to question the authority of the text and the foundations of their own assumptions. In short, critical thinking allows students to recognize, formulate and pursue meaningful questions, which are not only factual but also interpretive and evaluative, about the ideas of others as well as their own.

Critical Thinking Learning Outcomes: As a result of their participation in Collegiate Seminar, students will grow in their ability to:

1. Distinguish the multiple senses of a text (literal and beyond the literal).
2. Identify and understand assumptions, theses, and arguments that exist in the work of authors.
3. Evaluate and synthesize evidence in order to draw conclusions consistent with the text. Seek and identify confirming and opposing evidence relevant to original and existing theses.
4. Ask meaningful questions and originate plausible theses.
5. Critique and question the authority of texts, and explore the implications of those texts.

WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATION

A mind is not truly liberated until it can effectively communicate what it knows. Thus Collegiate Seminar seeks to develop strong written and oral communication skills in its students. Students will develop skills that demonstrate an understanding of the power of language to shape thought and experience. They will learn to write and speak logically, with clarity, and with originality, and grow in their intellectual curiosity through the process of writing.

Written and Oral Communication Learning Outcomes:

As a result of their participation in Collegiate Seminar, students will grow in their ability to:

1. Recognize and compose readable prose, as characterized by clear and careful organization, coherent paragraphs and well-constructed sentences that employ the conventions of Standard Written English and appropriate diction.
2. Recognize and formulate effective written and oral communication, giving appropriate consideration to audience, context, format, and textual evidence.
3. Analyze arguments so as to construct ones that are well supported (with appropriate use of textual evidence), are well reasoned, and are controlled by a thesis or exploratory question.
4. Use discussion and the process of writing to enhance intellectual discovery and unravel complexities of thought.

SHARED INQUIRY

Shared inquiry is the act of reasoning together about common texts, questions, and problems. It is a goal of Collegiate Seminar to advance students' abilities to develop and pursue meaningful questions in collaboration with others, even in the context of confusion, paradox, and/or disagreement. Through the habits of shared inquiry students will carefully consider and understand the perspectives and reasoned opinions of others, reconsider their own opinions, and develop rhetorical skills.

Shared Inquiry Learning Outcomes: As a result of their participation in Collegiate Seminar, students will grow in their ability to:

1. Advance probing questions about a common text or other objects of study.
2. Pursue new and enriched understandings of the texts through sustained collaborative inquiry.
3. Reevaluate initial hypotheses in light of evidence and collaborative discussion with the goal of making considered judgments.
4. Engage in reflective listening and inclusive, respectful conversation.

C O U R S E S

Seminar 001 Critical Strategies and Great Questions

This first seminar develops the skills of critical thinking, critical reading and writing, and shared inquiry that are foundational to Collegiate Seminar. Students learn strategies for engaging with a diversity of texts, asking meaningful questions, and effectively participating in collaborative discussions. Reading and writing assignments are specifically designed to support students' gradual development of these strategies and skills. The reading list is current but subject to modification. From some texts only excerpts are read. *Corequisite: English 4.*

Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"
LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"
Woolf, "How Should One Read a Book?"
Al Ghazali, "Manners to be Observed by Teachers and Students"
Seneca, "Moral Epistle #88"
Supreme Court, *Korematsu v. the United States (1944)*
Alexie, "What You Pawn I Will Redeem"
Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence"
Thucydides, "Mytilenian Debate," "The Melian Dialogue"
Johnson, "Melvin in the 6th Grade"
Genesis 22
Ptolemy, *Almagest*
Brome Abraham and Isaac
Cervantes, "The Man Who Was Recklessly Curious"
Galileo, *The Starry Messenger*
Mo Tzu, "On Universal Love"
Matthew 5-7, "Sermon on The Mount"
Carson, *Silent Spring*
Spiegelman, *Maus*
Epictetus, *The Handbook (The Encheiridion)*
Sophocles, *Antigone*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Homer, *The Odyssey*

Seminar 002 Western Tradition I

Employing and building upon the strategies of critical thinking, critical reading, and shared inquiry learned in the first seminar, students will read, write about and discuss a selection of classical, early Christian and medieval texts from the Western tradition. The reading list is current but subject to modification. From some texts only excerpts are read.

Gospel parables
Sappho (selections)
Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*
Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*
Euclid, *Geometry*
Plato, *Meno*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Terence, *The Brothers*
Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*
Virgil, *Georgics*
Plutarch, *Coriolanus*

Augustine, *Confessions*
Hildegard, *Scivias*
Boethius, *On the Consolation of Philosophy, bk 1*
Marie de France, *Nightingale, et al.*
Dante, *Purgatorio*
Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

Seminar 102 Western Tradition I for transfers

This first seminar for transfer students develops skills of critical thinking, critical reading and writing, and shared inquiry that are foundational to Collegiate Seminar. Students will read, write about and discuss a selection of classic and modern texts from the Western tradition. The reading list is current but subject to modification. From some texts only excerpts are read.

Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B"
LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"
Genesis 1-11
Toni Morrison, *Lecture and Speech of Acceptance, Award for Nobel Prize*
Spiegelman, *Maus*
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*
Plato, *Crito*
Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence"
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Christine de Pisan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*
Matthew 5-7, "Sermon on The Mount"
Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*
Dante, *Inferno*
Momaday, "The Way to Rainy Mountain"
Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*
Homer, *The Odyssey*
Terry Tempest Williams, "The Clan of One-Breasted Women"

Seminar 103 Western Tradition II

Employing and building upon the strategies of critical thinking, critical reading, and shared inquiry learned in previous seminars, students will read, write about and discuss a selection of Renaissance, 17th, 18th and 19th century texts from the Western tradition. The reading list is current but subject to modification. From some texts only excerpts are read.

Machiavelli, *The Prince*
Luther, *On Christian Liberty*
Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*
Descartes, *Discourse on Method*
Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*
Voltaire, *Candide*
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
Selections from Romantic Poetry
Dickens, *Hard Times*
Marx, *Communist Manifesto*
Nightingale, *Cassandra*
Darwin, *The Origin of Species*
Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*

Seminar 104 The Global Conversation of the 20th and 21st centuries

Building on the Western tradition explored in the second and third seminars, readings focus on the Great Conversation of the modern world, which includes the West but also includes important intercultural and global voices. The course focuses on issues of significant relevance for a 21st century student, as well as texts that allow for integrative thinking across the entire Collegiate Seminar sequence. The last portion of the course will include student reflections on what they have learned and how they have grown, revisiting the steps of their intellectual development in a capstone experience.

Robert Frost, *"The Gift Outright"*
 Maya Angelou, *"On the Pulse of Morning"*
 Mahatma Gandhi, *Selected Political Writings*
 United Nations General Assembly, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
 Franz Kafka, *"The Metamorphosis"*
 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*
 Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
 Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*
 Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*
 Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*
 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*
 Xiao Hong "Hands"
 Paul Celan, *"Death Fugue"*
 Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *"Babi Yar"*
 Mahmoud al-Braikan and Taleb Abd al-Aziz, *Fifteen Iraqi Poets*
 Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*
 Nelson Mandela, *"The Rivonia Trial"*
 Garrett Hardin, *"The Tragedy of the Commons"*
 Vandana Shiva, *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*
 Naguib Mahfouz, *The Time and the Place*
 Gabriel Garcia Márquez, *"The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother"*
 Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography*
 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*
 Audre Lorde, *This Bridge Called My Back*
 Qiu Jin, *"Lord Shi Jing of Japan: A Response to Your Original Verse"*
 Jhumpa Lahiri, *"The Third and Final Continent"*
 Miguel de Unamuno, *"Saint Emmanuel the Good, Martyr"*
 Nietzsche, *Aphorisms*
 Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*
 Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*
 Richard P. Feynman, *"Atoms in Motion"*
 Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *"Can Religion Withstand Technology?"*
 Theodosius Dobzhansky, *"The Teilhardian Synthesis"*

144 Multicultural Thought

Selected readings from 20th-century multicultural authors of the United States, especially from California. Readings continue the dialogue with authors from previous seminars, give renewed attention to questions raised in those contexts and address contemporary issues as well. *Prerequisite: Seminar 001 or 002.*

145 World Traditions

Readings from the traditions of Asia, Africa and the Middle East that raise basic human questions of courage, compassion, loyalty and wisdom. These works from around the world are selected to extend the themes and ideas from both the Western Tradition sequence and the Multicultural Thought seminar to a truly global conversation. *Prerequisite: Seminar 001 or 002.*

190 Co-Leader Apprenticeship (.25)

A course designed for specially selected, experienced seminar students assigned to assist a faculty member as student co-leader for a specific seminar class. As co-leaders, students participate as discussion facilitators and models in a seminar they have already completed. Meetings with assigned seminar faculty by arrangement. May be repeated for credit.

192 Introduction to Methods and Field Experience in Elementary Level Discussion Groups (.25)

Prerequisite: Seminar 002 or 102. For course description, see Justice, Community and Leadership Program.