



FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES 2008-2009



*Connecting students
with faculty, staff and
each other*



UMBC

AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

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UMBC

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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES

2008-2009

Connecting students with faculty, staff and each other



“If you are a student who learns by doing, is willing to explore topics from multiple perspectives and enjoys questioning, discovering and creating knowledge, then one of these opportunities is for you.”



Diane M. Lee
Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education



UMBC Banner Events 2008-2009

Your UMBC experience begins with Welcome Week. Extracurricular activities from student clubs, intercollegiate and club sports and weekend activities are all within reach.

FALL 2008

UMBC Fall Opening Meeting

August 22

Welcome Week

August 23–September 1

- Residential Life Opening
New Students August 23
Returning Students August 25
- New Student Book Experience
August 25
- Convocation
August 26

Homecoming and Family Celebration

October 17–19

December Graduates Day

December 9

Winter Commencement

December 18

SPRING 2009

Winter Welcome Week

January 26–31

Residential Life Opening

January 27

Quadmania

April 18 (date may vary due to national music act)

Black and Gold Leadership Awards

May 4

May Graduates Day

May 12

Spring Undergraduate Commencement

May 21



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WHY SHOULD YOU CHOOSE A FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITY?

Institutions across the country provide entering first-year students with an opportunity to participate in programs specifically designed for first-year students, and UMBC is no exception. Our program differs from others by allowing students to choose their own first-year experience which they feel most effectively meets their needs. This booklet is designed to introduce these opportunities to you, while explaining the benefits of participation.

Who are first-year students?

A first-year student is anyone who is in his or her first year at UMBC, including transfer students.

What are the benefits?

Students benefit from the experience by getting to know a small group of peers while becoming connected to the University both academically and socially. The more you know about the campus, the faculty and staff, your peers, and about our resources, the greater the chance of you reaching your goals in a timely manner with a smoother process.

Are students who participate in one or more of these opportunities really more successful?

Yes. Our data tells us that students who participate in a first-year seminar, an "Introduction to an Honors University" course, a living learning community, or one of the other programs described achieve a higher level of success and are better prepared to maintain and/or raise their level of success during their academic career.

Why do I need to know faculty and staff?

Faculty and staff will play a significant role assisting you in reaching your goals and getting you the assistance you need. They know campus resources and are committed to your success. They make it possible for you to leave UMBC prepared for a job or acceptance to graduate school. You need their recommendations to move forward professionally. Staff can provide a similar kind of support, but most often they are the people who always know whom to contact for almost any kind of issue you encounter or question you might have.

I have lots of friends at home, why do I need to know my peers?

You have selected UMBC as your home away from home. Your peers on campus will be your friends, members of your study groups, people you can rely on for notes when you have to miss class (for excused absences of course!!), and will be there to give you a ride, share in your success, and support you when things do not go as well as expected. They will be your connection to resources, and our upper level students, as well as your classmates, want to provide you with that kind of support.

Though participation in a First-Year Experience program you can begin to develop your own network of support at UMBC. Do not miss this opportunity because you only have your first year to take advantage of it. Pre-register today!!



HOW TO PRE-REGISTER FOR FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE COURSES: FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS (FYS) AND INTRODUCTION TO AN HONORS UNIVERSITY (IHU) SEMINARS

This is a one-time opportunity. First-year students can only register for seminars in their first or second semester at UMBC. Please note that there are different registration forms for FYS courses and IHU seminars, and these forms are located on the Office of Undergraduate Education Web site, www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed.

You may register for either an FYS or IHU course or both. The FYS and IHU courses provide students with uniquely different opportunities. Priority for seats in courses will be on a first-come, first served basis, so, to ensure you get your first choice, visit the Web site at your earliest convenience.

Directions:

- 1) Choose a course option. Read the seminar course descriptions in this brochure and visit the Office of Undergraduate Education Web site, www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed, to view updates to the 2008-2009 offerings.
- 2) Register for a fall 2008 FYS opportunity. Complete the online registration form, indicating your first, second and third preferences. The form is available at www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/fys/regform08.html.
- 3) Indicate your interest in a spring 2009 FYS opportunity. Complete the online registration form, indicating the spring 2009 courses of interest to you by indicating year first, second and third preferences. You will receive registration information via e-mail during the fall semester. The spring 2009 interest form is online at www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/fys/regformspring09.html.
- 4) Register for a Fall 2008 IHU Seminar. Complete the online registration form, indicating your first, second and third preferences. The form is available at www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/ihu/ihuregform.html.

For More Information: Call or e-mail Jill Randles at 410-455-3715 or jrandles@umbc.edu.

SUMMER 2008 – GET A HEAD START ON YOUR CLASSES.

CSI: Collegiate Summer Institute **A Summer Bridge Program for New UMBC Students**

The CSI: Collegiate Summer Institute is a summer bridge program that provides admitted students with the opportunity to choose between a Mathematics or English course designed not only to offer a head start on earning college credits, but also to introduce them to life at UMBC. Both Math 106Y and English 100Y are part of the Introduction to an Honors University program, in which engaging course material is connected with activities and special programming. These courses are limited to 20 students, allowing for one-on-one time with the instructor in a friendly, supportive environment in which students feel comfortable asking questions, exploring and challenging their perceptions.

The program provides new students with the opportunity to

- Meet new people and create friendships
- Take a four credit academic course (Math 106Y or English 100Y)
- Get to know upperclassmen and learn from their experiences
- Get a head start on earning college credit
- Get accustomed to the demands of a college student
- Have one-on-one time with their professor

Community-building programs will be held after classes and throughout the week, along with weekend outings as a group. These events will be planned and coordinated by the CSI staff. Peer mentors, who are UMBC students, will offer perspective, advice and guidance to participants around issues that occur both inside and outside the classroom.

Students in the CSI program have a unique opportunity to enter their first regular semester of college with a clear understanding of what they can expect from the college experience, as well as knowing what is expected of them. From day one, they will have the benefit of an established community of friends and mentors committed to their success.

To download a brochure and a mail in registration form, or to register via our electronic form, visit www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/CSI.



ABOUT FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

First-year seminars are designed to create an active-learning environment enriched by field work, original research, group projects or performance as well as more traditional reading, writing and lecture formats.

Faculty who possess a deep commitment to undergraduate education and who have a special interest they want to share with students design and teach first-year seminars, which are three-credit courses created to introduce students to the academic excitement and rigor that will be a part of every student's experience at UMBC. These courses also meet general education requirements and bring an interdisciplinary focus to the study of the liberal arts.

First-year seminars are limited to 20 students per class, so students have direct access to a faculty member they get to know well, and who, in turn, will get to know them. Seminar participants face the challenges of an academically rigorous course with the support of a faculty member who closely observes each student's academic performance and provides access to resources to support each student's learning.

In this active-learning environment, faculty partner with students in the exploration of course material that incorporates writing, creative thinking, significant opportunities for discussion and faculty/peer critiques of assignments. To learn more about the faculty teaching First-Year Seminars, visit www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/fys/new_faculty.html and www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/fys/current_faculty.html.



FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES
2008-2009





FALL 2008

Images of Madness
Tuesdays, 4:30–7 p.m.
FYS 102A (SS)



Meets the Social Science General Education Requirement (SS)

Carolyn Tice
Professor, Social Work
Associate Dean and Program Chair
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In contemporary society, virtually everyone goes to movie theaters or views feature films at home on videos, DVDs or television. For many people, films, regardless of their accuracy, serve as a major source of information on social issues, including mental illness. This course reviews Academy Award winning films depicting mental illness to consider the influence of motion pictures on the public perception of social issues, policies and services. Beginning with *The Snake Pit* (1948) through *As Good as it Gets* (1997), we will analyze films using a historical framework in conjunction with assigned readings that address cultural stereotypes, societal attitudes and the public's response toward people with mental illness.

We will look at the history of treatment and services for persons with mental illness, social work practice and service delivery networks. In addition, we will explore critical concepts in social work practice and policy related to people with mental illness. The class will engage in critical thinking, analysis and discussion of these issues, including social work's role as advocate and change agent. Class assignments, case studies and group exercises will help us to understand the potential power of the mass media, specifically films and to question our awareness of and response to mental illness.

What Professors Say

"The First Year Seminars are a wonderful opportunity for students to learn from, and interact with, faculty in exploring a subject of great interest to both. I could not think of a more stimulating and thought-provoking introduction to UMBC."

— **Dr. Alan Rosenthal, Professor Emeritus, French**

FALL 2008

Contrasting Visions of Society
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:45 p.m.
FYS 102F (SS)

Meets the Social Science General Education Requirement (SS)

David Mitch

Associate Professor, Economics

Ph.D., University of Chicago

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This course will be based on reading four influential works, which set forth contrasting visions of society. The four works are Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Plato's *Republic*, Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* and Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Each of these are works with which educated people are expected to be familiar and each of them continues to shape discussions of policy and social affairs. Yet, undergraduate students are all too infrequently provided opportunities to study these texts first hand in their general education courses. This course will provide students with this opportunity. It aims to develop an understanding of these four texts and the contrasts between the visions of society implicit in each. In addition, each student will be asked to read and report on a piece that exhibits the contemporary influence of one of the four texts above. For example, a contemporary discussion about the use of choice and vouchers as a way of reforming the educational system could be interpreted as an application of principles of competition proposed by Adam Smith. Thus, a further aim of the seminar will be to cultivate an appreciation of the on-going relevance to contemporary policy and social issues of these works. These texts cross current disciplinary boundaries and can be seen as drawing on the disciplines of economics, philosophy, political science and sociology.

What Professors Say

"The first-year seminar has stimulated some of my most creative teaching. One of the most satisfying aspects of the experience was the way in which the seminar participants welcomed the opportunity to become an intellectual and social community – clearly very much enjoying their experience together and providing an important support system for one another."

— Dr. Ed Orser, Professor, American Studies



FALL 2008

Paradigms and Paradoxes: An Attempt to Understand the Universe**Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30–3:45 p.m.****FYS 103B (S)***Meets the Science General Education Requirement (S)**Joel F. Liebman**Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry**Ph.D., Princeton University**E-mail: jliebman@umbc.edu*

There are at least two kinds of scientific activities: acquiring and generating data, and inquiring and generating general modes of understanding. The latter activities will dominate this course. The course contents include discussions of some remarkable features of the universe: the class discussions will require no more scientific background than gained from high school chemistry and mathematics. Some topics for the course follow.

Matter doesn't collapse, shrink or disappear—it has size, weight and sometimes shape. We take this for granted. Don't we? Positive and negative charges attract. The atomic nucleus is positive and electrons are negative. Why don't these parts of atoms get closer and closer, and eventually collapse? In other words, we ask, not only why are atoms so small but also why are they so big? This topic is not merely philosophical. Questions of fuel efficiency and national defense arise as naturally as those of the existence of the universe. There are 26 letters in the English alphabet. There are four letters in the genetic code and some 100 chemical elements in the periodic table. There are millions of distinct words, individual types of organisms and chemical compounds. Are these numbers 26, four and 100 small or are they large? As such, our study includes the nature of language, information and life. Consider the number 3.14159265357988.... Can you identify it? Answering this question should be as easy as pie. Hatmakers equate this number to 3. Is this a rational choice? Answering this question tells us about the nature of numbers, measurement, design and industry, and also about the answerer.

FALL 2008

Diversity, Ethics and Social Justice: in the Context of Schooling

Mondays and Wednesdays, 3–4:15 p.m.

FYS 102C (SS)

Meets the Social Sciences General Education Requirement (SS)

Vickie Williams

Director of Student Services, Education

Ph.D., University of Maryland, Baltimore County

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Schools are strong social institutions that influence all of us. There are many significant political, cultural, psychological and ethical forces that are directing how schools prepare students to succeed. It is important to understand how education policies, practices, issues and values are constructed and changed.

In multicultural America, classrooms mirror the diverse nature of children's backgrounds, cultural experiences, languages and "ways of knowing." Drawing from our experiences as products of the education system, we will explore and mediate the tensions that exist in current reform efforts as schools endeavor to meet the needs of diverse students. This course will use an inquiry-based approach to examine federal and local policies and how they impact students, schools and society.

Students will participate in activities at a local school in UMBC's Professional Development Schools network. These schools are active learning communities in which higher education faculty, P-12 faculty and students collaborate to optimize learning and success for all. Students will complete a service-learning project based on their unique talents, interests, skills and field of study that makes a contribution to a school.



FALL 2008

Computation as an Experimental Tool **Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30–3:45 p.m.** **FYS 103A (M)**

Meets the Math General Education Requirement. (M)

Manil Suri

Professor, Mathematics and Statistics

Ph.D., Carnegie-Mellon University

E-mail: suri@math.umbc.edu



The goal of this course is to make students comfortable with the idea of using mathematical computation as a tool towards answering questions and embarking on new explorations. In the last two decades, computational mathematics has played an increasingly important role in scientific research, with advances and discoveries being routinely made through numerical simulation. We will begin by briefly examining this phenomenon in a historical and philosophical context (scientific experiment vs paper and pencil mathematical analysis vs computer simulation.) We will go on to explore questions on population dynamics, chaos, fractals, automata and number theory, using Web-based computational applets and simple Matlab programs. The ultimate goal would be to feel as comfortable using a computer for investigating a question in one's discipline as one might feel using a calculator or some other tool.

Through this course, students will find that there is a major “experimental side” to what working mathematical scientists actually do, which does not come through in regular courses.

Additional Course Requirement: A suitable score on the LRC algebra placement exam for a GEP mathematics course is required.

FALL 2008

Arts, Humanities, or Science: Which Road to Reality?
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11:15 a.m.
FYS 101P (AH)

Meets the Arts and Humanities General Education Requirement (AH)

Rick Welch

Professor of Biological Sciences, Research Professor of the Human Context of Science and Technology Program, Affiliate Professor of History Ph.D., University of Tennessee

E-mail: welch@umbc.edu



The Scientific Revolution began some 450 years ago when Copernicus dethroned the earth – and, ultimately, humankind – from the center of the universe. Since then, we have come to view the world around us as an ordered clockwork. In place of the human being, machines became the center of attention. Empowered by the engines of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, the application of science to our daily lives and livelihood has marched onward – to the point that, today, science itself has become a servant to our machines. Other important areas of human thought, such as the humanities and the arts, have become somewhat secondary to the scientific cause. Science has given much to humankind: knowledge, understanding and technology. However, the pursuit of science has also brought much controversy and challenge, in regard to defining our position (and our role) in nature.

Students in this course, irrespective of their academic majors, are taken on an exploratory path of study that attempts to provide a balanced intellectual picture of the essence of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge. We ask the basic question: Which view of humanity and nature – science, poetry or art – is right? There is a significant historical component to the course, as we pursue the origins and bases of the polarized situation that exists today. We will read selected works from key historical figures during the development of the Scientific Revolution, as well as an array of writings from today's scientists, artists and literary figures. The course culminates with an examination of the positive values that underlie the outwardly different ways of thinking about the world and of the manner in which they all can fit into a complete picture of the world in which we live.



FALL 2008

**France Under German Occupation: Collaboration,
Resistance, Survival**
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11:15 a.m.
FYS 102 (SS)



Meets the Social Sciences General Requirement (SS)

Alan Rosenthal

Professor Emeritus, French

Ph.D., Rutgers University

Email: rosentha@umbc.edu

The German occupation of France during the Second World War was one of the most devastating events in that country's history. Its effects are felt even today. In this course, we will study the period of the occupation and will look at the noteworthy individuals involved and the ordinary people whose lives were turned upside down. We will also consider the vexing question of who resisted, who collaborated, and who simply tried to survive. From all this, we will attempt to draw lessons regarding the behavior of people under extreme stress. Our approach will be both historical and cultural. Materials will include literature, articles from the press, historical documents, and film.

What Professors Say

"FYS courses are intended as a bridge between students and faculty; disciplines and understanding; beginning courses and contemporary limits of knowledge. They are educational, enjoyable, and fun for me as instructor – I hope the same for my students."

— **Dr. Joel Liebman, Professor, Chemistry**

FALL 2008

The United States and Iran since World War II
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:00 p.m.
FYS 102 (SS)

Meets the Social Sciences General Education Requirement (SS)

Devin Hagerty
Associate Professor, Political Science
Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania
E-mail: dhagerty@umbc.edu



The next U.S. president will face no more vexing foreign policy challenge than managing America's difficult relationship with Iran. Timed to coincide with the 2008 elections, this course will examine the evolution of U.S.-Iranian relations since 1945, focusing closely on the roots of the differences separating the two sides today, as well as on potential paths to détente. Throughout the course, we will draw on tools and materials from history, economics, political science, geography, and religious studies. These perspectives and the bridges we build between them will allow us the richest possible picture of this complex relationship.

Students participating in this seminar will have the opportunity to learn from guest speakers who will expose them to a variety of different perspectives, and the class will take field trips to New York and/or Washington, where we will meet with Iranian and/or U.S. diplomats. Topical DVDs will also be shown, as appropriate.

What Students Say

"I was a little shy and nervous when I first came to campus and my first-year seminar class helped me out so much with this. Every class, we arranged our desks in a big circle so that we could have open, friendly discussions. Everyone got to voice opinions, hopes, and fears about being a first-year student. The professors were welcoming and understanding, while also challenging us in our writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills. My first year seminar class really helped to support my success at UMBC"

— **Samantha Haines, Psychology major**



FALL 2008

Chasing Lightning: Sferics, Tweaks and Whistlers **Time TBA** **FYS 103 (S)**

Meets the Science (Non-lab)General Education Requirement (S)

Philip Rous

Professor, Physics

Ph.D. Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London (U.K.)

E-mail: rous@umbc.edu

Phillip Webb

*Assistant Research Scientist,
UMBC GEST Research Center*

E-mail: pwebb@umbc.edu



We all know what lightning looks like during a thunderstorm, but the visible flash we see is only part of the story. This is because lightning also generates light with other frequencies that we from lightning, these other frequencies can carry the lightning's energy hundreds or thousands of miles across the surface of the Earth in the form of special signals called "tweaks" and "sferics". Some of these signals can even travel tens of thousands of miles out into space before returning to the Earth as "whistlers".

In this seminar, you will learn about the basic physics of lightning, thunderstorms and the

Earth's atmosphere and then you will build a special electronic receiver that will allow you to listen to the signals generated by lightning as far away as other continents. The INSPIRE Project, a non-profit organization, produces the unassembled receiver kit. The components of the receiver will be provided to you, which you will assemble under supervision as part of the course. No prior knowledge of electronics or electronic assembly is required; we will teach you everything you need to know to understand how your receiver works and how to put it together.

After everyone has built their receiver the class will do field work at local sites to listen for the sferics, tweaks and whistlers (one needs to get away from power lines, which can cause all sorts of bad interference). You will also have the opportunity to learn from guest speakers who will talk about topics including lightning observed on other planets.

SPRING 2009

Intercultural Exploration Through Film **FYS 104A (c)**

Meets the Culture General Education Requirement (C)

Alan Bell

Professor, Modern Languages and Linguistics

Ph.D., The Johns Hopkins University

E-mail: abell@umbc.edu



We find ourselves inundated with visual media and its principle *raison d'être* is to exert influence in subtle and often hidden ways. The rigor with which we focus on in-depth analyses of text, intended to elicit deeper meaning and significance, is not generally brought to the task of deciphering visual material that surrounds our daily existence in a multiplicity of formats through the mass media. At the same time, we find ourselves thrust into a world that every day becomes more globally centered and one in which cultural knowledge and sensitivity have never been more paramount to the survival of complex modern societies. Through an intensive study of contemporary, intercultural cinema and readings on the art of filmmaking, we will confront both of these issues.

Films will be grouped into thematic units that include: (Unit 1) The Intercultural Experience of the Immigrant Family, (Unit 2) The Intercultural Experience in Times of War and (Unit 3) The Intercultural Experience in Times of Peace. Because the films themselves are the core materials of the course, it is mandatory to attend each class, participate in discussions and do the required reading for each session.

What Students Say

"When I was asked to be a peer facilitator, I jumped on the opportunity. As someone who's decided to become an educator, I thought it would give me an interesting experience in a classroom—albeit a fairly casual one. I felt like I learned more about those 18 freshmen than I had with a lot of people I met in college. The topics we covered in class were important, but being able to create a group of people who would share and learn was the most encouraging thing I saw each week."

— Ashley Farrand, Peer Student Instructor, Science 100Y



SPRING 2009

Turning to One Another: Beliefs and Behaviors FYS 101A (AH)

Meets the Arts and Humanities General Education Requirement (AH)

Diane Lee Vice

*Provost, Undergraduate and Professional Education
Ph.D., University of Maryland, College Park
E-mail: dlee@umbc.edu*

Jill Randles

*Assistant Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education
M.Ed., Lynchburg College C.A.S., Loyola College
E-mail: jrandles@umbc.edu*



We are witnessing renewed interest in matters related to truth, community, connectedness and spirituality. Concomitant with headlines about war, and other global issues is a vibrant dialogue about social responsibility, moral reasoning, ethical action and the sources of beauty, creativity and passion that give life purpose and meaning.

As we enter the 21st century, we will need people who can lead with head and heart, who can combine the life of the mind with work for the greater good and who exhibit the skills, knowledge, imagination and spirit to create an equitable, sustainable, whole and hopeful world. This course is oriented toward the exploration of questions that are both personal and global in their orientation. For example: What do I believe about others? What is the relationship I want with the earth? When and where do I experience sacredness? There will be opportunities for conversation to occur around topics such as these; literally a “turning to one another” in order to expand and inform our understanding of how our beliefs and behaviors have the power to transform.

Students will enter this exploration by: 1) examining writings related to beliefs and behaviors; 2) discovering different ways spirituality is represented across disciplines and cultures, throughout history and in patterns of involvement and service; and 3) reflecting on class discussions and readings in guided journals.

SPRING 2009

Sexuality, Health and Human Rights **FYS 102G (SS)**

Meets the Social Science General Education Requirement (SS)

Ilsa Lottes

Associate Professor, Sociology and Anthropology

Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

Email: lottes@umbc.edu



Who has the right to access scientific information about individuals' sexuality and sexual health? What privacy rights do people have in their sexual relationships? Who controls when and if one has children? In the last decade, scholars and advocacy organizations have been asking such questions that link sexuality, health and human rights. Increasingly, these linkages are made by human rights advocates, those marginalized by their gender and/or sexuality, feminists and professionals in the health and family planning fields.

In this seminar, we will consider a number of sexuality, health and human rights questions: What are sexual rights? What is meant by sexual health? How important are sexual rights? What characteristics of a society promote or hinder sexual rights? What responsibilities are tied to sexual rights? Do views on sexual rights conflict with the general welfare of society? To what extent do Americans have sexual rights? What laws restrict sexual rights?

Students will become sensitized to views on sexual rights and the reasons/justifications for these various perspectives. In this process they will learn how to critique social science research, evaluate strengths and weaknesses of this research and identify common errors of scientific and everyday reasoning.



SPRING 2009

Dynamics of Problem Solving FYS 103I

Meets the Math General Education Requirement (M)

Shlomo Carmi

Professor, Mechanical Engineering

Ph.D. Aeronautical Engineering, University of Minnesota

E-mail: carmi@umbc.edu



Have you ever considered how problems are defined and then solved? What kinds of questions do you ask when you are confronted with a choice? As you have lived with decisions made by you and others, have you ever wondered if they lead to a good solution? Do you want to play a major role in the decision making process... and understand how to challenge or support the decisions that will define your future?

Since the beginning of time mankind has been involved with problem solving, whether related to one's physical existence or spiritual well being. In this day and age, technology-driven change is impacting the entire spectrum of the human experience. In this course, we will be engaged in exploring the available modern problem solving tools and needed skills. These will then be applied, as we pay careful attention to the human element and to a diverse universe of cultural values.

Through the use of case studies and discussion sessions, students will work independently and in groups to analyze selected problems and arrive at reasonable solutions. We will examine a variety of approaches to solving problems, how problems are perceived with different models formulated and with various degrees of success. These concepts will be applied to real world situations, in order to enhance our decision making skills. Our projects will include models in history, science, engineering and behavioral sciences. Students will present their projects orally, as well as in writing.

Additional Course Requirement: A suitable score on the LRC algebra placement exam for a GEP mathematics course is required.

SPRING 2009

What Should Government Do? **FYS 102E (SS)**

Meets the Social Science General Education Requirements (SS)

Tim Brennan

Professor of Policy Sciences and Economics

Ph.D., Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison

E-mail: brennan@umbc.edu



In thinking about how our society works, have you ever asked yourself questions like:

- What should be “left to the market” rather than handled by the government?
- Should government be able to take money from one person and give it to another?
- Do we have “rights” to services, like health care or education, which the public is obliged to provide?
- How can we possibly decide how much the government should spend to save lives?
- Can there be justified government-imposed limits to privacy or freedom of speech?
- When should the government be able to tell us what to do, and when should we be able to do whatever we want?
- Why should we obey the law?
- When judges decide cases, are they just playing politics?

Cable news channels, network talk shows, op-ed pages and other media outlets are full of opinions on these topics from pundits and politicians. Too often, their assertions are either blatant responses to political clout or gut reactions that public policies are “just unfair.” Our aspiration is to go beyond superficial reactions and parochial politics, to apply ethical and economic principles to policy questions. The object is not to provide answers—many of these questions have been debated for centuries—but to understand what facts and values go into forming our judgments about “what should government do.”

Most of our time will be spent reading, writing and talking about how multidisciplinary perspectives provide sometimes compatible, sometimes conflicting insights into crucial issues facing us as citizens. Students will be expected to think critically about what government does and does not do, and to share their discoveries, assessments and questions with the class.



SPRING 2009

Investigating Everyday Problems and Their Current IT Solutions **FYS 102D (SS)**

Meets the Social Science General Education Requirement (SS)

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As we proceed through a normal day, we are faced with a myriad of small problems ranging from “How can I avoid that traffic jam?” to “What’s the number for the pizza place that delivers?” Other larger problems, such as “Are Maryland’s new voting machines accurate and secure?” and “How do we train our surgeons without putting patients at risk?” also occasionally get our attention.

The purpose of this course is to provide first-year students with an opportunity to study some real-world problems and to see how research is carried out on those problems at UMBC. This course will concentrate on problems currently being studied by members of the computer science and electrical engineering (CSEE) department, but it is interdisciplinary in nature since those problems vary in subject matter tremendously.

- The students will do hands-on exercises designed to familiarize themselves with the current available software solutions for the chosen set of everyday problems being investigated.
- Each student will then choose a problem and work in a group with other students in the class who are interested in that same problem.
- Each group will tour the CSEE lab that is working on their problem and will investigate the research being done at other institutions on their chosen topic.
- Each group will write a paper about their problem, the current state of the solution and the ongoing research in that area.
- Each group will present their paper to the class.
- Near the end of the semester, the students will attend UMBC CSEE’s Research Review Day, where they will listen to presentations and attend a poster session in a conference-like environment.

SPRING 2009

Issues in Biotechnology FYS 103C (S)

Meets the Science General Education Requirement (S)

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Almost every newspaper issue today has one or more articles about how our society is being affected by new advances in biotechnology, and how its impact is controversial. Some of these issues include: cloning, genetic engineering of plants and animals, DNA analysis as a means of determining parentage or involvement in criminal events, development of new medicines and vaccines, the emergence of drug-resistant bacteria, the human and other species' genome project, the origin and genealogy of human groups, etc. For our society to discuss these issues in a rational and thorough manner, it is important to understand the scientific basis for the methods used, their limits and uncertainties and their relationship to other areas of life sciences, medicine, public policy and bioethics. Through directed readings, class discussions and student presentations, this seminar will focus on understanding these various aspects of modern biotechnology with an emphasis on its scientific basis. Practical demonstrations and visits to UMBC labs using biotechnological techniques will be an important part of the course to illustrate how the methods theoretically discussed in class are actually done.

What Students Say

"The first year experience course that I took gave each student and the instructor the opportunity to reflect on personal experiences and beliefs to bring the class to life. The intimate class setting was very welcoming for freshman students since it allowed everyone the chance to make new friends in class. Typically college friends are made through clubs/organizations and student campus events, but this course made everyone realize how different each individual is and the ambience was comforting enough to allow students to become closer and share different beliefs with no fear of being degraded in any way."

— Irene Jawarish, Undeclared major



SPRING 2009

Global Warming FYS 103 (S)

Meets the Science General Education Requirement (S)

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The science of global warming involves a broad understanding of several scientific disciplines (physics, chemistry, math/statistics, biology). The general public has a very poor conception of how scientific consensus is developed on complicated socially-linked issues. This course will review the scientific literature behind this important issue and examine the processes by which scientists try to reach consensus on difficult issues. Students in this course will be challenged to represent and refute the scientific arguments leading to our current understanding of the state-of-the-science and, subsequently, examine the process by which such scientific information can be used to affect the making of public policy.

This will include the development of our current climate over eons (paleoclimate), the variability in modern climate (the last 1000 years), the concept of climate versus weather (the last 100 years), the evolution of our current atmospheric state due to emission of greenhouse gases and aerosols (last 50 years) and the predictions for the next 10, 50 and 100 years.

What Students Say

“My experience taking a First-Year Seminar at UMBC helped me in the transitional process from high school to college. With a small group setting, I was able to share my beliefs and hear diverse perspectives from my peers, which helped me learn about what it means to be a UMBC student.”

— **Brian Frazee, Political Science major**

ABOUT INTRODUCTION TO AN HONORS UNIVERSITY (IHU) SEMINARS:

Consider registering for one of these classes in your first semester; IHU seminars are a great way to satisfy prerequisites as you receive additional support. Most seminars are connected to courses that satisfy either general education or major requirements plus you will have fun getting to know UMBC with other first-year students.

These seminars are offered as an additional component to several of UMBC's introductory courses. They carry one credit and focus on enhancing skills that pertain to college life. For example, students have the opportunity to improve their writing, test taking and time management skills by working with staff and faculty who are committed to student success. Students also have the opportunity to explore many other facets of the college experience, from the research tools of the Albin O. Kuhn library to the importance of cultural diversity on campus and in the world. Additionally, many students value the IHU seminars' focus on personal exploration; the courses examine life-long learning concepts, and can help students identify their own preferred learning styles. They also help students begin to make decisions about their majors and careers, which can be intimidating choices for a first-year student.

Specific skill development varies from course to course and relates directly to the content of each seminar. IHU seminar courses can be found in the Schedule of Classes and are listed with a "Y" as part of the course number. Look for:

AMST 100Y—Ideas and Images in American Culture (AH)

BIO 100Y—Introduction to an Honors University Seminar – Life Science (science, lab course)

ENGL 100Y—English Composition (composition)

ENES 101Y—Introduction to Engineering Science (required for engineering majors)

GES 102Y—Human Geography (SS)

GES 110Y—Physical Geography (science, non-lab)

GES 120Y—Environmental Science and Conservation (science, non-lab)

HIST 111Y—Western Civilization 1700 to the Present (SS)

MATH 106Y—Algebra and Elementary Functions IS 101Y—Introduction to Computer Based Systems

PHED 202—Introduction to Health Behaviors (required for all athletes)

POLI 100Y—American Government and Politics (SS)

SCI 100Y—Water: An Interdisciplinary Study (science, lab course)

SOCY 101Y—Basic Concepts in Sociology (SS)

If you are interested in pre-registering for one of these courses, complete the online registration form located on the Office of Undergraduate Education Web site, www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed. Please note that registrations in English 100Y and Math 106Y require appropriate scores on the UMBC placement exam.



NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Transfer students are welcome as participants in any of the first-year experience courses, but in the Fall of 2008 the Departments of Information Systems and Computer Science will be piloting a course that focuses on the challenges students encounter when transitioning to a new institution. Although the topics covered are like those of any other Introduction to an Honors University (IHU) course, the focus will be on the particular needs of transfer students.

This one-credit course will focus on developing and understanding the skills needed to achieve success at an Honors University, and connect students with resources that will support their success. You will meet faculty and staff who appreciate the contribution transfer students make to the classroom as they recognize the commitments that often compete for a transfer student's time.

Course Goals

From the perspective of a transfer student the goals for the course are:

1. Define the nature of UMBC's academic environment.
2. Identify the essential academic skills for UMBC study.
3. Promote the importance of students' active involvement with the UMBC community for their academic and personal development.
4. Prepare students for their professional lives after graduation.

The Transfer IHUs for Fall 2008 are:

CMSC 291T Special Topics in Computer Science—Transfer Student Success Seminar

Students enrolling in this one-credit seminar must also be registered for any 200-level or higher Computer Science (CMSC) course.

IS 298T Special Topics in Information Systems—Transfer Student Success Seminar

Students enrolling in this one-credit seminar must also be registered for Information Systems (IS) 300.

Visit www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/ihu/ihuregformpilot.html to pre-register for one of these unique opportunities for transfer students.

OTHER FIRST-YEAR OPPORTUNITIES

About LRC 101

College Learning and Study Skills will introduce you to a variety of self-management and study techniques that you can apply to your UMBC coursework and to your personal goals. Academic reading and note taking, goal setting, test-taking, time management and determining your preferred learning style are among the topics covered.

Living-Learning Communities

Watch the mail for housing information that specifically describes UMBC's academic communities that include Aspiring Teachers at UMBC, the Shriver Living-Learning Community (service-learning), Intercultural Living Exchange, the Humanities Floor, the Visual and Performing Arts Living-Learning Community, Women Involved in Learning and Leadership, Center for Women and Information Technology, Honors College Living-Learning Community and the Exploratory Majors Living-Learning Community. Note: Most of the living-learning communities require completion of a second application that can be downloaded from www.umbc.edu/reslife/communities/lrc.html.

Campus Connect

Campus Connect is a program to help UMBC students make the most of their college experience. As the name suggests, the program aims to “connect” students with faculty, staff and student mentor volunteers, whose purpose is to serve as a source of information, guidance, advice and support. Getting in touch with a Campus Connect mentor in your first year could be the best decision you’ll ever make. They are the core of the Campus Connect program, and they are there to be a resource for you. Whether it is giving advice on time management, finding the right person to help with your needs or simply listening to your concerns, a Campus Connect mentor is there to get you on the right track – and keep you there. To sign up for a mentor, visit www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/connect/e-RSVPform.html.

First-Year Council

The mission of the First-Year Council is to engage all new students—freshmen and transfers—in campus life and support students through their transition to becoming active and successful members of the UMBC community. Members of the First-Year Council serve this purpose by creating a supportive and collaborative environment and encourage involvement in student organizations, intramural sports, campus events, student employment and faculty supported research; advocate volunteerism on and off campus; promote leadership development opportunities; and connect students to university resources such as personal development and time management workshops. For more information about how to get involved, contact the Office of Student Life at 410-455-3462 or visit us in The Commons, Suite 336. Make UMBC Yours!

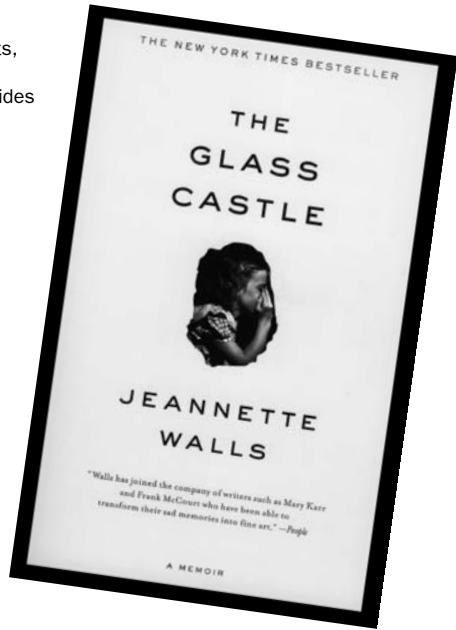


NEW STUDENT BOOK EXPERIENCE

August 25, 2008; 3 – 4 p.m.

UMBC's summer book reading program connects new freshmen and transfer students with other new students, and with faculty and staff members at the start of the academic year. The New Student Book Experience provides an intellectually stimulating interaction that welcomes new students into the UMBC community. Small-group discussions for all entering students are facilitated by UMBC faculty and staff. These discussions allow everyone to come together and get a taste of the sort of discussion that is prevalent in many courses. This experience provides students with the opportunity to share ideas and to relate them back to a common source so that different interpretations may be thoroughly examined and discussed. The benefits of participating in the New Student Book Experience include:

1. The opportunity to participate in the Barbara Simon Memorial Essay Contest. Prizes are awarded to contest winners.
2. Reading and discussion that is good preparation for any class at UMBC, but particularly English 100, which uses the book in assignments throughout the semester.
3. Related campus-wide lectures throughout the year.
4. Preparation for other classes, which discuss topics addressed by the book.



You can get involved in the New Student Book Experience before your first semester by reading the selected text, joining the online discussion board, and participating in small-group discussions during Welcome Week.

This year's selected book, *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, is available at the UMBC bookstore at a 30 percent discount. You can find more information about the book experience, including book reviews, details about the essay contest and information about the selection process, at www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/book/index.html.

SAVE THE DATE

Jeannette Walls will visit UMBC on Wednesday, February 4, 2009. Join us for her lecture at 7 p.m., followed by a reception and book signing.

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

"In my experience with FYE, I have seen my students benefit in ways that have supported their successful transition to UMBC through enhanced knowledge of campus resources, increased peer to peer friendships, better overall engagement in campus life, and improved connections to faculty members in the FYE learning environment."

— **Erin Carter, IHU Instructor**

"My first year seminar course exposed me to the tools of success for college. It has allowed me to become connected, integrated, and involved in the UMBC community."

— **Kristopher dela Cruz, Financial Economics major**

"One of the best experiences I had during my freshman year was that year's New Student Book Discussion. It was 'Cold Mountain' and even the people who hadn't read the book yet got excited about it when they heard us talking about how much we loved it (and we all watched the movie together) and everyone participated in our discussion. To this day, the people from my floor will still bring up things we talked about in our 'Cold Mountain' discussion. It still is the perfect conversation starter."

— **Vanessa Nakoski, American Studies major, 2008 Graduate**

"Teaching an IHU section interactively is challenging, but I learn from students as much as I believe they learn from the IHU experience."

— **Cassie Bichy, IHU Instructor**

"FYE programs provided me with an opportunity to connect with both peers and faculty who provided me with resources I would have otherwise never received. These resources have opened my eyes to the wealth of opportunities available at UMBC, enhancing my experiences on campus ever since I arrived."

— **Tom Davis, Computer Science and Math major**

"Teaching a first-year seminar is one of the best teaching experiences of my career."

— **Dr. Philip Rous, Professor, Physics**