

## **IC101 INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY FRESHMAN SEMINAR THEMES**



One of your first courses in college will be a seminar called "Individual and Community." It will be a small group -- maximum 19 -- that will give you a jumping-off point for later core curriculum courses. Each class will explore the tension between the individual and the community from a particular point of view, designed by the professor. These classes all have the same goals, but they journey there by different routes. We hope you enjoy the trip!

**Please note on your pink Academic Preference Form your top three thematic choices for your IC101 freshman seminar class.**

### **Theme 1: Circles Within Circles: Membership and Leadership in Diverse Communities**

This class will examine themes such as solitude and connection. We will look at the values of contributing to a strong community, and also at the tension between community norms and individual creativity. Through the vehicle of contemporary issues-local through global-we will address the question of how we become critical thinkers and leaders of conscience.

### **Theme 2: Food & Farming**

We all like to eat. How much thought goes into where your food is grown and how it is produced or processed? What is the difference between organic and non-organic? What is a localvore? What is slow food? We will look at agriculture and the food industry, the effects that agriculture has on the environment, the local economy, tourism and the local community. This course will be interesting to students interested in Environmental Science, Biology or eating.

### **Theme 3: Identity and Community in a Mediated World**

This course examines the concepts of individual and community as they apply to both traditional and more current interpretations. The course culminates in the examination of fan participation in online communities. The course also emphasizes civic engagement, includes ongoing participation in Fitzwater Tuesday Briefings, and is especially recommended for mass communication majors.

### **Theme 4: Students as Voters in America**

In the age of the 24/7 news cycle, you are flooded with streams of information unavailable to and unimaginable by previous generations of Americans. Public officials and seekers of public office are in non-stop campaign mode always worried about their image in the eyes of the American public. Does this focus on image work to the advantage or disadvantage of the voters? On the one hand, politicians, more than ever, are attentive to elections, but on the other hand, there are more incentives for substance to take a back seat to issues. How has the political process and, in turn, our sense of community changed as we move through the information age? What do these changes mean to the influence of voters in the process and to their values? What are the big issues facing your society as you enter college and prepare for your future? How can you, the students, as voters influence the American political process? A review of historical trends and contemporary issues will help us shed light on such concerns. This course suits students interested in politics, public affairs, and the news.

### **Theme 5: Coming of Age: Where are You Going and Where have you Been?**

The course will explore the terrain that students traverse as they transition from adolescence to adulthood, particularly as it applies to their lives as college students. Students who enjoy reading and writing will find this class a good match, particularly if they enjoyed reading works such as *The Catcher in the Rye*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Song of Solomon*, and/or the *Glass Menagerie* (though we won't be reading these texts). All course readings and activities will pertain to and explore this theme as well as how "Coming of Age" is connected to issues of a liberal arts education, civic engagement and the TeaCH goals of FPU. This course would be especially appropriate for students interested in English, Psychology, Sociology, American Studies, Education or those who enjoy reading and writing.

### **Theme 6: Telling the Story: Documentary Studies, Community Life and Social Change**

Students will examine the individual's place in contemporary society through the lens of life in the local communities and towns of the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire where Franklin Pierce University is located. The course will provide an introduction to the documentary research tradition, explore different documentary genres and discuss collaboration, ethics, and community outreach. During the semester, students will develop their basic documentary skills by producing either an audio or video documentary or a photo essay aimed at telling their own stories and documenting the lives of others and/or fostering social change on an issue. This course is a good choice for students who are interested in the artistry of telling stories about real life people and society through video, photography, sound and writing, which is applicable in almost any academic major.

### **Theme 7: The Historian and the Community**

This course explores the connections between history, memory, community, and self-identity. Readings, writing assignments, and activities will be used to simulate thinking about various issues in American history and culture. This course is particularly useful for students who are interested in History, Public History, Secondary Education and Social Studies, Law, Anthropology, and related fields.

### **Theme 8: Identity: Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender in the United States**

This course will introduce students to basic concepts of identity through writings of social scientists, physical scientists, political commentators, poets and literary writers. The course is divided into three main divisions: a) *Identity*, examines the many layers that make up our social selves.; b) *Power*, considers how our lives are shaped by social forces; c) *Change*, considers how we can effect personal and social transformation. This course would be appropriate for students interested in a multidisciplinary approach to the social sciences and the arts and humanities (i.e., history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, education, economics, criminal justice, philosophy, literature).

### **Theme 9: Developing Applied Creativity**

Innovation is the key to our future. In this course the students will learn how to tap into their creative potential on demand. The class will explore various ideas from the field of creativity studies and balance theory and with practice. What is learned in the course will be useful during the students' college careers and beyond. This course will be of interest to students who are thinking about studying business, science, social science and education.

### **Theme 10: The Power of One**

This class for those who want to work across the globe. We read *How to Re-imagine the World* by Anthony Weston to start you on your way. We'll investigate careers which will take you abroad. Then we'll meet area residents who have individually developed projects in Haiti and the Lakota Sioux reserve, worked for International Adoptions and for Doctors Without Borders and the Peace Corps. Open your imaginations, dream big and take your gifts planet-wide. This course is for students who want to explore the planet and the opportunities that are available for working and studying abroad.

### **Theme 11: The Medium and the Message: The Power of Design to Influence Behavior**

This course will look at some the freedoms that we enjoy in this country, the opportunity we have to express them, and the persuasive power of pop culture and the media to motivate people to action. Students will experience diverse messaging through film, tv, and the printed medium, and be given the chance to respond to the messaging using several different vehicles of communication. Student project will include creating and designing a campaign intended to influence behavior and move people to action. This course might be interesting to students interested in Graphic Communications and Mass Communications.

### **Theme 12: Reading and Writing at the University: Development and Study of Academic Literacy**

In this class we study the general patterns of literacy popular in the academy. We seek to learn about the "identity kit" that results from membership in this highly influential discourse community. This course is appropriate for students interested in education, literacy, and discourse communities.

### **Theme 13: Why Did I Do That?: Choices, Attitudes and Behaviors**

Designed for students who might explore Psychology or Social Work and Counseling, this course deals with behaviors, individual choices, motivation, and attitudes prevalent in our society and why people do them from a psychological basis. Class discussion is geared toward helping freshmen acclimate to the new college environment and help them understand behaviors prevalent in many young adults.

### **Theme 14: The Pursuit of Happiness: The Good Life, the Common Good, and You**

Democracy is about the heart as well as the intellect. Terry Tempest Williams has written, "The human heart is the first home of democracy. It is where we embrace our questions. Can we be equitable? Can we be generous? Can we listen with our whole beings, not just our minds, and offer our attention rather than our opinions?" Using a hands-on approach, students will identify an issue that is personally meaningful to them, write a discussion guide that explores the topic from various perspectives, and lead a public forum. The seminar will assist students in further developing writing, research, and leadership skills as well as a deeper understanding of how much of our lives is really under our own control and how much is determined by the social forces that surround each of us. This course is designed for students who are interested in ethical dilemmas in an array of professional fields, including American Studies, Criminal Justice, Education, English, Environmental Science, History, Mass Communication, Philosophy, Political Science, Pre-Law, Psychology, and Sociology.

### **Theme 15: How to THINK like a college student**

We will explore critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving particularly as it applies to the student's college career. In-class and out-of-class activities, readings, and writing assignments during the semester will focus on acquiring skills as well as bring out one's innate talents. The skills learned will improve success in college courses, help students adjust to being an adult individual in a college community, as well as carry the students further along their chosen career paths. This course may appeal students interested in psychology, science, and mathematics.

### **Theme 16: Wilderness or Wal-Mart: Public goods and private rights in land management**

What is nature, who owns it and how should it be managed? Is land a resource for humans to use, or is it a natural sanctuary that we need to leave alone? What are the individual's rights and responsibilities in owning and using land, and should the larger community be able to control these uses? In this class we will consider these questions as we study the plants and wildlife of FPU's 1000 acres of undeveloped fields, forests and wetlands, to determine what actions should be taken to balance human uses and natural processes. Students taking this class should have a strong interest in environmental science, and should enjoy spending time outdoors!