University Courses

UNIV 0123. Practical Introduction to Peer Advising.
A defining part of Brown’s Open Curriculum is the central role that students play in supporting the learning of their peers. In this class, you – in community with your classmates as potential future peer advisors – will learn best practices in inclusive advising pedagogy while exploring specific academic, co-curricular, professional, and social challenges, opportunities, and resources at Brown. Coursework includes self-reflection, peer-to-peer sharing, hands-on exercises, and theoretical readings that culminate in a group project exploring an advising area of interest and importance to you. Those who successfully complete this course will receive preference for funded peer advising positions within the College, including the Meiklejohn Peer Advising program. (Mandatory S/NC, Half-Credit Course restricted to semester levels 01 to 06.)

We begin with the chronicle of a great scientific quest: the 19th-century search for the structure of molecules. A consensus was reached only after many decades of experiments, interpretations and misinterpretations, polarisms, and controversies both scientific and personal. Our purpose is to show how theories are shaped and to give insight into the human dimensions of science. We next detail the transfer of the new chemistry to the marketplace, from its beginnings in the synthetic dye industry. Finally, we conclude with the role of chemistry in World War I.

UNIV 0300. The Hispanic Experience in the United States.
This seminar will consider how Hispanics are transforming the United States even as they evolve as a people. We will discuss Hispanicity as an ethnic and racial identity, debate the ethical dilemmas posed by undocumented immigration, the significance of the unprecedented geographic dispersal, and what the burgeoning second generation portends for the future contours of economic inequality.

UNIV 0333. Contemplative Approaches to Living and Dying.
One of the central components of a religious tradition are beliefs about the meaning of human existence—a meaning that is constructed in relation to the significance of one’s inevitable death, the nature of the afterlife, and conceptions of salvation. These core beliefs also deeply inform the ethics, rituals, and contemplative practices of religious communities. Through an investigation of four case studies, this course will explore how different religious traditions orient human life in relationship to a meaningful death. Particular emphasis will be placed on contemplative practices for skillful living and dying and on relating to death through rituals.

UNIV 0400. Beyond Narnia: The Literature of C.S. Lewis.
C.S. Lewis was one of the most widely read authors of the 20th Century, yet much of his philosophical, theological and political theories are unfamiliar. His fiction and philosophical writings will be explored to better understand his perspective on modern humanity, the relationship of man to family, the community and the state. C.S. Lewis had a very clear philosophy on the importance of the individual and how he relates to the larger social structures. Morality and the role of individuals as they interface with others around them and their responsibility for working with society both at community level and at the macro-state level will be explored.
UNIV 0456. Exploring Career Options.
It's normal to know what you want to do for the rest of your life, or even for the next few months. You're definitely not the only one who doesn’t have it figured out yet. This course is designed to help you begin the process of identifying and reflecting on your skills, interests, values, and strengths to help you consider and explore internships, jobs, and career fields that might interest you. The course will also introduce you to internship and job search skills – resume, cover letter and LinkedIn profile writing, networking, interviewing, and negotiating – as well as frameworks to help you approach career-related decision making. (Mandatory S/NC. Half-Credit Course restricted to undergraduate students in semester levels 03 or 04.)

UNIV 0500. A Comparative Phenomenology of Mystical Experience.
Mystical experience – personal engagement with an ultimate reality— is found in virtually all cultures, in explicitly religious and deliberately secular guises. It has received extraordinarily diverse appraisals: some have acclaimed it “the only truth there is,” while others have been executed for asserting it. This course examines the nature of mystical experience and the variety of its manifestations in and out of the world’s major religious traditions. Students will read broadly in primary sources and engage two contemporary theoretical questions: Is mystical experience conditioned by exclusively socio-cultural factors? Is it possible to derive an ethic from mystical experience? Enrollment limited to 16.

UNIV 0550. The Politics of European Integration and Disintegration.
What began as a post-war organization of six states to regulate coal and steel industries has evolved over seven decades into a Union of 26 states to regulate an extensive range of political, economic, and social issues at the transnational level. Viewed from this perspective, the project of European integration has been a remarkable success story. The EU has been engulfed in a seemingly endless series of crises that have seriously threatened the functioning of its institutions and the future of the project of European integration. Participation by President Simmons depends on her availability. Interested students should apply using the application found at http://www.brown.edu/administration/presidential_senior/ Applications are due by April 30th.

UNIV 0700. Story and Sound: Introduction to Audio Journalism and Storytelling.
Storytelling and interviewing have long been tools in the social sciences. Their importance has grown as smart phones have put the ability to record sound and video into everyone’s hand. Nowhere is the egalitarian nature of storytelling more apparent now than in podcasting, a format that’s come to occupy a growing role among researchers and scholars. This course asks students to develop critical abilities to analyze and interpret works of audio journalism and podcasting, and create their own. Students learn the fundamentals of nonfiction storytelling and the specifics of audio and podcast production. They’ll learn about how audio fits into an ever-changing media landscape, and learn to think critically about what stories are told and why. Students learn the fundamentals of audio journalism, including finding and identifying stories, conducting interviews, writing for radio, editing, and sound design.

UNIV 0701. Fascism: 1933-Present.
The resurgence of ethno-nationalist and populist movements has upended the liberal democratic consensus of the past half century in the form of authoritarian politics in Europe and America, many have questioned whether we are witnessing a return of Fascism. As a political worldview believed to have been defeated at the end of WWII, Fascism nevertheless continues to represent the anxiety looming over the liberal political order. This class will examine the intellectual history of Fascism as a politics of identity, from interwar Europe to the present day and interrogate its meaning today.

UNIV 1001. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Contested Narratives.
The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a central event in the history of the modern Middle East. We will compare the radically different narratives that Palestinians and Israelis tell themselves and others about their struggle over Palestine/Israel. Sources will include historical documents, memoirs, and accounts of the conflict by Israeli and Palestinian historians. We will read works of fiction and view films that present the story of the conflict from both perspectives. Attention will also be paid to efforts by Israelis and Palestinians to transcend their conflicting narratives and attain mutual understanding. All sources in English translation.

In this course, we will examine how competing heritage narratives of the city of Jerusalem have been shaped by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim histories and beliefs, as well as by Israeli, Palestinian, and international views and interests. We will explore the impact of media portrayal, educational platforms, and archaeological explorations in the contexts of social, religious, and political debates from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. At the focus will be the question of the city’s indivisible heritage and boundaries that divide the city and its communities.

In this course, we will study narrative accounts of 20th-century American incidents in which racism led to the persecution of members of minority groups by means of lynchings, miscarriages of justice, or the placement of people in internment camps: the unjustly conducted trial and lynching of the Jewish factory manager Leo Frank accused of murdering a young girl in Georgia; the kidnapping and murder of African American adolescent Emmett Till in Mississippi; and the internment of Japanese descendants during World War II out of fear that they would aid America’s enemy.

Immigrants own over a quarter of newly established businesses, despite accounting for less than 15 percent of the total U.S. population. 45 percent of immigrant business owners are women. These entrepreneurs have developed businesses in various industries including healthcare and medicine, biotech, hospitality, food services, garment and technology. Course traces U.S. history of 18th century immigrant entrepreneurs (Italians, Germans, ethnic and religious affiliated Jews) to more recent entrepreneurs from countries such as China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Cuba. We examine today’s emerging immigrant entrepreneurs including Mexicans and Filipinos, and among the more recent immigrant groups, including Vietnamese, Cambodians, Ethiopians, Eritreans.

UNIV 1100. Imagining an Equitable University.
The course studies moments over the past half century in which the University was faced with a need to be more inclusive, with an emphasis on issues of race and gender. Our goal is to create an alternative history of Brown that enables new voices to evaluate how the process of governance has worked. Participation by President Simmons depends on her availability. Interested students should apply using the application found at http://www.brown.edu/administration/presidential_senior/ Applications are due by April 30th.

UNIV 1110. The Theory and Teaching of Problem Solving.
What is a problem and how do you solve one? What relationship exists between problem-solving and teaching? This course is designed for STEM focused students (but it is open to all) who are teaching/will teach and are interested in improving their problem-solving and teaching. You will gain the skills that will aid you in your own learning, promote learning in others, improve communication and problem-solving capabilities, and prepare you to engage more deeply in diverse learning spaces. In the final weeks of the course you will apply concepts to a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project that focuses on improving/examining problem-solving and/or teaching in your field. S/NC.
UNIV 1111. Unmasked: Together We Gather.
This unique, not-for-credit course is a way to connect students and build community via intellectual discussion on a variety of relevant themes and contemporary ideas. We shall consider the following questions (among others): How has Covid-19 effected our sense of freedom? Is anger a prerequisite for social activism towards racial justice? What is political success in this extremely polarized moment? Is power always hierarchical?
All Brown students may attend any number of the meetings. Each session will highlight a different theme (e.g., Freedom, Power, Love, Loneliness, Hope, Success, Rage, Death, etc.) and feature a brief reflection by the professor, a presentation by a group of students on a topic related to the theme, and a discussion for all participants.

Considers the ethical tradition in the sciences, and the ways in which ethical issues are engaged in science. Readings and case study examples are drawn from a range of fields, including engineering, chemistry, physics, astronomy and the biological sciences. The seminar has been designated with NSF funding, and is being co-taught at Brown University, Zhejiang University in China and the Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay. The three sections of this seminar will meet together to share international perspectives several times during the semester. Enrollment limited to 25. Not open to freshmen.

UNIV 1207. Eco-Entrepreneurship.
Environmental, business, and social opportunities are often seen as being at odds. This course is a hands-on, interactive journey to explore bringing an impactful idea for an environmental product/service/solution into the world and designing a business plan to do so. You will identify an environmental area of opportunity, learn how to focus on the problem before the solution, identify the key stakeholders including your users/customers, and build a business model. You will look at the triple bottom line, and learn new tools, best practices, and frameworks to breathe life into your solution and make it viable. Instructions for submitting a personal statement before enrolling will be available in the syllabus.

This course is only open to students participating in the Brown Experiential Learning Pilot Program and is required for their participation. The course is centered around a challenging 20-hour/week internship with a Biotechnology or Life Sciences company or in a Campaign, which provides an immersive experiential learning opportunity. Seminar sessions, workshops, guest speakers, and reading and writing assignments enable students to reflect on their internship experiences, contextualize their work and organization within the broader environments, and develop academic and professional skills.

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UNIV 1400. The Cultural History of Disability Minorities in the United States.
Due to the efforts of people with disabilities to secure their civil rights, "disability" has begun to be perceived as a social identity and role rather than solely a medical condition. This course analyzes the cultural history of disability, giving attention to cross-cultural comparisons. Broad topics include: concepts of disability; disability and bioethics; images of disability in film, the media, art, and literature; and political movements of people with disabilities.

UNIV 1520. The Shaping of World Views.
To many students, an exclusive emphasis on specialized studies fragments the "world" in which they live. A widespread feeling of loss pervades the minds of students who often come to universities to learn right from wrong, to distinguish what is true from what is false, but who realize at the end of four years that they have deconstructed their freshman beliefs, values, and ideologies, but have created nothing to replace them. This course examines the diversity of worldviews both synchronically and diachronically and surveys various explanations for such diversity. Enrollment limited to 30. Conducted in English.

UNIV 1700. Transformation of the Research University.
This seminar will focus on recent transformations of the academic, instructional and administrative character of the elite American research universities. Emphasis will be on selected pressure points (such as research funding, diversity, technology, market influence) that drive change and shape the future.

UNIV 1702. Discrimination and Public Policy.
This course examines structural discrimination and interpersonal discrimination as possible drivers of race, gender, and social class inequalities primarily within the U.S. but also in other parts of the world. Key questions involve: What is (and what is not) discrimination? How do social scientists measure discrimination? What do differing methods allow us (and not allow us) to say about the existence and mechanisms of discrimination? What are the consequences of discrimination? What are possible policy approaches to addressing discrimination?

This course is a required 2-credit course for students participating in the Brown in Washington, D.C. program. The course is centered around a challenging 30-hour/week internship in a public-sector or not-for-profit organization in Washington, D.C., which provides an immersive experiential learning opportunity at an organization or agency involved in the public policy process. Seminar sessions, workshops, field trips, and reading and writing assignments enable students to reflect on their internship experiences, contextualize their work and organization within the broader DC policy environment, and develop academic and professional skills.

Fall UNIV1801 S01 18115 M 2:00-5:00(01) (S. Montgomery)

This course is designed for master's students. This half-credit course provides an overview of a range of skills to prepare entering master's students for success in their academic program and in their career. The course engages faculty and staff from across the university, to both provide training in key skills and to give students connections to useful resources to support them throughout their program. Students will develop a foundation for professional career development and career searches, as well as becoming familiar with many of the resources available at Brown to support their professional development.