

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR:  
*The Self in the World*

Fall 2019  
(Monday / Wednesday schedule)

As you embark upon your life as college students and grow into your roles as citizens of the wider world, questions about your place in that world become more urgent. First Year Seminar invites you to reflect on how writers and thinkers past and present have grappled with the question of how the self relates to other people and to the wider community. The year-long course is underpinned by two narratives of discovery and (self-) exploration: Homer's ancient Greek epic, the *Odyssey*, and its latter-day adaptation, the Afro-Caribbean epic poem *Omeros* by Derek Walcott (1990). Along the way, we will read — slowly and carefully — a series of touchstone works that grapple with this central question of the self in the world from a wide range of perspectives: from the fragments of Sappho to the autobiography of Frederick Douglass, and from Dante's *Inferno* to Rabindranath Tagore's classic Bengali novel, *The Home and the World*. The readings in these core works will be illuminated by companion texts from *Genesis* to Marx and Freud. Seminar-style discussion and writing-rich assignments will ask you to consider how ideas about "citizenship," both broadly and narrowly defined, have emerged over the centuries as responses to the complex relations between the self and the wider world, providing you with a foundation for your work at the College and for life beyond Bard. In addition to your work in the classroom, the whole first-year class will also come together in regular forums, held on Monday afternoons, to engage creatively and critically with the ideas of the course.

***Required Texts***

Walcott, D. 1992. *Omeros*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. ISBN 978-0374523503

Carson, A. 2003. *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho*. Knopf (Vintage). ISBN 978-0375410673

Euripides, *Ion, Helen, Orestes*. 2016. Translated by Svarlien, D. A. Hackett. ISBN: 9781624665714

Virgil, *Aeneid*. 1981. Translated by Mandelbaum, A. Random House (Bantam Classics). ISBN: 9780553210415

Dante, *Inferno*. 1996. Translated by Pinsky, R. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. ISBN 9780374524524

Shakespeare, W. *The Tempest*. 2016. ed. Holland, P. Penguin, Pelican Classics. ISBN 978-0143128632

**\*\* In addition, you are required to purchase the First Year Seminar Course Reader from the Bard Bookstore, which contains important additional texts that will be used in class. The Course Reader contains materials for the whole year of First Year Seminar. \*\***

***Course Requirements***

• **Writing:** Students are expected to complete all three major writing assignments, and to engage seriously with the process of revision that is built into the writing process.

• **Attendance and participation:** Students are expected to attend and contribute constructively to all classes. If students are absent one or two times, their final grade will not be affected. If they are absent three, four, or five times, their final grade will be affected. If they are absent six or more times, they will fail the course.

Only if students are experiencing extraordinary medical or personal emergencies, as attested by a letter from the Dean of Students Office or a documented accommodation plan from the Disability Support Services Office or the Title IX Office, will additional absences be allowed. An excessively late arrival in class or an unexcused departure from the middle of class counts as an absence.

• **Monday Forum Events:** All First-Year Seminar students are expected to attend the regular Monday forum events at 4.45pm. These are an important part of the course, designed to enrich your learning and make the course a common experience.

• **Academic honesty:** First Year Seminar will follow and strictly enforce the Bard College policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty (<http://www.bard.edu/dosa/handbook/index.php?aid=1201&sid=705>). It is your responsibility to read it and make sure you understand what it says. Any student who plagiarizes all or part of a paper (including passing off work from another class as a First Year Seminar paper) will receive a failing grade for this course.

### ***Final Grade***

Writing assignment #1 and revision	25%
Writing assignment #2 and revision	25%
Writing assignment #3 and revision	25%
Attendance, participation, and other assignments	25%

### ***Suggested Reading Assignments:***

#### **1. THE SELF IN THE WORLD**

##### Week 1

*Mon. Sept. 2: Introductions*

*Wed. Sept. 4: Walcott, Omeros chapters 1-8*

##### Week 2

*Mon. Sept. 9: Walcott, Omeros chapters 9-19*

*Wed. Sept. 11: Walcott, Omeros chapters 20-32*

##### Week 3

*Mon. Sept. 16: Walcott, Omeros chapters 33-49*

*Wed. Sept. 18: Walcott, Omeros chapters 50-64*

#### **2. FRAGMENTED SELVES**

##### Week 4

*Mon. Sept. 23:* Sappho p. 3-177; Course reader: Selections from Herodotus (book 2, sections 134-5) and additional Sappho poems

*Wed. Sept. 25:* Sappho p. 178-355; Course reader: Selections from Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Week 5

*Mon. Sept. 30:* Euripides, *Helen* p. 91-130. Course reader: Selections from Herodotus (book 1, sections 1-5)

*Wed. Oct. 2:* Euripides, *Helen* p. 130-75

Week 6

*Mon. Oct. 7:* Virgil, *Aeneid* books 1-2

*Wed. Oct. 9:* Virgil, *Aeneid* books 3-4

3. THE SELF AND THE STATE

Week 7

*Mon. Oct. 14:* **NO CLASS, FALL BREAK**

*Wed. Oct. 16:* Virgil, *Aeneid* books 5-6

Week 8

*Mon. Oct. 21:* Virgil, *Aeneid* books 7-8; Course reader: selections from *The Broken Spears*

*Wed. Oct. 23:* Virgil, *Aeneid* books 9-10

Week 9

*Mon. Oct. 28:* Virgil, *Aeneid* 11-12

*Wed. Oct. 30:* Course reader: selections from Ovid and Akhmatova

4. THE SELF AND THE SOUL

Week 10

*Mon. Nov. 4:* Dante, *Inferno* cantos 1-3; Course reader: *Genesis* 1-3

*Wed. Nov. 6:* Dante, *Inferno* cantos 4-8; Course reader: Al-Ma'arri, *The Epistle of Forgiveness*

Week 11

*Mon. Nov. 11:* Dante, *Inferno* cantos 9-17

*Wed. Nov. 13:* Dante, *Inferno* cantos 18-22

Week 12

*Mon. Nov. 18:* Dante, *Inferno* cantos 23-30

*Wed. Nov. 20:* Dante, *Inferno* cantos 31-34; Course reader: Levi, *If This Is a Man*

5. THE SELF INTO MODERNITY

Week 13

*Mon. Nov. 25:* Shakespeare, *Tempest* Act 1

*Wed. Nov. 27:* Shakespeare, *Tempest* Acts 2-3

Week 14

*Mon. Dec. 2:* Course reader: Selections from Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*

*Wed. Dec. 4:* Shakespeare, *Tempest* Acts 4-5

## Week 15

*Mon. Dec. 9: Conclusions*

*Wed. Dec. 11: NO CLASS, ADVISING DAYS*

## Week 16

*Mon. Dec. 16: NO CLASS, COMPLETION DAYS*

*Wed. Dec. 18: NO CLASS, COMPLETION DAYS*

## ***Resources***

- **The Stevenson Library:**

<http://www.bard.edu/library>

Library Hours: [www.bard.edu/library/hours.php](http://www.bard.edu/library/hours.php)

Stevenson Library has everything you need to research, write, and cite your work. In addition to print and online resources, computers, printers, and spaces for quiet study and group work, our staff is here to help you every step of the way.

If you have questions about finding sources, citing your work properly, or anything else about doing research, you can:

- Stop by the reference desk on the first floor--or text, chat, email or call us. Just click on the Ask a Librarian link from the library homepage to find out how to contact us.
- Reach out to your House Librarian:  
Coulter House: Kate Laing ([claing@bard.edu](mailto:claing@bard.edu))  
McKenzie House: Amber Billey ([billey@bard.edu](mailto:billey@bard.edu))  
McWilliams House: Alexa Murphy ([amurphy@bard.edu](mailto:amurphy@bard.edu))  
Yauch House: Jeremy Hall ([jhall@bard.edu](mailto:jhall@bard.edu))

Stevenson Library also offers writing support for students. Just make an appointment with Jane Smith, Associate Director of Library Writing Support, for a one-on-one consultation. To contact her, request a writing appointment (online: <http://www.bard.edu/Library/writing-support.php>), email [jesmith@bard.edu](mailto:jesmith@bard.edu), or pop by her office in Stevenson 406.

The library keeps all FYSEM books and readings on Reserve. You can check these out on the third floor at the Reserves desk for 3 hours at a time. Visit the First Year Seminar library guide for helpful information and advice about close reading, writing, and revision:

<https://libguides.bard.edu/c.php?g=698777>

- **The Learning Commons:** Bard's writing center and academic support program welcomes faculty and all Bard students to our socially-structured space. We train peer tutors in practices for engaging the social, collaborative aspects of learning. The BLC writing program provides tutoring for every stage of the writing, research, and revision process. We also offer one-on-one and group tutoring in all subjects taught at the college; individualized academic assistance; study rooms; "Shut Up & Write!" reading-room events; assistance for students with disabilities; ESL support; and credit-bearing courses in composition pedagogy, writing, developmental math, English as a second language, inclusive pedagogies, and public speaking. The Learning Commons is in the basement of Stone Row, across the quad from Old Henderson. Our website contains useful handouts for faculty members involved in teaching writing and using writing

as a tool for exploring ideas in their courses. Examples include “Bringing Writing into the Classroom,” “Nine Ways to Spend a Class on Writing,” and “Commenting Effectively on Student Writing.” Research on and methods of active reading and collaborative learning is also available for faculty. Contact: The Learning Commons at [blc@bard.edu](mailto:blc@bard.edu) or (845) 758-7812, or Jim Keller, Director at [keller@bard.edu](mailto:keller@bard.edu) or (845) 758-7051. See you in the BLC!

Visit our web page here: <http://www.bard.edu/learningcommons>

- **The Center for Student Life and Advising:** The Center for Student Life and Advising comprises the offices of the Dean of Student Affairs, the Dean of Studies, and the Chaplaincy. It provides academic and personal advice as well as mentorship to students throughout their time at the College. Contact the Center at [csla@bard.edu](mailto:csla@bard.edu). The two staff members in charge of the first-year class are Alexis Lopez, Assistant Dean of Students (for students with last names beginning with A-K), Sottery Hall 108, 845-758-7454 at [alopez@bard.edu](mailto:alopez@bard.edu), and Kaet Heupel, Assistant Dean of Studies (for students with last names beginning with L-Z), Sottery Hall 107, 845-758-7454, at [kheupel@bard.edu](mailto:kheupel@bard.edu). See also <http://www.bard.edu/csla>.

- **The Counseling Service:** The Counseling Service has six counselors. They offer individual short-term counseling as well as a variety of talks, workshops, therapy and support groups, walk-in counseling options, and trainings. Their office is in Robbins Annex on North Campus. Contact the counselors at [counselingservice@bard.edu](mailto:counselingservice@bard.edu) or at 845-758-7433. See also <http://www.bard.edu/counseling/about>.

- **The Chaplaincy:** The Chaplaincy is available for pastoral care and conversation with students.

Contact: The Rev. Mary Grace Williams, (Christian chaplain) at [mwilliams@bard.edu](mailto:mwilliams@bard.edu) or 203-858-8800

Rabbi David Nelson (Jewish chaplain) at [nelson@bard.edu](mailto:nelson@bard.edu)

Sankai Lemmens (Buddhist chaplain) at [sankai@dharma.net](mailto:sankai@dharma.net)

Nora Zaki (Muslim chaplain) at [nzaki@bard.edu](mailto:nzaki@bard.edu)

<http://www.bard.edu/chaplaincy>