SYLLABUS FOR FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR FACULTY
(for a Tuesday/Thursday class schedule)

Bard College
First-Year Seminar

THE SELF IN THE WORLD

Spring 2020

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


** 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. **
In line with Bard’s commitment to Equity, Access and Inclusion, the College is in the process of establishing a permanent book fund to assist any student who is having difficulty affording the course materials. We have secured a limited amount of funds for Spring 2020. If you would benefit from accessing this fund, please email fysem@bard.edu by Friday February 7.

Statement on Accessibility

Bard College is committed to providing equal access to all students. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. Together we can plan how best to support your learning and coordinate your accommodations. Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations through disability services should share their accommodation letter and make arrangements to meet as soon as possible.

Have a learning difference or disability – including mental health, medical, or physical impairment – and are not yet registered? Please contact Disability Support Services at disabilityservices@bard.edu. The Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

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 20%
Writing assignment #2 and revision 35%
Writing assignment #3 and revision 20%
Attendance, participation, and other assignments 25%

Suggested Schedule:

1. THE SELF AND THE HUMAN

Week 1
Tue. Jan. 28: Introductions
Thu. Jan. 30: Shelley, Frankenstein, Volume 1

Week 2
Tue. Feb. 4: Shelley, Frankenstein Volume 2
Thu. Feb. 6: Shelley, Frankenstein Volume 3

Week 3
Mon. Feb 10: 4:45 pm: Forum event: Dan-el Padilla Peralta, “Title TBA” (Sosnoff Theater)
Tue. Feb. 11: Course reader: Selections from Rousseau

2. THE SELF IN HISTORY

Thu. Feb. 13: Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life, Preface and Chapters 1-4

Week 4
Tue. Feb. 18: Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life, Chapters 5-10
Thu. Feb. 20: Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life, Chapter 11 and Appendix. Writing assignment #1 due

Week 5
Tue. Feb. 25: Frederick Douglass, “The Dred Scott Decision” and “The Significance of the Emancipation in the West Indies,” The Portable Frederick Douglass p. 248-291; Course reader: US Constitution
Thu. Feb. 27: Karl Marx, Communist Manifesto, Preamble and chapters 1-2

Week 6
Tue. Mar. 3: Karl Marx, Communist Manifesto, Chapters 3-4; Course reader: Federalist Papers 10 and 54.

3. NARRATING THE SELF

Thu. Mar. 5: Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway p. 1-29 (top of page). Writing assignment #1 revision due

Week 7
Tue. Mar. 10: Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway p. 29-117 (“...approaching his door.”)
Thu. Mar. 12: Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway p. 117 (“The sound of Big Ben…”)-165
Week 8
Thu. Mar. 19: Course reader: Selections from Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman

Week 9
*Spring Recess* – No classes on Tue. Mar. 24 and Thu. Mar. 26

4. THE SELF AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Week 10
Tue. Mar. 31: Tagore, *The Home and the World*, Chapters 1-4

Week 11
Tue. Apr. 7: Tagore, *The Home and the World*, Chapters 7-10; Course reader: Marx, “The British Rule in India”

5. THE SELF IN THE WORLD #2

Week 12
Tue. Apr. 14: *The Odyssey* 1; Course reader: *Arabian Nights*, prologue
Thu. Apr. 16: *The Odyssey*, 2-4. **Writing assignment #2 revision due**

Week 13
Mon. Apr. 20: **4.45pm: Forum event: Panel discussion on first-year curricula, “Title TBA”** (Sosnoff Theater)
Tue. Apr. 21: *The Odyssey*, 5-8
Thu. Apr. 23: *The Odyssey*, 9-12

Week 14
Tue. Apr. 28: *Advising Day* – No class
Thu. Apr. 30: *The Odyssey*, 13-16. **Writing assignment #3 due**

Week 15
Tue. May 5: *The Odyssey*, 17-20
Thu. May 7: *The Odyssey* 21-24

Week 16
Tue. May 12: Conclusions
Thu. May 14: *Completion Day* – No class. **Writing assignment #3 revision due**
Resources

• The Stevenson Library:
  http://www.bard.edu/library
  Library Hours: 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)
    McKenzie House: Amber Billey (billey@bard.edu)
    McWilliams House: Alexa Murphy (amurphy@bard.edu)
    Yauch House: Jeremy Hall (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, 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 or (845) 758-7812, or Jim Keller, Director at 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. 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, 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. 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 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 or 203-858-8800
Rabbi David Nelson (Jewish chaplain) at nelson@bard.edu
Sankai Lemmens (Buddhist chaplain) at sankai@dharma.net
Nora Zaki (Muslim chaplain) at nzaki@bard.edu

http://www.bard.edu/chaplaincy