

Suffolk University

College of Arts and Sciences

Fall 2025 First-Year Seminars

All CAS students should select one first-year seminar (SF) course to take during their first semester. If you are part of the CAS Honors program, you are required to take an honors section of the first year seminar. These courses can be found towards the end of the packet and typically include the word Honors in the title.

This document is meant to be used as a guide. Please log onto Workday to view the most up to date course availability.

SF 1129 – Beacon Hill: Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy

Description: The course will explore the physical geography, history, and image in literature, film, and pop culture of Suffolk University's Beacon Hill neighborhood. The purpose and objective of the course is to provide students with a deep knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Beacon Hill through examination of written and visual sources, and feet-on and eyes-on experience of the public parts of the Hill.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 9077 | M_W_F | 10:05 AM - 10:55 AM

Faculty: Suzanne Westhues

SF 1141 - Classical Civilizations

Description: How is it that the knowledge, intelligence, wisdom and values of the Greeks and Romans still educate and edify the world by providing venues towards leading fulfilling and dignified lives? The guiding principles of their respective civilizations rested upon eight pillars: -Humanism: It was recognized that humans have the potential to master their world and live life to the fullest. -The Pursuit of Excellence: To imagine the highest good and strive to attain it. -Self Knowledge: It is imperative to know oneself before seeking to know the world. -Rationalism: Always question, reason and discern truth from falsehood and never consider any matter superficially. -Restless Curiosity: Often the resolution of one issue leads to the revelations of others mysteries and pursuits which compels further investigation. The wise individual makes this a lifelong endeavor. -Love of Freedom: As long as one brings no harm to others, one must be free to live and discover as much as possible. -Individualism: All are unique and, therefore, must recognize individual strengths and identity. -The Practice of Moderation: The prudence of avoiding extremes in personal and social conduct. In this course, students will read two (brief) texts on the Greek and Roman contributions to the world and then will proceed with specific readings which illuminate the eight principles above for achieving the good life.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 2100 | W | 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Faculty: Leon Rozmarin

SF 1161 – The Playwright and the Stage

Description: This writing and script analysis intensive course will explore plays across a range of styles. We will study the scripts of several new or recent plays and will experience performances of those works or readings by playwrights and actors via Zoom, in the classroom, or at professional theatres (usually on Wednesday evenings). We may also engage in conversations with theatre professionals, such as producers, directors, actors, designers, playwrights and critics in order to lift the script off the page and provide a living experience of theatre.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 9077 | T_TH | 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Faculty: Richard Chambers

SF 1173 - Understanding the Vast Sweep of Chinese Culture

Description: This course is an introduction to both ancient and modern Chinese civilization with a focus on its literature, arts, and 4000 year cultural history. We will see China at its earliest stages through its archaeology and progress to the heights of literary splendor in the Tang and Song Dynasties. Study of select early plays from the Mongol Yuan period will clearly tie into the development of Ming and Qing period fiction. With the fall of imperial China in 1911, the focus of literature changed drastically and we will study how many modern authors were able to draw from a massive wealth of literary resources to help create a new Chinese literature and culture. We will watch several films that will provide a rich visual portrait of the culture. We will read quite a few representative literary and historical works in English translation that will give a great deal of insight into modern China and how we can both relate to and interact with this complex and amazing country. This course is a good introduction to further study of Chinese history and culture and, in particular, provides a valuable context for students in all majors that wish to gain a deeper understanding of Asian culture.

Meeting Patterns: Sawyer Room 1125 | T_TH | 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

Faculty: Christopher Dakin

SF 1185 – Socially-Conscious Storyteller

Description: This section of the Seminar for Freshmen will consider the role that writing plays in examining social justice issues through the storytelling venue of fiction. How does the writing and reading of fiction make us more socially-conscious people? Through an examination of selected readings from historical novels such as Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* and "The Shawl" by Cynthia Ozick (both the short story and novella companion), along with various short stories by E.L.

Doctorow, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison and others, students will analyze how such literature represents complex social issues through the conventions and techniques of fiction. In addition, students will also produce historical fiction pieces of their own as a means of further understanding how fiction can be used as a tool for social change. Topics will include recent concerns related to immigration, racism, war, African-American slavery, the Holocaust, and intergenerational trauma in America. Students will consider how the storytelling techniques of fiction allow readers to consider these topics both from a historical and contemporary perspective. In addition to course readings, presentations and classroom conversations, the class will also visit museums such as Museum of African American History and the local nonprofits like MIRA that connect specifically to these topics and discuss those factors that shape the resulting dialogue and stories around them. From these visits, students will be asked to write historical fiction specifically engaged in social justice issues as a way to showcase their understanding of how fiction can be used as a tool for social justice, spreading awareness and greater critical thinking of some of today's most pressing and controversial topics.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 5050 | M_W_F | 12:30 PM - 1:20 PM

Faculty: Olivia Cerrone

SF 1197 - The History of Rap, Hip Hop and Popular Culture

Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to rap music and hip hop culture and examine it as a cultural critical and historic phenomena. This course explores the connection of rap music to social movements/social justice as well as to understand it in the context of its place in pop culture. The objective is to be able to critically and historically understand rap music in the context of the social political economic and cultural environment of the time during its rise.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 2100 | M_W_F | 11:10 AM - 12:00 PM

Faculty: Frank Irizarry

SF 1200 - Quantum Reality, Information, and Computing

Description: Quantum theory and quantum computation are at the forefront of physics in the twenty-first century. These topics traditionally require substantial background in physics and mathematics. In this course, a new pedagogical approach is used to teaching quantum physics to an audience presumed only to know basic arithmetic. This seminar will introduce freshmen to the principles of quantum computer science and technology, allowing students to perform meaningful hands-on calculations with quantum circuits and algorithms. This course will also provide an opportunity to participate in the instructor's ongoing work on actual quantum computers, and to interact with several Boston-area quantum computer scientists.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 4046 | M_W | 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM

Faculty: Prashant Sharma

SF 1201 - Sinatra: Voice of the 20th Century

Description: Before Lady Gaga, Justin Timberlake, Taylor Swift, Bruno Mars, Beyonce and Michael Jackson came Frank Sinatra: America's first pop superstar. When he died in 1998 at age 82, his obituary in The New York Times noted that "Sinatra stood as a singular mirror of the American psyche." Students will explore the 20th century through Sinatra's life and six-decade career; his parent's emigration from Italy; his rise as a singer who reinterpreted the Great American Songbook into timeless classics; his films that reflected life in the wartime 40s, the Baby Booming 50s and Mad Men 60s but also addressed the then-taboo topics of drug addiction, government insurrection and homosexuality; his voice for racial and religious tolerance; and his association with presidents, industry giants, pro athletes and organized crime figures. Students will listen, watch, write, read, research, share and understand why Sinatra remains popular today.

Meeting Patterns Section 1: Sawyer Room 908 | T_TH | 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Section 2: 73 Tremont Room 9077 | T | 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Faculty: Charles St. Amand

SF 1203 - Generals, Explorers, and Smokejumpers: Disaster Leadership

Description: This course is designed to help entering college students examine and discover their leadership strengths and develop practical leadership responses within the context of crisis. It will examine historical events, disasters, crises, times of significant social change, war, and turmoil, which all provide the backdrop for this course and underscore the challenge leaders face during times of social upheaval. The course features a broad survey of inspiring individuals from all walks of life who have drawn from their own experiences and intuition to employ creative solutions, improvisational thinking, and disruptive decision-making to excel at crisis management.

Meeting Patterns: Sawyer Room 1125 | T_TH | 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Faculty: Michael Siegel

SF 1204 - The Age of Renaissance and Reformation

Description: Covers the period 1300-1600, and explores the intellectual and cultural developments of the Renaissance, and of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations in their social, political and cultural contexts. Topics include: the Black Death; Humanism; the rise of the city-state; art and science in the Renaissance; changes in family and social life; the causes of the Reformation (intellectual, social, technological); Calvinists, Lutherans, and Radical Reformers; Counter-Reformation and its political consequences; the Wars of Religion; the age of Elizabeth I of England and Philip II of Spain.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 9077 | M | 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Faculty: Matteo Casini

SF 1209 - Video Games As Expressive Art

Description: The size and reach of the contemporary video game market is staggering: it is larger than the global film industry, twice the size of the American sports industry, and orders of magnitude larger than the streaming and physical music industry. Games are a medium of entertainment and expression that simply has no cultural parallel today. Which is to say that we can learn a lot by carefully studying games, gamers, and gaming culture and market. The academic word for this study is ludology. This course will introduce the basic analytical mechanics of ludology to help you practice your critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 9077 | M_W_F | 9:00 AM - 9:50 AM

Faculty: Scott Votel

SF 1213 - I Fought the Law and I Won: Debating 21st Century Civil Rights in the Law

Description: Aristotle's Politics argues that debate is the most highly valued political skill because it is through debate that we are able to carry reason into action. Debate is the public vehicle by which we make decisions that impact all members of society. Debates echo in the halls of Congress, in trial courts across the land, and in executive offices, because it is through the art of debate that we are able to test the veracity of what we believe to be true. Some even believe it is better to debate questions without settling them than it is to settle questions without debating them. This first-year seminar course blends an emphasis on legal principles associated with American civil liberties with the art of debate in an attempt to help build honest and competent students at Suffolk University and the same into their futures afterwards.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 5070 | F | 10:00 AM - 12:40 PM

Faculty: Gregory Bordelon

SF 1215 – Philosophy in the City

Description: Cities —says urbanist Jane Jacobs — are by definition full of strangers.

Yet we come to them to find and build new social relations — to become neighbors and fellow citizens. Philosophy, too, starts in the city — in the agora (the market or town square). In this course we will explore philosophy by exploring the city of Boston in particular and cities more generally: the opportunities they afford, the challenges they face, and how people survive and thrive within them. Topics may include urbanization, racial segregation, community and citizenship, homelessness and housing insecurity, policing and safety, transportation and (dis)ability, belonging, budgets and taxation,

gentrification, architecture and urban aesthetics, planning, urban ecologies, tourism, economic opportunity, and more.

Meeting Patterns Section 1: 73 Tremont Room 9077 | M_W | 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Section 2: Sawyer Room 908 | T_TH | 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM

Faculty: Rachel McKinney

SF 178 - Sacred Hoops and Sneaker Pimps: Understanding the American Hoop Dream

Description: This course is about the basketball hoop dream played out at the high school and college levels. We will study a wide variety of materials - novels, films, websites, reference works - to understand both the construction, and destruction, of the hoop dream in such diverse places as New York City, Seattle, rural Indiana, suburban Georgia, and the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Issues of race and culture will serve as guiding themes as we develop critical theory explaining why the hoop dream has persisted, and adapted, over time, to fit the needs of its believers and supporters.

Meeting Patterns Section 1: 73 Tremont Room 5035 | M_W | 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Section 2: 73 Tremont Room 5040 | M_W | 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM

Faculty: Richard Miller

SF 191 - Film Adaptation

Description: "Why did they change the ending of the book? The novel is so much better!" We will explore the concept and industry of film adaptation. Students will read novels and watch respective film adaptations to explore how the written word is adapted to the screen; both fiction and non-fiction works will be considered. Also, field trips to past film locations in Boston will be taken to explore why specific settings were chosen for respective situations. Additionally, students will create their own written adaptations of source materials, putting into practice the concepts studied in class.

Meeting Patterns: Samia Academic Center Room 218 | T_TH | 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM

Faculty: Monika Raesch

Honors First Year Seminars: All CAS Honors Students must choose an Honors seminar from the list below.

SF H1148 - Honors Brave New Worlds

Description: Explores themes of adventure, self-discovery, exile, and culture shock in classic and contemporary travel writing (including fiction, poetry, and non-fiction) as well as film. Students will experiment with creative writing of their own, develop theories of cosmopolitan world citizenship, travel through the city of Boston on field trips, and team up to learn about different countries in Suffolk's global network of study abroad programs.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 5035 | T_TH | 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Faculty: Leslie Eckel

SF H1172 – Honors U.S.-Mexican Border

Description: One hundred and sixty nine years have passed since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed. It is only fitting to analyze the profound changes that the gain/loss of these territories caused for the citizens of both sides of the border. This course will explore the literature, culture, and history of the United States-Mexican Border and the most pressing problems pertaining to the region. Emphasis will be on contemporary border theater and film. The works of Salcedo, Galindo, Lopez and others will be studied as well as contemporary films and documentaries such as Alambrista, Senorita Extraviada, The Gatekeeper, Sin Nombre, Wetback: the Undocumented Documentary, Victoria para Chino, Which Way Home, and much more. There are no prerequisites for this course. Though the course is conducted in English, parallel readings in Spanish will be made available to those who wish to read and/or compare the original texts.

Meeting Patterns: Sawyer Room 134 | T_TH | 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM

Faculty: Iani Moreno

SF H1173 – Honors: Understanding the Vast Sweep of Chinese Culture

Description: This course is an introduction to both ancient and modern Chinese civilization with a focus on its literature, arts, and 4000 year cultural history. We will see China at its earliest stages through its archaeology and progress to the heights of literary splendor in the Tang and Song Dynasties. Study of select early plays from the Mongol Yuan period will clearly tie into the development of Ming and Qing period fiction. With the fall of imperial China in 1911, the focus of literature changed drastically and we will study how many modern authors were able to draw from a massive wealth of literary resources to help create a new Chinese literature and culture. We will watch several films that will provide a rich visual portrait of the culture. We will read quite a few representative literary and historical works in English translation that will give a great deal of insight into modern China and how we can both relate to

and interact with this complex and amazing country. This course is a good introduction to further study of Chinese history and culture and, in particular, provides a valuable context for students in all majors that wish to gain a deeper understanding of Asian culture.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 5070 | M_W | 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

Faculty: Christopher Dakin

SF H1176 – Honors: What Is a Fact?

Description: What makes a fact a fact? What makes a fact true? At one time, these questions were only asked by epistemologists and postmodernists, but with the rise of fake news and the discourses surrounding it, these questions are relevant to everyone. Understanding facts is also essential to college students, who must learn to use reliable sources in order to create credible work. In this class, we will examine works of literature, art, science, and history that interrogate how facts are created and how we determine their truth value. Texts will include podcasts, novels and book-length studies of memory and theory of mind (the study of how we understand what others are thinking). We will also utilize the resources of Boston and Suffolk University; we will visit the WBUR NPR newsroom, a local museum, and learn about the legal definition of "truth" from a representative of the law school. By analyzing these texts, participating in these experiences, and completing a series of assignments that ask students to think critically and creatively, this class seeks to understand how we create facts, and why we need them.

Meeting Patterns: Sawyer Room 135 | M_W | 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Faculty: Nicholas Frangipane

SF H1190 - Honors Black Lives Matter

Description: This course will analyze the history of white supremacy and racial violence in the United States from the end of the Civil War that continues to this day. It will also examine the history of resistance to this racial violence, how American public schools teach the history of race and racial violence, and the many controversies surrounding monuments in public spaces.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 5050 | T_TH | 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

Faculty: Bryan Trabold

SF H1214 - Honors Boston and Book History

Description: Even in the digital age, books continue to be a central part of the college experience, and Boston, a city of universities, libraries, and museums, houses an untold number of them. But while we usually tend to think of books in terms of their contents—Are they science textbooks? Trashy novels? Picture books for toddlers?—this course will consider the history of books as material objects, and as a

central means of sharing and saving information for thousands of years. We will consider the definition of “book,” trace the history of books from ancient clay tablets and papyrus scrolls to medieval manuscripts and modern printed volumes, and learn about the connections between books and important social movements. To help us engage deeply with the physical qualities of books, this class will be active and hands-on, including workshops in papermaking, marbling, and printing, and numerous field trips to nearby locations where we can see and touch books from the distant (and not-so-distant) past, learning more about how they were made and how readers interacted with them. Drawing on the city of Boston’s past and present literary riches, this class will make you view every book you encounter in a different light.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 5040 | F | 1:15 PM - 3:55 PM

Faculty: Hannah Hudson

SF H132 - Honors The Beatles

Description: This seminar will investigate the impact and legacy of the Beatles. The Fab Four deserve our scholarly attention as musical innovators and as cultural avatars of the 1960s, an era that still exerts influence today. We will examine the many ways in which the Beatles rocked the establishment and became defining figures in post-war youth culture. We will also discuss other media (the visual arts, film, fashion, style) and fields of study (mass media, marketing, recording technology, copyright law, English history) using the Beatles as our guides.

Meeting Patterns: Sargent Hall Room 255 | T_TH | 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Faculty: David Gallant

SF H182 - Honors Heroes, Antiheroes and Outsiders: Reading the Graphic Novel

Description: How is it that "comics", a genre often viewed as entertainment for children and adolescents, has become one of the most exciting forms of narrative and visual art? To answer this question, this seminar will examine a range of graphic novels, from those that celebrate their origins in superhero comics, such as Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, to those that treat subjects not usually considered proper to the comics genre, such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, about the Holocaust, and Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, about the complexities of sexual identity. As we read these works, we will look at how the combination of words and still images makes the graphic novel a unique storytelling form, as well as how artists and writers push the envelope to create new styles and challenge our expectations. In addition to class discussions and writing assignments, we will take a field trip to the Museum of Fine Arts and create a collaborative group graphic novel step-by-step over the course of the semester (all abilities welcome).

Meeting Patterns: Samia Academic Center Room 320 | T_TH | 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Faculty: Wyatt Bonikowski

SF H189 - Honors American Gothic

Description: This literature seminar will study and compare the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, Flannery O'Connor, and Annie Proulx. Beginning with Poe as the father of the short story genre in America and exploring his critical theory of the "grotesque and arabesque", the class will examine the emergence of the gothic literary idiom as a classic American genre. Critical essays on the gothic aesthetic will be analyzed and film adaptations and documentaries will be viewed.

Meeting Patterns: 73 Tremont Room 5050 | T_TH | 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Faculty: Peter Jeffreys