

---

# First-Year Seminars

---



**Albion College**

Albion College's distinctive character and commitment to its students begin with the first courses entering students may select. The First-Year Seminars listed in this booklet are special courses Albion has developed to offer opportunities for you to explore beyond the boundaries of the more traditional class.

Structured to create a stimulating learning environment in the small class setting, Albion's First-Year Seminars initiate the intensive contact with our extraordinary faculty that has been recognized as Albion's greatest strength. Small classes like these—with an emphasis on discussion, an opportunity for individualized student research projects, and the development of strong communication skills—serve as the foundation for your undergraduate experience at Albion and will help you develop the appreciation for lifelong learning that characterizes Albion graduates.

The First-Year Seminars are the centerpiece of Albion's dynamic First-Year Experience, which also includes Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR), Learning Strategies Programs, and academic and career planning. With programming that enriches every aspect of your life—in and out of the classroom—there's simply no better way to begin your college education than in Albion College's First-Year Experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mauri Ditzler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mauri Ditzler  
President

# First-Year Seminars, Fall 2019

ALL ENTERING STUDENTS ENROLL IN A FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR AS PART OF THE COLLEGE'S CORE REQUIREMENT FOR GRADUATION. PLEASE READ THROUGH THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SEMINARS IN THIS BOOKLET AND IDENTIFY YOUR FIRST FOUR CHOICES AMONG THESE OFFERINGS.

Additional information on registering for a First-Year Seminar appears on a separate form which can be downloaded from the Web at [albion.edu/firstyear/seminars/](http://albion.edu/firstyear/seminars/). Note: In some seminars, a field trip fee will apply.

These seminars are offered as part of the William Atwell Brown, Jr. and Mary Brown Vacin First-Year Experience.

## A Sense of Place: Albion and the American Dream

**Wesley Arden Dick – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—Are you curious about the community of Albion which hosts the College and your host city for the next four years? Do you know that Albion was selected as an All-America City in 1973? In fact, Albion mirrors many of the central themes of American history: “the good, the bad, and the ugly.” This course explores the American experience using Albion and Michigan history as case studies. Topics will include: the natural environment; Indians and the Michigan “Trail of Tears”; pioneers and the Michigan frontier; the founding of Albion College; abolition, anti-slavery, and the underground railroad; birth of the Republican Party and the Civil War; Sojourner Truth, Madelon Stockwell, Anna Howard Shaw and the women’s rights movement; the agricultural and industrial revolutions and the movement from farm to factory; immigration from Europe; World War I and the “Great Migration” of African Americans from the South to the North; the Ku Klux Klan in the North and the “Roaring Twenties”; prohibition and the Purple Gang; the Great Depression; migrations of Mexican Americans from Texas and white Southerners from Appalachia; the Civil Rights Era; economic boom and bust; environmental pollution and environmental activism; and contemporary community problems and strengths.

Our goal will be to deepen our understanding of the past and to connect the past to the present through a variety of reading and writing assignments, discussions, student presentations, guest lectures, and Albion area field trips. The class will also connect with the community through service learning. An anticipated bonus will be the opportunity to acquire an extended family, namely the people of Albion met through the course. In addition, our seminar will benefit from the contributions of historian Leslie Dick.

A field trip to Washington, D.C. is planned during the fall semester. In the past, students have paid for their plane fare with all other costs covered by the First-Year Experience program. In 2018, the plane fare was \$285. Note: For students unable to pay the plane fare, there are possibilities of alternative funding. Our goal is to make it possible for everyone to go on the Washington trip. In the seminar and on the road, our class will be on a journey in search of “Albion and the American Dream.”

**Instructor**—Wesley Arden Dick was born and raised in eastern Oregon. He attended Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, and completed his graduate studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. He married Leslie Keller Dick, also a native Oregonian, in 1960. Hired to teach history at Albion College in 1968, Wes, Leslie, their daughter Hilary, and a cat named Puff packed up and headed for the Midwest. As uprooted Pacific Northwesterners a long way from home, Wes and Leslie found themselves searching for a “sense of place” in Albion. Community involvement in organizations such as the Albion Branch of the NAACP and raising three more children—Shane, Hadyn, and Hadley—helped. Seeking understanding through history also helped. In 1988, Leslie edited and annotated *A Michigan Childhood, the Journals of Madelon Louisa Stockwell, 1856-1860*. Madelon was the granddaughter of Albion’s founder and the daughter of the principal of Wesleyan Seminary, soon to become Albion College. Madelon grew up in Albion and later attained a place in history as the first woman to gain admission to the University of Michigan. Leslie’s research demonstrated the richness of Albion’s local history. Wes had earlier created a course entitled “American Dreams Realities.” The result was the collaborative creation of the first-year seminar, “A Sense of Place: Albion and the American Dream.” Our seminar will have the added advantage of Leslie’s knowledge of Albion history.

Wes has received awards over the years. He has directed a two-year NCUR/Lancy Initiative Grant entitled “Boom, Bust, Recovery: Explorations of Albion, Michigan—The Last Half Century.” Leslie, Wes, and Robert Wall, with the aid of a Michigan Humanities Council Heritage Grant, created the West Ward School History Display, dedicated in 2015, at Holland Park. Research keeps him busy, but teaching remains his first love and his courses, “The 1960s” and “Environmental History,” have become his trademarks. Wes finds nurturing student activists (environmental, social justice, and peace causes) and student scholars (National Conference for Undergraduate Research, Elkin Isaac Honors Symposium, and honors theses) equally rewarding. For relaxation, he gardens with Leslie in the “house across from Wesley Dorm,” walks dogs in the Nature Center, listens to folk music, and plays tennis.

In May of 2019, Wes completed his 51st year teaching history at Albion College. At the 2018 Albion College Commencement, Leslie and Wesley were awarded honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degrees, in part, because of their commitment to their first-year seminar on Albion.

## Africa: Myth and Reality

**Emmanuel Yewah – Monday/Wednesday/Friday,  
1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—Using a variety of sources—history, geography, photographs, world fairs, newspaper articles, art, film, music, literature, documentaries, and the Internet—this course, interdisciplinary in scope and eclectic in its theoretical approaches, seeks to study and understand the process of construction of myths about Africa. Moreover, it attempts to deconstruct those myths so as to expose the reality hidden behind them, to acquaint students with the “other” Africa. Additionally, the course helps students develop a sense of who Africans are, what they do, feel, and hope for, reinforced through an experiential trip to Cameroon, West Africa in January 2019. Field trip fee and passport is required of all students who choose to participate (approx. \$1500 - \$1800).

**Instructor**—A native of Cameroon, Emmanuel Yewah has expertise in the literatures and cultures of French-speaking peoples, with special emphasis on Africa and the Caribbean. Currently he is professor of French and comparative cultural studies and chair of the Modern Languages and Cultures department at Albion College. He earned a Ph.D. in comparative literatures from the University of Michigan. He has published extensively on literature and politics, literature and law, literature and the environment, adaptation of literary texts into film, detective fiction, and African immigrants in the United States.

## All Power to the People: Why the Black Panthers Still Matter

**Nels Christensen – Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday,  
1:00-1:50 p.m.**

**Course Description**—Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale weren’t much older than you when they formed The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. They looked at the racial and social injustice in their neighborhoods, in their city, and in their country, and they decided to do something about it—something big and real and radical. This class takes a close look at the men and the women of the Black Panthers in order to see more clearly what we can and should be doing in our own troubled times.

**Instructor**—Nels Christensen (Ph.D., Michigan State University) grew up in northern California near the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains. For the past 12 years, he has spent his time teaching and canoeing in Michigan and New England.

## Amazing Topics in Genetics

**Ken Saville – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course description**—A new genome editing technology has been released from the lab and has transmogrified a wolf, a crocodile and a gorilla into huge flying monsters that are rampaging RAMPAGing through the big city!!! OK, the flying and the rampaging parts are a bit far-fetched, but the technology involved called CRISPR can do some amazing things. CRISPR technology can be used to target and change specific DNA sequences in practically any organism. This technology has already been used to edit the genomes of human embryos, correct genetic defects in human cells, and has the potential to correct many human genetic diseases. Many other applications, such as the generation of new crops, modifying mosquitos to fight malaria, and ridding human cells of the AIDS virus have also seen some success.

CRISPR technology, along with other Current and Amazing Genetic Topics (CATG – get it?) will be explored in this course. Students will identify topics of interest and we will explore these as a class through readings, presentations, videos, movies, and online activities. We might even get into the lab to try some of these things ourselves.

Of course, new genetic technologies come with the potential for abuse and/or unforeseen and unintended consequences. We will explore some of the objections and limitations to the uses of genetic technology such as the development of Genetically Modified organisms (GMOs). Is this technology really as scary as many people claim?

So, if you’re interested in genetics, or just curious about these latest and greatest advancements in genetic technology, take this first year seminar.

**Instructor**—Ken Saville has been teaching Genetics and Molecular Biology at Albion College for over 20 years. His research involves the genetics of fruit flies, particularly how transposable elements, or “jumping genes” damage DNA and how this DNA gets repaired. He has recently become interested in analyzing large genetic data sets using data science technology in a field called bioinformatics. Dr. Saville particularly enjoys involving students in his research and has worked with over 100 students at Albion, with many of them becoming co-authors on papers. When not in the classroom or in the lab, he can be found on the golf course or playing old man hockey at the rink. He is married to Kate and has four kids, with two attending the University of Michigan, one just starting at Michigan State University, and the fourth entering high school in Lansing.

## Dinosaurs

**William Bartels – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—This seminar investigates dinosaurs and their role in culture and society. We will first explore the origin, evolution, adaptations, and extinction of dinosaurs in the context of the physical, climatologic, and biotic Mesozoic world. Once we have attained a better understanding of dinosaurs, we will examine their role in the history and philosophy of science, public education, museum science, the study of evolution, and popular culture. The seminar will include student presentations, discussions, lectures, films and documentaries, and a variety of writing experiences.

**Instructor**—Dr. Bartels (AB Rutgers College; MS, Ph.D. University of Michigan) is a paleontologist and sedimentary geologist. He studies ancient river deposits and fossil reptiles (turtles, crocodylians, and lizards) from his field areas in Wyoming. Most summers though his career, he leads joint Albion College-University of Michigan-Duke University-University of Alberta expeditions to Wyoming to study the geology and collect fossil mammals and reptiles from the time right after dinosaurs went extinct. At Albion, he teaches all of the geology courses relating to sedimentary geology and the history of life on earth. Outside interests include his grown children, golf, and old Lionel electric trains.

## “Do the ‘Write’ Thing”: Spike Lee, Writing, and Identity

**Dominick Quinney – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—As part of the First-Year Seminar collective, this course’s primary focus is to acclimate first-year students to the culture, experience, and adjustment of college life. Students will build capacities and confidence in the foundations of college writing with preparation for the Albion College Writing Competency Exam. Further, students will learn basic concepts as they relate to identity development, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class, primarily through the works of Academy Award™ winning director and actor Spike Lee. Lee, a provocateur of social identities, offers unique commentary on the topics to be explored throughout the course. Students will critically engage in films, including *School Daze*, *Get on the Bus*, and *Bamboozled*. Upon completion of the course, students will have built upon their academic competencies and transition to the Albion College community.

**Instructor**—Dr. Dominick N. Quinney is an Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies at Albion College in Albion, Michigan. A Critical Race Theorist, he completed his doctorate in African American and African Studies at Michigan State University with a focus in Urban Education in 2013. Currently, Dominick teaches an introductory Ethnic Studies course, as well as courses with topics surrounding Education and Diversity, Social Movements, and Hip Hop for Social Change. Quinney’s qualitative research interests include the global sociopolitical development of black student activist scholars, and their academic achievement in the classroom, and understanding racial dialogue amongst diverse groups. Additionally, he has extensive research in the community engagement and development of urban high school students

## Fantastic Beasts

**Bille Wickre – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—Unicorns, dragons, mermaids, chimeras, werewolves....humans have a long history with fantastic beasts. In cultures from around the world, these amazing creatures appear in some of the earliest art and recur throughout history. Even today researchers seek evidence of the existence of fantastic beasts. In this class, we will combine traditional art historical scholarship with creativity and imagination to pursue fantastic beasts from art and history and create some beasts of our own. Local field trips to museums and other sites.

**Instructor**—Professor Bille Wickre (Ph.D. University of Michigan) teaches art history in the department of Art and Art History. Her specialties are women artists, 19th through 21st century European and American art, political and environmental art. Wickre is passionate about art that involves animals from all periods in the history of art. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Humane Society of South Central Michigan. She lives in Albion with her own pack of “fantastic beasts.”

## Fly Me To The Moon

**Nicolle Zellner – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 a.m.**

**Course Description**—This class includes the history and future of space exploration and will discuss topics related to the science of spaceflight, different countries’ efforts to explore space, human spaceflight, gender and diversity in the astronaut/cosmonaut/taikonaut corps, spacecraft missions, and exploring planets, moons, and asteroids in our Solar System and beyond. A trip to Washington, D.C., to tour NASA Headquarters, the Smithsonian Institution meteorite collection, and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, including the Udvar-Hazy Center is planned. Field trip fee (approx. \$300 - \$450).

**Instructor**—Dr. Nicolle Zellner is an associate professor of physics. She teaches introductory and advanced astronomy and physics courses. Zellner’s research interests focus on understanding the impact history of the Earth-Moon system and how those impacts affected the conditions for life on Earth. She studies lunar impact glasses to interpret the bombardment history of the Moon (and Earth), and a second project focuses on understanding how the chemistry of simple molecules is affected by impacts. Zellner was a member of the ANSMET team that searched for meteorites in Antarctica. She spent two months there, and she and the team collected over 800 meteorites! Zellner was a member of the scientific ground crew during NASA’s STS-67 Astro-2 mission in 1995. Her PhD is from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (2001), where she received the school’s first Multidisciplinary PhD. Her research has been supported by the American Astronomical Society and is currently supported by NASA and by the National Science Foundation.

## Great Lakes Playlist: The history and culture of music in the Midwest

Clayton Parr – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 a.m.

**Course description**—We'll investigate the various musical heritages of the Midwest region, from Motown to Chicago blues, from gospel to R&B, from classic rock to hip-hop. Through reading, writing, discussion, listening, class presentations and class travel, we'll explore the people who made this music, and the aspects of their history and experiences in this region that helped make the music what it is. Potential field trip destinations include Chicago (for blues and gospel); Detroit (for the Motown museum); and Cleveland (Rock and Roll Hall of Fame).

**Instructor**—Dr. Clayton Parr is the choir director at Albion. A long time ago, he graduated from Albion with majors in music and physics. He went away and taught in a number of other places (most of them in various parts of the Midwest) before returning to Albion to join the faculty in 2012. His research interests include music of Georgia (the country, not the state.) He also directs the Battle Creek Community Chorus, Michigan Educators Male Ensemble, and Alioni Georgian Choir of Chicago. When he's not doing music, he's usually in a kayak, at the ballpark, or looking up something obscure. He walks to work every day and likes it that way.

## Grey's Anatomy and Ethics

Holly Hill – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—Have you ever wondered what it would be like to make some of the tough decisions faced by medical professionals every day? These choices can often be black and white, but what about the grey? Meredith Grey that is...

We will be using popular movies and TV shows such as Grey's Anatomy to examine ethical issues faced by medical professionals both in and out of the professional setting. The class will take a look at short stories, case studies, and current events to reveal various ethical decisions we make as a society in our every day interactions with one another; as well as, the fundamental moral principles and values that underline our personal and professional lives. At the completion of this course you will have thought, discussed, and written your way through many topics such as assisted suicide, healthcare cost, truth telling, and medical experimentation in hopes of strengthening your own pillars of ethics.

**Instructor**—Holly Hill (M.A. Western Michigan University) is a certified & licensed Athletic Trainer and Instructor in the Kinesiology Department. Having been in the field of athletic training for 10 years prior to coming to Albion College she learned the value of ethical decision making while working with high school athletes, DIV II collegiate athletes, and in the industrial setting with gas and electrical linemen. She also has a passion for functional anatomy and has been teaching in the Kinesiology department since 2014. When not in her office she can usually be found in search of the perfect cup of coffee, with her family and their corgi in tow.

## Hawaii and the Himalayas: Geology, Ecology and Cultures of the Tallest Mountains on Earth

Carrie Menold – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:05 a.m.

**Course Description**—This is a discussion-based class exploring the geology and cultures around the world's tallest peaks, Mt. Everest (Himalayas) and Mauna Kea (Hawai'i). Most people know Mt. Everest is tall but measured from its ocean base Mauna Kea is even bigger! A fundamental question we will seek to answer is why mountains exist and why are these two mountains so much taller than any others. We will investigate the geological forces that create (and destroy) mountains, and learn why their locations are not random. The Himalayas and Hawai'i also have distinct cultures linked with their unique geology and ecology. We will spend time learning about Tibetan and Hawai'ian cultural practices and their links to mountain environments – for example, the Tibetan practice of walking around holy mountains and the Hawai'ian goddess Pele's association with the volcano. Several other mountain-related themes will also be examined, including their presence as natural barriers that both invite and impede exploration, their importance as unique ecosystems, and their role as nature's water towers. As we explore these topics we will do so with a focus on college academic preparation and transition from high school: instruction in college-level reading, writing and class discussion, time-management, finding and using sources for research papers as well as participate in a variety hands-on activities (several of which will be outdoors). In January, students will travel to the big island of Hawai'i to examine mountain-building processes, the active volcano, and a unique mountain culture. On the trip, we will travel across the island, from the mountain tops to the beach, and we will be outside everyday hiking to explore the geology and its influence on the culture. Field trip fee (\$1000 - \$1300).

**Instructor**—Carrie Menold (Ph.D., UCLA) is a member of the Geology Department. Her teaching focuses on rock and mineral studies as well as environmental geology courses. She uses geochemistry and field work to study mountain-building, looking at the first rocks to collide as mountains begin to form. Those rocks end up in the middle of the tallest parts of mountain ranges as collision proceeds, so her field study areas are up on the Tibetan Plateau and in the high Himalayas of India.

## Intersectional Pizza: Gender, Race, Class, and Food

**Trisha Franzen – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—Why do we eat so much pizza? This class asks questions about pizza and our identities. There are the obvious questions such as who eats most of the pizza and what kinds? But we keep going to deeper levels, examining who makes our pizza and who profits from our pizza eating. Overall this course considers the people who grow, harvest, process, transport, prepare and consume the ubiquitous and seemingly favorite food of young people in the United States: pizza. We will consider how the intersection of gender, race and class determine which people play which roles in these processes. In addition to reading, discussing and writing about food and culture, the class will also visit a farmers market, work in a garden, make pizza at our own wood-fired pizza oven, and consider regional pizza differences through a pizza-focused trip to Philadelphia. (Details for the extended trip are still being worked out and students will be asked to pay some of the costs.)

**Instructor**—Trisha Franzen, professor of women’s, gender & sexuality studies, loves history and food. She teaches the program’s introductory courses in, women’s history, feminist theory and sexuality studies. Her most recent book is *Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage*. She is the Master Gardener for the Albion Community Gardens.

## Languages

**Kalen R. Oswald – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 a.m.**

**Course Description**—As humans we are constantly sending and receiving messages through verbal language, but rarely do we reflect on how or why that is. We take it for granted as an inherent aspect of our humanity. We often do not even think about the issue seriously until we are confronted with the desire or need to learn a second language. In this course we will attempt to understand how languages work, how they have evolved and continue to evolve, how language is acquired, how languages can influence and be influenced by community, and how learning another language can be advantageous to individuals and groups. We will also learn how to communicate some basic messages in several different languages.

There will be a field trip to Detroit in October.

**Instructor**—Professor Kalen R. Oswald (Ph.D., The University of Arizona) grew up in the Mountain West (pronounced “Mouh’en West” in his native Utah). He has also lived in the “Four Corners” area of the United States, northwest Argentina and southern Arizona before settling in the Midwest (first Wisconsin and now Michigan). He is fascinated by cities (especially cities in Spain) and the urban process that shapes them, but prefers living in smaller towns with easy access to camping and hiking and where there is plenty of space to play with his family (wife Amy and children Taylor, Kendall, Lynnsey, Spencer and Kaya). This is his eighteenth year at Albion College, where he teaches beginning to advanced Spanish language, literature, and cultures.

## Latino USA

**Deborah Kanter – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 a.m.**  
**Kyle Shanton – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course description**—Latinos may comprise 25% of the U.S. population by the year 2050. What does it mean to be Puerto Rican, Mexican, Dominican, Latino . . . or Latinx? What are the challenges and joys of being Latino? How do the experiences of a newly-arrived immigrant differ from a fourth-generation Latina? Fiction, films, music, videos, oral history, artwork, and games will introduce us to the historias and cultura for Latino/as of different generations.

**Instructor**—Deborah Kanter (Ph.D., University of Virginia), professor of history, teaches Latin American and U.S. Latino history. She lived and worked in Mexico for over four years, which led to her first book, *Hijos del Pueblo: Gender, Family, and Community in Rural Mexico*. Her next book *Chicago Católico: Making Catholic Parishes Mexican*, will drop in 2020. A Chicago native, she enjoys watching movies, hiking, and discovering ethnic restaurants of every variety.

**Instructor**—Kyle Shanton (Ph.D., University of Arizona), professor of education, teaches courses in processes of learning and teaching, literacy, English as a second language and student teaching. He lived and worked in Arizona and New Mexico for nearly twenty years teaching in Spanish-English bilingual classrooms at pre-collegiate and collegiate levels. Recently he served as a Fulbright US Scholar to Cost Rica. Kyle’s research on bilingualism in family and community led him to his first book, *The Most Important Work: Stories of Sovereignty in the Struggle for Literacy*. A mid-western native, he enjoys biking, cooking, traveling with his children, and walking his dog.

## Let’s Move!

**Heather Betz – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 a.m.**

**Course description**—Our bodies are meant to move and they thrive when they do! Though, how much physical activity is enough? What happens when our bodies don’t get enough physical activity? In this class, we will explore the basis for our national recommendations for physical activity by reading some classic studies that explore the importance of physical activity in disease prevention. We will also explore the psychological, physiological, and behavioral costs that come with our current obesity crisis in the United States, focusing on both childhood and adult obesity. Additionally, we will move our bodies by trying different forms of physical activity (walking, yoga, Pilates, etc.) and explore the connection between physical activity and improved academic performance. Finally, we might even get to share our newfound knowledge and excitement with local elementary school children. Ready, set, let’s move!

**Instructor**—Heather Betz (Ph.D., Michigan State University) was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. It was there that she learned the importance of physical activity and the joy that comes from moving your body, whether that is through walking, hiking, kayaking, running, rowing, or doing yoga. When she’s not teaching about the human body as an Exercise Physiologist in the Kinesiology Department, she can be found running, reading, knitting, hanging out on her yoga mat, or chasing around after three daughters, two dogs, and a husband.

## Living the Life Fantastic: The Fantasy Literature and Authors That Have Captured the World's Imagination

**Mark Hoffland – Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course description**—Into Harry Potter? Game of Thrones? Lord of the Rings? Or even The Walking Dead? Enjoy reading about wizards, witches, dragons, dwarves, vampires, and zombies? What do you know about the authors who imagine them, and the real-world events that inspire them? In this course, we will explore the biographies and shared inspirations of fantasy authors J.K. Rowling (Harry Potter), George R. R. Martin (Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire) J.R.R. Tolkien (The Lord of the Rings), and Robert Kirkman (The Walking Dead), as well as lesser known authors, such as Terry Pratchett (the Disc World series) and Christopher Moore (Bite Me and Scare Bleu). We will watch film adaptations, listen to interviews with the authors, and discover the inspirations for these unique worlds, characters, and storylines. We will use the medium of fantasy fiction to discuss contemporary social issues; we will read one of Pratchett's comic novels; and we will create our own fantasy-based graphic short story using Comic Life software.

**Instructor**—Mark Hoffland has taught in the Department of Theatre since 2004. The ultimate “generalist”, Mark has directed, designed, and built many productions in a long career. He has produced theatre with people of all ages and experience levels. He has judged on all levels of the MIFA one-act competition for three decades. He has been enjoying fantasy and science fiction novels since high school.

## Mathematics and Technology in the Arts

**David Reiman – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**— Mathematics and art are two ancient disciplines with many connections. Geometry plays an important role in the arts from perspective drawings, to wheel-thrown ceramics, and sculptural forms. Western music uses a scale based on mathematically defined intervals. Symmetry is a theme in both art and mathematics. Artists are often at the forefront of employing new technology in the creative process. Many artists now make extensive use of computer software and three-dimensional printing. We will look at the historical developments in mathematics and art and see how these influenced ancient artists and new developments that continue to influence both mathematics and art. We will read and write about these developments, see how artists use mathematics, discuss their implications, and create related artworks. A trip to a major art museum is planned. We will have a large collaborative group art project that engages the entire campus in some concept using mathematics and technology in a major way. Students need not be experts in mathematics or arts, but should be comfortable using basic algebra and eager to be creative!

**Instructor**—David Reimann shares his life-long love of mathematics through his visual art. Mathematical elements such as symmetry, geometry, and number are common themes in his work. Using a wide range of media, Reimann creates patterns that convey messages on multiple levels and scales.

He frequently gives talks and exhibits his original art at both the Joint Mathematics Meetings and the Bridges Conference, the largest international conference on mathematical art. Since January 2015, he has been providing original cover art for the *Mathematics Magazine*, a publication of the Mathematical Association of America. He has bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics and a doctoral degree in computer science. Prior to joining the faculty of Albion College in 1996, he spent ten years as a medical imaging researcher at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

## Mauka & Makai: Place and Education in Hawai'i

**Suellyn Henke – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.**

**Course description**— How do culture, identity and sense of place influence our understanding of what it means to teach and learn? *Mauka and Makai: Place and Education in Hawai'i* is designed as an interdisciplinary case study about the development of education in Hawai'i. Hawai'i's rich sociocultural history of diverse indigenous and immigrant heritages, controversial overthrow by the United States, and location as an isolated volcanic archipelago, provide a unique landscape for examining culturally responsive instruction. Educational travel to Hawai'i is a highly encouraged option in January. Travelers should be prepared for thoughtful and culturally appropriate interactions with natural settings, schools, and community members. Estimated trip cost (\$1100 - \$1300).

**Instructor**—At the beginning of this century, I received a Ph.D. in curriculum with an emphasis in cultural studies from Miami University's Educational Leadership program. I taught high school English in Cincinnati Public Schools and spent two years teaching at the University of Hawai'i -Hilo on the Big Island before coming to Albion in 2002. I teach courses in sociocultural foundations of education and secondary education. I enjoy spending time with my family, being outdoors, reading, and hanging out with my pets. One of my dogs, a goofy goldendoodle named Kai, is even a therapy dog on campus.

## Medicine in the Information Age

**Christopher Rohlman – Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00-9:50 a.m.**

**Course Description**— How do we navigate the wealth of biomedical information and data that are available to us? In the age of personalized medicine, what decisions do we leave to the experts, and how do we advocate for ourselves? Today we have immediate access to primary research that can impact medical decisions and treatment in real time. How do we decipher the meaning of the science behind drug development, cancer treatments and genomic research? We will examine the sources of biomedical research, develop a basic knowledge of biomolecular science, and learn how to use the tools available to us, in an effort to ask better questions and gain understanding. These are questions faced by those that provide medical care and those that receive it. How do we make these decisions for ourselves, and help others understand the choices they have?

**Instructor**— Dr. Christopher Rohlman is a professor of biological chemistry. He teaches introductory and advanced courses in chemistry, biochemistry and biophysics. Chris's research focuses on understanding biomolecule structure and function, and the interactions that allow life on the cellular level. Chris is a Michigan native who has worked in California and Colorado, ultimately returning to the Midwest. His research group is driven by undergraduate students who present their work at national meetings of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He is an avid fan of music, film, and the outdoors.

## Mind-Control! How your world is dictated by design.

**Lisa TenHulzen – Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.**

**Course description**— From the phone in your hand to the streets you walk on, design dictates your feelings, thoughts and actions by infiltrating your subconscious. In this course we will develop the subtle language of design that will, in turn, allow us to identify, investigate and interrogate the designed world around us. Through class discussions, projects and presentations, we will regain control of our (soon to be) much fuller minds.

**Instructor**—Lisa is a theatre artist specializing in scenic design. After graduating from Northwestern College's Theatre Arts B.A. program, She earned her M.F.A in Scenic Design from the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Some fun facts about her are that she loves all animals except chimpanzees. She grew up in the country and can ride a unicycle.

## Patchwork America

**Matthew Schoene – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 9:15-10:20 am.**

**Course Description**—In the contemporary United States, we are constantly bombarded by the idea that we are divided – economically, ethnically, politically and culturally. In this seminar, we will take the position that the real divide within this country is one of communities with different characteristics – characteristics with the potential to shape who you are, how you spend your time, what you believe and how your life is likely to turn out. Using simplistic, dichotomous designations like conservative/liberal, rural/urban, rich/poor or black/white tends to miss these core realities of community life.

Communities give us an opportunity to think about the local organization of human society. What are the economic, environmental, political and cultural structures that create the realities of different communities? How do these conditions influence the behavior of the people who call it home? Ultimately, we can never truly understand a local community better than the people who actually live there, but we can take steps toward better understanding social diversity in the United States by examining perhaps the only thing that everyone has: a hometown. This class will include a field trip to our closest major metropolitan area, Detroit (fee: \$200-300).

**Instructor**—Matthew Schoene (PhD, The Ohio State University) is a global/transnational sociologist studying social and political activity in cities, especially those of the European Union. Despite his global research agenda, he has lived in 5 different states throughout his 20s (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina and Michigan) and has subsequently become very interested in how we live, work and interact within our local communities.

## Public Policy in Film

**Drew Christopher – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**— One of the many benefits of living in a democracy is the freedom to hold your own opinion on an issue. In this course, we will examine a number of current issues being debated by public policy experts in the United States. The purpose of examining these concerns is not to provide answers to any issues we are currently facing, but rather, to help you learn how to formulate a position on these various issues by considering multiple perspectives on each one. To do so, we will view films that deal with topics including but not limited to health care, corporate ethics, foreign policy, and drug legalization. Through film viewings, readings, papers, and class discussions, you will explore not only important current issues in public policy, but more importantly, you will learn how to formulate an opinion using data from various sources. In doing so, you will also learn how almost any source of information can be biased, and therefore, you will need to understand how to try to correct for that bias.

**Instructor**—Drew Christopher is a teacher in the psychology department. He has taught at Albion for 18 years, teaching not only in that department, but in the Honor's College and of course the First-Year Experience Program. Drew enjoys teaching first-year seminars because they give him the chance to meet students with a wide range of interests and help them find their direction in college. Drew was an undergraduate at Stetson University (in Florida) and he got his graduate degrees from the University of Florida. Outside of school, he likes working out (sometimes) so that he can eat the often less-than-healthy dishes he likes to cook and not feel guilty, learning about history, and entertaining his two beagles. He also likes to watch and play sports and is a fan SEC football and Boston-area professional teams.

## RENT and the Bohemian Life

**Maureen Balke – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—“The bohemian life.” What does it mean? Passion, poetry, and poverty? Life, love, and art? Opposing convention and the status quo? Living for “no day but today” and “measuring lives in love”? We will study the Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning musical “Rent” by Jonathan Larson, which is based upon the beloved Puccini opera *La Bohème*, which in turn is based upon the 1840s Parisian novel *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* by Murger. We will compare the struggles of all these “starving artists” as they “strive for success and acceptance” while enduring “obstacles of poverty, illness, and the AIDS epidemic.” Mature thematic material including issues of drugs, sexuality, discrimination, and AIDS will be discussed in the larger context of our own community, society, and the world.

Additional materials for the course include Philadelphia, the Academy Award-winning film starring Tom Hanks; Kushner's award-winning series *Angels in America*; *Moonstruck*, the Academy Award-winning film starring Cher and Nicholas Cage; and selections from the *AIDS Quilt Songbook* and

from the musical Avenue Q. We will also discuss the autobiographical novel *Without You*, by Anthony Rapp, from the original cast of *Rent*.

On her recent sabbatical, Maureen Balke spent several weeks in New York observing the contemporary musical theatre scene, including *The Book of Mormon*. Scenes from this currently running Tony Award-winning musical will also be studied. Note: No in-depth knowledge of musical terminology is required for this course.

**Instructor**—Soprano Maureen Balke (D.M. in vocal performance, Indiana University) has performed opera, musicals, and art song recitals throughout the Midwest and in several European venues, winning several competitive voice awards along the way. The desire to pursue a professional career in music developed while she grew up on a Christmas tree farm in Wisconsin with her nine siblings and parents, all of whom sang and performed music in various genres, including country/western and folk music. Always interested in poetry and languages, she has specialized in German and French art song and has released a CD of art songs by composers Joseph Marx and Anthony Taffs, entitled “Never Seek to Tell Thy Love.”

## Samurai Culture through Film

**Midori Yoshii – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.**

**Course Description**—The Japanese warrior class, samurai, has been long introduced and widely accepted in the world through literature and film. How are the samurai portrayed in American society? Why might this warrior class from another country be a popular image in the U.S.? This course is designed to analyze the historical development of the warrior class, the influence of Zen Buddhism on their code of conduct (Bushido), and the transformation of Bushido, comparing the depiction of the samurai in motion pictures and historical literature. Movies studied in this course will include: *Twilight Samurai* (2002), *Kagemusha (Shadow Warrior)* (1980), *Last Samurai* (2003), *Seven Samurai* (1956), *Chushingura (47 Ronin)* (1963), and *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999). Students are expected to read and discuss pertinent literature. The purpose of this intellectual exercise is to develop participants' ability to discover common humanity in foreign cultures and to learn how to apply this approach in our understanding of the world.

**Instructor**—Midori Yoshii (Ph.D., Boston University), a native of Japan, is a historian of international relations. Her past research topics include, among others, the implications of Germany's role in Japan's decision to go to war with the U.S., American naval attachés' activities in Tokyo on the eve of the Pacific war, and the impact of World War II on the lives of Japanese-American women living on the U.S. West Coast. Yoshii's most recent study analyzes the U.S. policy toward China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea in the 1960s. She taught at Boston University, University of Massachusetts, Boston, Bentley College, and Okazaki College of Foreign Studies in Japan before coming to Albion College. Being a baseball fan, she enjoys watching games at the “new” Tiger Stadium, especially when the Red Sox are in town.

## Science, Truth and Other Enigmas

Jeremy Kirby – Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—There is a substantive difference between, for example, astrology and astronomy. The latter conforms to the practices of our best scientific thinking, while the former is a pseudo-science at best. But how might one explain the difference between pseudo-science and real science? It might be suggested that scientists rely upon observation and obtain better predictive results than pseudo-scientists. Astrologists, however, rely upon observation, and they are rarely mistaken in their predictions. Perhaps, then, what distinguishes pseudo-science from real science is that the hypotheses of the latter may be disconfirmed while the ‘conjectures’ of the former will hold, come what may. However, Charles Darwin’s critics accuse him of dealing in platitudes as well, and few of Darwin’s supporters would want to classify him among the pseudo-scientists. The principle of natural selection is all about “the survival of the fittest.” And, as the critics will ask, who are the fittest, if not those who survive? Distinguishing pseudo-science from science is, thus, easier said than done. But this is precisely what we shall endeavor to do in this course.

**Instructor**— Jeremy Kirby teaches and writes on issues concerning the history of philosophy and the history of science. He has published two books concerning Aristotle’s approach to science and a number of articles relating to the history of philosophy. He lives in Albion, MI.

## The Civil War in Popular Culture

Marcy Sacks – Monday/Wednesday, 8:00-9:50 a.m.

**Course description**—The Civil War has long captured the American imagination, and it continues to have a remarkable hold in our contemporary consciousness. Debates over Confederate monuments and the legacy of Gen. Robert E. Lee rage; the Confederate flag can be seen on display, even in states that fought for the Union; and reenactors make annual pilgrimages to battle sites in order to live the experience of the war. This course explores the presence of this deadliest American war in popular culture, including films, literature, and in national conversations, and tries to understand why Lost Cause nostalgia endures more than 150 years after the Confederacy lost its bid to create a separate country. Particular attention will be given to the absence of African Americans in these remembrances and why that matters.

Optional trip: Students will have the opportunity to travel to various Civil War battle sites and the new American Civil War Museum in Richmond, Virginia.

**Instructor**—Dr. Marcy Sacks is the Julian S. Rammelkamp professor of history and has been teaching at Albion College for over twenty years. She specializes in African American history and U.S. race relations. As a competitive marathoner, she can often be found running around Albion and its environs. Although her kids are grown and gone, she and her husband lavish their attention on their two cats.

## The Horror!: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Zombies, Vampires, and Other Monsters

Allison Harnish – Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—Practically every culture in every epoch of human history boasts monstrous folktales, literature, art, and mythology that haunts the imagination. Some are more real than others— take, for instance, the mummies of ancient Egypt and the witches of Salem, versus Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* or Robert Kirkman’s *The Walking Dead*. Yet, all speak to the social anxieties of their time—e.g., raging culture wars, concerns about science and technology, distress over communicable disease or environmental degradation, mistrust of government and/or corporations, and fears of “the Other” that manifest themselves through racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other forms of oppression and intolerance. In this seminar, we will investigate the historical development of certain monsters from their folkloristic origins to their modern iterations. We will study horror movies new and old—including George Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and Jordan Peele’s *Get Out* (2017). We will draw on multiple academic disciplines in order to understand how even the most far-fetched of monstrous creatures are real in their capacity to reflect back onto societies their deepest fears and their darkest secrets.

**Instructor**—Alli Harnish (Ph.D., University of Kentucky) is an assistant professor of cultural anthropology. Her research and teaching interests include gender, globalization, environmental politics, and indigenous communities. When she’s not teaching at Albion or conducting research in Zambia, she can be found playing with her dogs, attempting DIY home projects, and enjoying the great outdoors.

## This is Amerca: The Impact of Pop Music on Cultural Dialogues

Ashley Feagin—Tuesday/Thursday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—Starting from the earliest recordings of Mamie Smith to the contemporary anthems of Beyoncé, Childish Gambino, and Janelle Monae, we will explore the impact popular music has on shaping dialogues and social movements. The seminar will cover a range of pop music genres as well as important cultural themes. Music will include blues, country music, hip-hop, bluegrass, pop, rock-n-roll, and more. Cultural themes will include gender, race, feminism, representation, sexual politics, and more.

**Instructor**—Ashley Feagin (M.F.A., Louisiana Tech University) is an assistant professor in the art and art history department. In her teaching and in her art, She challenges her students and her viewers to explore how we build stories—and also participate in the storytelling process—through photographs, installations, performances and collaborations. Her work has been featured in several books published by Vermont Photography Workplace, and in the traveling group exhibition, “Spinning Yarns: Photographic Storytellers.”

## Tolkien and Middle Ages

Chris Riedel – Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00-2:05 p.m.

**Course Description**— J.R.R. Tolkien is famous today as creator of the modern fantasy genre and a source of wonder and delight to millions, but he was also a brilliant professor of medieval history, literature, folklore, and linguistics. We'll explore Tolkien's life and works, from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings* and beyond, as a window on both the Middle Ages and what the medieval world means to us today. How did readers of the medieval epic *Beowulf* understand the lurking dragon? How did Tolkien use dragons to represent the horrors of industrialization and modern warfare? We'll examine the historical, religious and literary roots that Tolkien drew on to create the first immersive fantasy world, while critiquing modern uses and stereotypes of the Middle Ages from politics to television series. We'll explore Tolkien's own moving insights into the human condition that have made his literary masterpieces timeless classics, drawn from his experience of both the medieval and the modern worlds. Students will read primary sources from the Middle Ages along with Tolkien's own works, watch depictions of his stories, and conduct original research into the medieval origins of some aspect of Tolkien's world that appeals to their own curiosity and imagination. Previous reading of Tolkien's works is encouraged but not required.

**Instructor**—Chris Riedel (Ph.D., Boston College) is in his third year of teaching at Albion College, where he teaches all the stuff that happened before Columbus (and occasionally some stuff after) – from ancient Egypt to the Roman Empire to Vikings and crusaders. His research and teaching interests include religious reform movements, biography, Islamic-Western interactions, and stories of miracles and magic. When not teaching or spending time in old medieval villages, he enjoys fantasy, science fiction, and comic books, or a bit of cooking and baking.

## Yo-Duh!: The Force of Communication in Star Wars

Karen Erlandson - Monday/Wednesday, 2:15-4:05 p.m.

**Course Description**—A long time ago in a galaxy far far away...

Actually, on May 25, 1977 in Hollywood, *Star Wars: A New Hope* was released in Theaters and changed the course of movie making and marketing forever. Using the lens of Social Science (even more powerful than the force) this seminar will include student presentations, discussion, lectures, films and documentaries to explore various themes inside the Star Wars Universe and their impact on our world outside of it.

Much like Luke first arriving in Mos Eisley, the transition to college can be confusing and there is much to learn. As part of the First-Year Seminar collective, this course's primary focus is to acclimate first-year students to the culture, experience, and adjustment of college life.

**Instructor**—Karen Erlandson (Ph.D. University of California, Santa Barbara) is Chair of the Communication Studies Department and a Michigan native. She studies Interpersonal Communication and teaches courses including Communication Gender, Intercultural Communication, and Persuasion. She likes to travel, especially to places with ruins of ancient human civilizations. She has spent some time in Spain (a place with a lot of cool ruins) and continues to develop her Spanish language skills.

