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| *INQ Course Descriptions – Fall 2025 Open Sections* |
| INQ 110 |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-B1 | Reading the Landscape: Exploring “Sense of Place” | MWF 09:40AM-10:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-B2 | Reading the Landscape: Exploring “Sense of Place” | MWF 10:50AM-11:50AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-B3 | Reading the Landscape: Exploring “Sense of Place” | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-B4 | Reading the Landscape: Exploring “Sense of Place” | TTH 08:30AM-10:00AM |
| We have lifelong interaction with the landscape—we conduct our daily lives in it, we seek both the familiar and the exotic in it, and it holds our memories and reveals our values—yet these relationships often go unexamined. What does it means to know a place? How can we study or “read” it? Does place shape us or do we shape it? How does place change over time? This course will focus on an inherently interdisciplinary topic, “sense of place,” using a variety of methods (verbal, physical, visual, etc.) and approaches (literature, history, geography, visual art, etc.) in an effort to comprehend a difficult but powerful subject. Our critical investigation of place/landscape may include the dynamics of insider/outsider, subjectivity/objectivity, and real/ideal—themes that are both personal and universal. By learning to read the landscape, we will better understand our place in it. Use your eyes, be curious, seek answers. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-C1 | Criminology Goes to the Movies | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-C2 | Criminology Goes to the Movies | TTH 1:10PM-2:40PM |
| Crime stories surround us. How do crime films both reflect our ideas about social issues, and shape the ways we think about these issues? In this course, students will learn to critically analyze crime films through the lens of criminological theory. The course will begin with an introduction to classical and contemporary criminological theory, followed by a discussion of the role of film in popular culture. Once a foundation for the course has been established, students will screen a range of crime films that correspond to specific criminological theories. Through their analyses of these films, students will explore the dynamic interplay between art and life. Throughout the semester, students will write and lead discussions about the films they are viewing; the course will culminate with an individual research paper and presentation. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-D | Media and the Supernatural | MWF 12:00PM-01:00PM |
| Harry Potter, Eclipse, The Da Vinci Code, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, The Blair Witch Project, Medium, and the Left Behind series are only recent illustrations of Americans’ longstanding fascination with the supernatural and the paranormal. Our course will examine this fascination within the broader context of the Information Age, with particular focus on New Media. We will also read and write about implications for current religious and spiritual practices, and for tendencies toward secularization (i.e., the weakening of the influence of religious institutions). Key questions: Why do many Americans (especially the young) claim to reject religion at the same time that they readily embrace spirituality? What do media representations of the supernatural reveal about the broader society, as well as about prevailing religious forces? Many of our inquiries will be assisted by techniques and terminology drawn from semiotics, a formal (but easily accessible) method for studying signs, symbols, codes, etc. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-F | Stories Retold | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| In this course we will study variations on classic stories from around the world in multiple genres: oral traditions, fiction, film, poetry and art. We will analyze the structure of individual narratives and, using collaborative research and presentation, we will ask how each of these retellings manifests historical and cultural contexts. How do these stories shift form and logic as they move across the world and across genres? Finally, we will construct our own variation of one of the great stories, being able to articulate how our embodiment of the story engages the history and cultural context of the narrative. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-J1 | Other Peoples Stories | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-J2 | Other Peoples Stories | TTH 01:10PM-02:40PM |
| In this course you’ll read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction about people—in order to think and write about different identities, including your own. Which people can you “identify” with? Which seem too “other”? Why? Which stories “ring true” to you? And which are less compelling? Why? When you look closely at different beings you “relate to,” what can you learn about yourself? What can you learn from those who seem too “other”? |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-L1 | Myths of Musical Genius | MWF 01:10PM-02:10PM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-L2 | Myths of Musical Genius | MW 02:20PM-03:50PM |
| What do we mean when we say a composer is a genius, or speak of a musician’s genius, or the genius of a singer? How can we say a work such as an opera or Broadway show or record album is a work of musical genius, when it is essentially a collaborative project? This course pursues an inquiry into the notion of musical genius by proposing how popular culture creates musical myths about artists and works held to be “great.” The term ‘myth’ can refer to any abiding story of human action and achievement. This course introduces students to several myths of musical genius--stories about originality in music and musicians across the ages. To complicate these myths of musical greatness, we will consider how the teachers and mentors, collaborators, and the artistic milieu of each artist’s epoch actually shaped the “genius” attributed to them and their work. Our goal is to learn the “back-story” of each myth, and to thus learn how our knowledge of music history can inform an understanding all too often framed simply by the myths and legends of popular consciousness. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-M1 | Finding Ourselves in Folktales | MWF 09:40AM-10:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-M2 | Finding Ourselves in Folktales | MWF 10:50AM-11:50AM |
| Who are the “folk” in folktales? How are these “folk” constructed by their cultures? Can we, as modern people, relate to any of the issues facing these “folks” from long ago? How has culture constructed us? How has it impacted the decisions we make in our daily lives? As we read folktales from a variety of cultures and critical materials that help students engage the primary texts, we will use class discussion, writing assignments, and research projects to meet our course goals: 1) to use the knowledge of cultural perspective gained through analysis of select folktales to evaluate how our own lives are impacted by culture; 2) to assess how our cultural perspectives may impact our daily decision-making. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-N | Not As Right As You Think | MW 02:20PM-03:50PM |
| Have you ever done something with no idea why you did it? Have you ever seen a friend keep believing in something that was clearly disproven? How good are we at estimating our skills and abilities? These questions make more sense when you have an understanding of cognitive biases. This class will show you how common cognitive biases can affect a person’s thinking, and we will examine their effect on current and historical events. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-O | A Study of American Film | TTH 02:50PM-04:20PM |
| Have you ever wondered what makes a film a classic? Who decides what is the “best movie of all time?” How is that decision made? By examining American Film from a literary, technical and commercial perspective, we will attempt to answer these questions. We will examine film as literary texts and visual art. You will learn to analyze the formal aspects of films—including scenes, shot selection, and dialogue—and will be introduced to genre and theoretical approaches to film study. You will learn to discuss films from a thoughtful and informed perspective, and write critically and analytically about how they work and what they accomplish as films. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-R | Everything's an Argument | MW 02:20PM-03:50PM |
| Why is it important to recognize that everything is an argument? In this course we will answer that question by studying specific types of arguments in detail, considering complex argumentation, and questioning factual assertions made by journalists, scientists, and politicians, among others. As we explore and examine formats ranging from essays to billboards students will be given a firm grounding in the central concepts of rhetoric. This course will also help students further develop their skills in critical thinking, writing, reading, speaking, and researching as well as prepare them for academic and personal success by awakening their intellectual curiosity. Our classroom will serve as a place to think rhetorically and with self-awareness about the beliefs and opinions that inform their actions in the Roanoke College community and beyond. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-T | (Dis)Ability Narratives | MWF 09:40AM-10:40AM |
| How does our culture decide when a person is or is not disabled? How does the definition of “disability” shift depending on what someone needs to do in a specific time and place? Why is “disability” considered a negative word by some people, and how can we change that idea? In this course we will consider stories from people with a variety of disabilities and look for points of connection. Which of these stories and experiences do you identify with? Which seem far from your experiences? We will also explore how these writers use their experiences to shape larger arguments that connect with the reader, and ways we can do that in our writing. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-K | Sport, Not Just a Game | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-V | Sport, Not Just a Game | TTH 08:30AM-10:00AM |
| This course is designed to equip you with a social scientific understanding of sport. We will examine the history of sport in North America and the role it plays in our lives. Whether by participating in sport, attending sporting events, or watching sports on TV, sport teaches children and adults a culture’s norms and values. We also find in sport many of the same issues we see in society in general, both the good (teamwork, leadership, and cooperation) and the bad (violence, substance abuse, sexism, and racism). We will examine how sport is organized, from youth, high school, college, to professional sport, and the ways sport is connected to a society’s social institutions. |
| 2025FA | INQ-110-W | Pop Psyc | MWF 9:40-10:40AM |
| This course will help you explore and understand different types of popular psychological topics through the analysis of a variety of readings. Readings will be in the form of chapters from popular books on psychological topics (such as The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat by neurologist Oliver Sacks, Outliers by science writer Malcolm Gladwell, What It’s Like to Be a Dog by neuroscientist Gregory Burns, The Body Keeps the Score by psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk, and others) as well as other, more publicly available science writing columns (such as those appearing in The Huffington Post, Wall Street Journal, and others). Critical reading and thoughtful reflections of these readings will form the basis of graded assignments, intended to promote scientific literacy, a skill paramount to being a critical thinker in today’s world, whether interested in a scientific career or not. |
| INQ 120 |
| 2025FA | INQ-120-C | Happiness and Goodness | MWF 12:00PM-01:00PM |
| 2025FA | INQ-120-C | Happiness and Goodness | TTH 08:30AM-10:00AM |
| This course explores the relation between living a happy life and leading a morally good life. We will use ancient and modern classics to identify conceptions of happiness ranging from the pursuit of pleasure to spiritual fulfillment, as well as different ways of conceiving moral goodness. Some of these deal with discerning and following our own interests and others with our relations to others and the bonds of duty that preserve those relations. By examining the traditions of ethical thought that embody these views and debating their practical applications we can hope to arrive at a better understanding of the grounds for our moral judgments. |
| 2025FA | INQ-120-D1 | The Moral of Our Story | TTH 08:30AM-10:00AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-120-D2 | The Moral of Our Story | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| This course introduces students to ethical inquiry by reading accounts of slaves, POWs, holocaust survivors, and important events in the 20th century such as the bombing of Hiroshima. Through these non-fiction narratives we will gain insight into key questions in moral philosophy such as: Is morality all relative? Why should we be good? How can we know the difference between right and wrong? |
| INQ 240 |
| 2025FA | INQ-240-B2 | Here's to Your Health | MWF 02:20PM-03:20PM |
| 2025FA | INQ-240-B4 | Here's to Your Health | MW 02:20PM-03:50PM |
| Newspapers, magazines, television, and websites frequently announce the latest health findings regarding nutrition, lifestyle, diseases, disorders, syndromes, treatments, medications, exercise, weight control… the list goes on and on. We do not lack for health information, but is the information presented to us good information? When reports are contradictory, what can we reasonably believe? We will learn the methodologies of modern statistics to address these questions. In the face of uncertainty, we must recognize the importance of basing decisions on evidence (data) rather than anecdote. Care must be taken to construct studies that produce enough meaningful data from which results can be trusted.  |
| 2025FA | INQ-240-C1 | Statistics and Sports | MWF 08:30AM-09:30AM |
| The sports industry is a multibillion dollar entity that generates some extremely interesting questions about quality assessment, business, ethics, and health issues. Some of the questions we will ask are: What type data are necessary to assess the quality of a player and how can we use that data to determine the value of a player? What are the long term health risks associated with playing full contact sports and how do we determine the prevalence of these injuries and their impact on the player’s lives. The key to answering these questions is putting aside preconceived opinions and emotion and using statistical analysis to see what the data say. Under the broad umbrella of statistics, this course will use an abundance of rich data sets to uncover the enormous impact that statistical analysis has on the sports industry.  |
| INQ 241 |
| 2025FA | INQ-241-A1 | Running the World Efficiently | MWF 09:40AM-10:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-241-A2 | Running the World Efficiently | MWF 10:50AM-11:50AM |
| What is the best way to deliver the mail? Deliver packages? Assign jobs to employees? Predict stable marriages? A variety of real world optimization problems will be analyzed using the methodology of graph theory and mathematics, especially in terms of how well the “solution” algorithms perform. We will discuss techniques for framing these and other questions in terms of graph structures and the algorithms used to find solutions. Special attention will be paid to efficient routes for goods and people, assigning tasks based on qualifications, and networks designed to reduce cost. |
| INQ 250 |
| 2025FA | INQ-250BI-A | How Organisms Evolve | MWF 08:30AM-09:30AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-250BIL-1 | How Organisms Evolve Lab | TH 01:10PM-04:10PM |
| Evolutionary theory is the common thread underlying our understanding of life on Earth. This course is designed to provide non-biology majors an opportunity to build a common thread answering the overarching question “How do living organisms evolve?” Answering this question will require examining the philosophy of science and how science works to answer questions. This course will also examine mechanisms of evolution ranging from biogeographic to molecular. Additionally, we will briefly examine biodiversity as the product of evolution and the ongoing biodiversity crisis. Biology, like all sciences relies on inquiry and critical thinking to discover the nature of the universe; thinking critically is imperative in a society that relies on its citizens to evaluate information and make decisions. |
| 2025FA | INQ-250PH-A | The Way Things Work: Sky Diving and Deep Sea Diving | MWF 01:10PM-03:10PM |
| The focus of this scientific reasoning course is to understand the way things work in our natural world. To that effect, fundamental questions that will be addressed are “why study motion, what factors contribute to the motion of an object and how do these contributing factors produce the observed motion of a sky diver and a deep sea diver”. The basics laws of physics applicable to sky diving and deep sea diving will be understood through a suite of laboratory experiments that are exploratory in nature. In this course, the focus will be on the process of science as it is motivated through measurements and inquiry. Cooperative learning groups, computer-assisted activities, and exploratory worksheets will facilitate the conceptual understanding process. Two group projects will provide opportunities for further scientific investigations into each of these topics.  |
| INQ 251 |
| 2025FA | INQ-251-C | Science and Pseudo-Science | TTH 08:30-10:00AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-251-D | Science and Pseudo-Science | MW 08:00-09:30AM |
| In modern society we are inundated with all kinds of information: the Internet, TV, the radio, the newspaper, magazines and books, and in our daily contact with others. Unfortunately, much of this information is incomplete, biased or just outright false, and since we base many of our actions on what we learn from these sources, it is important to have skills to critically evaluate this information. We will discuss and apply the main kinds of deductive and inductive arguments and be able to recognize them as they are used to influence all of us every day. Students will also understand the role of evidence in rational inquiry and be knowledgeable of the many pitfalls of human “common sense” intuition, as well as the proper interpretations of probabilities, in the evaluation of such evidence. We will utilize and explore many popular mysteries, such as ESP, Astrology, the Bermuda Triangle, visitation by extraterrestrial beings (UFOs), etc. in our discussions. |
| 2025FA | INQ-251- | How to Build a Dinosaur |  |
| How did dinosaurs evolve? How do genes and embryos work? How could we build a dinosaur with genetic engineering? Using the field of evolutionary developmental biology (evo-devo), we will explore the origins of dinosaurs on Earth, the way that genes and the environment interact to form embryos, and how this knowledge could be combined to create dinosaurs. |
| INQ 260 |
| 2025FA | INQ-260AN-G | Anthropology of Fashion-Global | TTH 08:30AM-10:00AM |
| All humans experience the “fashion impulse," a basic desire to decorate the body that sets us apart from the great apes. But how do humans use fashion to shape the body? to construct individual identity? to create and communicate messages of power and positionality? to differentiate themselves collectively from others? to build a nation? to challenge and/or sustain political ideologies? to enrich the haves and impoverish the have-nots of consumer capitalism? To answer these questions, we will examine case studies ranging from Scotland’s kilt-wearing Highlanders to the salaula fashionistas of Zambia, from Asian Chic designers in Seoul’s garment district to runway models working Dubai’s Modest Fashion Week. In our examination of how fashions systems operate globally, we will use ethnographic methods to avoid making ethnocentric and Eurocentric assumptions about how cultural constructs of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class impact the production, circulation, and consumption of fashion. |
| 2025FA | INQ-260EC-A | Economics and Crisis | MW 02:20PM-03:50PM |
| Crises take many forms: natural disaster, disease, poverty, war. How do economists address these big issues? Where do they turn for information and data? How are their findings used to frame policy? This course takes students through the research process of social science inquiry from the perspective of an economist. |
| 2025FA | INQ-260PS-A | Supreme Court | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| How do Supreme Court justices decide cases? Students will explore and test legal and extra-legal theories of decision making through the use of pre-existing quantitative data on the Supreme Court as well as judicial biographies. |
| 2025FA | INQ-260PS-B | Political Participation | MWF 10:50AM-11:50AM |
| The tenets of the US form of democracy are built on political participation and representation, yet few citizens vote regularly and fewer still run for elected office. Is democracy dependent on the participation of all citizens or can democratic institutions survive with the participation of only a few? Students will use the methodologies of political science to explore the relationship between democracy, participation, and representation in the context of US political institutions.  |
| 2025FA | INQ-260PY-B1 | Psychology in the Media | MWF 08:30AM-09:30AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-260PY-B2 | Psychology in the Media | MWF 09:40AM-10:40AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-260PY-B3 | Psychology in the Media | MWF 01:10PM-02:10PM |
| How accurately do popular media portray current psychological knowledge? Movies, sitcoms, newspapers, magazines, and blogs often report findings from psychological science. How often do they get it right, and how often do they get it wrong? Do they manipulate findings in order to make their points? This course explores the core methodologies of psychological science by comparing and contrasting popular vs. scientific treatments of current and perennial topics within psychology. Topics will vary, but may include amnesia, school shootings, effects of Facebook use, antidepressant effectiveness, Dissociative Identity Disorder, ADHD prevalence, and self-esteem. |
| INQ 270 |
| 2025FA | INQ-270-B | What’s True About the Bible? | M 05:45PM-08:45PM |
| No book has had greater impact on Western civilization than the Bible, and no book has been more intensively analyzed. This course poses the question, "What's true about the Bible?" and helps students answer it by teaching them critical tools scholars have employed: historical and archaeological; literary--text, source, form, and redaction criticism; and theological. Students will learn to read biblical texts knowing their historical and literary background, and understanding their religious insights. They will then be able to enter into critical conversations concerning what biblical texts mean for us today. |
| 2025FA | INQ-270-G1 | Men, Women and Monsters | TTH 02:50PM-04:20PM |
| In this course we will examine the formation of gender identity and anxiety through a variety of works representing pre-modern cultures. Fields of study represented include literature, music, religion, philosophy, art, and history, and the cultures we will encounter include ancient Sumer, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as medieval Europe, Japan, and India. Our studies will focus on how the works we examine use gender to create and express categories of social and sexual identity yet at the same time both emphasize and distort those categories with the addition of the monstrous. Students will be asked to confront and evaluate the questions and conundrums raised by these works, consider ways the artists tried to answer these questions, and determine why these questions are relevant to their lives today.  |
| 2025FA | INQ-270-G2 | War & Peace in Asia-Global | TTH 08:30AM-10:00AM |
| 2025FA | INQ-270-G3 | War & Peace in Asia-Global | TTH 10:10AM-11:40AM |
| How did war and peace interact in history? How did people try to avoid war and sustain peace? This course is designed to examine three major stages of violent interactions among East Asian countries, first around the seventh century, second around the thirteenth, and third around the fifteenth century. Despite relatively long periods of peaceful interactions, wars played important roles in the formation and reconfiguration of the East Asian world order throughout history. This course will examine the historical and political background of three crucial stages with focus on four historical figures, namely Emperor Yangdi of Sui Dynasty China, Genghis Khan of the Mongol Empire, Toyotomi Hideyoshi of Japan, and Admiral Yi Sunsin of Choson Korea, as well as their respective impact on the political and cultural spheres during the most turbulent eras in premodern East Asia.  |
| INQ 271 |
| 2025FA | INQ-271-F | Music as Mirror of Culture & the Sacred | MW 02:20PM-03:50PM |
| How have musicians handled tensions and debates between faith and reason in the music they create? How have the roles of sacred music in Western society changed over the past 500 years? What are the possibilities (and challenges) to musicians when composing music for sacred purposes? This course examines how music reflects changes in society and culture across time from the perspective of the sacred. Music offers a lens through which we can understand the metamorphoses of politics, religion, economics, and philosophical thinking. Movements, practices, and repertories covered include major western events like the Reformation, Enlightenment, and life after World Wars I and II. Contemporary examples will explore issues related to the potential for expressing the sacred in today's global world. |