

SPECIAL TOPICS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS SUMMER 2021

BADM 290 Adulting 101: Managing your Life and Money

To be financially literate is to know how to manage your money and life like an adult. This means learning how to pay your bills on time, borrow and save money responsibly and how and why to plan. Being financially literate also means that you will have the skills and knowledge necessary to make better decisions and increase the quality of your life. Adulting 101 will introduce students to the basic concepts of money and time management. Students will also use a variety of free financial resources to create budgets, manage their credit profiles, evaluate college assistance packages and the cost of educational loans, as well as comparing financial alternatives like buying a new or used car vs. leasing, buying a home or renting.

CCAP 300 Conversations on Race

Explores evolving conceptions of “race” in the United States, beginning in the antebellum period and extending into the present day. Draws upon a variety of disciplines including literature, history, law, sociology, and anthropology. Explores the dynamic power relationships that are engendered and sustained by American legal and cultural practices. Will chart the conversations about “race” as they emerge in literature, law, and society. “Race” is not a stable identity categorization, but an ideological framework through which power and domination, liberation and self-determination have been articulated and enacted throughout American history. This course will incorporate perspectives from a variety of writers, theorists, and community members. Special emphasis will be given to changing conceptions of “race.”

CCAP 300 Creative Economy of the Berkshires

The Creative Economy of the Berkshires is an active research seminar focusing on the development of a rural creative economy through an exploration of the history, economic development theory, city planning, government granting, and creative placemaking and the direct application of those efforts in North Adams, MA. Students will investigate the economic, political and cultural history of North Adams to generate a historical narrative of the progression from manufacturing center, to rustbelt community to an artist-belt center of activity. Students will conduct extensive research in the community exploring the history and current state of North Adams’ creative placemaking efforts and use their new understanding to develop and prototype ideas to further the community’s creative economic development.

CCAP 300 Representations of Nature

Over many millennia people have created visual, auditory, and textual representations of the world around them. In this course we will consider different forms of visual and textual representations of nature using example spanning Ice Age France to modern Hollywood cinema. Often the creator of nature representations have deliberate purposes that may involve honestly representing nature (i.e., documentary bird and plant art) or presenting a sublime and inspirational work (i.e., the Hudson River School) or reflecting society’s physical and spiritual dependence on nature (i.e., ancient Egyptian art). Nature representations have been used to motivate the consumption and use of nature (i.e., advertising), to inspire an awareness of the human connection to nature (i.e., nature essays), and to provoke the protection and conservation of nature (i.e., nature documentaries). In some cases the specific purposes of environmental representations are unknown (i.e., Paleo-Indian petroglyphs). As we study different representations of nature we will address the questions such as: what can we learn about the nature based on this representation? What motivations did the creator have in making this representation? Does the representation accurately reflect what is known scientifically about nature (recognizing that accuracy may not have been a purpose of the representation)? How does our society today create representations of nature? Throughout the course we will use many examples as a catalyst for examining modern scientific knowledge about the nature depicted in those representations.

EDUC 634 Connecting the Hoosic Watershed to Pk-6 Science Standards

Course Description: The Hoosic Watershed is rich with varied natural history and resources. In this course educators will explore the Hoosic Watershed through a place-based lens. The course will be taught both online and in person, with short multi-day field trips to local waterways and habitats being a key feature. Educators will be provided with ample resources to develop curricula that is specific to their local region and interests. Curricular connections to the PK-6 MA State Science Standards will be integrated throughout the course.

ENGL 303 The Art of the Podcast

Podcasting has changed the world when it comes to how we disseminate and consume media. By democratizing terrestrial radio and amplifying voices that have traditionally been blocked by cultural gatekeepers, the podcast has radically altered our media landscape. At this moment there are free podcasts available about what seems like every subject from cartography to cross-country skiing, but what makes a podcast a success and how difficult is it to create your own?

As part of the C4 initiative, this section of the course will have a focus on arts education and integration in Berkshire county. Together we will conceptualize and create our own podcast series that sees us interviewing prominent artists and creative economy leaders to document the widespread impact of arts education and the deep creativity of the Berkshires. In the process of creating our own group podcasts, you will also learn about the history of podcasts as well as popular genres such as interview-based and narrative podcasts via case studies of popular podcasts such as Serial, Two Dope Queens and In The Dark.

Students will engage with a variety of reading and listening assignments that represent a wide range of cultural experience and together we will deep dive into what makes for an engaging podcast that can stand out in a crowded digital space. The arts are flourishing in Berkshire County and I look forward to helping teach you to interact with this community in an engaging and entertaining way. This course does not require previous interviewing or audio editing experience, just a desire to learn and embrace your own creativity.

ENGL 351 William Shakespeare

This is a survey course that closely examines the plays and poetry of the Bard.

ENVI 360 Wildland Fire: Science and Management

This course will give students an overview of wildland fire science, fire ecology, and fire management. The course is targeted at students who will be conducting research directly or indirectly in disturbance ecology, plan to work with a land management agency or organization with which wildland fire is an issue, or as an introductory first step for students who may be considering a career in wildland fire ecology or management. We will focus largely on the Northeast, but will also cover national and global issues.

HIST 320/HSTE 601 Civics in Massachusetts

Topics to be covered include-(i) history of the United States of America; (ii) the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights; (iii) the Declaration of Independence; (iv) the constitution of the commonwealth; (v) local history and government; (vi) the function and composition of the branches of local, state and federal government; (vii) the roles and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy; (viii) the development of skills to access, analyze and evaluate written and digital media as it relates to history and civics; (ix) community diversity and historical trends in voter registration and civic participation relative to disenfranchised voter populations; (x) opportunities to identify and debate issues relative to power, economic status and the common good in democracy; and (xi) a program relating to the flag of the United States of America including, but not limited to, proper etiquette and the correct use and display of the flag, the importance of participation in the electoral process and the provisions of 4 U.S.C. sections 7 to 9, inclusive, and 36 U.S.C. section 301.

IDST 350/HIST 320/HSTE 601 Abolitionism in the Berkshires

This course will explore the development of African slavery in North America, the various movements against the practice of slavery, and the vital place of Berkshire County in these complex movements. We will be studying primary and secondary documents, as well as learning through local sites of interest.

PSYC 495 LGBTQ+ Psychology

In this class, we explore historical underpinnings, contemporary theories, and empirical research in psychological science related to the lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, and other queer individuals. Topics include identity development, mental/physical health, homo/trans*phobia and heternormativity/homonormativity, and intersectionality of sexual orientation and gender identity with other dimensions of cultural identity.