FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS 2018

First-Year Seminars constitute the gateway to the K-Plan and to college life for entering students, while also serving as the foundation of the Shared Passages Program. Offered in fall quarter, First-Year Seminars are designed to orient students to college-level learning, with particular emphasis on critical thinking, writing, and speaking. In keeping with Kalamazoo College's emphasis on intercultural education, they aim to engage students in the study of significant social and historical differences. They integrate collaborative and group work, effective research strategies and discussions, all promoting active, engaged learning. They work to accustom students to modes of academic behavior likely to promote success in college, including class participation, productive approaches to assignments, visits to faculty members’ offices, and awareness of support structures for K students.

First-Year Seminars are linked to academic advising, the First-Year Experience program, Upjohn Library, and the Writing Center. They create connections with the components of the K-Plan: depth and breadth in the liberal arts; learning through experience; international and intercultural engagement; and independent scholarship.

2018 DESCRIPTIONS

Note: First-Year Seminar descriptions are also available on the online course schedule. Students will choose and register for a First-Year Seminar during their registration time. Detailed information on how to search and register for courses can be found on the first-year registration website: (https://reason.kzoo.edu/advising/incoming/).

MUSIC AND FREEDOM – JOSH MOON (SEMN-105)

This course will interrogate the complex yet tantalizing relationship between music and freedom. What does freedom in music mean? Is liberation found in lyrics that express a challenge to oppression? Can transcendence be summoned from sound and improvisation? Are independent artists emancipated when they follow their own voice at the expense of profit and even their own fans? Has freedom been extinguished from music and replaced with a cheap illusion, as Theodor Adorno believed? On our search for answers, we’ll talk about protest, politics, aesthetics, film, identity, spirituality, and other topics as we seek a richer, more critical understanding of the sounds and songs that allow us to feel free.

PICTURING PARIS: URBAN SPACE, CAPITALISM, AND ART – HEATHER VINSON (SEMN-106)

The historical processes of urbanization and industrialization forever altered modernity’s cityscapes; however, the effects of capitalism—consumerism, leisure time, publicness, and spectacle—also worked to reshape experiences of everyday life. This course examines the relationship between urban space, capital, social relations, and works of art that try to negotiate these rapidly changing sites of modernity. Taking late-nineteenth-century Paris as our case study, we ask questions about how Impressionist artists attempted to “picture” the anonymity and ennui of modern boulevard life—its rapidity and relentless newness—and how their radical pictorial vocabularies mediated the uncertain gender, sex, and class relations in Paris, “the capital of the
nineteenth century." As we consider works of art that challenge capitalism and its bourgeois morality, we will study paintings by Manet, Degas, Cassatt, Caillebotte, Monet, and Lautrec, among others and ask difficult questions about the imbalances of power in modernity’s urban playground. Along the way, we will reflect on how representations of urban life and space itself can become sites of living memory. Finally, the course will ask students to rethink their own spatial and social experiences in urban geographies under late capitalism and urban renewal. How do we re-member and attempt to “fix” or “picture” the fluctuations of our everyday lives in digital representations and social media?

FROM PLATO TO PLAYDOH: SOME OF THE GREAT IDEAS OF MATHEMATICS – MICHELE INTERMONT (SEMN-108)
The ancient Greeks established some of the foundations of mathematics. In particular, their contributions to the field of geometry are quite well-known – who hasn’t heard of the Pythagorean Theorem?! But mathematics didn’t stop evolving then (and no, it hasn’t stopped evolving yet!). It is a dynamic subject and the great ideas of geometry morphed into a branch of mathematics called topology. Enter playdoh. While protractors and compasses may be the tools of geometry, playdoh is a more appropriate tool for studying topology. Of course, there have been many fascinating developments in mathematics since the ancient Greeks, and we’ll be exploring several of them with an eye towards establishing some of the themes that make mathematics universal. In addition to talking about math, we’ll be doing math. You don’t have to be good at the subject to take this course, but you should like it. Having had some math in high school, including algebra and pre-calculus, would be desirable.

MAKE IT STICK: HOW LEARNING WORKS – PATRIK HULTBERG (SEMN-112)
How do people learn? Perhaps more importantly, how do you learn? The fact that you are now a K student indicates that you are able to learn and retain (at least for some time) a vast amount of information. But are you learning in the most efficient way? Are you able to remember what you learn for a long time? Are you able to transfer your learning to new situations? Are there ways to identify principles that guide such deep learning? If so, can we use these principles to become “better” learners? In our search for answers to all these questions we will study different theories of learning, the brain, instructional design, and how other cultures teach and learn. The course will use activities, experiments, discussions, and personal reflections to explore these issues, with the ultimate goal for you to become a more “effective” learner (and hence a more successful K student).

DON QUIXOTE AS ‘PLAYER ONE’ – KATIE MACLEAN (SEMN-113)
What did virtual reality look like before modern technology? What makes a virtual world feel just as ‘real’ – or more real – than real life? Cervantes’ masterpiece, Don Quixote, is considered by many to be the first truly modern novel, but its historical and cultural context (Seventeenth-Century Spain) can seem very distant indeed. In this course, students will use contemporary theories from video game studies in order to explore this work with fresh eyes. Concepts like epic space, flow, medievalism, migration, virtual economies and simulation will allow us to connect with this iconic literary figure. This course is perfect for those students interested in literature, Medieval and Early Modern history or the appeal of video games today. Familiarity with Spanish is not required.
NOTHING: THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF DOING NOTHING – ADRIANA GARRIGA-LOPEZ (SEMN-114)
What does nothing mean? What does one do when one is doing nothing? How can we make sense of a word or category (no-thing) that in itself is a denial of thing-ness? Does nothing look different through different cultural lenses? And what could humans learn from thinking about nothing? This seminar will explore different views on the subject of nothingness as it has been imagined and discussed by artists, social theorists, philosophers, and other thinkers. We will discuss the content of nothing as a category and consider what or who can be contained within, or excluded from it. Together, we will engage with the theory and practice of nothing in order to detect what its expressions, tensions, and contradictions might be, as well as what counts as a thing or as nothing.

ENVIRONMENTAL (IN)JUSTICE – BINNEY GIRDLER (SEMN-122)
In this course we will explore the intersection between environmental and social justice. We have entered a new geological era – the Anthropocene – marked by unprecedented impacts of the burgeoning human population on the Earth’s physical and biological systems. At the same time, global inequality has deepened: most of the world’s wealth is concentrated in the hands of a small fraction of its people. Communities have unequal access to environmental benefits (clean air, water, greenspace), and different exposure to environmental harms (toxic waste dumps, air pollution, fossil fuel extractive industries). Recent examples in the news include the Keystone XL pipeline being routed through Native American lands without their permission, and the Flint, MI, water crisis that disproportionately affected poor, black residents of that city when lead leached into drinking water. Our study of environmental “haves and have nots” will not be limited to the United States; we will explore a diverse array of writers and genres – novels, poetry, essays, memoirs – that focus on themes of environmental justice and equity in the U.S. and around the world.

THEATER AND THE OTHER – ERIC HEAPS (SEMN-123)
This course uses works by playwrights from around the world to study issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, and intercultural communication, with a particular emphasis on the voices of the subaltern, those who have been silenced by the power structures they lived (or live) in. We will read works from Amiri Baraka, Luis Valdez, Tony Kushner, Caryl Churchill, and Lucienne Guedes Fahrer, among others. While reading these plays, we will discuss ways in which theatre can help bring voices to the voiceless but also talk about how to overcome obstacles we face in the theatre creation process that inhibit our voices and those of others we try to represent.

JOURNEYS TO THE WEST: PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION IN CHINESE TRAVEL WRITING – GRAHAM CHAMNESS (SEMN-124)
Why do people all over the world embark on journeys? What does it mean to be on a journey? Where does a journey begin and where or how does it end? And how do we overcome the obstacles we encounter when we go on a journey, and what do we learn about ourselves and the world through the process of overcoming those obstacles? These are some of the questions we will explore in this course through a focus on Monkey’s adventures in the great Chinese novel, Journey to the West. The story of Monkey, based on the monk Xuanzang’s historical journey to India in search of Buddhist scriptures, enjoyed widespread popularity in premodern East Asia and has continued to fascinate readers worldwide down to the present day. Together we will investigate multiple layers of meaning in Monkey’s tale. We will do this by relating its message about personal transformation to its religious, literary, and cultural contexts in China’s past, as well as to our experiences in the
present. Additionally, we will examine a diverse range of creative forms inspired by *Journey to the West*, including its classical Chinese fantasy “sequel,” the modern Chinese animation *Havoc in Heaven*, Jeffrey Lau’s *A Chinese Odyssey* film adaptations, Gene Luen Yang’s graphic novel *American Born Chinese*, and more. These various approaches to Monkey’s story attest not only to its deep cultural significance in China and East Asia, but also to the ways in which it can have significance for different people of all different cultural backgrounds. All readings will be in English. No previous knowledge of Chinese language is necessary.

**CULTIVATING COMMUNITY – AMELIA KATANSKI (SEMN-135)**

Novelist and environmentalist Wendell Berry has written, “A significant part of the pleasure of eating is in one’s accurate consciousness of the lives and the world from which food comes. . . . Eating with the fullest pleasure—pleasure, that is, that does not depend on ignorance—is perhaps the profoundest enactment of our connection with the world.” And yet, in today’s world of fast, processed food, many of us have lost of our connection to where our food comes from. Is it possible to rebuild relationships between those who grow and harvest food and those who eat it and gain an accurate consciousness of the connection between plate and planet, cuisine and culture? In this seminar, we will learn about the industrial food system and explore the ways that people today are developing alternatives that use food as an instrument of social justice and a way to build strong communities. We’ll read Michael Pollan’s influential exposé *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* as our starting point in our exploration of food justice, but we will study this issue from a variety of books, films, and perspectives. We will talk with local farmers, community organizers, farm workers’ advocates, entrepreneurs, and anti-hunger activists and get to know the Kalamazoo community by experiencing its harvest. We will also engage in a service-learning project that will work to build and sustain the movement for just, local, and sustainable food for everyone in our community. *Academic service-learning combines classroom study with real world experience, allowing students to apply what they are learning to everyday life in a way that addresses community-identified needs.*

**CROSSING BORDERS: AUTISM AND OTHER WAYS OF KNOWING – BRUCE MILLS (SEMN-136)**

In the past two decades, the diagnosis of and attention to autism has grown exponentially. More public awareness and debate, however, does not guarantee a more complex understanding. In this class, we will explore autobiographies, essays, clinical studies, and films about or by those with autism in order to gain an informed understanding of this widely-diagnosed spectrum disorder. We will move outside the borders of the class to see students within AI (autistic-impaired) classrooms and participate in service-learning work in the Kalamazoo community. For this work, groups of students will be matched and spend time with a person on the spectrum and his or her family. In an effort to understand this way of knowing, we will consider how expectations about communication and social relationships “impair” and/or enhance an ability to live in a “neurodiverse” world. If you have a reason for wishing to take this seminar (i.e., if you are committed to developing peer-to-peer relationships across cognitive difference (whether on or off the spectrum), if you have a sibling or friend with autism, etc.), please contact Bruce Mills at bmills@kzoo.edu as soon as possible. This contact will enable me to consider specific interests or circumstances more closely and thus whether to reserve a space for you in the class. *Academic service-learning combines classroom study with real world experience, allowing students to apply what they are learning to everyday life in a way that addresses community-identified needs.*
CO-AUTHORING YOUR LIFE: WRITING YOURSELF IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHERS – ANDY MOZINA (SEMN-137)
The autonomous, self-made individual is a powerful American myth. But no person is entirely self-made; all of us are embedded in various families and communities and ideologies, and we also find ourselves marked by cultural discourses about race, class, religion, gender and sexual orientation, all of which influence who we are in various ways. The clash between the desire for autonomy and the shaping power of these social conditions makes the process of coming up with an identity extremely difficult and complex. How can we maintain a sense of autonomy while acknowledging influences and contexts? How can we be ourselves while learning from others? How do we write our own lives when so many other hands seem to hold, or to want to hold, the pen with us? Through novels, stories, autobiographies, essays and a film, this course will explore different situations in which people struggle to form identities under intense “co-authoring” pressures. You will write analytical essays about the texts of others and personal essays about yourself.

OUR SHAKESPEARES, OURSELVES – AMY SMITH (SEMN-139)
Cultures often retell stories from the past as a way of thinking through the present: perhaps because using already existing material makes it easier to explore difficult issues, perhaps because we feel the need to “talk back” to the writers who have so deeply inflected our culture. In this course, we’ll be focusing on how modern cultures have reworked Shakespeare’s plays into a 1950’s sci-fi film, an MTV inspired movie, Afro-Caribbean drama, rock and rap music, and a Julia Stiles movie set in the Deep South. In exploring how Shakespeare has been adapted to these radically different contexts, we’ll also be exploring the difficult issues these adaptations focus on—race, gender, sexuality, colonialism and class. What a culture does with Shakespeare’s plays can tell you a lot about that culture; so we’ll be asking a number of questions: Why is Shakespeare so popular in the United States today? What does he mean to us? What are we doing with his plays and why? What do our adaptations of his work tell us about our own views about racism or sexism in America, for example?

TRUTH, LIES, AND POLITICS: FROM PLATO TO TRUMP – JENNIFER EINSPAHR (SEMN-144)
Are truth and politics friends or foes? Does your answer differ depending on the kind of truth in question? In political matters, is it always wrong to lie? Political thinkers have been asking such questions for millennia, but in an era of echo chambers, “fake news,” and conflicting accounts of what’s true, they have presented themselves with renewed urgency. In this course, we will examine the relationship between truth and politics within the political theory tradition as well as in the contemporary context. We will focus in particular on strategies for navigating the bewildering terrain of our so-called “post-fact” context, in which it seems as though politics has become a contest over reality itself.

CREATIVITY: INSPIRATION AND BEYOND – SIU-LAN TAN (SEMN-145)
The psychology of creativity is as complex and mysterious as it is intriguing. Whether brushing paint on a canvas, composing a poem or piece of music, launching a new advertising campaign, or making a breakthrough at the frontiers of science, some form of creative thinking is involved. In this seminar, we examine how creativity is expressed in domains such as art, music, film, film music, literature, science, business, and invention. Classic and contemporary theories and research findings will provide the materials for discussions, essays, and projects. Students will also apply
imagination and creative problem-solving skills to a variety of puzzles and exercises. This seminar will challenge your basic assumptions about the nature of creativity, and expand your horizons to encompass the richness and diversity of creative expression in its many forms.

ROOTS IN THE EARTH – AMY NEWDAY (SEMN-152)
Even in the most developed and densely populated of cities, we are connected to nature. As essayist John Burroughs wrote, “we are rooted to the air through our lungs and to the soil through our stomachs.” In this seminar we’ll examine our relationships with and beliefs about the natural world. What belief systems have influenced human interactions with nature throughout history and across cultures? Is our current relationship to nature serving us as individuals and members of a global community? Are there connections we can make between environmental and social justice issues that might help us envision more sustainable, satisfying, and even joyful relationships with nature AND with people? We'll grapple with how the answers to these questions affect our responses to problems such as climate change, pollution, and dwindling biodiversity. Readings include Bill McKibben’s *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau* and Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. This course will ask students to reflect on their own experiences with nature as they engage in a service learning project in collaboration with Kalamazoo College’s Lillian Anderson Arboretum.

THE NEW WORLD ORDER – GARY GREGG (SEMN-155)
The seminar will study recent analyses of the New World Order in the context of theories of “globalization,” focusing on causes of social strife and debates about what makes for a just society. It will examine the culture of the investment bankers who are the New Order’s main architects, the ideology of “neoliberalism” that is its blueprint, the fate of American workers whose jobs are disappearing, and the New World as lived by some of the two billion people in shantytowns, bidonvilles, and favelas. Students will write brief review-style essays and a case study of a city or region.

STALIN AND THE ART OF FEAR – ANDREW KOEHLER (SEMN-165)
From the 1920s until his death in 1953, Joseph Stalin wielded an extraordinary amount of control over the newly-created Soviet state. He interpreted the proper implementation of Socialist economic policy, he silenced his critics with unimaginable savagery, and he took an especially keen interest in dictating the terms by which art should be made. To whom does art belong? What was it like to create art in an atmosphere of censorship? Could artists -- like poet Anna Akhmatova or composer Dmitri Shostakovich, for example -- navigate these treacherous waters without sacrificing their creativity and artistic integrity? We will examine these and related questions through reading memoir, fiction, and historical accounts of the time; watching films; and closely listening to the music that spoke to and reflected this tumultuous time.

SALEM POSSESSED: THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS & THEIR LEGACIES – CHARLENE BOYER LEWIS (SEMN-168)
In 1692, the people of Salem, Massachusetts grew terrified when a small group of girls accused an enslaved woman, an impoverished woman, and a scandalous woman of bewitching them. Ultimately, twenty men and women were hung or pressed to death with stones and over a hundred others found themselves imprisoned. Historians have long considered the Salem Witch Trials a pivotal moment in American history. Countless works have offered countless reasons for the strange happenings
in Salem, trying to explain why a small community in Colonial America would succumb to witchcraft hysteria long after it had died down in Europe. The Salem Witch Trials have haunted American culture. Starting in the nineteenth century and continuing into the present, writers and artists have grappled with the various meanings of the witch hunts and the persecution of innocent persons, seeing connections between “the furies of fanaticism and paranoia” of 1692 and their own time. Most famously, Arthur Miller in *The Crucible* used the trials to examine the persecution of alleged Communists in the 1950s. This course will examine and seek to understand the events of 1692 and the subsequent legacies of the trials in American culture through the actual documents from the trials, the writings of historians, and the imaginative works of novelists, playwrights, poets, and film makers.

**LIFE WITH TWO LANGUAGES – LARISSA DUGAS (SEMN-172)**
Almost half of the world’s population uses two or more languages as they go about their daily lives. In this seminar, we will explore what it means to be a bilingual or multilingual person – how this affects our ways of communicating and our perspective on the world. We will also investigate how different societies organize life with two or more languages. Topics include: code-switching, language attrition, language & identity, bilingual children, bilingual education, super-bilinguals, bilingualism & politics, the “English-only movement” in the USA, and minority languages in the USA. Yookoso -Bienvenido- Bienvenue- Hwan-yung-hahm-ni-da - Chào mừng *This course is designed for students from a multilingual household or community or those whose primary residence is outside of the United States.*

**SLANG: A DISCUSSION OF INFORMAL ENGLISH – CANDACE BAILEY COMBS (SEMN-184)**
*This course is designed for students whose native language is not English. Permission required.*
Slang is the ever-changing use of informal language that is reflective of culture and society. Though slang is most common in spoken language, modern dictionaries have long embraced slang and recorded its usage. Notable examples include the Oxford English Dictionary new entries of ‘vape,’ ‘selfie,’ and ‘GIF.’ In this class, we will discuss, research, and write about the informal use of slang and its role in social interactions as well as what slang represents in the lives of English speakers. We will identify the purpose of slang in a community of speakers, and how language is used to create relationships. An important distinction will be made regarding the environment of informal and formal language and how English speakers navigate the cultural requirements of spoken and written language in academic settings. Through readings, videos, discussion, and writing, we will explore the fun and function of slang.

**IMAGINING POSSIBLE WORLDS: SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY, AND PHILOSOPHY – LARS ENDEN (SEMN-188)**
Which story is more likely to occur in the real world: *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings?* According to Scottish philosopher David Hume, “nothing we [can] imagine is absolutely impossible.” So, since science fiction and fantasy stories seem equally imaginable, maybe they are equally possible. However, the great sci-fi writer Isaac Asimov once said, “science fiction, given its grounding in science, is possible; fantasy, which has no grounding in reality, is not.” So, maybe fantasy stories are not possible after all. This suggests a deeper, underlying philosophical question: “what does it even mean to say that something is possible?” In this course, therefore, we will explore the question “what is possible?” using science fiction and fantasy stories as our guide. To do this, we will read such notable contemporary writers as Margaret Atwood, Stephen King, Michael Chabon, Ursula K.
Le Guin, T. C. Boyle, and Gregory Maguire. We will also watch three very weird movies and even a few episodes of *Star Trek*. We will use these experiences as the foundation for our philosophical study of possibility, which will include thinking hard about such topics as God, evil, freedom, knowledge, and zombies. YES!—that’s right—ZOMBIES!!

**THE ART OF REVENGE – JASON YOST (SEMN-189)**
The desire for revenge is only human. But there is a risk that the actual performance of revenge will initiate a chain reaction of violent reprisals whose consequences will quickly prove fatal to social life itself. The revenger understandably wants to restore the natural order of things, to right a wrong, but his or her desire threatens to work an even greater harm. This fundamental paradox helps to explain why revenge is so prominent in our collective, cultural imagination from the theatre of ancient Greece to the popular cinema of modern Hollywood. This seminar addresses the important and often vexing questions raised by tales of revenge: What is the difference between revenge and justice? Does revenge amount to a social responsibility or a slip into self-destructive narcissism? What role does revenge play in current moral and political dilemmas such as ethnic nationalism, capital punishment, and terrorism? To explore these issues, we will study a variety of works including tragedies by Euripides (*Medea*) and Shakespeare (*Titus Andronicus*), a novel by Thomas Pynchon (*The Crying of Lot 49*), and films by Clint Eastwood (*Unforgiven*), Quentin Tarantino (*Inglourious Basterds*), and others. Warning: This seminar obviously deals with violent subject matter. The films in particular may be too graphic for some students.

**IT’S ONLY ROCK’N ROLL (BUT I LIKE IT) – SCOTT BADE (SEMN-191)**
Mick Jagger said the song “It’s Only Rock ‘n Roll (But I Like it)” was a response to the pressure he and the band felt to continually exceed their past accomplishments. Who could have imagined how rock and roll (and all of its children) would succeed, exceed and change the world? In this seminar we will explore some of the fascinating relationships between current events, social, cultural and political developments, and rock music, as expressed through the music, lyrics, art, philosophy and fashion of rock and roll. Through generous listenings, viewings, readings, discussions, and writings, we will gain a well-rounded view of the history of rock music and a deeper appreciation for the complex and evolving part rock and roll has played and continues to play in the social, cultural, political and, of course, musical evolution of our lives and the world.

**BANNED: CENSORSHIP AND THE POLITICS OF ART – PATRICK KINNE (SEMN-193)**
Art is a ubiquitous part of our society, but how exactly do we define the word “art” and what do we expect from it? Some might say art is solely for aesthetic enjoyment and to make us feel good, but what happens when art becomes part of the culture wars? What social conditions drive controversy around art? This course will explore art’s seemingly unparalleled ability to outrage and offend. We will discuss and dissect a wide variety of historical cases where art has been deemed dangerous and/or objectionable. Through a variety of readings and discussions we will explore such topics as: Is censorship ever okay? What can controversies surrounding art tell us about those who are offended? And, what does being offended mean in a democratic society? In this course we will learn how to unpack the context of controversial art and self-examine our personal values and what it means to have those values challenged.
BAD RELIGION – ALYSSA MALDONADO-ESTRADA (SEMN-195)
In this course, we explore communities and practices that have been considered “loud,” “superstitious,” “weird,” “unorthodox,” and purportedly “satanic.” To outsiders, bad religion is religion that seems to straddle the lines of magic and witchcraft, and religion that does not stay in its sphere but seems to embroil itself in public space, business, and politics. This class does not argue that there is such a thing as “bad religion” but explores contestations over what constitutes “appropriate” religious practice, community, authority, and belief in 20th century and contemporary America. We will explore groups from Scientologists, the Peoples Temple (known for the Jonestown suicides) to apocalyptic Catholics, Latinx devotions and Afro-Caribbean religions—groups that have drawn the ire of neighbors, established churches, media, and governmental authorities. We will explore how understandings of immigration, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality structured these communities and shaped the controversies that surrounded them. We will interrogate the construction of religious norms and ideas of “acceptable” religious practice across different moments in American history. Students will critically analyze primary sources and media representations—from crime television shows to documentaries—to explore how media and pop culture are operative in constructing the religious mainstream and margin in America.

MEMORIES, SECRETS, AND LIES: WRITING THE SELF – KATHRYN SEDERBERG (SEMN-196)
Why do we love to read “confessions,” watch makeover shows, read blogs, and take selfies? How do we shape the stories we tell about ourselves, and the image of self we present to the world? Is there such a thing as a “true” or “authentic” self? In this seminar you will work with memoirs, letters, a TV series, a graphic novel, diaries, and scrapbooks to explore how individuals present themselves and how they tell their life stories. We start with the genre of confessions, looking at how writers draw in their audiences by claiming to tell secrets, and “nothing but the truth.” We will discuss memory, its failures, and the ways we retrieve “lost time” in narrative. Other topics include performance and identity, censorship and autobiographical scandals surrounding authors who “broke the rules” of memoir. One week we visit the Kalamazoo College Archives and work with diaries, letters, and scrapbooks from college students 100 years ago—examining how their experiences may parallel or differ from your own. We will also visit the Kalamazoo Institute of Art to view works of self-portraiture.

“O, QUEEN OF CITIES!” BYZANTIUM, THE REAL GAME OF THRONES – KYLE LINCOLN (SEMN-197)
The Roman Empire never fell—it just turned Greek. Istanbul used to be Constantinople. It’s completely normal to cut out your brother’s tongue to keep him from becoming Emperor instead of you. A world of assassinations, tax fraud, and adultery existed in a city that had stadiums that held more than 100,000 screaming fans and gave its citizens free lunches. Fortune favors the bold. The bold are born for Constantinople.