

First Year Courses

The following courses are intended for First Year students. Enrollment is limited to a small number of First Year students, and the courses include introductions to such topics as research skills and campus resources, in addition to their specific content.

ASTR 108 Discovering Our Universe

McLeod (Astronomy)

This course leads first-year students through hands-on exploration of the structure of the Universe and our place within it. We will measure the size, shape, and spin of the Earth by using simple home-made instruments to observe the sky. We will learn to use Wellesley's own telescopes to explore the arrangement and contents of our own Solar System. Finally, we will determine our place within the Milky Way Galaxy and the Universe using data obtained from the National Virtual Observatory. Some daytime and nighttime observing will be required outside of class. This course is open only to first-year students. No prior experience in astronomy is required, but algebra and trigonometry will be used. Students who take ASTR 108 may not take ASTR 109.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students. Fulfillment of the basic skills component of the Quantitative Reasoning requirement.

Distribution: Natural and Physical Science or Mathematical Modeling

Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

ECON 101F Principles of Microeconomics

Velenchik (Economics)

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. This first course in economics introduces students to the market system. Microeconomics considers the decisions of households and firms about what to consume and what to produce, and the efficiency and equity of market outcomes. Supply and demand analysis is developed and applied. Policy issues include price floors and ceilings, competition and monopoly, income distribution, and the role of government in a market economy.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students. Fulfillment of the basic skills component of the Quantitative Reasoning requirement.

Distribution: Social and Behavioral Analysis

Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

EDUC 117 Diversity in Education

Darer (Spanish), Richards

An introduction to issues in diversity and multicultural education. We will examine rationales for diversity and multicultural education and some of the effects of these policies. We will analyze implications of diversity for teaching and learning, and study the influences of race, ethnicity, gender, language, socioeconomic status, and religion on schools and school curricula, with a focus on tensions surrounding increasing diversity in American education.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students.

Distribution: Social and Behavioral Analysis

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

ENG 150/PHIL 150 First Year Colloquium in Literature and the History of Ideas

A team-taught interdisciplinary seminar for first-year students that brings the perspectives of such disciplines as philosophy, psychology, and history to bear on the traditional study of literature.

Rodensky and deWarren (Philosophy)

Topic A for 2008-09: George Eliot and the Philosophical Novel. This course examines the ways in which philosophy finds expression in literature and literature finds significance in philosophy. The focus of this examination will be the work of the great Victorian novelist George Eliot and the major philosophical ideas and texts that influenced her, including the work of Spinoza, Feuerbach and J. S. Mill (among others). We will discuss these philosophical texts separately and in detail, and consider how Eliot refashioned them in the context of two of her novels, *The Mill on the Floss* and *Middlemarch*. As part of our interdisciplinary interest, we will reflect on the basic categories of the “literary” and the “philosophical,” asking what it means to read novels “as philosophy” and to read philosophy “as literature.” *Students may register for either ENG 150 or PHIL 150 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students.

Distribution: Language and Literature or Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy

Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

ENG 150 First Year Colloquium in Literature and the History of Ideas

A team-taught interdisciplinary seminar for first-year students that brings the perspectives of such disciplines as philosophy, psychology, and history to bear on the traditional study of literature.

Ko and Lynch

Topic B for 2008-09: Estranged Bedfellows of Literary History: Chaucer and Shakespeare. This team-taught course will complicate the model of literary history that locates Chaucer and Shakespeare firmly on different sides of a bright historical line between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Even in comparison to other Renaissance writers, Shakespeare was deeply interested in medieval topics, as can easily be seen in tragedies such as *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. Chaucer, on the opposite side of the medieval/modern divide, was uncannily modern and cosmopolitan, not only reformist-minded in religious matters but also fascinated by philosophical paradox and interested in representing new modes of subjectivity in his poetry. Likely readings include the Merchant’s Tale and Franklin’s Tale from the *Canterbury Tales* and selections from Chaucer’s romantic poem *Troilus and Criseyde*, sometimes called the first novel in the English language, alongside Shakespeare’s much darker *Troilus and Cressida* and *Romeo and Juliet*, concluding with Shakespeare’s magnificent late romance *The Tempest*.

Prerequisite: None. Open only to first-year students.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Spring Unit: 1.0

EXP 123 The Art of Reading: An Introduction to Literary Theory

Parussa (Italian Studies)

What is literary theory? What's its use? Where does it come from? These are just some of the questions that will be addressed in this course dedicated to the exploration of the most important theories for the interpretation of literary texts. Students will read essays on various methods of textual reading and will apply them to the interpretation of major texts of world literature. Each week we will combine the presentation of a different method of textual interpretation with the discussion of a classic world literature. This course will show how theories have represented a challenge to the traditional literary canon; and it will also provide students with intellectual tools that will enable them to interpret other texts they will encounter in their future.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

GEOS 110 The Coastal Zone: Intersection of Land, Sea and Humanity with Laboratory

Argow (Geosciences)

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. OFFERED IN 2009-10. This first year course will focus on physical processes that frame ecological and human interactions within the dynamic coastal environment. At local beaches and shorelines, students will observe, sample, and measure coastal processes in action to answer such questions as: Why do some beaches lose sand, where does it go, and what should we do about it? What are coastal wetlands, and how do they form and function? Field trips will be supplemented by information drawn from popular and scientific literature and media. The final project will involve field and laboratory research on local coastal issues, including management implications. Weekend field trip required. This course is for all first year students interested in the natural world, how it works, and why.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students.

Distribution: Natural and Physical Science

Semester: N/O. Offered 2009-10. Unit 1.25

GEOS 111 The Yucca Mountain Problem: Where Should We Put Nuclear Waste?

Besancon

Choices about disposal of radioactive materials will affect countless future generations. Focusing on the proposed storage facility at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, we will examine the important scientific questions that must be answered for long-term safety of a nuclear repository. Students will learn the scientific principles governing risk assessment, groundwater movement, volcanism, earthquakes, and the groundwater properties of the repository rocks, and how each affects the safety of the proposed containment facility. We will also examine the evidence and methods used to predict how the waste and the containers designed to hold it will behave for long periods. Students will identify key issues and produce small group projects examining some of the scientific issues raised by this controversial proposal.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students.

Distribution: Natural and Physical Science
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

POL 108 Seminar. State and Society in Contemporary China

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. This course will use the case of contemporary China to introduce students to the discipline and major subfields of political science. To illustrate the subfield of comparative politics, our analysis of modern China's political development and government will be placed in the context of the experiences of other developing nations and (former) communist party-states. Political theory will be a thread throughout the course as we explore ideas from Confucianism to Communism that have shaped political life in China. For international relations, we will look at China's recent rise as one of the world's great powers. As an example of American politics in action, we will study the various influences that go into the making of US China policy.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students.
Distribution: Social and Behavioral Analysis
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

SOC 105 Doing Sociology – Applying Sociological Concepts to the Real World

Levitt (Sociology)

The goal of this course is to learn to analyze real life situations using sociological tools. The course is organized around a series of exercises that will teach students different analytical techniques and explore sociological theories and concepts. Projects may include reading novels, analyzing films, working with census data, interviewing, conducting surveys, participant observation, debating, and a small independent research project. Each project will focus on a sub-field in the discipline and will serve as a platform from which students can explore basic theories, analytic categories, and methods. Students will work individually, in pairs, and in small groups.

Prerequisite: Open only to first-year students.
Distribution: Social and Behavioral Analysis
Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

All WRIT125 classes, including those that satisfy requirements within majors, are intended for First Year students. Please refer to the section of the catalog for the Writing Program's offerings.

Many departments and programs recommend specific courses as entryways into their majors, and some reserve seats for first-year students. Please consult the First Year Program website at <http://www.wellesley.edu/FirstYear/> or the relevant department for more information.