

# JUNIOR INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINAR PROGRAM

The Junior Interdisciplinary Seminar (JINS) is the signature course of Truman's Liberal Studies Program. Each seminar offers students models of how connections can be made among modes of inquiry, knowledge bases, discourse conventions, and disciplinary perspectives. The Truman faculty who teach these courses encourage and model interdisciplinarity as a lifelong learning habit and assist students in integrating the multiple ways of thinking about issues, problems, and concepts associated with diverse academic disciplines. Such syntheses produce a fuller and more complex understanding of issues, problems, and concepts.

Each JINS course is designed to encourage and enhance student agility as thinkers. "Agile learners" are able both to specialize in disciplines and to work as generalists. They can draw upon and connect the diverse perspectives, skills, and knowledge they have acquired through their education as they address new and complex situations in their personal, professional, and civic lives.

JINS courses are designed to prompt several learning outcomes:

- ◆ Engagement with intersections or tensions between two or more academic disciplines with respect to applied methods or tools of inquiry;
- ◆ Investigation of ways in which a given topic or concept may be understood and questioned by two or more different disciplines within a larger civic, cultural, or professional context;
- ◆ Consideration of a problem in the students "home" or major discipline via the lens of another discipline's perspectives;
- ◆ Knowledge of, and reflection on, how advanced level content from two or more disciplines interact; and
- ◆ Integrated analysis and reflection informed by approaches or methods from two or more disciplines.

Each Junior Interdisciplinary Seminar counts as one of three writing-enhanced courses required beyond English 190: Writing as Critical Thinking. A JINS brochure produced each semester will provide detailed course descriptions of all seminars scheduled for the next semester. These JINS brochures will be available at the JINS Fair (normally scheduled one week before the beginning of pre-registration), in advising centers, and division offices.

## Prerequisites

1. completion of the Sophomore Writing Experience (with conference) and
2. Junior status or "rising junior" status (i.e., full-time sophomores with at least 45 credit hours at the time of registration).
3. Some courses have additional prerequisites. See the individual seminar descriptions below for further information.

**Seniors who failed to enroll in a JINS course during their junior year must wait until all Juniors have pre-registered before they will be allowed to enroll in a JINS course.**

# SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

## JINS 300 – Cultural Crossroads (template course) 3 hours

Cultural Crossroads is an interdisciplinary analysis of a geographical configuration. From this analysis, students will compose a biography that draws on methodologies of at least two disciplines and will deal with an aspect related to the course's specific topic. Possible topics:

### Cairo

An interdisciplinary analysis of the largest city in Africa and the Middle East from prehistory to the twenty-first century.

### Istanbul

An interdisciplinary analysis of Istanbul from prehistory to the twenty-first century.

### Peruvian Culture

A detailed examination of the culture of Peru, its origins, evolution, and present-day composition. In this course we will read pages on customs, history, literature, anthropology, archaeology, politics and economics. Students will analyze, discuss and write about the readings. They will also view slides and videos, visit web sites, read the daily news from Peru, and engage in a lively discussion about issues.

### The Many Faces of Spain

A panoramic view of the origin and evolution of the many cultures of Spain, as well as its contemporary society. Students will examine the history, traditions, art, music, literature, geography, politics, economics of Spain through topical discussions to reflect on today's Spanish cultural mosaic.

## JINS 301 – Music in Religious Thought and Practice 3 hours

Music in Religious Thought and Practice explores and analyzes links that occur and are made between sacred music and religious ideologies. During the seminar, students will examine published literature in the disciplines of Music and Religious Studies about a specific historical place and geographical time and place and develop writing projects within that area.

## JINS 302 – Wilderness Leadership 3 hours

Wilderness Leadership is an interdisciplinary analysis of small group (team) leadership dynamics in wilderness setting, emphasizing the interplay of factors (psychological, physiological, sociological) in extreme conditions.

## JINS 303 – Computers and Natural Language 3 hours

This seminar examines how computers do (and perhaps someday will) use human language (spoken and written), and how computers affect use of language.

## JINS 304 – Native American Conflict 3 hours

Through reading, researching, and writing about reports of the conflicts between Indians and Whites throughout American history, students will learn more about their own cultural assumptions as well as the perspectives and methodologies of the disciplines of history, anthropology, ethnology, and literary studies.

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**JINS 305 – Issues in Democratic Institutions**

**3 hours**

An interdisciplinary confrontation with issues currently affecting the institution of American public education on every level, the seminar challenges students to define for themselves what the aims of American education should be (what should be taught, whom society should educate) and to analyze specific individual and group responsibility for the education of a democratic society.

**JINS 306 – The Rock Generation**

**3 hours**

The Rock Generation seminar focuses on the rock music and social relationships between the United States and the United Kingdom from 1960-1980 using analysis and exploration of the perspectives of Musicology and Sociology.

**JINS 307 – Friendship**

**3 hours**

Friendship in the contemporary U.S. has been called “the neglected relationship” because few social ceremonies mark the beginning, development, or ending of friendships as significant relationships despite the reality that many of us identify it as the relationship most necessary for survival and happiness. Seminar members will scrutinize the nature and varieties of friendship from a number of perspectives (philosophy, psychology, sociology).

**JINS 308 – U.S. Immigration Laws and Immigrant Writings**

**3 hours**

An interdisciplinary approach to the relationships among law, history and literature. During this course students will examine legal documents, legal history, and immigrant literature concerning a particular ethnic group (for example: Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Jewish, or Irish Americans). By the end of the course each student will have completed a portfolio consisting of 4000 words of deeply revised prose.

**JINS 309 – Decision Making Seminar**

**3 hours**

This course examines the perspectives of several social science disciplines, including economics, sociology, psychology, and political science, as they relate to the understanding of decision making. Students will consciously integrate the concepts of several disciplines to study and help explain a decision in the individual, organizational, or political arena.

**JINS 310 – The Classical Perspective on Ancient Historians**

**3 hours**

An examination of several prominent ancient Greek and Roman historians, with special focus upon the interdisciplinary manner in which Classicists approach ancient histories. All readings will be in English translation.

**JINS 311 – Race, Class, and Gender**

**3 hours**

Using the perspectives of multiple disciplines, students in the Race, Class, and Gender Seminar explore race, class, and gender and sexuality as socially constructed categories that continue to wield considerable power over a person’s chances for success.

**JINS 312 – American Social Character**

**3 hours**

Drawing upon different conceptual paradigms, from multiple disciplines, students will further develop critical, sympathetic, and reflective understanding of the American social character and the ways in which it has changed through history.

**JINS 313 – Bloomsbury**

**3 hours**

This course will examine the collaborative work of the group of artists, writers, and thinkers known as Bloomsbury who were active in the early part of the twentieth century in England. The written and visual works of Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, John Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and others will be read, appreciated and discussed as contributors to modernism.

**JINS 314 – Economics of Gender**

**3 hours**

This seminar explores male/female interrelationships with an emphasis on work place environments. It calls on several disciplinary perspectives regarding issues of gender. Selected topics include: household formation, labor force participation, market work, income determination and earnings differentials. Prerequisite: STAT 190.

**JINS 315 – Nuclear Weapons: History and Physics**

**3 hours.**

We will study nuclear weapons from the discovery of the atomic nucleus to the present. We will approach the subject, specifically, from the point of view of the historian and the physicist, along with whatever other ways of knowing you wish to bring to the conversation. The class will be discussion oriented, with a few labs incorporated into the class meetings, and a considerable amount of reading and writing.

**JINS 316 – Portrayals of Women. (template course)**

**3 hours**

This course examines depictions of women in a variety of literary, artistic, and cultural contexts from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Themes may vary from section to section, but the inquiry, research, writing, reflection, and discussion will be interdisciplinary. Possible topics:

**Ancient Greece**

This course will focus on depictions of women in Greek literature and art from Homer to Aristophanes, but will also address other related themes in order to elucidate cultural phenomena of Ancient Greece. Such themes include the following: mythology and religion, warfare and social/political theory, art and architecture, philosophy and scientific inquiry.

**Corsets and Kimonos: Victorian Britain and Edo Japan**

Compares and contrasts the portrayals of women in two distinct cultures: Great Britain during the reign of Victoria (1837-1903) and Japan during the Edo period (1615-1868.)

**The Middle Ages**

This course will focus on depictions of women and women’s roles in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries. C.E. These depictions may come from the women authors themselves, from male contemporaries, or from less literary portrayals in sources such as canon law, visual art, musical compositions, medical treatises, etc.

**JINS 317 – Women’s Movement in Intercultural Perspective: The U.S and South Africa**  
**3 hours**

This course will trace progress toward gender equality in the U.S. and South Africa, as it is achieved both through grassroots activism and through other types of strategic movement by women to empower themselves. Cultural and economic differences between the two countries and among the women within them will be examined as possible barriers to female solidarity.

**JINS 318 – Classical Athenian Humanism**  
**3 hours**

An examination of the humanistic movement in Fifth Century B.C. Athens. All readings will be in English translation.

**JINS 319 – Human and Computer Cognition**  
**3 hours**

An interdisciplinary course that addresses the issue of how humans and (perhaps) computers are able to reason.

**JINS 320 – Development of the Book**  
**3 hours**

An interdisciplinary investigation of the forces which have conditioned the composition, production, and consumption of the Western book from antiquity to the present, with particular emphasis upon transitional moments such as the fourth-century replacement of the roll by the codex and the fifteenth-century advent of print.

**JINS 321 – Leadership Analysis: Exploring the Final Frontiers**  
**3 hours**

This course examines the dynamics of small-group leadership in the exploration of aerospace and undersea environments. Leadership analysis courses expand upon knowledge learned in the modes of inquiry as an in-depth exercise in critical thinking.

**JINS 322 – Architecture: Forms and Structures**  
**3 hours**

This course stresses a critical approach to architecture through an analysis of historical context, function, materials, patronage, structure, architectural theories and styles.

**JINS 323 – Dress and Self Image**  
**3 hours**

This course examines clothing from the social psychological, aesthetic and communicative points of view.

**JINS 324 – Contexts of Disability**  
**3 hours**

The interactions between various disciplines will be explored in order to understand disability as a cultural phenomenon shared by civic contexts.

**JINS 325 – Rural America**  
**3 hours**

This course explores ways of conceptualizing and defining “rural,” describes the geographic, social, economic, and political characteristics found in rural places, and discusses the implications of using alternative perspectives. Beyond this common introduction, specific sections of the course will examine in more detail selected contemporary issues relevant to rural people and places.

**JINS 326 – On Human Nature**  
**3 hours**

When we inquire about being human, what is the contribution of the sciences and of the humanities respectively? In this course, we investigate whether the two fields make mutually exclusive assertions or whether some form of mediation is possible, particularly between biological perspectives on human nature on the one hand and religious and philosophical perspectives on the other.

**JINS 327 – Illuminations**  
**3 hours**

A writing workshop and studio art course in which students explore the relations of written and graphic interpretations of literary texts, and how these shape the meaning of a text.

**JINS 328 – Exploration and Discovery. (template course)**  
**3 hours**

This course is an interdisciplinary analysis of a period of exploration or moment of discovery in human history. Possible topics:

**The Renaissance Age of Exploration**

This course examines the controversies of European expansion from 1200-1600. Students will learn of the benefits and tragic costs associated with the contacts between Europeans and native peoples. Students will do this through studying the period and events, but also in reflecting on travel and exploration in their own lives as well as points where they come in to contact with the “new.”

**JINS 329 – Language and Meaning**  
**3 hours**

This course is an interdisciplinary approach to studying language as a medium of communication. It includes both a survey of various theories of meaning and a study of symbol systems in the creation, maintenance, and change of a culture or social group (such as an academic discipline.)

**JINS 330 – Environmental Economics: Issues and Policies**  
**3 hours**

This course will examine the environmental issues and resulting problems facing the world today, as well as the policy issues involved in solving these problems. It will emphasize applying the economics decision-making model to environmental issues and advantages and disadvantages of the economist’s analysis. Prerequisite: ECON 130, 200 or 201.

**JINS 331 – The Chemistry of Art**  
**3 hours**

This course examines the interaction and manipulation of matter (chemistry) in order to make an aesthetically pleasing form (art), including the interaction of light with matter to produce color and the examination of materials used in such artworks as paintings, dyes, glasses and ceramics. Direct experimentation with these media will occur in a laboratory component. Prerequisite: CHEM 100 or CHEM 120-121.

**JINS 332 – Death and Dying**  
**3 hours**

This course examines the historical and current perspectives on death from both philosophical and behavioral sci-

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ence points of view. The primary emphasis is to understand death in relation to ourselves and the social organization in which we have our identity.

**JINS 333 – Conflict, Cooperation, and Choice**

**3 hours**

This course is an interdisciplinary study of rational choice as the basis for predictive models of human behavior. We will use economics and game theory as our primary vehicles for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the rational choice assumptions, but we will also survey the way other disciplines (e.g., political science, anthropology, sociobiology, etc.) use this assumption in their models. Prerequisites: completion of statistics requirement and mathematical mode requirement.

**JINS 334 – Geometry of the Universe**

**3 hours**

In this course students will explore our evolving perceptions of the nature and origins of the universe from scientific, philosophical, and historical perspectives. The concepts of space, time, and infinity will be particularly emphasized. Prerequisites: fulfillment of Essential Skills requirement in mathematics.

**JINS 335 – Ecology versus Land Use**

**3 hours**

Through the disciplines of ecology and politics, this course examines our society's efforts to preserve wildlife habitat and maintain biodiversity, while also protecting the property rights needed for economic productivity.

**JINS 336 - The Environment (template course)**

**3 hours**

This course will investigate the natural environment from a variety of perspectives, focusing especially on the interaction between humans and the natural world. Possible topics:

**Border Crossings in South and Southeast Asian Forests**

An exploration of diverse disciplinary perspectives on South and Southeast Asian forests (from Pakistan to Indonesia), including readings from anthropology biology, geography, history, and literature.

**Change in the Great Plains After Lewis and Clark**

In this course we will link scientific knowledge with choices and behavior to examine the human impact on the Great Plains. We will examine some of the ecological principles relevant to human existence in the environment and the human perspective on these principles be they economic, philosophical, political, religious, sociological or psychological. Students will write responses to resource management dilemmas based on solid reasoning accounting for scientific knowledge and human perspective.

**JINS 337 – Musical Theatre**

**3 hours**

This course examines the musical theatre form from aesthetic, historical, structural, sociological, and auteur/stylistic perspectives. Viewing of classic performances and group critiques and presentations are also special features of this course.

**JINS 338 – Race and Ethnicity (template course)**

**3 hours**

How have the construction and evolution of racial and ethnic identities influenced human developments over time? This course begins with a theoretical discussion of race and ethnicity as viewed from different disciplinary perspectives (for example, biology, sociology, anthropology,

history, etc.), and then proceeds to an evaluation of their creation in a specific geographic or historical context. This class will stress racial diversity, the emergence of new forms of ethnic identity, and the politicization of these identities (as with the emergence of Black consciousness and ethno-nationalist movements). How have these various constructions of identity influenced cultural, economic, and political developments? Throughout this entire process we will constantly critique our assumptions of racial and ethnic categories in order to understand better the purposes they play in society. Possible topics:

**Latin America**

This course begins with a theoretical discussion of race and ethnicity, and then proceeds to an evaluation of their creation in a Latin American context. This course will stress the rich racial diversity in Latin America (Indian, European, African, Asian, etc.), the emergence of new forms of ethnic identity in Latin America (such as the Mestizo and Mulatto peoples), and the politicization of these identities (with the emergence of Black consciousness and Indigenous ethno-nationalist movements). Throughout this entire process we will constantly critique our assumptions of racial and ethnic categories in order to understand better the purposes they play in society.

**Latino Health Care in America**

Latino Health Care in America presents interdisciplinary perspectives of health care for Latino cultural groups in America. Students will analyze health care issues for selected cultural groups within Mexico and the United States from the theoretical and investigative modes for nursing and anthropology. Some issues to be addressed include health care disparities, access to health care, and delivery systems. Orientation to these modes, as they pertain to health care, will be provided within the course.

**JINS 339 – Gender and Culture (template course)**

**3 hours**

Examination of the intersections of issues of gender and cultural anthropological and literary/artistic conceptions of "culture." Possible topics:

**Women of the Middle East**

The study of women in the modern Middle East and North Africa through the examination of culture, both as an anthropological concept and as an artistic category (including literature and the "fine arts"). Students will examine historical, religious, and political issues through literature, theatre, music, and the visual arts, comparing the self-presented image of the women of the area with anthropological-derived descriptions and data. Generally we will focus on women of the second half of the twentieth century, examining the religious, social, economic, and political conditions of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian women in an attempt to develop a greater understanding of the lives of all inhabitants (both male and female) of this most volatile area of the world.

**JINS 340 – German-Jewish Identities**

**3 hours**

This course examines the problems that German Jews have faced in establishing a sense of identity in the 20th century. The first part will focus on the "Jewish Question;" the second half will focus on the holocaust and holocaust memory among German-Jewish intellectuals.

**JINS 341 – Sport and Society (template course)**

**3 hours**

This course investigates the relationship between sports and the societies that produce them. Many peoples and

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civilizations have practiced competitive and recreational athletics throughout human history, but the forms, functions, and ideologies of sports have differed considerably. This class will focus on key aspects of athletics using a variety of different disciplinary methodologies. Possible topics:

**The Olympics**

The summer Olympics constitute the largest international gathering of people in the world. It is an event that captivates citizens of all countries with the best in human performance, pageantry, and drama. In their original form, the games were supposed to be apolitical, promote international goodwill, and involve only amateur athletes.

However, these ideals have virtually disappeared from the Olympics as international politics, sociological forces, and historical events have drastically influenced their evolution. The purpose of this class is to fully explore the Olympic games as an intersection among the disciplines of history, political science, sociology, and sport. Through this exploration process, the course seeks to improve both the critical thinking and writing skills of its participants.

**Twentieth Century America**

This course considers the impact of a variety of sports-related issues, using both “functional” and “conflict theory” approaches to trace the effects of sport upon both society at large and specific social, economic, racial, and gender-based practitioners and audiences.

**JINS 342 – I-E: i.e., the Indo-Europeans**

**3 hours**

This course uses evidence from linguistics, archaeology, and history (among other disciplines) to explore the origins and identity of the speakers of Indo-European, a language spoken over five millennia ago, which gave rise to modern languages such as English, Russian, Hindi, the Romance Languages, etc.

**JINS 343 -- The Horse in Art, Science, and History**

**3 hours**

By using an interdisciplinary perspective, students will consider the art, science, and history of the horse. Works of art depicting the horse will be considered to focus on 1)

how human perception of horses has changed over time, 2) art as a reflection of use throughout the millennia since domestication, and 3) the versatility of the horse in the endeavors of humans. Science will be used to consider unique equine anatomical, physiological, and behavioral adaptations that predestined this species to play a central role in human history. Historically, students will consider horses in time and place to identify uses by various cultures for the advancement of political and geographic aspirations.

**JINS 344 – Salome and John the Baptist**

**3 hours**

This course explores the cultural contexts of the story of Salome and John, and the consequent literary and visual interpretations of the story from the 1st century to the present.

**JINS 345 – War and Peace: From Page to Stage and Screen**

**3 hours**

Students will analyze Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, as well as several of its musical and cinematic adaptations, to determine the role visualization plays in understanding and adapting a literary work. Lectures, readings, and assignments will draw from the disciplines of literary theory, cognitive science, psychology, film theory, and dramaturgy.

**JINS 346 – Varieties of Non-Violence**

**3 hours**

An examination of the varieties of non-violence, civil disobedience, conscious objection, and related subjects, ideas, figures, and movements.

**JINS 347 – Religion, Health, and Healing**

**3 hours**

This course will explore the ways in which religious beliefs, social roles, and symbolic practices play a part in constructing a culture’s understanding of health and illness, through the disciplines of biomedicine, religious studies, psychology, and sociology.