

SELF AND SOCIETY SEMINAR OFFERINGS

FALL 2021

All incoming first-year students should review the Self and Society courses listed below before they register for classes.

Is The World Getting Better or Worse?

TRU 110 - 3 credits

This particular section "Is the world getting better or worse?" focuses on the evidence-based decision making. The conversation includes how we had made decisions about world issues, how one's background affected the perception, what is our role in the society promoting "correct" information, and how to make a good decision which hopefully make the world better.

Section .01: MWF 10:30-11:20

Section .18: MWF 11:30-12:20

Modality: Blended on Campus/Online

Instructor: Dr. Hyun-Joo Kim, Statistics

Who Are You? TRU 110 - 3 credits

This section of Self and Society will consider how individuals attempt to construct their own identity versus how society attempts to construct identities of individuals. We will look at individuals who choose to construct an identity as outsider. We will also look at those whose identity as outsider is forced on them by the dominant society. We will therefore look at marginalized/oppressed groups who seek to construct a valid identity for the group. Both individuals and marginalized groups seek to break free of a socially-imposed identity. Yet the problem is that individuals and groups must live in a society. We will look at these issues primarily as manifested in verbal art – fiction (novel, poetry) and non-fiction (memoirs). How do human beings confront what can seem to be an irresolvable tension between individual and group identities?

Section .02: TR 3:00-4:20

Modality: Blended on Campus/Online

Instructor: Dr. Shannon Jumper, Russian

Moral Sciences TRU 110 - 3 credits

We investigate the foundations of Self and Society by exploring our world reality as informed by disciplines that evolved from the Scottish enlightenment period, once known as Moral Sciences. We know some of them as Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology, along with a recent blending of Economics and Political Science known as Public Choice. Drawing on literature from such disciplines, including statistics, we examine what we think we know, what actually is, and explore where we should go as we and our society move forward. We provide a framework for addressing both timeless and modern societal concerns as found today in all forms of media, political debates, and conversations among friends.

Section .03: TR 10:30-11:50

Modality: Fully on Campus

Instructor: Dr. David Gillette, Economics

Who are "We"? Ideologies and (Political) Identities TRU 110 - 3 credits

Who are "We"? Ideologies and (Political) Identities. The ideologies of nationalism and democracy have greatly shaped modern life. But who is a member of our nation or our political community? And what binds members of the same nations or political community together? What obligations do we have to one another? What obligations do we have to our leaders? Or they to us? What do we owe, if anything, to fellow human beings outside of our society? We will examine the role of major political, social, and economic ideologies and their implications on national identity, political community, political and economic rights, any obligations we owe to others within our community, as well as on any international obligations emerging from our ideological views of the world. In this course we see how different ideologies would lead us to answer differently, examining nationalism, classical liberalism, modern liberalism, socialism, Marxism, anarchism, fascism, feminism, and environmentalism. We will also explore other traditional sources of identity.

Section .04: MWF 9:30-10:20

Modality: Fully on Campus

Instructor: Dr. John Quinn, Political Science

Sustainability TRU 110 - 3 credits

We explore the intersection of chemistry, biochemistry, and societal issues in the pursuit of sustainability. It is expected that incoming CHEM and BCMB majors will take this course, but it would be interesting and accessible to all students with minimal chemistry background.

Section .05: MWF 1:30-2:20

Modality: Fully on Campus

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Kauffmann, Chemistry

Section .06: MWF 3:30-4:20

Modality: Fully on Campus

Instructor: Dr. Bill Miller, Chemistry

My Heartland TRU 110 - 3 credits

While the term "heartland" is often used to describe the central geographic area of the United States, especially its more rural regions, in this class the term is used to draw attention to the ways in which the places in which we spend our formative years play a role in shaping our sense of identity. People tend to express affinity for the place that they call home—their "heartland". And that place tends to infuse them with particular worldviews and values that may travel with them even when they leave the place. We will explore how those worldviews tend to differ for places or communities of different sizes spread across the urban-suburban-rural continuum and how the

economic and cultural differences between these places can be either a source of strength or of division in the broader society.

Section .07: TR 10:30-11:50
Modality: Fully on Campus
Instructor: Dr. Michael Seipel, Agricultural Sciences

Music Psychology TRU 110 – 3 credits

In this section students will consider music through the lens of many disciplines, including biology, psychology, philosophy, and sociology. Students will explore the various factors that contribute to music preference, the acoustic and physiological processes of sound, how music is used and celebrated in society, and the use of music for therapeutic purposes. Students do not need to have prior formal music training to enroll in this class..

Section .08: MW 1:30-2:50
Modality: Blended On Campus/Online
Instructor: Dr. Jocelyn Prendergast, Music

Think, Make, Art TRU 110 – 3 credits

This course will introduce students to the fields of studio art, design and art history with an emphasis on the big ideas that visual thinkers address in their work. Students will explore the role of individual identity, culture, and society in the pursuit of artistic research and what it means to be a responsible cultural producer. The course includes reading, writing, discussion and lecture as well as two studio-based projects. Think, Make, Art is intended for studio art, design and art history majors as well as anyone interested in visual arts.

Section .09: TR 1:30-2:50
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Prof. Laura Bigger, Art

Living in the Anthropocene TRU 110 – 3 credits

The Anthropocene is the proposed name for a new geological epoch that recognizes that humans are now a force of nature equaling or surpassing other forces that shape the earth's physical, chemical, and biological systems. Massive human impacts on the earth including mining, construction, moving materials and species among continents, domestication, pollution and climate change pose an integrated set of problems for natural systems that are caused by human activity. This course will focus on how scientists are defining the Anthropocene, who gets to decide whether to name a new epoch, and what it means to be a person (self) living in a global society during a period of unprecedented change to the planet we call home. We will use the discipline of anthropology (biological, cultural, and linguistic study of humans past and present) as an anchor in a multidisciplinary exploration of the evidence and arguments about both the nature of change and its likely impact on our lives (individual and collective moving forward. Along the way we will explore Big Questions from a wide range of fields and make connections between the content of this course and other courses you are taking in the Dialogues curriculum.

Section .10: TR 1:20-2:50
Modality: Flipped
Instructor: Dr. Amber Johnson, Anthropology

The Writer in Society TRU 110 – 3 credits

Our seminar section will be oriented around the study of self and society by studying writers, researching their practice and the professional steps required in identifying and reaching out to an audience, as well as exploring the creative process, more broadly.

Section .11: TR 12:00-1:20
Modality: TBD
Instructor: Dr. Jamie D'Agostino, English – Creative Writing

Hothouse Planet TRU 110 – 3 credits

In the past 150 years, human industry has led to a radical destabilization of the planet's climate systems; our current inability to address this existential crisis is fundamentally a function of the conflict between individual and collective action—in other words, Self and Society. The magnitude of the problems demand actions organized across social boundaries—placing the short-term self-interest of (some) individuals in conflict with the collective interest of all living creatures. We will study the basic science of climate change; the policy inaction of individuals, corporations, and national states; and psychological insights into why “rational” humans are playing a game of global chicken.

Section .12: MWF 3:30-4:20
Modality: Blended On Campus/Online
Instructor: Dr. Christine Harker, English and Environmental Studies

Everyone Gets a Trophy TRU 110 – 3 credits

The course will explore the impact of teamwork in self and society. Students will be introduced to topics that influence their experience with teamwork and how that experience might be different based on generation, psycho-social factors, demographics, social norms, physical health, interpersonal skills, personality and environment.

Section .13: TR 9:00-10:20
Modality: Fully on Campus
Instructor: Jana Arabas, Health and Exercise Science

Section .14: TR 10:30-11:50
Modality: Fully on Campus
Instructor: Amanda Starks, Health and Exercise Science

Self, Story, Society TRU 110 – 3 credits

Story sits on the curb at the intersection of self and society. This S&S section will look at the tool of story, its historical development, and the wide variety of ways we use it (and abuse it) in order to make sense out of the world, both collectively as cultures and individually as we consciously and unconsciously go through identity development.

Section .15: MWF 12:30-1:20
Modality: Fully on Campus
Instructor: Dave Leaton, English and the Writing Center

The Stories We Tell TRU 110 – 3 credits

Telling stories is an essential part of human interaction: We do it to make friends (revealing parts of ourselves), to teach, explain, apologize, persuade -- and occasionally to deceive. This course will look at telling stories in lots of different ways: how you (individually) encounter and produce them in your life, how storytelling fits into different academic discipline and professions, how storytelling traditions vary across cultures (including different cultures here in the U.S.), how we can study them as literature, as linguistic productions, psychologically, etc. Come share some great stories with us!

Section .16: TR 12:00-1:20
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Dr. Mary Shapiro, Linguistics

Are You Educated? TRU 110 – 3 credits

The purpose of this course is to cultivate the habits of curiosity, good scholarship, ethical consideration, and community engagement needed for students to grow as liberally educated lifelong learners. Students will explore the notion of the self and how each individual's role is influenced within the broader context of the world, relevant groups, the local community, and society. The course serves as an introduction to critical, multidisciplinary, and intercultural thinking. This course must be taken concurrently with the Truman Shared Experiences. We will examine self and society through the lens of “Are you educated?” You will engage in a group investigation. In addition, I expect we will challenge some of your pre-conceived notions in terms of what it means to be educated and what that might look like for different social economic means.

Section .17: T 5:30-8:20
Modality: Fully On Campus
Instructor: Dr. Wendy Miner, Education

Higher Education in America TRU 110 – 3 credits

This class will devote itself to the examination of the role of higher education in American society as well as your role as students and, in the future, alumni and working adults. American college campuses have long been seen as hotbeds of political activism and social unrest, as well as the home of cutting-edge research, high-profile sports, and overactive social lives. But what else is “college?” What more does it do for society? For the individual? Is it fair to deride current students as “snowflakes,” as some pundits do? And more specifically, what is your place in college? What is your role in the university hierarchy and how will that change as you progress through your undergraduate years? What will your attendance here, and your degree, do for you in the future? Why even go to college at all?

Section .19: MW 11:30-12:50
Modality: Fully on Campus
Instructor: Dr. John Jones, Education

The Intellectual TRU 110 – 3 credits

This section of the Self and Society Seminar asks us to collectively consider what it means to be an intellectual – starting with the word: has it been used, and do we use it, to mean just somebody who’s really smart? And is that somebody who is hyper-expert in a specialized area, or a person who is broadly educated across numerous domains? Do we see them as private people meditating alone and for their own purposes, or do we expect them to be somehow publicly engaged? How did we come by these ideas? How does the culture evaluate/value the intellectual? There are actually empirical procedures for thinking through the history of words like nerd and geek, and we can look at representations in books and film. How does each of us relate to this category? There are large numbers who aspire to it, and also those who resent it or hold it up for mockery. Some who fear it. Some who are afraid of having it applied to them.

The major section-specific outcome is to be prepared to see these categories – the intellectual and anti-intellectualism -- as real and present throughout our cultural history, shaping our understanding of the world as we presently experience it, and as we try to figure out our place in it.

Section: .20: MWF 10:30-11:20
Modality: Fully On Campus
Instructor: Dr. Adam Davis, English

Water and the Common Good

TRU 110 – 3 credits

What is a natural resource? How do we construct the value of those resources, and what is considered a common good? How do we think about water that flows from drinking fountains versus that in a can of soda, or an industrial solvent versus an aquifer? Given the central role of water’s many forms across ecological, cultural, and economic landscapes, it’s no surprise that questions of water governance span centuries and continents. In this class, we will examine concepts of water in two different societies: the Roman Empire, and the contemporary United States. We will explore water management in ancient and contemporary cities. As a class, we will analyze the various ways in which people value and think about water: drinking water, recreation, sanitation, economic resource, and catastrophic floods or droughts. To what extent do these concepts emerge as a part of our cultural identity? How did the perspective of past peoples differ, and what can we learn from those differences?

Section .21: MWF 1:30-2:20
Section .22: MWF 2:30-3:20
Modality: Fully On Campus
Instructor: Prof. Stephanie Russell, History

Talking About Talking TRU 110 – 3 credits

Think you have an “accent” or a “dialect”? Know someone else who does? Come join us as we explore how the way one talks reflects who they are (their ethnicity, region, gender, sexuality, social class, and personality) as well as who they aspire to be (In short, the Self). We also will explore how the analysis of how you talk can inform the understanding of the society that you live in as well as our understanding of how the human mind works

Section .23: MWF 2:30-3:20
Modality: TBD
Instructor: Dr. Doug Ball, Linguistics

Money Matters TRU 110 – 3 credits

An exploration of how macroeconomics, public policy, and societal norms influence the decision-making of the individual with respect to managing their own financial resources and accumulating household wealth.

Section .28: TR 10:30-11:50
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Charles Boughton, Business Administration

Major-Specific Seminars

TRU 112: Self & Society Seminar: Biology (3 credits)

On Being a Biologist

The purpose of this course is to cultivate the habits of curiosity, good scholarship, ethical consideration, and community engagement needed for students to grow as liberally educated lifelong learners. Students will explore the notion of the self and how each individual's role is influenced within the broader context of a major or occupation, relevant groups, the local community, and society. The course serves as an introduction to critical, multi-disciplinary, and intercultural thinking. This course will also serve to introduce biology majors to the discipline. Students will explore the role of individual identity, culture, and society in the pursuit of biological research and what it means to be a responsible citizen of the natural world.

OPEN TO: This course is required for Biology majors, but also open to any other students interested in Biology

Section .01: MWF 8:30-9:20
Section .02: MWF 9:30-10:20
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Dr. Joanna Hubbard, Biology

Section .03: MWF 2:30-3:20
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Dr. Robert Sieg, Biology

Section .04: MWF 2:30-3:20
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Dr. Elisabeth Hooper, Biology

Section .05: MWF 2:30-3:20
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Dr. William Alexander, Biology

TRU 113: Self & Society Seminar: Nursing (3 credits)

The Integrity of Care

This course will examine self and society through the lens of nursing and its past, present, and future. Students will compare and contrast the impact of social structures upon health care of individuals and communities, as well as the health care professionals providing care. Topics for discussion will include the historical evolution of nursing (including education, licensure, scope, image, and uniqueness of the discipline), with a particular emphasis upon the ethics of caring and research in growing a body of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge.

OPEN TO: Nursing Majors only

Section .01: MWF 11:30-12:20
Section .02: MWF 12:30-1:20
Modality: Blended on Campus/Online
Instructor: Teak Nelson, Nursing

TRU 114: Self & Society Seminar in Leadership Communication (3 credits)

Leadership Communication

This course is designed with the Harry S. Truman Leadership scholars in mind. This section of the seminar approaches the origins, concepts, and development of self, one's own identity, through the lens of the Communication discipline with an emphasis in Leadership. This course offers the groundwork for self and society and leadership through an integrative framework of theory, analysis, practice, and reflection. Specifically, this course focuses on ideas pertaining to language, thought, identity, culture, diversity, and the overlap with and impact on society. Additionally, there are opportunities for you to develop best practices for being an ethically engaged citizen and leader at various stages of life. Throughout the course, you will hone your understanding of what it means to hear and interpret the narratives of self that are communicated to us, how we develop and share an awareness about our own identity and diversity, while recognizing our individual role and responsibility as participants and leaders in our local and global communities.

OPEN TO: Harry S. Truman Leadership Scholars only

Section .01: MWF 1:30-2:20
Modality: Fully on Campus
Instructor: Dr. Brian Altenhofen, Communication

TRU 116: Self & Society Seminar: Artificial Intelligence (3 credits)

Artificial Intelligence

This course investigates artificial intelligence's (AI) impact on both the individual and society at large. The past, present, and future of AI will be covered with particular emphasis on effects of robots in our increasingly connected society.

OPEN TO: This course is designed for Computer Science Majors but is also open to anyone interested in the field.

Section .01: MWF 11:30-12:20
Section .02: MWF 12:30-1:20
Modality: Fully on Campus
Instructor: Dr. Ruth Halma, Computer Science

TRU 117: Self & Society Seminar: Game Theory (3 credits)

Game Theory

This seminar section will be oriented around the study of self and society from a mathematical perspective using the principles of mathematical game theory as our lens. We will use game theory to look at how as humans we behave in conflict, how we deal with struggles against nature, to plumb questions of human free will, to think about the economy and political environment we operate in, and sometimes even to play games. Much of the homework will be mathematical in nature, solving questions of conflict that are modeled in mathematical language. Expect an emphasis on problem solving and mathematical writing. There will be regular opportunities for classroom discussion and your participation in discussions is expected and graded.

OPEN TO: This course is primarily intended for Mathematics Majors, but is open for any students interested in Mathematics and game theory

Section .01: MWF 9:30-10:20

Modality: Blended on Campus/Online

Instructor: Dr. Don Bindner, Mathematics

Transfer Student Seminar

TRU 310: Self & Society: Transfer Seminar (1 credit)

You've Entered the Twilight Zone

"You're traveling through another dimension -- a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination." Although these words are drawn from the iconic "Twilight Zone", they're also a useful way to think about navigating college life at Truman, the liberal arts, and interdisciplinary studies-- especially for transfer students acclimating to a new environment. In this class, we will view episodes of both Rod Serling's classic television series and Jordan Peele's more recent reboot as starting points for exploring the course themes of "Self" and "Society," undertaking research, honing communication skills, collaborating on projects, and meeting your transfer peers. So buckle up -- you've just entered the Twilight Zone!

Section .01: W 11:20-12:20

Modality: Blended on Campus/Online

Instructor: Dr. Sara Day, English

Section .02: M 12:30-1:20

Modality: Online Synchronous

Instructor: Dr. Amy Norgard, Classics