LS101US- Ways of Knowing

Courses with University Seminar (US) core designation are primarily intended for first-year students throughout all curricula to provide a platform for collegiate level discourse. Activities that hone written and oral communication skills are universally incorporated, but the themes represented in individual US core courses vary considerably to reflect the department or program from which the course originates. All US core courses are small in size and rely heavily on seminar-style teaching where course content is delivered by discussion and interaction rather than by lecture. This learning environment promotes vibrant interactions between first-year students, a faculty member, and in many courses, a more experienced student fellow. US core courses provide a venue where students can enjoy rigorous academic discussions that promote critical thinking, learning, and understanding in a supportive and truly collegiate manner.

Through completion of the US Core, students will:
- Analyze main ideas and supporting evidence presented in written texts and oral presentations
- Evaluate diverse points of view when forming and supporting their own ideas
- Prepare and deliver an effective oral presentation
- Demonstrate critical and creative thinking in written communication

LS101US-Ways of Knowing is open to all students; however, it cannot be repeated. Liberal Studies does not use a common syllabus for LS101US; instead, instructors select their own course themes and develop their own curricula.

LS101US- Creating Intercultural Competency for a Globalizing World
This specific University Seminar is designed around the concept of “intercultural competency.” In addition to the general goals listed above, students will improve their ability to work effectively with cultural difference. The potential benefits of increasing intercultural competence are many, and range from the prosaic: increasing career success- to the profound: contributing to the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious world. We will explore the differing definitions of culture, both from a macro and micro perspective, taking time to identify what is typically thought of as US-American Dominant Culture model and comparing that to the reality of our multi-cultural nation.

Course materials include various articles, TED talks and excerpts from books, including *The Rational Optimist* by Matt Ridley, *The Social Animal* by David Brooks, *Ancient Futures*
by Helena Norberg-Hodge, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind (3rd Edition)*

**LS101US- Critical Thinking: Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance**
In this section of Ways of Knowing, students are presented with the opportunity to discover, evaluate, and apply critical thinking to their academic experience, as well as to life outside of the university.

This course is taught using both face to face instruction, concurrently with D2L (MSU’s electronic online learning platform) instruction. All discussions and activities are to be completed and posted on D2L and will then be discussed in class.


**LS101US- NOM, NOM, NOM: When We Consume Images and They Consume Us**
This seminar will critically examine our current culture’s immersion in the world of images. We will briefly trace our historic relationship with images as a means of communication, and examine our evolution from oral to written, to image-based expression. Our primary concern is how images operate in our current world, and how they affect us. In what ways does our unprecedented access to images affect the way we interact with and perceive the world? How does this type and amount of stimulation operate in our brains? How does the psychology of design affect our preferences and decisions as consumers? What role do images play in defining our sense of self and our relationships, especially in the realm of social media?

We will utilize a variety of course materials to examine these questions including books, articles, and videos through the lenses of art, design, sociology and psychology. One section of the course is delivered entirely face-to-face and the other section is blended face-to-face and online, where online discussion is a critical component of course participation.