



Hope COLLEGE
HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

FALL 2025



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR FYS

FYS is an introduction to the liberal arts and to college-level ways of learning. This three-credit course will engage fundamental (e.g. "What does it mean to be human?") or emerging (e.g. "How does technology affect human flourishing?") questions on topics such as humanity, the natural world, and God that are broadly explored through the liberal arts. While each section will cover a unique topic and have additional specific learning objectives, all sections will include instruction and activities related to the three broad student learning outcomes from the Hope College Anchor Plan:

1. Examine fundamental or emerging questions about humanity, the natural world, or God by seeking answers through different modes of inquiry.
2. Reflect on the diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world.
3. Practice Hope College's Virtues of Public Discourse: humility to listen; hospitality to welcome; patience to understand; courage to challenge; honesty to speak the truth in love.

In FYS, expect intellectually challenging projects and assignments — as an individual and in a group with other students. You will be actively engaged as you read texts closely and discuss the issues and big questions that these texts address. FYS is an IDS (Interdisciplinary Studies) course because it emphasizes that knowledge has no boundaries and is not department-based. This course will stimulate your initiative to become broadly educated in the sciences, the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences. FYS will help introduce you to the kind of college-level learning expected in other classes at Hope — learning that is an open-ended, lifelong process, not merely the passive absorption of facts.

FYS will also include an introduction from campus partners that will help introduce students to a variety of areas of campus life and personal development. Partners include Van Wylen Library, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, the Boerigter Center for Calling and Career, the Registrar's Office, and a variety of others.

The instructor of the First-Year Seminar will also be the student's academic advisor. This will allow the student and advisor an opportunity to get to know each other in and out of the classroom.

Conversations about other courses, grades, adjustment to college, personal interests, career goals, and campus involvements will occur more naturally in this setting.

HELP SELECTING FYS TOPICS

Course descriptions for each section of FYS are listed below. As you read through the descriptions, keep a list of the sections that most interest you. When you complete your registration survey, you will need to select your top ten sections, as well as indicate five in which you prefer not to be placed. The Registrar's Office staff will keep these in mind when creating your fall schedule. They need various options because sometimes courses fill quickly or do not fit in with the other courses in your schedule.

We suggest you make selections not just on the basis of what you already know or are comfortable with, but by considering what you might learn from new areas, taking new approaches, or raising new questions. Whatever sections you select, you should count on being challenged to look at what may be familiar issues in new ways and from perspectives you may not have considered.

If you plan to be in the Phelps Scholars Program, please indicate this on your registration survey. You can select the FYS section as your 1st choice and select nine others as backup in case your participation in the program changes. See the notes beneath that program below for additional program and application information.

FALL 2025

IDS 100-01 Embracing Freedom, Resisting Slavery

What does it mean to be free? And are any of us truly free? This FYS section approaches these questions by focusing on various types of unfreedom, with particular attention to ancient slavery and resistance to servitude throughout the ages. We will explore slavery in ancient Greek popular literature through Aesop's fables, examine the Roman Empire and the role of slavery in it, closely critique slavery in the Bible and related literature, learn about Stoicism's creed of freedom and about prominent modern abolitionists; finally, we will encounter the modern scourge of human trafficking and discuss ways to combat it.

IDS 100-02 Power to the People: Global Voices of the Sixties

"All you need is love. One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. Under the cobblestones, the beach! Other lands of the world call for the contribution of my modest efforts. Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No." We have all heard one of these iconic phrases and the powerful stories behind them. More than fifty years later, they continue to stir emotions and spark debate.

In this course, we will explore the global 1960s from multiple perspectives (politics, literature, music, and film). We will study protest and resistance in Paris and Berkeley, as well as Buenos Aires, Beijing, Algiers, and Detroit. This was a decade of student uprisings, anti-colonial revolutions, and visionary demands for a better world. I will emphasize the global aspect, but you will be free to explore the local expressions of a transnational moment. Along the way, we will reflect on the university not just as a place of study but as a stage for action and imagination. What does it mean to learn? How do we connect education to justice and change? This course invites you to find out.

IDS 100-03

Home-ish: Kinda, Sorta, Maybe— On Finding, Challenging and Creating Home

Leaving home for college is probably your first major step toward independence—and with this independence, comes a unique opportunity to reflect on what "home" really means. Starting college often involves leaving one home behind and learning how to create another. In this interdisciplinary First-Year Seminar, we will explore the many dimensions of home—as a physical space, a geographical location, a set of relationships, a memory, or a complex, liminal space we build over time. Through novels, short stories, films, music, personal reflections, and critical essays, we will investigate how home is imagined, experienced, and often contested. Drawing on a range of interdisciplinary media, we will examine how the concept of "home" can be shaped not only by ancestry and origin, but also by identity, migration, and the possibility of return.

IDS 100-04 The Power of Our Stories

Revelation 12:11 says, "We are freed by the blood of the Lamb, and the words of our testimony." Have you ever thought about your life's story? Maybe you have, perhaps you haven't. Regardless, your story matters! Hope College is a community of individuals who all have a story to tell! Each of these stories are unique and makes Hope College the special place that it is. God has done so many amazing things through His people here, and how much more could we see His hand if we answer the call to share about the experiences of life that have made us who we are? This course will examine how life stories and personal testimonies have led to individual, local, national, and global transformations. Throughout the course, you will develop your story. You will reflect deeply on how the following aspects have

shaped you: your origins and family history, external forces, internal tensions, and social dynamics. You will leave this course equipped to share both the long-form and short-form of your story.

IDS 100-05 Is Geography Destiny?

In 2025, we live in an interconnected world. Faraway events affect us right here in Holland, MI, and actions taken in the USA affect the whole world. Recently, changing American policies have roiled world markets, and America has challenged fundamental elements of the post-World War II world system. Why do states do what they do? We'll use geography to analyze international goals and actions. We'll base our course on Tim Marshall's *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Explain Everything About the World*, and on Dan Smith's *State of the World Atlas*. We will also read current articles about the regions we study. We will aim to understand what nations want, and why. As you explore the fundamental question about why states do what they do, you will also map out a possible study-away semester as part of your Hope College education. Our vigorous discussions will help us to develop an understanding of the diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical experiences of people in the United States and the world

All students should also request a second language course (at their appropriate level) on their Registration Survey.

IDS 100-06 Selling Your Story: Lessons Learned From Science Communication

Could you read a scientific research article and accurately summarize its significance to a friend? Most of us can't. Is that because you aren't smart enough to understand it? No. It's because the article wasn't written for you—it was written for others within that specific research community.

So whose job is it to unpack all those details so society can appreciate the value of the work? In this class, we'll explore the relationship between scientific research, the public, and the role that the media plays in disseminating this information. Is the version of the results you see on social media accurate? If not, is that a problem? And how might scientists benefit if their work were better understood?

But why should you care? We'll also consider whether the lessons scientists learn about how to sell the value of their work could be applied to future Hope graduates (you!) when you have to "sell" your applications and résumés to future hiring managers and admissions committees—regardless of the path you choose after Hope.

IDS 100-07 Science, Anti-Science, and the Christian Faith

Science is a gift from God. Loving God with our minds is a biblical exhortation. In this course, we will read material from various domains of the social and natural sciences. We will read research on how and why people refute or deny scientific findings. We will examine cases of how disinformation about science is spread and consider methods to prevent it. You should consider taking this course if you: a) are open to being informed by science and b) see various ways of knowing (including a scientific way of knowing) as a valuable part of the Christian life. All FYS students will compose a *Big Questions Essay* that explores one or more big questions that are core to a liberal arts education. The big question for this course is: *What is truth?*

IDS 100-08 How to Live

The question of how we ought to live is at the center of college life. As a college student, you may be wondering about who you want to be and who God has created you to be. Which major or career path or friends should you choose? What shouldn't you choose? Does God care about how you spend your time or your money? These are big questions with a lot of input from a lot of people and places, and it can be hard to sort through the chatter.

So how should we live? In this seminar, you will have time to think critically and creatively about what it means for you to live life to the fullest. We'll explore the writing of others who have pondered this question and we will take the time to pursue joy, peace, and self-reflection.

How do you want to live? Join this seminar to think more deliberately about who you are and where you're headed

IDS 100-09 Financial Literacy and the Good Life: Making Informed Decisions for Personal Well-Being

This engaging first-year seminar explores the essential concepts of personal finance and financial literacy, equipping students with the skills necessary for making informed financial decisions throughout their lives. The course addresses a fundamental question: What might material resources have to do with the good life? Through this lens, students will examine topics such as budgeting, saving, investing, and credit management, while considering how financial choices impact overall well-being and life satisfaction. The seminar encourages critical thinking about the role of money in achieving personal goals and happiness. Students will learn practical skills like creating personalized budgets and understanding credit scores, while also reflecting on the broader implications of financial decisions. By connecting financial literacy to the pursuit of a fulfilling life, this course aims to empower students with both the knowledge and perspective needed to navigate their financial futures responsibly and meaningfully.

IDS 100-10 Music and Mind

This topic is intended to address a growing body of scientific evidence related to the positive impact music has on people's minds well beyond the entertaining aspect of pure enjoyment. The textbook preface provides a well defined summary of this important part of human life: "A compelling and growing body of research has shown music and arts therapies to be effective tools for addressing a widening array of conditions, from providing pain relief and alleviating anxiety and depression to regaining speech after stroke or traumatic brain injury, and improving mobility for people with disorders including Parkinson's disease and MS (Multiple Sclerosis). Much of this area of study is new, made possible by recent advances in brain imaging, and supported by the National Institute of Health, major hospitals, and universities. This work is sparking an explosion of public interest in the arts and the health sector."

IDS 100-11

Are You Still Watching: Reclaiming Your Focus in the Age of Distraction

When's the last time you stayed up hours later than you intended playing *Monster Hunter Wilds*, binging *Outer Banks*, watching sports analysis, or letting an endless stream of Tik Tok wash over you? Getting lost in a good book is as old as the hills, but new technologies make it easier than ever to obsess for hour after hour. Are these activities a waste of time? Or do they challenge us—broaden our horizons—give our brains some needed relaxation? Is it possible to enjoy that feeling of getting carried away without becoming just a passive commodity in an economy built on transfixing our attention? Together, this class will explore the pros and cons of geeking out and getting absorbed in another world. The readings, movies, and podcasts we study in this course will reveal the psychology behind focus, distraction, and procrastination; celebrate fan culture and creative engagement; and investigate how to reclaim our attention spans, should we choose to.

IDS 100-12 Dealing with Our Differences

Our world is deeply divided by economic, racial, cultural, and religious differences. Some of these differences cause obvious ruptures in our relationships with our families and communities. Others go unnoticed, but still cause significant difficulties for those affected by them. This course will consider how we can do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8) in this context. We will consider what we owe to strangers living in poverty, how to navigate racial and cultural diversity, and how to engage in dialogue with those who hold opposing religious and political beliefs.

IDS 100-13

God's Worlds and Our World - Through Fiction from C.S. Lewis & His Friends

If you've ever read CS Lewis' fiction before (and it's okay if you haven't—you're still welcome in the class!), you'll know that it is entertaining. Lewis' stories have a deeper message behind the story line, too. Lewis uses fiction to illustrate Christian truths, in something like the way that Jesus uses parables to illustrate Christian truths (think of Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan, for example, which is fiction with a moral for us). Lewis' stories have a message for us about our own world as it is in everyday life, with its ups and downs, the world as God intended it to be (think of Genesis), and the world to come (think of the Book of Revelation). Lewis also wonders about other worlds in our universe, or the multiverse: is there non-human intelligent life and if so how does God relate to them? Reading Lewis will guide us into talking about these issues. We'll read some of Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia and also his space trilogy for adults, as well as work from other authors Lewis liked. We'll also read some of Lewis' friends and those who made an impact on him, including his friend J.R.R. Tolkein who wrote some terrific short stories (besides *Lord of the Rings*).

This section contributes to the Emmaus Scholars learning track, but is open to all students. To find out more about the Emmaus Scholars program, please see our [website](#)

IDS 100-14

Arabian Nights: Storytelling and Survival in the Middle East and Beyond

The classic collection *1001 Nights* is narrated by Shahrazad, a woman whose life depends on her ability to tell entertaining stories. Her husband, King Shahryar, was betrayed by his former wife and has come to believe that all women are treacherous. As an act of revenge, he now marries a new woman each day and has her executed the next morning. When Shahrazad marries him, she replaces this chain of killings with a chain of stories. Each night, she weaves a magical tale to captivate the king, only to stop at a cliffhanger. She promises to reveal the ending if only he will let her live until the next night. Shahrazad's never-ending narration, therefore, saves not only herself but also the other 1000 women whom the king would have married and killed if not for her intervention.

In this course, students will be introduced to *1001 Nights* as a way to explore narrative as an essential part of the human experience. We will learn about modern-day asylum seekers, who have to tell a certain version of their stories in order to be accepted by host countries. We will discuss the allure—and potential danger—of national myths, particularly in the context of US-Mideast relations. And we will ask the question: how can we ethically tell our own stories, and listen to those of others, in a world full of power imbalances?

IDS 100-15 The World of Screwtape

In C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*, a senior demon mentors a junior demon assigned to a particular human being. The job of this "junior tempter" is to seduce the "patient" into hell, and the less the patient knows about it, the better. The letters are a delightful read, and they teach us a lot about imaginative writing, the spiritual life, and our own faults. We will read these letters slowly and write along with them.

We'll also read other work by Lewis to understand more about Screwtape's "world." This will include Lewis's *The Great Divorce* (a fictional book about heaven and hell), and probably *The Silver Chair* (the sixth book in Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*). We may also read from some of the writers in the "enemy's camp" and some of the "propagandists" on Screwtape's side. Finally, we'll watch a movie with a different take on the demonic. You probably won't agree entirely with Screwtape or his ideas about "the enemy" (i.e., God). But you will find yourself holding up a mirror when Screwtape discusses his favorite tempting strategies.

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IDS 100-16 War and Peace

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This shining vision from the prophecy of Isaiah looms as an eternal hope for the human race—yet one that is continually sabotaged. What is the seemingly unconquerable appeal of war? How has warfare been depicted in history and the arts, from Homer's *Iliad* to contemporary fiction and the latest movies? What has caused the endless march of wars from the twentieth century to the present? And how have heartfelt campaigns for peace both emerged and crumpled in modern times? Through attention to history, works of literature, and the testimony of survivors, this course will address these questions—questions undeniably of life and death.

IDS 100-17 Humans and the Environment

How do humans understand the environment? What are some tools that societies today use to study the environment? This FYS explores the changing historical contexts of environmental developments, beginning with some of the earliest meanings of the word "environment." We will survey human understandings of the natural world, settlements and civilizations, and science and technology from the ancient times. We will also address new and exciting ideas of the virtual/digital environments of the future. Through this FYS, students will think of ways to position themselves in the global timelines of human and nonhuman developments.

IDS 100-18 Can My Work Be God's Work

Can your life's work in a secular career field glorify and please God as much as someone serving in ministry? Or do you view your career outside of ministry separate from how you live out your faith—something done just to support yourself and your family and give to God? Many Christians see their secular career separate from their sacred duty to serve God, and many have the view that work is a burden, the result of living in a fallen world. Others make their career an idol, expecting it to provide them with their identity and purpose in life. In this First Year Seminar, we will seek a biblical view of work guided by authors from both inside Christian ministry and the secular workplace to answer the guiding question, "Can my work be God's work?"

IDS 100-19 Music: The Universal Language

Other than God and family, music has always been the most important part of my life. I have traveled the world performing and witnessed how a passion for music can not only unite people of all races but also heal the mind, body, and soul. I have learned that when you give yourself unconditionally to music and let it guide you, it becomes a spiritual journey. Every melody, rhythm, and chord has its own meaning and offers gifts just as precious as those we receive from life. What type of music moves your soul and shapes who you are? We will explore these

questions through engaging discussions, sharing the artists we love to broaden our awareness and deepen our senses.

Prepare to embark on a journey inward and experience *Music: The Universal Language*.

IDS 100-20 What's Your Lens?

We make choices daily that shape the way we see life. We are all interpreting the world through a set of lenses that inform the stories we tell ourselves and the impact we will have on others. What do you notice around you and why? How are you choosing to see the world, to see others, and to see yourself? Do our lenses for life make a difference?

In this course we will examine what we choose to focus on, who we pay attention to, and the choices big and small that we are presented with in college. Through readings & reflections, discussions, and projects, we will explore together the concept of others-focused lenses - how they can transform us and impact the world.

IDS 100-21 Finding Creating Real Community in College

We come to college with countless expectations about the concept of community. Parents tell stories about the lifelong friendships that began during orientation week. Marketing materials promise relationships, fun, and connection to others. Friends' social media highlight their incredible experiences.

Is finding community really that easy? What do I do with this nagging doubt that everyone is connected...except for me?

What if we don't actually *find* community, but actually *create* it? This class will explore habits and practices that equip others...and ourselves...to flourish in the college context. We will consider both historical and contemporary voices to identify some simple, but profound practices that contribute to belonging.

You won't find community in this class, but during our time together you might just get some hints about how to create it.

IDS 100-22 Beyond Numbers: Mathematical Pathways to Human Flourishing

What if math isn't just about numbers, equations, or tests—but about what it means to be human?

In this first-year seminar, we'll explore *Mathematics for Human Flourishing* by Professor Francis Su of Harvey Mudd College, a book that invites everyone—including those who have felt left out of math—to rediscover the subject as a deeply human endeavor. Through stories, puzzles, philosophy, and personal reflection, we'll look at how math connects to basic human desires like play, beauty, justice, love, freedom, and truth.

No advanced math background is required—just curiosity and a willingness to think differently. Along the way, you'll hear powerful stories (including those of people who discovered math in unlikely places, like prison), tackle creative challenges, and reflect on your own learning journey. This is a course about more than math—it's about flourishing as a person.

IDS 100-23 Let There Be Light: Faith, Energy, and the Power of Community

How can we live well—together—on a warming planet? This seminar explores “community energy” not only as a response to climate change but as a way of thinking about shared life. We'll examine where our energy comes from, who controls it, and how communities are organizing to build more just, local, and sustainable systems. Alongside these questions, we'll reflect on what it means to be rooted in place, to care for creation, and to live in community—on campus, at home, and in the world. Through

discussion, storytelling, and field experiences, students will explore how Christian commitments to justice, stewardship, and neighbor-love can illuminate paths toward a more hopeful and connected future.

IDS 100-24 Conspiracy Theories

Do the illuminati run the world? Were the Apollo moon landings staged? Who really shot John F. Kennedy? Are aircraft contrails dangerous? What are false flag operations? And what is up with the Masons? This course will critically examine the phenomena of conspiracy theories from a variety of perspectives. How do conspiracy theories get started? How do they spread? Why do people believe them? How do we know what is true and what is not? In the face of information warfare, fake news, and alternative facts, how can we be sure? We will examine different ways of knowing as we develop and hone critical thinking and communication skills. We will also critically assess the value of a liberal arts education gained in the context of the historic Christian faith.

IDS 100-25 The Gift of Language

How does learning a language make us good neighbors? In this class, we will be exploring the different language programs offered here at Hope (German, French, Classics, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and Spanish) and discussing how learning about new languages and cultures can shape our vocations. We will be reading *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality and Foreign Language Learning* by David Smith to orient our semester long conversation. We will also consider study abroad programs and start thinking about how travel can be an integral component of your Hope College education. In our classroom, we will welcome international students, students who have studied abroad and community members to talk about their experiences with language learning both here in Holland and farther afield. Their insights will benefit us as we ponder how learning a language in the age of Google Translate helps to make us good disciples, as well as capable global citizens. This class is for seasoned polyglots and monolingual students alike. If you are interested in becoming more connected to your community and our larger international family, this will be a great place to start your Hope experience!

IDS 100-26 What Makes Life Good? Building Meaning in the First Third of Life

The "good life" during college and early adulthood is about more than success—it's a time to discover who you are, build relationships, and explore your purpose. While society pressures young adults to have it all figured out, this stage is about learning, growing, and setting future goals. Andrew Carnegie outlines life in three phases: learning, career-building, and giving back. As first-year students at Hope College, you're in the "learning phase"—developing critical thinking, gaining independence, and defining goals for your future.

This course will help you make the most of your college experience by:

- Exploring your unique purpose
- Defining your "good life"
- Utilizing campus resources for academic and personal growth
- Managing your time for studying while building relationships
- Applying effective study strategies for academic success

By the end of the course, you'll have a solid first-year plan and a clearer vision for your academic and career path. Thoughtful planning, strategies, and goal-setting will prepare you to embrace future opportunities and create your version of the "good life."

IDS 100-27 Bridging Divides: The Generation Gap

When reading the news, browsing social media, or talking to friends, we are regularly bombarded with messages about things that divide us. One particular divide that seems prevalent today is that between the old and the young—the generation gap. In this seminar, we will think about how age and generation shapes how we see the world, and how those differences can lead to division. We will also take a step back and ponder larger questions: why do humans, as individuals and as groups, become divided? How can we find ways to build bridges, to connect across our divisions? The class will engage a number of disciplinary perspectives, including history, psychology, political science, economics, and philosophy. Through doing this, we will consider how engagement with the liberal arts can provide us with a wider lens for understanding problems and finding solutions.

IDS 100-28 Oh! The Places We Go!

“I’m sorry to say so, but, sadly it’s true. That bang-ups and hang-ups can happen to you.” - Dr. Suess.

Where do we go when experiencing these bang-ups and hang-ups? Where do we go when we have experiences that raise us up? What does it mean to fully “show-up” in these situations? Does it really matter how much we show-up if we are there? What impact does our level of showing up have on the connections and relationships in our lives? What impact does it have on us?

While we will not actually explore Dr. Suess’s classic nursery rhyme, students will analyze texts and other media from Dr. Brene Brown and other experts on emotions and their impacts. Students should expect both large and small group discussions about emotions—what they are, how we experience them, and what we do with them. Students will also practice different ways of assessing where we go in different emotional settings and circumstances.

IDS 100-29 Adulting

Have you ever had that horrifying moment when you’re looking for an adult, then realize you’re the adult? So you look for an older adult, someone successfully adulting...an adultier adult. We are all faced with this dilemma at one time or another in our life. There is a lot of pressure to know your major, have your career goals set, and look like you have your life together. It is easy to compare ourselves to peers and question our own success and choices.

In this class, we will explore how sociologists define “adulthood,” examine big questions such as what makes someone a successful adult and whether there are multiple ways to achieve that success. Additionally, we will delve into how to transition into the next chapter of our lives at Hope. Our journey will include engaging readings and discussions on emerging adulthood, developing skills for our career, discerning our calling, and hands-on activities such as cooking, budget planning, and other skills that aid in successfully adulting. All of these experiences will help you become an adultier adult.

IDS 100-30 It’s All In Your Head, Or Is It?

Through readings, in class activities and discussions we will examine the effects of cultural, racial, and inherited, generational toxic stress and trauma on brain chemistry. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we will explore theories and research through various authors that link the body’s physical, mental, and spiritual response to toxic stress and trauma.

Students will be asked to be open to vulnerability and challenged to examine internal dialogues, behaviors, and beliefs that may be preventing them from being their best selves. We will seek to develop growth mindsets and skills to build resiliency in ourselves and others while answering the big question, “Can our mind control what our body feels?”

IDS 100-31 The Story You Were Meant to Tell

Storytelling can create a captivating and scintillating new world. Yet, a truly remarkable story goes beyond simply grabbing the reader's attention; it connects to us in a deeply profound way. Often, such stories reveal insights into life's uniqueness and awe-inspiring experiences. Stories help us interpret life's meaningfulness and teach us to make sense of the world around us.

This course has two main components: diving deeply into the question of what makes life meaningful, and learning powerful storytelling techniques. Through a mix of philosophical inquiry and creative exploration, we will take an interdisciplinary approach to examine the pillars that contribute to a meaningful life. We'll engage in rich discussions, thought-provoking readings, imaginative theorizing, and playful yet purposeful storytelling activities.

For a final project, you will be asked to reflect on what gives your life meaning and transform your discoveries into a compelling narrative. Your final story can take the form of a creative writing piece, podcast, video, or another expressive medium of your choice.

This is your opportunity to explore what gives life its meaning, purpose, and beauty. Whether you're a deep thinker, a creative soul, or simply curious about what makes life worth living, this course invites you to imagine boldly, reflect deeply, and express what truly matters—through the story you were meant to tell.

IDS 100-32 Holistic Health

Health is a state of optimal well-being that extends beyond just physical fitness. True well-being encompasses all aspects of the self, including spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical health. Achieving balance requires nurturing each of these areas. In this course, we will explore various dimensions of health, from psychological and emotional well-being to nutrition and physical fitness. Through readings, discussions, and practical strategies, we will examine ways to support overall health. Get ready to reflect on yourself from multiple perspectives to gain deeper insight into what it means to be truly healthy.

IDS 100-33 Hobbies and Happiness

Want to learn how to increase your happiness? Pursuing hobbies. Engaging in hobbies can broaden our perspectives, increase our creativity, contribute to lifelong learning, and help develop positive relationships – all of which have the potential to increase our happiness. This class will explore how hobbies can open our minds to new ideas, leading to personal growth and development. We will delve into the benefits of pursuing creative outlets and how they can foster innovation and problem-solving skills. Join us and discover how investing in your passions can lead to a fulfilling and rewarding life.

IDS 100-34 Hunting Arete: Developing My Talent and Acting On My Passion

“Capability is confirmed and grows in its corresponding actions, walking by walking, and running by running... Therefore, if you want to do something, make a habit of it.” - Epictetus

How can I develop my talent? Can you create great habits for yourself where your passion project nurtures your discipline, and your discipline feeds your growth toward excellence (arete)?

What do you love to do? James Prosek, in his book *Fly Fishing the 41st Parallel: Around the World on the 41st Parallel*, speaks of his passion as a 'locura' or almost crazy-mad interest in catching fish on a fly. His infatuation with trout led him to creating art, writing, and traveling. Prosek travels around the world on his home latitude observing natural spaces and our place within, and of course catching fish and painting them.

Where could this take you? Far from being exclusive, your passion can help you create connections with people near and far. Can you envision a future for yourself where you can find a way to be an asset while doing what you love?

IDS 100-35 Choices, Habits, and Consequences

How do the small decisions we make each day shape who we become - and how can we ensure those choices support a healthy balance between work, study, and personal life? In this seminar, we'll explore the powerful connection between our choices, the habits they form, and the consequences - both intended and unexpected - that follow. Drawing from psychology, literature and real-life stories, we'll examine how habits are formed, why change is difficult, and what it means to take ownership of our actions.

A key focus will be developing habits that prioritize wellness and support work-life balance-physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. We'll ask: How do routines impact health, happiness, and academic success? How can we break free from unhelpful patterns and create habits that encourage balance, self-care, and achievement?

Through discussions, reflective writing, and practical exercises, you'll analyze your own routines, learn strategies for positive change, and consider how the habits you build in college can help you thrive now and in the future.

IDS 100-36 What is Your Life's Purpose

It's hard to go through a single day without someone telling you what *they* think your purpose is. Advertisers suggest we are here as consumers, to purchase things that will make us happy. Our friends, family, and community may hope we pursue a certain major or career. Different religions answer the question uniquely, too, often encouraging us to listen for God's calling or seek transcendence. How do we determine which path to follow? How do we make those big life-changing decisions?

In this class we will explore how to discern and pursue a meaningful life using social science research, ancient Greek philosophers, religious stories, literature, and vocational discernment tools and practices.

IDS 100-37 Redefining Success: Beyond Metrics and Milestones

What is success, and who gets to define it? This seminar challenges you to examine your inherited assumptions about achievement and worth while developing the practical skills needed to thrive at Hope College. Through critical discussions, reflective exercises, and engagement with diverse perspectives, we'll deconstruct conventional success narratives in academics, community, relationships, and career paths. You'll learn effective college strategies while simultaneously questioning the very frameworks that shape our goals. By course end, you'll not only possess practical tools for collegiate achievement but will have developed a personalized philosophy of success that aligns with your authentic values and aspirations—one that may look quite different from what you've been conditioned to pursue.

IDS 100-38 Vocational Letters: Nursing, Teaching, Politics, & the Military

This course will explore vocational discernment from the perspective of four careers: nursing, teaching, the military, and politics. Through the letters of individuals called to these professions, the class will examine both the challenges and possibilities that constitute vocational careers. By reading the letters of Florence Nightingale from the Crimean War, Sullivan Ballou's letter to his wife during the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln letter to his son's teacher, and Nelson Mandela's letters from his prison at

Robben Island during Apartheid, the class will discuss the benefits and challenges to vocational calling. We will use two parables from the Bible, “The Parable of the Talents,” and “The Lost Sheep;” and two poems, Wilfred Owens’ “Dulce et Decorum est,” and Max Ehrmann’s “Desiderata” as context for exploring vocational discernment.

IDS 100-39 Divine Comedy: Taking Humor Seriously

Laughter seems to be a universal feature of human experience. There are few things that bring us more enjoyment or that can forge a friendship faster than a good joke. At the same time, laughter frequently serves as a source of hurt and division. In this course, we will explore the nature of humor and comedy, along with their religious, moral, and cultural implications.

We will survey how thinkers and artists across the centuries have tried to define and explain humor. We will sample various genres of comedy from a range of cultural settings and media, and we will discuss the ethics of jokes in a pluralistic world. Finally, we will consider questions about the relationship between religion and comedy: Are there sacred things that shouldn't be joked about? Is there a place for laughter in spiritual life? Does God have a sense of humor?

IDS 100-40 The Compassionate Heart

What motivates you to be compassionate? Does your ability, your motivation, or your desire to experience compassion depend on the situation, your mood, your current circumstances, or the people involved? Do you find that your intrinsic compassion for those around you exceeds your expectations under certain circumstances? Do you sometimes express compassion out of a sense of responsibility, a moral obligation, or a social expectation? In this class we will focus on the concepts of caring, empathy and compassion with mindfulness and intentionality through self-exploration into your own strengths, aptitudes, and preferences while reading various texts and participating in class discussions in order to explore all levels of compassion towards yourself, towards others, and towards the world around you.

IDS 100-41 Developing a Growth Mindset through Joyful Learning

Many children might answer that “recess” is their favorite subject, but play isn’t just for the playground...there is a renewed emphasis on playful, joyful learning starting from a young age. For example, the Michigan Essential Instructional Practices in Early Mathematics PreK-5 recommends that teachers “Design learning environments to encourage mathematical play and tinkering” and to use tasks that encourage choice, creativity, and social engagement. How does this translate to learning for adults? In this class, we will explore how playful, hands-on activities, games, and meaningful routines can build rich problem-solving skills, expand our capacities for reasoning and “thinking outside the box,” and reshape how we define what it means to learn. Together we will consider different frameworks that explain how people learn and develop an understanding of the importance of having a growth mindset as opposed to a fixed mindset as a learner. We will build communication skills and perseverance while solving interesting puzzles and problems, and recognize the important role of mistakes as part of effective learning.

IDS 100-42 I Was Hungry, I Was a Stranger, I Was Sick...and What Did You Do?

Following the words from Matthew 25: 35-36 we will explore our call to community as Christians. *“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”* What do these verses say to us in our ordinary lives? Where do we see the face of the hungry, the stranger, the sick, the imprisoned in our society? And what is our response? We will begin with an exploration of holy empathy and then immerse ourselves in relevant topics such as poverty, hunger, refugees/immigration, mental health, and prisons. We will learn about those among us, or who have gone before who are living out this call with empathy

by truly giving, “something to eat, something to drink, providing clothing...” Using readings, documentaries, and community conversations we will explore these verses and discern their meaning in our lives today.

IDS 100-50, 51, 52, 53 Unity Through Diversity

Phelps Scholars Program sections

The Phelps Scholars Program is an alternative version of community where difference doesn’t mean division. Instead, Phelps Scholars live together in Scott Hall and enroll in the same FYS, both spaces for creating intentional community and learning in a different way. We will explore the complexities of our differences and similarities through readings, discussions, service learning, and day trips to cultural events and centers, while also prioritizing a successful transition to college. Those components will serve as our guide for exploring a fundamental question about community: How do we flourish in community and practice justice in an intentionally diverse context? Together, we will discover some answers and achieve these four goals in the process: Get off to a great start, learn about the world and its people, succeed in college and in life, and have fun along the way.

For additional information or to apply to the Phelps Scholars Program, visit

<https://hope.edu/academics/phepls-scholars/>

If you plan to apply or have already been accepted to the Phelps Scholars Program, you can select this topic as your first choice and select nine other topics as backup in case your plans to participate change.