First-Year Writing seminars emphasize writing and thinking skills. You will be asked to do the following: 1) write frequently, in a variety of genres including expository essays and one or more assignments requiring research; 2) revise some of this writing; and 3) meet your instructor for conferences on your writing. The course is taught in multiple sections and designed for writers with varying levels of experience and confidence.

Section A: MWF 9:05-10:00, N. Buccigalia

HEROES AND VILLAINS. Stories, whether they are classic fairy tales, superhero sagas, or the narratives we tell about our everyday lives, are full of recognizable hero and villain archetypes. Antiheroes, tricksters, witches, and warriors occur most recognizably in fantasy and science fiction, but we see them as well in real-world narratives about political parties, institutions, and interpersonal relationships. In this seminar, we will read, think, and write about the heroes and villains in our entertainment, news, and lives. Texts will focus on characters who complicate the hero-villain binary and may include V.E. Schwab's *Vicious*, Catherynne M. Valente's *Deathless*, and Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*. Major assignments may include a profile essay, a researched essay, and an opportunity for creative writing.

Section B: MWF 10:45-11:40, J. Nagamatsu

CLIMATE FICTION. Glacial ice is melting and sea levels are rising. Climate change exacerbated by human activity is happening, and the debate about these changes continues. Storytelling is at the heart of this dialogue. Stories are the vehicles scientists and nonprofits use to make their cases; it is also the vehicle of multinational corporations and lobbying groups. But through film and literature, stories can offer a much more intimate lens, allowing for social critique and the illumination of a future we’d be remiss not to imagine. This seminar will examine the stories scientists and corporations tell but will pay special attention to how some of our most celebrated science fiction and literary authors have tackled questions such as What can we do? What will the world look like? and What will we lose? In examining how art and politics address these issues, we will discuss texts ranging from novels and short stories to scholarly articles and mainstream journalism. As a class, we will explore what makes a climate change story successful (and believable) by examining artistic and rhetorical strategies of assigned readings. Assignments will include a personal essay, an original creative work with rationale statement, a researched essay, and smaller assignments such as reading forums and film responses. (Open to Environmental Conversations students only.)

Section C: MWF 10:45-11:40, C. Gallego

TWILIGHT OF THE AMERICAN DREAM – The economic downturn of 2008—what many have called a collapse—has raised concerns regarding the financial health of future generations. It is now widely accepted that the potential for younger Americans to do better than previous generations—the narrative of social mobility popularly understood as the American Dream—is no longer a reality. Instead, there is a growing consensus regarding the death of this dream and with it the very possibility to improve one’s economic, social, and cultural condition. It seems that rather than progressing toward a healthy democracy, the United States has spiraled into a science fiction reality where the media controls our thinking, politics is governed by self-interest, and corporations are powerful enough to hire private armies to impose their will around the globe.

The main theme of this seminar centers on twentieth-century American culture, particularly as it relates to issues of historical progress, national identity, cultural change, and aesthetic experimentation. The main question we will address is “What has happened to the American Dream?” In addition to literature, we will read some philosophical and political texts. Some of the texts we will discuss include Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, documentaries like *The Corporation*, and the films *Revolutionary Road*, *Do the Right Thing*, and *Fight Club*.

Section D: MWF 11:50-12:45, J. Naito

SEEING RACE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. In the past several years, the nation’s attention has repeatedly turned to race and its role in contemporary life. Yet, in the public protests and debates that have followed
events such as the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice, the Charleston massacre at Emanuel AME Church, and the decision to remove public monuments to the Confederacy in New Orleans, scholars, political leaders, activists, journalists, and—not least of all—college students have pointed to the shortcomings of the contemporary dialogue about race. This seminar is intended to address this need. Over the course of the semester, we will consider the role of race in aspects of twenty-first-century American life including education, housing, employment, and the law; examine its role on contemporary college campuses; and trace its representation in popular culture. Readings and other materials for this distinctly interdisciplinary course will be drawn from the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities. Note: the only text that students are absolutely required to purchase is EasyWriter. All other required texts will be available on two-hour reserve in the Rolvaag library; students who do not wish to purchase them are welcome to use those on reserve.

Section E: MWF 11:50-12:45, S. Ward

HIP HOP GENERATION. How did we get from Watergate and DJ Kool Herc’s “break” to Obama’s playlists and Yeezus? This seminar uses hip-hop culture as a guide to the social, political, and economic changes that have taken place in the United States since the early 1970s. We will focus on the historical circumstances and unique spaces out of which hip hop arises as well as the culture’s own conception of history and aesthetics, its poetics of place. While our abiding interest will be the transformations of musical sound and urban culture over the last forty years, we will also attend to the wide-ranging influence that hip hop has had on documentary and feature film, journalism, literature, dance, advertising, visual art, and even, perhaps, US politics. Writing assignments will be developmental in nature, beginning with short, “close listening” exercises and album reviews and building toward a final digital project that incorporates various media to construct its argument.

Section F: MWF 12:55-1:50, M. Trull

MAKING ECOLOGY PERSONAL. How have you been shaped by the natural places you know best? This seminar will focus on writers and filmmakers who narrate a personal experience with nature. We will read and discuss works in a range of genres, including creative nonfiction, memoir, ethnography, and documentary film. We will ask how individual and community identities are formed by interaction with nature, how cultures define “nature” differently, and how we can understand ourselves as participants in ecological systems that include living things, land, water, and air. Students will work on the process of writing with short pieces, culminating in a final research paper in which they further investigate a natural place they have experienced and write about its meaning for them.

Section G: MWF 12:55-1:50, B. DeFries

FRIENDSHIP. Friendship is among the most foundational concepts in nearly every age and society, and yet it remains among the most mysterious. Today it commonly refers to people, nations, pets, businesses, and online avatars associated with people we may never have met. Why is friendship so resonant across temporal and cultural contexts and yet so hard to define? Is friendship a preference for individual people or an obligation we have to each and every person we encounter? To what extent is friendship gendered? Does friendship play different roles in different cultures, and if so, how do we talk about intercultural friendships? In this seminar, we'll draw on literature, philosophy, and political and cultural writing in order to consider existing philosophies of friendship and to develop our own. Students will discuss readings in class, respond to them in short essays, and then apply the fruit of their conversations and written explorations to their own researched arguments on an aspect of friendship that appeals to them.

Section H: MWF 2:00-2:55, J. Kwon Dobbs

RACE AND POWER. In the twenty-first century, race persists today as a system of power, oftentimes interlocked with class and gender, as evidenced by the criminalization of black and brown communities and the fatal shootings of young men of color, as well as the ban on ethnic studies in Tucson, Arizona, despite the curriculum's life-changing effects in students' lives. This seminar looks at texts related to these and other events in order to understand how race continues to hold force over our social realities. Students write short essays and a researched essay to strengthen their writing processes while developing analytical language to name and interrogate race in the United States.
Section J: EXPLORING HEALTH AND WELLNESS.

EXPLORING HEALTH AND WELLNESS. What makes a person healthy and well? Is it more than just the absence of disease? How do American definitions of health differ from perceptions of health in cultures around the world? This writing seminar will explore the many facets of wellness (physical, social, emotional, spiritual, environmental, and intellectual) and what it means to be healthy. We will read, discuss, analyze, and write about the myriad of wellness attributes and their complex interaction with each other. Writing assignments will progress along a continuum of personal essays, family interviews, position papers, article reviews, and a researched essay. Students will draw from their personal experiences, as well as articles, texts, films, and invited speakers.

Section K: PERSONAL NARRATIVES.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES. Students in this seminar work the whole semester to develop a single personal narrative, one made of shorter essays that develop their skill at writing description, analysis, and argumentation. For the short essays, for example, they develop statements that draw on their memories from childhood, involving recollections of a place, person, and incidents. Ultimately, they produce seamless stories that integrate these accounts and incorporate an array of genres. In the course of writing a neighborhood biography or migrant or farm story, or an immigrant account or family secret, or a recession story, they also learn to research in the library crucial details and to gather information from interviews. Finally, after reading models of excellent writing produced by contemporary American authors who focus in their work on issues of American identity and after working regularly in peer groups, they develop a keen sense of their audience.

Section L: CHANGING OUR MINDS.

CHANGING OUR MINDS. The United States is a country increasingly divided by issues of politics and religion. From immigration to abortion, from gun rights to bathroom rights, from vaccinations to marijuana use, many of us feel strongly about the issues that we care about. But from where, exactly, do our deepest held beliefs emerge? And how do we actually change the minds of others—or ourselves? In this seminar, we’ll use moral psychology to consider the roots of belief and the human capacity for change. Students will investigate an issue they care about through a variety of lenses: personal reflection, research, argument/debate, and interview/immersion with an “other” viewpoint. Ultimately students will try to convince their classmates—and themselves—to see the world in a more complex light.

Section M: GENDER AND SPORTS.

GENDER AND SPORTS. Sports and competition have long been lauded as building character for young people, in part because athletes thrive on challenge and use failure as a springboard for growth. Sports are a multi-billion-dollar industry in the U.S. because fans (who aren’t playing the games themselves) become passionate about following sports teams or individuals. The focus of this writing seminar will be how gender intersects with these two worlds of sports, the participants and the fans. We’ll examine how gender is performed on the field or the court. We’ll discuss Title IX and its importance to increasing sports opportunities for women. We’ll look at how the media represents social attitudes toward sex and gender, particularly in its binary forms. As befits a writing seminar, we will take extensive time to discuss the writing process, revision, audience, researching, and other important matters relating to improving our writing abilities.

Section N: ON BEING HUMAN.

ON BEING HUMAN. What does it mean to be a human being? Though all modern humans are biologically and genetically distinguishable as one unified species (Homo sapiens), it is the diversity of our species that is remarkable though sometimes contentious. In this seminar, we will support each other in reading, discussing, and writing about a range of topics relevant to being a human today. New information about our species’ scandalous relationships with extinct relatives like Neanderthals will help us interpret the evolutionary history of human unity. Thought-provoking fiction and non-fiction books will help us navigate the diversity of modern humans, from individual personalities up to national identities. Group work launches students into their own investigations of other
aspects of human diversity. Course resources draw from popular science and literature and are accessible to students of all interests and backgrounds. Assignments are designed to build research and writing skills over the semester and will include a personal essay, a researched essay, and several others.

**Section O: T 1:20-2:45 / Th 2:15-3:35, J. Patterson**

**GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMICS.** Graphic novels and comics marry art and writing for a totally immersive reading experience. But they’re not just about superheroes. They can also be thought-provoking meditations on the deepest issues of our time. In this seminar, we’ll explore comic and graphic novel titles that work to inspire environmental and social activism among readers, examining how this kind of literature can challenge readers to think beyond the page. In the process, we’ll also consider two fundamental questions: How do comics work? And what do comics do? To that end, we’ll read comics criticism and theory, comics, and graphic novels. We will also write four short and one longer paper, and we’ll draw. (But don't worry: you do not need to be an artist. Full disclosure: I, myself, am not an artist.)

**Section P: T 1:20-2:45 / Th 2:15-3:35, B. Reed**

**ASIAN POP CULTURES: K-POP TO BOLLYWOOD.** Global pop cultures reflect and express personal and national identity. When the K-Pop group BTS (Bangtan Boys) made history in May 2018 as the first Korean group to debut an album as Number 1 in the U.S., South Korean President Moon Jae-in tweeted his congratulations and stated, “At the very heart of BTS’s outstanding dancing and singing is sincerity. This magical power turns grief into hope and differences into similarity.” We will think about this “magical power” of pop culture. By reading popular and scholarly writing on aspects of pop culture, we will explore issues of identity, nationalism, gender representation, authenticity and cultural appropriation. Our objects of study include Bollywood movies, K-pop music videos, Chinese historical television serials, and Japanese anime. We will write about Asian pop cultures in a variety of genres: personal essay, media review, comparative essay, and research paper. No prior knowledge of Asia or Asian pop cultures is required.

**Section Q: T 1:20-2:45 / Th 2:15-3:35, J. Mbele**

**THE TRICKSTER.** "The Trickster" is an engaging and significant phenomenon in the lives of human beings all over the world. Thinking and writing about the trickster will help us discover an important part of ourselves as humans. We will read, discuss, and write about narratives and other discourses dealing with the trickster, including folktales, epic and fictional tales, and theoretical works. We will reflect on these readings and respond to them in our writing, particularly by using these materials as sources of inspiration. Student writing will be discussed in conferences with the instructor. Texts include Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, Niane's *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, Radin's *The Trickster*, and Sandars' *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.

**Section R: MWF 8:00 – 8:55, J. Shaiman**

**FINDING HOME.** An intimate connection grows between us and the places we call home. This seminar takes this connection as its starting point, investigating our private spaces and those we share, sometimes unwillingly, with strangers. To this end, we will discuss sociological studies about how we express ourselves in the spaces we inhabit, consider some of the philosophical connections between domestic spaces and the people we have the capacity to become, and theorize how and why a house becomes described as “haunted.” To help us investigate these topics thoughtfully, we will draw from literary nonfiction, history, sociology, literary criticism, philosophy, and journalism. These readings will come from both traditional academic sources as well as popular ones. Essays will include a close reading of a room, a researched argument about a supposedly haunted house, and a response to a philosophical argument about the power of spaces to shape who we are.