GES160 Inquiry Seminar

All sections of GES160 Inquiry Seminar explore a specific topic of interest while students 1) develop and understand the meaning and value of a liberal arts education in the Christian tradition, 2) establish community, and 3) learn and practice research, writing, and speaking skills.

2019-2020 Planned Inquiry Seminar Topics

**Fall 2019**
- All God’s Creatures: Animals as Property or Peers
- The Book Was Better?
- The Danger of a Single Story
- Emotional Intelligence
- Exploring Native American Cultures
- God’s Story; Our Story
- The Politics in Your Food
- Tales of King Arthur
- Writing Our Story: Your Voice and Voices from the American Past
- “Yes...And!”: IMPROVing Your Life
- A Life of Calm in a Time of Chaos: Exploring Contemplation [Honors section]

**Interim 2020**
- The Stuff We Keep
- Ethics & Professional Sports
- Hearing Colors & Melty Faces: Understanding the Brain through Neuropsychological Cases

**Spring 2019**
- All God’s Creatures: Animals as Property or Peers
- The Book Was Better?
- The Danger of a Single Story
- Emotional Intelligence
- Exploring Native American Cultures
- God’s Story; Our Story
- Science in the Movies
- Sojourning Insights
- Tales of King Arthur
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Description</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All God’s Creatures: Animals as Property or Peers</strong></td>
<td>Annie Berglund</td>
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<tr>
<td>They live in our cities, our neighborhoods, even our homes. We feed them, clothe</td>
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<td>them, make them famous on Instagram. Millennials take the generational lead in</td>
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<td>pet ownership; yet, in the last 40 years, the number of wildlife on Earth has</td>
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<td>halved. How have perspectives on the ethical treatment of animals changed in</td>
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<td>recent decades? Are the differences in perspective an Eastern vs. Western cultural</td>
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<td>phenomenon? An urban or generational divide? What does the Bible have to say</td>
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<td>about animals and how is that translated into the 21st century? Exploring the</td>
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<td>use of animals in the media and entertainment industry, cosmetics and testing,</td>
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<td>husbandry and hunting, this class will examine the moral obligations, if any,</td>
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<td>that humans have to our four-legged friends. From case studies of zookeepers</td>
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<td>saving animals in warfare to the direct confrontation of activists in the Animal</td>
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<td>Liberation Front, students will assess how far humans are willing to go for</td>
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<td>their convictions. Together we will wrestle with the ethical dilemmas we face in</td>
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<td>our own daily interactions with all God’s creatures.</td>
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<td>Offered: Fall, Spring.</td>
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<td><strong>The Book was Better?</strong></td>
<td>Lindsay Craig</td>
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<td>Stories form the central way we frame our understanding of the world, and how</td>
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<td>we communicate our most powerful thoughts, deepest beliefs, and simplest</td>
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<td>observations. But how do these stories evolve or alter in the retelling? How</td>
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<td>does the movement of a story from a written text to a visual text change the</td>
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<td>story itself? We will explore several common and uncommon stories in their</td>
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<td>original, and in later film versions to pursue these questions, and to ask other</td>
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<td>questions about the nature of how stories “work.” Including familiar works by</td>
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<td>C.S. Lewis (<em>The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe</em>), Dodie Smith (*I Capture</td>
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<td>the Castle*), and the Gospels, we will discuss memory, truth, retelling,</td>
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<td>adaptation, and influence. Together we will examine how stories both create and</td>
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<td>conform to the context of the reader or viewer.</td>
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<td><strong>The Danger of a Single Story</strong></td>
<td>Abbey Payeur</td>
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<td>Have you ever held a firm, seemingly unchangeable conviction about a topic, only</td>
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<td>to find yourself completely changing this view once you understood a different</td>
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<td>perspective? Inspired by the well-known TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,</td>
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<td>this course will explore the danger of having a “single story” or sole</td>
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<td>perspective on any given topic. Learn how to evaluate and appreciate multiple</td>
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<td>perspectives as you determine your views about politics, class, race, and social</td>
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<td>justice issues.</td>
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<td><strong>Emotional Intelligence</strong></td>
<td>Katie Friesen Smith</td>
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<td>You’ve heard of IQ but have you heard of EQ? Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the</td>
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<td>ability to understand and manage your emotions and understand how those</td>
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<td>emotions impact others. Researchers suggest EQ is key to personal and career</td>
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<td>success. How do we learn to recognize or manage our emotions? How do we</td>
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<td>recognize what others are feeling? How are EQ skills visible in current events</td>
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<td>today? Did Jesus have EQ? In this course we'll explore the various layers of</td>
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<td>emotional intelligence.</td>
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<td><strong>Ethics &amp; Professional Sports</strong></td>
<td>Ray Van Arragon</td>
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<td>Professional sports are enormously important in American life, and Christians</td>
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<td>are as involved with them as anyone. But should they be? On the one hand,</td>
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<td>professional sports promote excellence and teamwork, and they bring together</td>
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<td>disparate peoples and communities. But on the other hand, many sports thrive on</td>
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<td>cut-throat competitiveness and violence, leaving athletes damaged and discarded.</td>
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fans revel in these things. How can the notions of right and wrong, of justice, and of Christian virtue apply to all of this? In this course we explore how Christians might think about professional sports, and evaluate how engagement with professional sports might play a role in a robust and virtuous Christian life.

Offered: Interim.

Exploring Native American Cultures  
Instructor: Scott Sochay

In Revelation 7:9-10 the Bible talks about members of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues standing before the throne of God presenting an amazing picture of diversity and unity. It would make sense then that as God’s creatures we would want to start that process in this life: learning about cultures other than our own. When most people think of Native Americans they think of them mostly in an historical context (and mostly through impression of Western tribes). Yet, Native cultures are diverse and contemporary. This course will explore the cultures and worldviews of Native Americans and help students understand the significant roles Indians play in contemporary America. In this context, students will learn to appreciate how culture and the Bible connect in new and fascinating ways.

Offered: Fall, Spring.

God’s Story; Our Story  
Instructor: Meredith Nyberg

How are stories told in the Bible and how can we learn to tell our own stories to others in a captivating way? We will explore the methods used by Jesus and many others to tell stories in the Old and New Testaments that capture the imaginations of people worldwide. We will apply creative storytelling techniques in order to understand and convey stories about the Bible and about our own life journeys through media and other communication methods.

Offered: Fall, Spring.

Hearing Colors and Melty Faces:  
Instructor: Sherryse Corrow

Understanding the Brain through Neuropsychological Cases

Imagine if every time you heard a C-sharp, you also experienced the color blue. Or if every time you looked at a face, it appeared to melt. In this course, we will explore how neuropsychological cases of perceptual and cognitive oddities have taught us about how the human brain works. As part of this process, we will ponder and marvel at the complexity of the human nervous system and discuss how these types of cases influence our faith.

Offered: Interim.

A Life of Calm in a Time of Chaos: Exploring Contemplation  
[Honors Pieta Seminar I]  
Instructor: April Vinding

When was the last time you took a deep breath? Must we—as modern people, Americans, evangelicals—“produce or die”? What are the costs and gifts of choosing “being” over “doing” in the age of information, technology, efficiency, and consumption? In this course we’ll explore the genesis (both the origin and the way) of contemplation by gathering wisdom from across history and cultures, and by engaging in contemplative practices established by Christians across the ages. Local, off-campus activities will be required.

Offered: Fall.

The Politics in Your Food  
Instructor: Christopher Moore

Everyone eats, but have you ever considered that what you chew is a political act? Despite many agricultural advances, famine persists. In places with plenty of food, we see malnutrition and obesity. How can this be? Jesus often taught his followers through the provision of food. As Christ’s followers, how should we eat? What is the relationship between food and justice? We'll explore these questions
Science in the Movies  
Instructor: Wade Neiwert

Science exists in all areas of society, and movies present a unique lens for examining how science is viewed and understood. How historically accurate and realistic are the scientific advances represented? Is science and its progress positively or negatively portrayed in movies? How are scientists depicted and for what purpose? How has science been illustrated differently and similarly over time? Our study of questions like these will engage a wide range of movies and scientific disciplines.  
Offered: Spring.

Sojourning Insights  
Instructor: Ripley Smith

We are all sojourners of one sort or another in this life. Particularly, Christ-followers have a specific call to be sojourners (1 Chron. 29:15). There are lessons that are uniquely to be gleaned from both the journey and the perspective of the sojourner. This course will reflect on the attitude and the action of sojourning as a method for becoming more observant, self-aware, and courageously compassionate toward the landscapes we pass through. This course will require some exploration of the local area.  
Offered: Spring.

The Stuff We Keep  
Instructor: Lex Thompson

Museums and other repositories of objects store ideas, knowledge, stories, and experience. How do our institutions decide what to keep? What knowledge is important? How is it communicated through artifacts and objects? Who are we keeping this information for, and how do we communicate to them? Combining research and direct engagement with wide-ranging types of museums, libraries, and collections in the Twin Cities, we will seek to understand how we preserve and present knowledge through material objects.  
Offered: Interim.

Tales of King Arthur  
Instructor: Lindsay Craig

The tales of King Arthur are known to nearly everyone in one form or another, but the reasons why Arthur matters are as complex as all the world. He and his court are at times ideals of Christian conduct, sometimes examples of very bad kings and very bad things, sometimes philosophically fascinating, and sometimes cardboard cutouts of knights in shining armor and damsels in distress (not to mention wizards, dragons, and magic from which many authors have borrowed). In this course, we will look at how the compelling story of King Arthur has remained constant and changed radically over time. We will examine the earliest traces of Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, the Holy Grail, and Camelot, then look at variations from The Sword in the Stone (the book and the movie) to The Natural to see just how Arthur's mythology and reality have become woven into our conceptions of character, adventure, fantasy, and even ourselves.  
Offered: Spring.

Writing Our Story: Your Voice and Voices from the American Past  
Instructor: AnneMarie Kooistra

Do you know your story? Do you know the story of your family? Do you know the story of others who have come before you? How can learning the stories of our ancestors help us shape our own story? How can the visions of seemingly distant Americans help us better find our place in the present, while inspiring us in the transformative work God might be calling us to do in the future? In this course, we
explore the personal narratives of figures from America’s past in the hope that such voices can be part of our own story—as a cloud of witnesses that challenges us to think critically about our own story and the legacy we might leave behind.

Offered: Fall.

“Yes...And!”: IMPROVing Your Life

Can the art of improvisation do more than make people laugh? Is the principle of “Yes,...And!” good for anything other than improv games? Yes! ...And will we engage in ways that improvisation strengthens not only our funny bones, but also our flexibility, collaboration, and creativity? Yes! ...And will there be consideration of the professional and spiritual implications in our improvisation explorations? “Yes, ...And!”

Offered: Fall.