Bethel University College of Arts & Sciences
Planned Inquiry Seminar Topics 2017-2018

**Fall 2017 - Descriptions on Page 2.**
Change
The Book was Better?
Christians and Unity
What Good is Comedy?
The Politics in Your Food
Science in the Movies
The Danger of a Single Story
"You Don't Say": The Art of Nonverbal Communication
Friend Request: Exploring Models of Friendship and Community [Honors program]

**Interim 2018**
Sleep
Exploring Native American Cultures

**Spring 2018**
The Book was Better?
Blessings and Curses of a Social Media Life
Bracketology: Competition and Controversy in College Basketball
Making Monsters
The Danger of a Single Story
Ethics & Professional Sports
Defining Success
Infectious Disease
Making a Difference
A Life of Calm in a Time of Chaos: Exploring Contemplation [Honors program]
Fall 2017 Inquiry Seminar Topic Descriptions

Change
“Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change,” (Mary Shelley, Frankenstein). Change is inevitable, but humans are notoriously poor at dealing with it. How can we learn to deal productively with change and perhaps even change the world as we do? As Christians, how do we balance our belief in an unchanging God in a world of constant change? In this course we’ll explore the social, spiritual, and psychological impact of change as we read, write, and talk together.

The Book was Better?
Stories form the central way we frame our understanding of the world, and how we communicate our most powerful thoughts, deepest beliefs, and simplest observations. But how do these stories evolve or alter in the retelling? How does the movement of a story from a written text to a visual text change the story itself? We will explore several common and uncommon stories in their original, and in later film versions to pursue these questions, and to ask other questions about the nature of how stories “work.” Including familiar works by C.S. Lewis (The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe), Dodie Smith (I Capture the Castle), and the Gospels, we will discussion memory, truth, retelling, adaptation, and influence. Together we will examine how stories both create and conform to the context of the reader or viewer.

Christians and Unity
Americans and Christians often extoll the value of unity — or lament its absence. What are the causes of disunity, and what is its impact on Christian mission, witness, and community? Can pursuing unity itself be destructive? We’ll consider sources of division within the church (from old theological debates, lingering racial segregation, and recent schisms over sexuality), and how Christians are subject to the technological, cultural, and political forces accelerating the fragmentation and polarization of American society.

What Good is Comedy?
Is there good in fun? Is humor frivolous? Is it optional? What makes things funny, and is laughter really the best medicine? In this course you’ll engage funny stories, films, comics, music, stand-up, and plays with a team of professors (a joker and a cynic) to explore how comedy works and why laughter matters for our bodies, society, and relationships—and whether it matters for our souls.

The Politics in Your Food
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 by considering food systems inside the United States and around the world—and find answers with both political and personal impact.

Science in the Movies
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.

The Danger of a Single Story
Have you ever held a firm, seemingly unchangeable conviction about a topic, only to find yourself completely changing this view once you understood a different perspective? Inspired by the wellknown TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, this course will explore the danger of having a "single story" or sole perspective on any given topic. Learn how to evaluate and appreciate multiple perspectives as you determine your views about politics, class, race, and social justice issues.
"You Don't Say": The Art of Nonverbal Communication
As little as 20% of what we communicate comes through in the words we use. Students will be introduced to the field of nonverbal communication, becoming better equipped to read behaviors such as emotions, power, status, deception, flirting, and liking. We will also explore the way culture, structures, and even clothing influence the way we behave nonverbally. Friend Request:

Exploring Models of Friendship and Community [Honors section]
What defines a good friendship? What is the value of friendship? How do we cultivate friendships with people who are very different from us? In what ways does technology help and hinder the development of friendships? When might a friendship need to end? And, how might thinking about friendship vary in different stages of life and from different cultural perspectives? This course will explore these questions and others, as we evaluate different models of friendship, using philosophical and literary writings from Aristotle to the present day. We will apply these ideas to our own lives, thinking about the types of friendships we want to develop now and in the future.