

## **IDC 401 Course Descriptions for Spring 2025**

### **Catalog Description**

IDC-401: Senior Seminar (3 credit hours)

The Senior Seminar is the capstone experience in the general education of a Bellarmine student. It has as its primary focus the development of students' abilities to examine contemporary issues in a comprehensive and integrated way within a Catholic social justice perspective and a liberal arts and sciences context. Seniors from various disciplines come together in smaller groups with a faculty member to reflect on critical issues facing contemporary society, such as racism, economic and social justice, environmental concerns, national and international crises, and ethical issues arising from developments in science, medicine, and technology. Students are also expected to bring the knowledge and skills gained in their major fields of study and their other general education courses to the seminar as appropriate.

### **FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT**

**Section 01 T 6:00-8:45 pm**

**Instructor: Cecil**

This course will cover a basic introduction to financial empowerment and the different tactics associated with it: Financial education, financial coaching, etc. Students themselves will be receiving financial education around the topics of banking, budgeting, credit, etc. We will look at what local and national agencies provide what services. We will look at emerging trends and technologies, as well as study demographically who is seeking these services, and why? We will look at local, state, and federal policy towards the field. We will analyze what national-level empowerment efforts there are. We will also be looking at case studies of what other cities are doing. We will be looking at themes of inclusion, access, and community. We will look at what barriers exist to asset building. This course will have a Louisville-first focus but will also identify what is going on in the field nationally. Students completing this course will achieve their Level 1 certification in the Community Financial Empowerment Certification program offered through Louisville Metro Government.

### **JUSTICE: WHOSE AND HOW?**

**Section 2 MW 1:30-2:45 pm**

**Instructor: Fuller**

The problem of discerning what is just is ancient. Central to both political and legal philosophy, it is essential to Christian social thinking. Our political lives are shaped according to the way we answer this question. Every pivotal Western and Eastern philosophical and religious thinker proposes a response to our problem. From the Old Testament prophets and poets until the protesters in Ferguson, we have weighed the means and meaning of justice. Recent Catholic social teaching has advocated the belief that we cannot build our communities and political life on charity and love alone. To have a healthy community just institutions are necessary. The purpose of this course is to discover the basic resources which our beliefs and traditions offer us in addressing the problem of justice. In class we will discuss and study the history of the

nature of justice from the time of Plato and Aristotle until that of contemporary thinkers such as John Rawls and Charles Taylor. It will include, as well, a debate about the cultural and historical development of the concept of justice. The current debate on the possibility of the development of a common language about human rights and social ethics, despite a diversity of religious and cultural foundations, will be presented. Can Eastern and Western societies advocate for justice and human rights even though they do not share the same moral and religious foundations? Is a universal declaration of human rights possible in a world riven by religious and cultural fragmentation?

## **PEOPLE, LAND, & POWER**

**Section 3: W 6:00-8:45 pm**

**Section ON3 – online asynchronous**

**Instructor: Spalione**

Land simultaneously unites communities and divides societies thereby entwining people and power with place. A survey of some of the most pressing concerns of social ethics in the modern world – such as the Syrian refugee crisis, the United States’s deportation of immigrants, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, along with numerous issues of the environmental crisis – demonstrates the moral significance of the way humans interact with land. This inescapable connection between people, power, and place is reflected in Pope Francis’s encyclical letter *Laudato Si*: “[we] must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (p.35). Thus, this class will discuss the ecological and social ethics of land dealing with challenging questions such as the following: What ecological responsibilities do societies have in the use of natural resources? What are the political ethics of national borders? What are the inalienable rights of displaced persons seeking a homeland? How can local communities care for their immediate environment in an effective and sustainable ways? This course will include a community engagement component.

## **Quality of Life**

**Section 4 TTH 8:00 – 9:15**

**Instructor: Catron**

We need the basics of food, water, shelter, and clothing to survive. But is survival enough to make life worth living? Why do we strive to create improvements in our world and our lives? We hear the Quality of Life used in a variety of contexts: financial, medical, political, social, and spiritual. This course explores what is meant by Quality of Life.

Different disciplines require specific elements when discussing their definition of “Quality of Life.” Throughout the semester, we will explore these definitions and trace how they have evolved. This journey will encompass reading a variety of texts to see how “Quality of Life” has and is being used to make policies in the public realm and is used to make personal life choices. We will also explore the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching as they intersect and closely relate to quality of life. Students will strive to articulate their own personal definition of “Quality of Life” and in doing so discover how their definition has been shaped. The final project asks students to take course concepts and the knowledge they have gained in their courses and in

internships/work to propose a solution their future profession can enact to improve an element of Quality of Life. the time of Plato and Aristotle until that of contemporary thinkers such as John Rawls and Charles Taylor. It will include, as well, a debate about the cultural and historical development of the concept of justice. The current debate on the possibility of the development of a common language about human rights and social ethics, despite a diversity of religious and cultural foundations, will be presented. Can Eastern and Western societies advocate for justice and human rights even though they do not share the same moral and religious foundations? Is a universal declaration of human rights possible in a world riven by religious and cultural fragmentation?

### **Stigma and Disease**

**Section 05 TTh 9:25- 10:40**

**Section ON02 online asynchronous**

**Instructor: McCandless**

Disease has emerged as important topic in the study of deviance. In contrast to traditional forms of deviance with strong moral underpinnings (e.g., tattoos, crime), health conditions are generally perceived to be biological in origin. Despite this, many health conditions (e.g., HIV/AIDS, cancer, STDs, hepatitis, leprosy, and gastrointestinal disorders) are stigmatized. Drawing on readings from a wide range of professional literature, we will study the meaning, impact, and management of health-related stigmas to illustrate how and why certain diseases are viewed and experienced as stigmatizing. We will also learn the steps that individuals take to reject or minimize health-related stigmas. This course will include a community engagement component.

### **Theatre and Prison**

**Section 07 TTH 3:30 – 4:45**

**Section ON - Online asynchronous**

**Instructor: Stewart**

For many, the individuals who populate our prisons are an avoided or entirely forgotten group of people. From moderate and maximum-security prisoners to those on death row, there are hundreds of men and women who are committed to using theatre and other art forms as a means of taking responsibility for their crimes. Through this engagement, these individuals work toward self-understanding, self-expression, rehabilitation, and redemption.

As a means of considering the agency and humanity of the incarcerated and the transformative processes and experiences of these men and women, this course will look at the organizations and people who create theatrical experiences in prison. Through this lens, we will collectively challenge our ideas about the incarcerated: the nature of our cultural and personal relationship to them, how we feel they should live, and who we believe them to be. We will supplement our research on arts practices in prison with articles, documentaries, written and recorded commentary, and guest speakers who will expand our understanding of prison life in general and what it means to be incarcerated in the US. This course will include at least one visit to the Luther Lockett Correctional Center in LaGrange, KY, to observe rehearsals of the Shakespeare

Behind Bars and speak with the men about their experiences. This course will include a community engagement component.

### **Story and Community**

**Section 06 TTh 12:15-1:30**

**Instructor: Weinberg**

This course will encourage graduating seniors to consider “story” as a positive force for change—both their own stories and the stories of others. How might storytelling go hand-in-hand with social action? What are some of the most effective forms of storytelling? What are some of the ethical considerations when telling stories? We’ll take a close look at what kinds of important stories are being told, from the work of best-selling authors and popular podcasters to local work being published and broadcast on a grassroots level. Students can expect to explore their own stories and life-trajectories through progressive writing assignments and a supportive classroom dynamic. An optional service-learning component involves a partnership with Young Authors Greenhouse, a nonprofit that tutors kids in creative writing to encourage creativity and personal growth, focusing on under-resourced communities and schools.

### **Honors Senior Seminar**

**IDC 401H-01 1:30 -2:45**

**Instructor: Abee**

This course invites students to collaborate in the research, design, and development of a First-Year Seminar to be taught to future Honors students. Guided by a faculty member, students will explore a chosen interdisciplinary theme, shaping every aspect of the course—from selecting readings and creating assessments to designing discussion topics and co-curricular activities. Each student will take ownership of a significant portion of the course while working closely with peers to ensure a cohesive and engaging learning experience, drawing on their own academic interests to enrich the theme’s interdisciplinary approach.

Through this hands-on process, students will gain valuable experience in curriculum development, research, and peer leadership. By the end of the course, they will have developed a comprehensive seminar that integrates research and student-centered learning, positioning themselves as leaders in the Honors community. The chosen theme for the course is The Art and Science of Hiking. A description of the proposed course is below.

This course explores the physical, psychological, environmental, and cultural dimensions of hiking as both a recreational activity and a meaningful form of human interaction with nature. This course offers an interdisciplinary approach, blending the practical skills required for hiking with insights from ecology, geography, fitness science, environmental philosophy, and the arts. Through practical lectures, hands-on outdoor experiences, and creative projects students will learn essential hiking skills such as navigation, trail safety, gear selection, and wilderness survival. Students will also learn the cultural dimensions and various ways humans interact with nature by engaging in the arts such as ecomusicology and art installations in parks. By the end of the course, students will develop not only the practical expertise to hike responsibly and

safely but also an appreciation for the deeper connection between humanity and the natural world.

### **Legacy of Bones**

MW 12:00 – 1:15 (Monday is in person meetings, Wednesday meetings are on Teams)

*Section will be open if needed*

Instructor: Hume

This is a very special, one-time-only course offering! You know those human skeletons you see hanging around gross anatomy labs and professor's offices—ever wonder whose bones they are? Did that person consent to be used for scientific research or display? Does their family know where they are? When and how will they get buried? Sets of “legacy bones” (human bones passed down to anatomy professors over generations) exist in colleges all over the county, and the American Anatomists Association is requesting that they be interred (buried) or otherwise disposed of.

Dr. David Porta, professor of gross anatomy, has several bones which need to be cared for, memorialized, and respectfully interred by his retirement at the end of spring 2024. In this class, students will take the lead investigating the bones and understanding the ethical, scientific, historical, and cultural implications around sets of bones like this, and finally, learning how to ritualize and memorialize the human lives once's associated with them. The class culminates in a ritual and respectful interment. Dr. Hume will be the primary faculty and Dr. Porta will consult.