Fall 2014 Sophomore Initiative Courses

With many of the College’s best teachers, we’ve launched new courses and selected others to highlight for all LSA SOPHOMORES, with reserved seating.

**Sophomore Initiative** courses:

**Probe** deeply into an issue.

**Explore** a question across many disciplines.

**Focus** on connecting academic learning with developing real world skills.

Positioning Yourself for a Successful Internship

What skills do you need to make yourself competitive for internships? How do you stand out in the sea of others vying for those opportunities and represent yourself and your talents? ([UC 170.001](#))

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**Twenty-two Ways to Think about Sport**

Explore the intersection of natural science, social sciences, and humanities approaches to issues surrounding sports. This course offers perspectives on health, environment, social relations, economics, politics, and culture. ([UC 256.001](#))

**Predicting the Future**

Analyze expert predictions about what the future holds and benefit from gaining insight on how different disciplines approach a question, whether it is to choose a major, or to gain perspective on how one’s major fits into the bigger picture. ([UC 254.002](#))

**User’s Guide to the Liberal Arts**

Students LOVE this mini-course designed to help you understand why a college education looks the way it does. Learn what UM LSA grads do with their degrees, and what employers are looking for! ([UC 270.006](#))

**Obesity: The Science, Culture, and Politics of Fatness in America**

Explore the “obesity epidemic” from multiple perspectives including science, culture, and politics. Seek answers to the questions: why has it become a concern? What (if anything) can be done to prevent or reverse the spread of obesity? ([UC 254.001](#))
**UC 170.001 — Positioning Yourself for a Successful Internship**

This one-credit course will provide you with the skills needed to make yourself competitive for internships as well as the academic foundation for your success. Much of the course work will focus on concrete skills associated with your representation of yourself, including resume writing, using LinkedIn and other social media, developing cover letters, and interviewing. At the same time, we will explore aspects of the world of internships from various academic perspectives.

**UC 170.002 — The Financially Savvy Student**

This one-credit course provides you with knowledge and practice in financial literacy. Students in the class will develop skills in managing money, making choices, and planning for the future, including: using credit and debit cards safely and smartly; developing personal monthly budgets and financial self-assessments; leveraging financial aid and scholarships; and funding study abroad, spring break, research, and internships. Student learning in the class is grounded in economic history, educational policy studies, behavioral psychology and behavioral economics.

**UC 174.001, 002, 003, 004 — Digital Research: Critical Concepts and Strategies**

This one-credit, hands-on computer lab will help students lay a solid foundation for success in all current and future interdisciplinary academic research. With an emphasis on the wealth of digital resources now available, the material focuses on information discovery and management skills, expands knowledge of scholarly sources, and promotes critical thinking.

**UC 254.001 — Obesity: The Science, Culture, and Politics of Fatness in America (ID)**

In this course, we'll explore the "obesity epidemic" from multiple perspectives: 1) "Science: Weighing the Evidence" will focus on what we know about the biology of body size, 2) "Culture: From Sideshow Freaks to a Fast Food Nation" will explore how beliefs about fatness are shaped by social forces, and 3) "Politics: The Obesity-Industrial Complex," will explore the policy debates and institutions that shape what we think and do about fatness as a society. Some questions this course seeks to answer include: Why did obesity become a matter of grave public concern? What do we know about why some Americans get fatter, but others have remained thin? What (if anything) can be done to prevent or reverse the spread of obesity? Requirements will include four short papers, frequent reading quizzes, and participation in a class blog.

**UC 254.002 — Predicting the Future (ID)**

This course will equip you to analyze expert predictions about what the future holds: where do they come from, and how reliable are they? To answer these questions, we will draw on several U-M faculty guest lecturers, who come from a variety of backgrounds and fields of expertise. We will look only at what predictions experts make today, but also consider the "history of predicting the future": how successful have past thinkers been at making predictions, and why have they been successful or unsuccessful? This course will also be beneficial for anyone who would like to gain insight into how different disciplines approach a given question, whether it is for the purpose of choosing a major, or to gain perspective on how one's own major fits into a bigger picture.

**UC 256.001 — Twenty-two Ways to Think about Sport (ID)**

This course, designed for sophomore exploration, provides a multi-disciplinary investigation of natural science, social science, and humanities approaches to issues surrounding sports. Featuring single lectures from the College’s best teachers, the course offers students perspectives on health, environment, social relations, economics, politics, and culture.

**UC 256.002 — Twenty-two Ways: The Science of Medicine (ID)**

This course, designed for sophomore exploration, provides a multi-disciplinary investigation of natural science, social science, and humanities approaches to issues surrounding science of medicine. Featuring excellent teachers from across the university, the course offers students perspectives on health, environment, social relations, economics, politics, and culture.
UC 270.006 — A User’s Guide to Liberal Arts
"The "Liberal Arts and Sciences" is one of those phrases that everyone uses and seems to know what they mean, but few people would actually feel comfortable defining. This mini-course is designed to help students understand why their college education looks the way it does and learn to speak confidently about how their liberal arts education is preparing them for success in a wide range of possible careers and endeavors. Find out what LSA graduates from the University of Michigan do with their degrees, what employers are looking for in recent college graduates, and how important your major really is. You'll also meet LSA alumni, get to know the structure of your university better, and debate current issues in U.S. higher education.

UC 270.007 — Entrepreneurial Creativity
One of two core classes created for the campus-wide Certificate in Entrepreneurship, this course explores the relation between creativity, innovation, and problem-solving processes. We will consider the elements of creative thinking, explore creativity insights from a variety of perspectives, and engage in projects designed to foster students' own innovation skills. Is creative thinking somehow different from "normal" thinking? How do innovators frame problems and generate solutions? What is the relation between idea generation and collaborative team work? How do entrepreneurs in business, social goods, and technology develop and employ vital skills in persuasion, cooperation, communication as they bring ideas to life in the form of enterprises? This course will explore all these questions in order to ground students in both the theory and practice of creativity as it takes shape in entrepreneurial endeavors.

ANTHRCUL 222.001 — The Comparative Study of Cultures (SS)
Why do people do things in different ways? Why do they sometimes understand and value the things they do so differently? What do these cultural differences mean? This course has two aims: First, to introduce students to the concept of culture and to a small sampling of the great diversity of cultures that exist around the world; Second, to learn about some approaches to understanding this cultural diversity — and, along the way, to learn a bit of the history of social and anthropological theory.

ASIAN 243.001/HISTART 243.001 — Home and the World: Introduction to South Asian Art (HU)
Studying the visual arts of South Asia constitutes a gateway toward understanding the entirety of the intellectual and cultural heritage of humanity, from antiquity to the present day. The assemblages of objects and images produced and used in South Asia — Buddhist stupas, sprawling temple-cities, embroidered textiles, Mughal paintings, Satyajit Ray films and much else — represent more than the inheritance of South Asia, home to a fifth of the world’s population. In addition to introducing these objects and images, this survey course will also explicate how they are equally the heritage of many other cultures because many of them have emerged from encounters with other mediums and with other civilizations, which, in turn, have been reflected, reshaped, and reformed by the art of subcontinent.

ASIAN 304.001/HISTART 304.001 — Art of Yoga (ID)
As the ancient Indian discipline of yoga becomes increasingly popular worldwide it is important to query its early development, transformation over the centuries, and the possibilities that it holds forth to its practitioners. Graphing milestones in the history of yoga, this course is also an introduction to the visual, literary, and religious cultures of South Asia. This course includes field trips to art museums and yoga studios in the Ann Arbor area.

BA 202.001 — Entrepreneurial Business Basics
The campus-wide entrepreneurship program requires two 3-credit courses, UC 270: Entrepreneurial Creativity, and this class, which can be taken in any order. This Business Basics course covers how to turn a product or service idea into a tangible, marketable product with an organization that can produce and distribute it. Students will learn about resource management, market research, product development, and the social purpose of Entrepreneurship.

CMPLXSYS 260.001/SOC 260.001 — Tipping Points, Bandwagons, and Cascades
There are many situations in which how we behave depends on the behavior of others. We can be influenced by our friends and also by complete strangers. Social influence may be trivial and fleeting, or enduring and highly consequential. Examine how interdependent behaviors of individuals can lead to some surprising and unexpected social outcomes. We will explore both theoretical models and empirical applications of social dynamics, including
sexual networks and marriage markets, the formation and transformation of neighborhoods, the success or failure of social movements, and the diffusion of innovation.

**COMPLIT 240.001 — Literature Across Borders: Matters of Life and Death (HU)**
What does human life consist of? What is its value? When does it begin and end? These questions have been the subject of continuous debate in literature, science, and public policy for millennia. In this course, we will revisit fundamental questions about life and death through fiction, poetry, drama, film, scripture, and politics, treating each of these discourses as equally valid contributions to our understanding of issues that touch each and every one of us.

**ENGLISH 221.001 — Literature Outside the Classroom: Zell Visiting Writers Series (HU)**
The Zell Visiting Writers Series brings some of the most exciting writers working today to the University of Michigan. In this introductory creative writing course students will use the ZVWS to enrich their own writing, considering the literary devices contemporary authors use to create their own signature voices. Over the course of the term, students will tease out the concerns, challenges, and approaches of the semester’s line-up of visiting writers, and will learn how crafting poems, stories, and essays can illuminate their own experiences.

**ENGLISH 290.001 — Themes in Language and Literature: Horror (HU)**
If you like a good scare, this course is for you! We will study horror in many different forms. We will read poems, short stories, and novels both historic and recent. But much more variety marks the texts for this course; we will also study films, comics, graphic novels, and “new-media” or computer-based horror stories. Read more about the course on the course blog: [http://courseofhorror.wordpress.com/](http://courseofhorror.wordpress.com/)

**ENGLISH 290.002 — Themes in Language and Literature: Plays for a Modern Stage (HU)**
What does cultural literacy mean when applied to a field like modern theater and contemporary drama? Why is this question important? This class will consider the many ways in which plays and playwrights help to define and sometimes destabilize the societies from which they are drawn, and the role drama plays in the ongoing conversation any democratic society needs to have about itself. Focusing on works drawn from the western world, plays to be considered this semester include such cultural landmarks as *A Doll’s House, Uncle Vanya, Mother Courage, Waiting for Godot, A Streetcar Named Desire,* and *Death of a Salesman.*

**LHSP 230.001 — Writing and Arts II: Publishing and Editing (CE)**
This LHSP course integrates writing and the arts as students develop their creative talents and skills and work together on a culminating project/performance. The course focuses on creative skill-building and peer critiquing, requiring both individual and collaborative work.

**POLSCI 391/COMPLXSYS 391 — Introduction to Modeling Political Processes (SS, QR1)**
This class provides an interdisciplinary introduction to modeling social systems. Themes of one to many and many to one will be central to the course as we construct, manipulate, and evaluate a variety of models from political science, economics, sociology, biology, public health, and even physics. These models will provide students with new and provocative ways to think about why people vote, commit crimes, and attend classes, about what one’s contribution is to society, and about why markets and democracies sometimes work and sometimes fail. By the end, students will have learned several modeling techniques and be able to apply them creatively across a variety of contexts.

**WOMENSTD 270.001/SOC 270.001 — Gender and the Law (SS, RE)**
This course explores contemporary legal responses to gender inequality in the U.S., with particular attention to the ways that feminists have tried to use law for social change. Topics may include sex and race discrimination on the job, pay equity, immigrant women’s labor conditions, regulations of pregnancy and abortion, domestic violence, and rights to sexual freedom (particularly that of gays and lesbians). We will study debates among feminists over these legal strategies, the interaction of law with society and culture, and the ways that women’s racial and ethnic identities make a difference in the application and effects of law.