

SJC100- Freshman Seminar

Island: Magic, Mystery, Metaphor [for Honors students]

Fall 2015
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Philosophy

Tuesday-Thursday 8:50-10:05
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SJC 100 - THE FRESHMAN SEMINAR

A seminar course for all first year students which will introduce them to the academic world of college and, along with the required *First Year Experience Program (FYE)*, will serve to engage students in the college experience here at St. Joseph's. Each course section will focus on a unique and engaging topic related to the discipline or avocation of the instructor and may also incorporate interdisciplinary themes. This course will offer a laboratory experience of careful and critical reading, writing to learn, research skills, and cooperative classroom activities.
3 hours a week, 1 semester, 3 credits.

Our section 02H topic



I live on an island within an island within an island. Where am I? From prehistory through the contemporary era we have been fascinated with islands. Our earth went through a number of island formations until we came to our present geological era. From Polynesia to Bermuda. The Hebrides to the Falklands. Atlantis to Manhattan—humans have struggled to survive, understand, and simply delight in the otherness of islands around the world. Islands connote buried treasure, strange and fascinating

cultures, paradise and hell. Come and discover how the sciences and the humanities have explored the ways in which islands offer ecological lessons, create varied human cultures, and serve as rich sources for human imagination. Around the world are thousands of islands: familiar, mysterious, human-inhabited, empty, or home to creatures. Discover the islands of the world while we examine the ways in which we ourselves are islands.

SJC 100 Course Objectives and Goals

This course will offer a laboratory experience of careful and critical reading, writing to learn, research skills, cooperative classroom activities. Our SJC100 goals are:

- Acquire and/or continue to develop intellectual curiosity and the learning skills needed to promote and satisfy that curiosity. While each section will have a unique topic, all SJC 100 sections will focus on pivotal learning skills necessary for all students regardless of their major, particularly reading, writing, discussion and critical thinking.
- Introduce the missions and goals of the college (integrity, intellectual and spiritual values, social responsibility, service and global awareness) as operationalized in our academic programs through the specific course topic of our section
- Form an active *community of inquiry* with and through a shared focus on an interdisciplinary consideration of the elements, thereby engaging you in a community experience which supports rigorous and accessible active learning
- Facilitate the transition from the dependency in the high school learning experience to the relatively independent college learning experience.

Class objectives for our section:

- A thoughtful exploration of the idea of Islands and how they have shaped our thinking, feeling and modes of living
- To think about the mission and goals of the college as metaphorically represented in our relationship to islands in science, history, and the imagination.
- A deeper appreciation for the liberal arts as we explore art, music, history, science, philosophy, literature for new ideas about which to puzzle
- Engaging ourselves in creative thinking, clearer writing, and personal engagement in our community of inquiry

Texts for the Course [Two books and an online reading]

Islands beyond the Horizon by Roger Lovegrove

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (June 23, 2015)

ISBN-10: 0198727577 or

ISBN-13: 978-0198727576

Hippolyte's Island by Barbara Hodgson [Hopefully you got this on Amazon??]

Publisher: Raincoast Books; First Edition edition (2003)

ISBN-10: 1551926466

ISBN-13: 978-1551926469

“The Man Who Knew Islands”, chapter in **The Song of the Dodo**, by David Quammen, [ereserve or in BB]

Possibly other readings as determined (will be on e-reserve or in our Blackboard class: code **S2205**)

Recommended:

A Writer's Reference by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers

Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's; Seventh Edition (January 21, 2011)

ISBN-10: 0312649363

ISBN-13: 978-0312649364

Course Requirements and grading scheme

- 20% participation: most of this course occurs within the classroom as we discuss and debate the issues before us. It is imperative that you attend, have read the assigned text prior to class and participate in the discussion. The class is what **we** together make it. Plus it is always more fun when students talk!
- 20% exams (a number of these throughout the term—these cannot be made up but will be announced)
- 20% final essay project
- 15% blog contributions—at least seven short essay and links, etc. posts on our website about islands
- 5% reading quizzes (see below)
- 20% Final exam
- 100%

Class Sessions Syllabus*



- 9/1 Introduction to the course and welcome to the college
- 9/3-8 Reading difficult texts and **Part I: mapping our project: Island Secrets—a tour**
reading: **Islands**, Intro, Wrangle and Chinijo
- 9/10-15-17 charting terrain
reading: **Islands**, Jan Mayer through Fernando de Noronha
- 9/18 Investiture in the evening!
- 9/22 Library Orientation
- 9/24-29 Islands: stories of human conquest: on the edge
reading: **Islands**, Mingulay through Vigur
- 10/1-6 Islands: isolation and community
reading: **Islands**, St. Kilda through Great Skellig
- 10/8-15 Islands: saving nature from ourselves
reading: **Islands**, Ile aux Aigrettes through Epilogue
- 10/13 No classes
- 10/20-22 **Part II: Islands in the imagination**
reading: **Hippolyte’s Island, Part I and II**
- 10/27-29 Truth and Imagination
11/3-5 reading: **Hippolyte’s Island, Part III and IV**
- 11/10-12 Catchup and possibly a Second library visit: planning and working on your final paper
- 11/17-19 **Part III: Ecology, Science, and the Adventurous Spirit**
Reading: *The Man Who Knew Islands*
- 11/24 In-class peer review session
- 11/26 Thanksgiving! No classes
- 12/1-3 Part III: Ecology, Science, and the Adventurous Spirit (cont.)
Reading: *The Man Who Knew Islands*
- 12/8-10 Presentations on your essay projects and review
- 12/?? Final exam—in class

* This syllabus is tentative; if we need to go slower or faster, we will adjust as we go.

Office hours: Monday through Thursday, room E208- 8 -8:45 AM and easily by appointment; call if you have any questions or concerns. You may also contact me through e-mail: wturgeon@sjcny.edu

Written Assignments

1. Class blog Contributions 15%

Associated with our class is an **online blog** to which I will ask you to contribute ideas, links, images, whatever you find that you would like to share. You can find the blog at this url”

<http://www.sjc100-islands.org>

Active participation in this online blog will contribute to your final grade. You should post a minimum of **seven** posts over our term as new posts will appear each week or so and we discuss them in class. I will give guide prompts in class to help you formulate your own post. You would also respond to the posts of others.

2. Research Paper 20%

Every section of SJC100 includes a research paper project. We will build this together throughout the term. You will choose an island to investigate and explore its history (natural and human), cultural artifacts, ecology, and its role as a suggestion of ideas about the human condition. As part of that process, you will look for sources, create a bibliography and write a draft. The final paper will be due: December 3rd. We will also do an in-class peer reading and review session.

6-8 pages with proper citation. (More information will follow.) Your work will be presented in class on some of the final days to share with your fellow students.

Exams/Assessments 45%

1. We will have about 4-6 quizzes throughout the term, randomly determined. The lowest or missed quiz grade will be dropped. The study questions can be found on the Blackboard course site. You will need to print out the study questions for each reading, complete them and bring them to class to help in our discussions. [5%]
2. **Exams:** We will have a series of exams which will introduce to you to the following types of assessment: [20%]
 - Objective tests
 - Essays
 - Exams based on a lecture and exams based on readings and discussions
3. a **Final Exam** scheduled during Final exam week.

Academic Policies-General Notes from the Dean

The Dean has asked that I alert you to some general rules and points of clarification:

Plagiarism and other forms of Academic Dishonesty statement:

The College expects students to observe academic integrity in all aspects of their academic life, including the conduct of examinations, assignments, and research. All members of the College community share the responsibility for creating a climate of academic integrity, based on the fairness to others and respect for oneself. Violations of academic integrity are treated very seriously. Plagiarism (the act of copying, stealing or representing the words of another as one's own without giving credit to the source), cheating on examinations, and all forms of academic dishonesty are forbidden. Students found guilty of such behavior are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include a reduction in grade, a failure in the course, or expulsion. Instructors at St. Joseph's College routinely use plagiarism detection devices such as Turnitin.com, Safe Assign, and Google to uncover acts of plagiarism.

Note from me: In composing essays and papers, please be scrupulous in format and authenticity. Copying texts (written and web sites) without citation is plagiarism and will not be tolerated. Any such work will be rejected and the grade of “F” will be recorded. If you are uncertain about how to use other sources, please consult me. I will review the details. Consult the College Catalogue for further details about the ramifications of plagiarism.

I care deeply about integrity, my own and yours. I ask that you observe our college policy of honesty and dedication to our core values. Cheating and plagiarism are not victimless crimes; they are serious infractions against one another as members of a community dedicated to learning and caring for one another.

Students with disabilities statement:

St. Joseph's College, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, provides assistance and resources for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability: physical, psychological, medical or learning, which may impact your academic learning, contact Student Accessibility Services, located in O'Connor Hall, Room E301 phone number: (631) 687-1248. This office will assist you in getting all necessary accommodations at the College and in the classroom. All information will be kept confidential and private. Students should also work with their instructor to make arrangements if they require accommodations for test taking, carrying out assignments, or other academic needs.

Further notes from me: It is prudent to make copies of papers that you submit in case they do not reach me. I haven't lost a paper yet but in rare cases they have disappeared from mailboxes, etc. In general I recommend saving your school work on your computer or a disk or simply make photocopies. This can be a life-saver!

Additional points:

1. There is no extra credit because there is plenty to do as constructed.
2. Absence is a state of not being present. There are no excused absences; however, I am aware that life happens and you must sometimes choose the more important responsibility over that of class. Be sure to contact me to explain and be prepared for the following class.
3. No cell phones, please. Turn them off when you enter the classroom. Otherwise we play name that tune and I dance. You do **not** want to see me dance. Trust me...

From the Arts & Sciences Undergraduate Catalogue:

Grades are interpreted as follows:

Quality Grade	Percentage	Quality Points
Excellent		
A	93.0 - 100.00	4.0
A-	90.0 - 92.9	3.7
B+	87.0 - 89.9	3.3
Good		
B	83.0 - 86.9	3.0
B-	80.0 - 82.9	2.7

Satisfactory		
C+	77.0 - 79.9	2.3
C 7	3.0 - 76.9	2.0
Passing		
C-	70.0 - 72.9	1.7
D+	67.0 - 69.9	1.3
D	63.0 - 66.9	1.0
D-	60.0 - 62.9	0.7
Unsatisfactory	F Below 60.0	0.0

Excellent= outstanding mastery of the materials and performance on all assessment projects accompanied by active, ongoing and sustained participation through questions, comments and support of others within the learning community. A grade in the excellent range indicates that the student not only completed every aspect of the course requirements but went above and beyond in terms of engagement through readings, discussions and exams.

Good= A superior grasp of the material, clearly above average performance on assessment projects and active involvement in class. A clear indication of hard work, talent and philosophical curiosity

Satisfactory= acceptable performance in class and on assessment projects. Completion of all work assigned with evidence of basic competency; this is a completely respectable grade, especially if you are not choosing to minor in philosophy

Passing= enough work and quality was provided to pass the course but in most cases there were learning problems, such as with attendance and subsequently comprehension, lack of or minimal participation, checkered pattern of readings, failure to study for quizzes and exams, need for serious work on writing and thinking skills, failure to complete assignments..

I realize that our theme in SJC100 is not likely directly related to your major here at SJC but one of our goals is to weave points of connection to any and all disciplines and invite you to challenge me to help you make those connections vibrant and interesting. It is worth noting that your grade is in your own hands. I respect that this course may not win the majority of your attention based on other responsibilities and I acknowledge that each student can choose for him or her self how much effort and time they can devote to any one class. The freshman seminar's goal is to seduce you into loving learning—a possibly new idea after 13 years of schooling that too often destroy our native curiosity and replace it with feelings of inadequacy and boredom.

I begin the semester inviting everyone to give it their all and live up to one's own high standards as a point of personal pride and ownership of your own education. Keep me informed if you encounter problems that interfere with your performing up to your own chosen level. I am always available for assistance. If you would prefer to work with fellow students, let me know and we can structure some study groups. There is absolutely no one at St. Joseph's College who cannot pass this course if they choose to do so.

Writing assignment rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

Course: _____

Instructor: _____

	Exemplary/A	Proficient/B	Acceptable/C	Unacceptable/C-/D/F
Thesis/Focus/ originality	The thesis is stated in a clear and concise manner, which is engaging and thought provoking.	The thesis is clearly stated.	The thesis is not clear or there is no argument stated.	There is no thesis.
Evidence and documentation	Balanced presentation of relevant and legitimate information that clearly supports a central argument and shows a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains important insights. Writer properly utilizes appropriate citation style.	Information provides reasonable support for a central argument and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains some insights. Writer usually utilizes appropriate citation styles	Information supports an argument at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights. Citations often do not follow correct style.	Neglects important sources, uses sources poorly. Citations are insufficient or incorrect.
Organization	Ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis. The ideas flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of	Ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis. For the most part, the reader can follow the line of reasoning.	In general, the writing is arranged logically, although occasionally ideas fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about what the writer	The writing is not logically organized. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of

	reasoning.		intends.	reasoning.
Reasoning, ideas and details	Substantial, logical, and concrete development of ideas. Details are germane, original, and convincingly interpreted.	Offers solid but less original reasoning. Contains some appropriate details and examples	Offers more obvious or broad reasoning. Details are too general, not interpreted, irrelevant to the thesis or inappropriately repetitive.	Offers simplistic, underdeveloped, or cryptic support for main ideas. Inappropriate or off-topic, or with errors of fact.
Language and clarity	The language and writing style is consistently appropriate, professional, and clear.	The language and writing style is generally professional appropriate, professional, and clear.	The language and writing style is not consistently appropriate, professional, or clear.	The language and writing style is regularly inappropriate, unprofessional, or confusing.

Comments:

Grade: _____