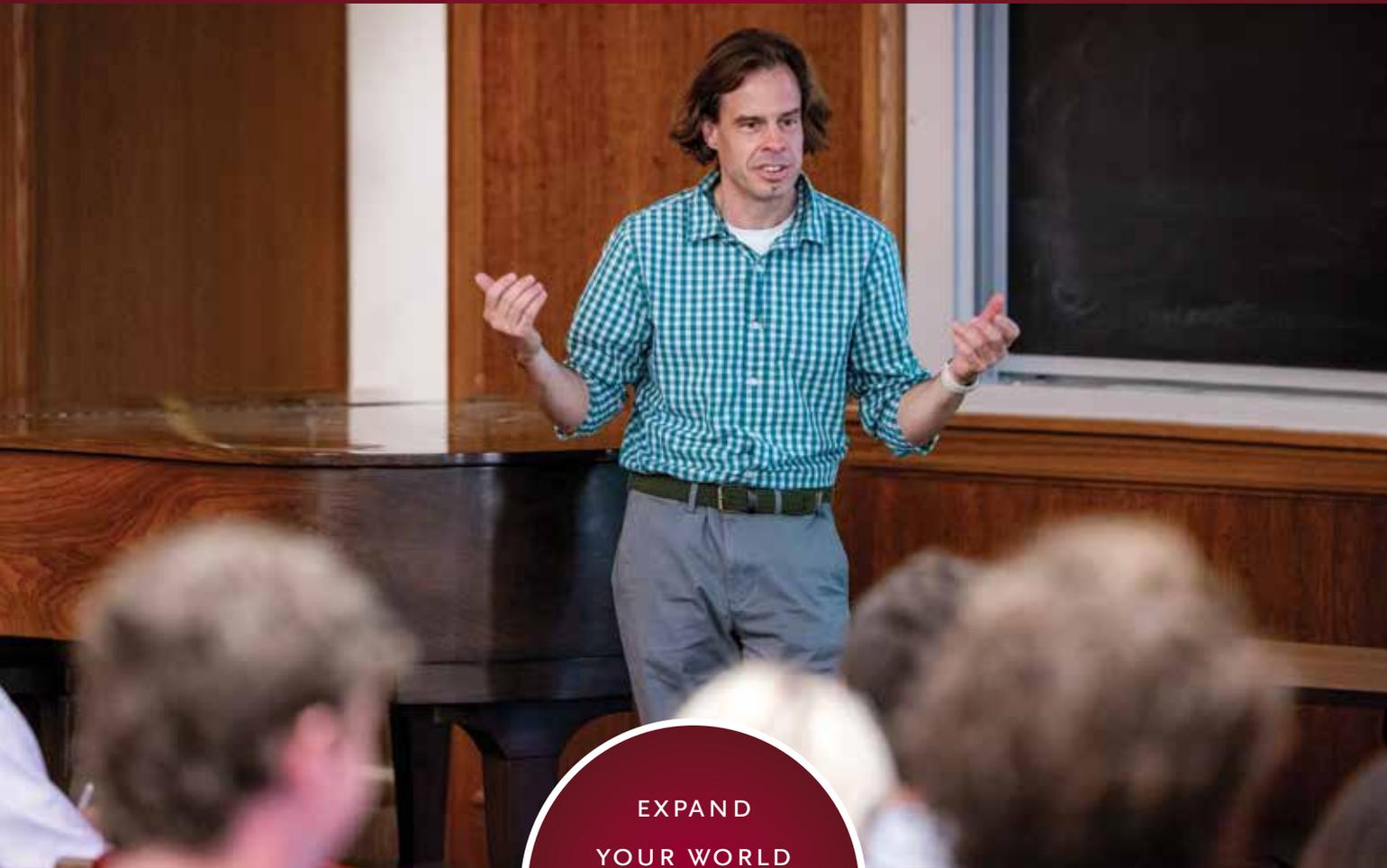


Complex Problem & Enduring Question Courses

SPRING 2025 OFFERINGS FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS



EXPAND
YOUR WORLD

EXPAND
YOURSELF

BOSTON COLLEGE

THE UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM

The centerpiece of a Jesuit education has always been a common curriculum that emphasizes the study of defining works in the humanities, the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts. The Boston College Core Curriculum is designed to provide a broad understanding of the forces that have shaped the world by challenging students to think across disciplines in order to make good decisions and to communicate effectively in an increasingly complex world.

To fulfill Core requirements, each student must complete:

1 course in the Arts	<i>Art History, Studio Art, Film, Music, or Theatre</i>
1 course in Cultural Diversity	
2 courses in History	<i>1 course in History I 1 course in History II</i>
1 course in Literature	<i>Classical Studies, English, Romance Languages and Literatures, or Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies</i>
1 course in Mathematics	
2 courses in Natural Science	<i>Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Environmental Studies, or Physics</i>
2 courses in Philosophy	
2 courses in Social Science	<i>Economics, Political Science, Psychology, or Sociology</i>
2 courses in Theology	<i>1 course in Christian Theology 1 course in Sacred Texts and Traditions</i>
1 course in Writing	

To view all courses that satisfy Core requirements, visit [BC.EDU/CORE](https://bc.edu/core)

Student comments in this brochure taken from anonymous survey responses

COMPLEX PROBLEM COURSES

Complex Problem courses are six-credit courses of 76 students, team-taught by two professors from different disciplines. Students meet multiple days each week for lectures and once per week for labs. Students and faculty also gather for weekly Reflection sessions, which may involve group activities, guest speakers, or field trips off campus. Each Complex Problem course fulfills two Core requirements. Some may fulfill an additional Core requirement for Cultural Diversity through either Difference, Justice, and the Common Good (DJCG) or Engaging Difference and Justice (EDJ).

ENDURING QUESTION COURSES

Enduring Question courses are two linked three-credit courses taught by professors from different disciplines. The same 19 students take both courses. Four times during the semester, students and faculty gather for Reflection sessions, which may involve group activities, guest speakers, or field trips off campus. Each pair of Enduring Question courses fulfills two Core requirements. Some may fulfill an additional Core requirement for Cultural Diversity through either Difference, Justice, and the Common Good (DJCG) or Engaging Difference and Justice (EDJ).

If you have any questions about these courses or how to register, please e-mail core@bc.edu.



Scan the QR code with your smartphone to learn more about the courses.



AS A MEMBER OF THE CLASS OF 2028, YOU ARE INVITED to enroll in Boston College's innovative Complex Problem and Enduring Question Core courses. These courses are collaboratively taught by two faculty members from different fields and are designed to engage students in interdisciplinary explorations of topics of critical importance. These include areas such as race and representation; economics, law, and health policy; social and environmental inequalities; justice and the common good; and more.

Complex Problem and Enduring Question courses extend inquiry beyond the classroom to labs, Reflection sessions, conversations with outside speakers, and off-campus field trips, creating an intensive shared learning experience for both teachers and students. They exemplify Boston College's distinctive approach to Core education by establishing a foundation for students' intellectual development and preparing them to become engaged, effective world citizens.



You will have the opportunity to enroll in this spring's Complex Problem and Enduring Question courses when you register in November. Both types of courses are worth six credits and fulfill up to three of the University Core Curriculum requirements.

For more information, visit [BC.EDU/COMPLEXENDURING](https://bc.edu/complexenduring)



Consumer Culture: Past, Present, and the Fate of the Planet

SOCY1714 + HIST1717

Juliet Schor, Sociology

Robin Fleming, History

Ethan Tupelo, Core Fellow

► Fulfills 1 Social Science + History II

Although we are increasingly aware that our habits of consumption affect the environment, it is hard to imagine that consuming patterns can be changed. In this course, students will learn that practices of consumption are both socially and historically constructed, that they change dramatically over time, and that there are (and always have been) urgent moral issues connected to these ways of life. We will explore the global, social, and environmental dimensions of consumption, studying things like the 1897 Sears catalog, 1950s television shows, Canada Goose jackets, DIY manuals and makerspaces, and hippy cookbooks of the 1960s.

This course lecture meets:

- MWF 11–11:50 a.m.

You must select one of the following lab sections with your registration:

- M 9–10:15 a.m.
- T 4:30–5:45 p.m.
- Th 4:30–5:45 p.m.
- F 9–10:15 a.m.

Reflections will be held:

- W 6–7:50 p.m.

“I loved the community
that we created
in and out
of the classroom.”

The “Other” Americans: Representation and Reality in Asian America

HIST1621 + UNAS1729

Arissa Oh, History

Anthony Tran, Communication

Hongyan Yang, Core Fellow

► Fulfills History II + Arts + Cultural Diversity

Asian American history is American history. It is simply not possible to understand why the United States looks the way it does today without understanding the roles American interactions with Asian nations and people have played in the development of U.S. society. Despite being key figures in immigration, trade, and foreign policies and domestic contests around race, class, gender, and sexuality, Asians in America are continuously (un)seen as the “Other” Americans. This course will explore the history and mediated representations of Asians in the U.S. to understand how U.S. society has constructed Asians in America and how Asian Americans have sought to speak for themselves. By analyzing primary sources, films, television, and digital media—as well as producing their own media based on historical materials—students will critically engage with U.S. history as both historians and media producers to examine the complex ways Asian Americans have shaped America itself.

This course lecture meets:

- TTh 12–1:15 p.m.

You must select one of the following lab sections with your registration:

- Th 1:30–2:45 p.m.
- Th 3–4:15 p.m.
- F 12–1:15 p.m.
- F 1:30–2:45 p.m.

Reflections will be held:

- M 6–7:50 p.m.



Imperial Designs: Art and Rivalry in the Eastern Mediterranean Frontier ARTH1110

Imperial Designs: Colonizing History HIST1723

John Lansdowne, Art History

Elizabeth Shlala, Associate Dean for the Core

► **Fulfills Arts + History I + Cultural Diversity**

Who owns the past and its artifacts?

In this course pairing, we will examine the enduring ideas of empires and their challengers through the present day. These courses interrogate an enduring facet of the attitude of the imperial center toward places, spaces, and peoples: the impulse to chart, divide, name, claim, and portray. Using historical maps as our point of departure, we will investigate how these imperial impulses, made manifest in shifting constructs of ownership and otherness, extended beyond physical territories to encompass—to colonize—bodies and minds. Probing the visual, material, and embodied legacies of conquest in the Mediterranean context affords insight into the borders and boundaries still imposed today.

These course lectures meet:

- TTh 3–4:15 p.m.
- TTh 4:30–5:45 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- T 6–7:50 p.m.

Life, Liberty, and Health: The Economics of Healthcare ECON1702

Life, Liberty, and Health: Policy, Politics, and Law UNAS1702

Tracy Regan, Economics

Mary Ann Chirba, Law School

► **Fulfills 1 Social Science + History II + Cultural Diversity**

Why is healthcare so interconnected with policy, law, and economics?

Recently, health has become a central focus of political infighting, public discord, and personal worry. Healthcare and health insurance now dominate everything from think tanks to *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* Meanwhile, concussions go up, NFL ratings go down, drug prices soar, and opioid abuse damages individuals, families, the healthcare system, and the economy. Such complex issues are best understood through interdisciplinary study. These paired courses will introduce basic principles of economics, law, and public policy through the lens of contemporary problems involving enduring questions of government authority and individual autonomy, morality and ethics, social justice, and human rights.

These course lectures meet:

- MW 12–1:15 p.m.
- MW 1:30–2:45 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- M 6–7:50 p.m.

“The dynamic was truly unlike any other compared to my other classes and it helped me learn that I was in it together with my classmates.”



“I couldn’t be more appreciative of that experience because it really set me up for a great four years here.”



The American Divide: The Economics of Inequality ECON1703

The American Divide: The Philosophy of Inequality PHIL1711

Geoffrey Sanzenbacher, Economics

Cherie McGill, Philosophy

► **Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 Philosophy + Cultural Diversity**

How should we interpret our nation's persistent inequalities when our founding documents assert the equality of all?

Concern over inequality in the U.S. has shown itself in movements like Occupy Wall Street, the Fight for a Fifteen Dollar Minimum Wage, and Black Lives Matter, and has become even more of a focus since the COVID-19 pandemic. These paired courses will examine the meaning, causes, and consequences of inequality from the perspectives of economics and philosophy. Providing a broad picture of the current state of the U.S. economy and analyzing the role of economic policy in determining opportunities and outcomes, these courses will prepare students to develop their own views about how past economic choices have shaped current economic realities and how we might create a more equitable future.

These course lectures meet:

- MW 1:30–2:45 p.m.
- MW 3–4:15 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- W 6–7:50 p.m.

Crafting Alternative Futures: Communication, Agency, and World-Making COMM2205

Crafting Alternative Futures: Imagined Worlds in Literature ENGL1739

Kalemba Kizito, Communication

Krithika Vachali, English

► **Fulfills 1 Social Science + Literature + Cultural Diversity**

How can we harness the power of imagination to build alternative societies?

These paired courses invite students to explore the power of public imagination as a tool for constructing alternative societies. By working with critical, media, and communication theories alongside literature and film about speculative future worlds, students will interrogate existing systems and envision futures that challenge the status quo. They will be encouraged to take agency in the process of creating new futures by collaborating on projects and crafting narratives and blueprints for societies that prioritize sustainability, equity, and the common good. Through the courses, students will develop the tools to critically examine scholarship and literature in social, political, intellectual, and literary contexts while learning to use persuasion to mobilize communities and take an active role in shaping the future.

These course lectures meet:

- MWF 11–11:50 a.m.
- TTh 1:30–2:45 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- W 6–7:50 p.m.



Growing Up Gendered: Contemporary Media Representations COMM2216

Growing Up Gendered: Socio-Cultural Perspectives in Contemporary Society SOCY1708

Lisa Cuklanz, Communication
Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Sociology

► Fulfills Literature + 1 Social Science + Cultural Diversity

How is our gendered identity constructed?

These paired courses analyze how societal norms shape gender roles by examining the impact of family, educational settings, media representations, and social interactions that further understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation. TV shows, movies, ads, and online platforms are assessed. These courses explore how gender intersects with factors such as sexuality, race, and social status, and their impact on gender identity. Issues related to gender-based violence are also examined. By engaging in group discussions, lectures, and innovative assignments that draw from fields including communication studies, sociology, and psychology, students will gain a deeper understanding of how gender roles are constructed.

These course lectures meet:

- TTh 10:30–11:45 a.m.
- TTh 12–1:15 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- Th 6–7:50 p.m.

War and Peace: History and Literary Truths HIST1727

War and Peace: Historical and Literary Experiences UNAS1715

Nicole Eaton, History
Thomas Epstein, Classical Studies

► Fulfills History II + Literature

How does *War and Peace* speak through its historical context as a description of a perennial human situation?

War and Peace is a great and massive novel. Its primary subject, the effect of the Napoleonic Wars on Russia, may seem distant from our contemporary concerns. Yet its fundamental questions—"How shall I live and what is worth dying for?" "Is war a necessary evil, or something greater, or different?" "How does our social-historical experience construct our identity?"—are as relevant today as ever. Approaching these and other questions from two separate disciplines, we will attend both to the historical and literary context in which *War and Peace* was written and to the ways it speaks to us today.

These course lectures meet:

- TTh 12–1:15 p.m.
- TTh 1:30–2:45 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- T 6–7:50 p.m.

Reckoning with Incarceration: Social Perspectives

COMM2183

Reckoning with Incarceration: Biological Perspectives UNAS1734

Celeste Wells, Communication

Jessica Black, School of Social Work

► **Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 Natural Science + Cultural Diversity**

How do stories concerning justice, retribution, and rehabilitation shape the physical, mental, and social health of individuals?

These paired courses will examine how the universal needs of justice and safety are institutionalized by legal, social, health, and cultural fields, and how victims, perpetrators of crime, and the families of both come to understand them. One course will explore the stories and unequal impacts of the retribution versus rehabilitation design of the U.S. incarceration model while the other will examine how experiences like toxic stress, social exclusion, and poor sleep impact physical and mental health on a biological level and throughout the lifespan.

These course lectures meet:

- TTh 1:30–2:45 p.m.
- TTh 3–4:15 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- T 6–7:50 p.m.

How Sports Explain America: The History of Sports in the United States HIST1718**How Sports Explain America: The Sociology of Sports in the United States** SOCY1718

Thomas Mogan, Associate Dean, Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences

Kyoung-yim Kim, Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences

► **Fulfills History II + 1 Social Science + Cultural Diversity**

How have sports served to define and illustrate the essence of American society and culture throughout history and in contemporary times?

These paired courses will explore the complex relationship between sports and society. Through an interdisciplinary approach to history and sociology, students will analyze the evolution of sports, assess how they mirror the changing dynamics of American society and culture, and investigate the multifaceted roles sports have played and continue to play in shaping our society. By the end of these courses, students will understand how sports serve as a microcosm of American society and a platform for social change, fostering critical thinking and a deep appreciation of the nation's cultural fabric.

These course lectures meet:

- TTh 3–4:15 p.m.
- TTh 4:30–5:45 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- Th 6–7:50 p.m.



“I have never felt so intellectually engaged and challenged.”

Disney: American Social Norms and Values

COMM1701

Disney: Narrative and Myth in American Culture

ENGL1725

Rita Rosenthal, Communication

Bonnie Rudner, English

► **Fulfills 1 Social Science + Literature**

What role do literature and popular culture play in shaping our views and decisions about social and political matters?

These paired courses investigate different aspects of Disney. In one course, students will explore the history of folk tales and their movement around the world. Source material will include Grimm, Perrault, Anderson, and others, and students will focus on the ways tales have been altered by Disney for their movies. In the other course, students will examine how Disney influences society's views of acceptable and preferable social constructs. By analyzing Disney's media and other cultural products, students will assess the implications and global impact of their persuasive messages.

These course lectures meet:

- MWF 11–11:50 a.m.
- TTh 9–10:15 a.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- W 6–7:50 p.m.

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From Charity to Justice: Transforming Approaches to Poverty in Political Economy UNAS1737**From Charity to Justice: Transforming Approaches to Poverty in Literature** ENGL1742

Peter Giraud, Core Fellow

Gayathri Goel, Core Fellow

► **Fulfills 1 Social Science + Literature + Cultural Diversity**

Why does poverty persist and how can we remedy it?

In an individualistic society such as ours, poverty is often framed as a personal failing. In these paired courses, however, we will look at some of the systemic factors, notably capitalism, as mechanisms that create and sustain a poorer class of people. We will also consider how poverty complicates narratives of markets as fostering progress and individual freedom. If freedom for some requires the regimentation and exclusion of the many, is it genuine progress? By examining enduring accounts of poverty, we will explore its origins as a mass phenomenon, consequences for civic bonds, and influence on political participation. In addition to making poverty visible, literary texts will also demystify the complex nexus of factors that produce poverty and inhibit true progress. Understanding what causes poverty is the first step in alleviating the suffering of the poor, so that everyone has the right to a life of dignity and fulfillment.

These course lectures meet:

Section 01

- MWF 9–9:50 a.m.
- MWF 10–10:50 a.m.

OR**Section 02**

- MWF 10–10:50 a.m.
- MWF 11–11:50 a.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- Th 6–7:50 p.m.



Building A Habitable Planet: Theological Perspectives THEO1703

Building A Habitable Planet: Geoscientific Perspectives EESC1701

Natana DeLong-Bas, Theology

Ethan Baxter, Associate Dean for the STEM Disciplines

► **Fulfills 1 Theology (Sacred Texts and Traditions) + 1 Natural Science**

How have religion and science shaped our understanding of the origins of the Earth, its evolution into a habitable planet, and our human relationship with it?

Providing both Christian and Islamic perspectives, this course explores our planet and the evolution of life. Students will also examine the scientific method and the tools of geology, geochemistry, and geophysics used to unlock the history of the Earth from its beginnings.

These course lectures meet:

- MWF 10-10:50 a.m.
- MWF 11-11:50 a.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- M 6-7:50 p.m.

The Just City: Global Perspectives on Power and Social Difference HIST1722

The Just City: Understanding Environmental Problems and Solutions ENVS1737

Andrei Guadarrama, Core Fellow

Courtney Humphries, Core Fellow

► **Fulfills History II + 1 Social Science + Cultural Diversity**

How can we create just cities?

In an urbanizing world, contemporary cities are characterized by the production and reproduction of social and environmental inequalities. While cities are uneven landscapes, they are also laboratories for social and environmental justice. But how do urban inequalities work? What makes a more just city? These paired courses investigate these questions from social, global, and environmental perspectives. We will discuss how city-building and suburbanization are mediated through natural resources and infrastructural systems that shape structures of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and age. Students will cultivate their own interdisciplinary frameworks of social and environmental justice as a step toward becoming informed global citizens.

These course lectures meet:

Section 01

- MWF 1–1:50 p.m.
- MWF 2–2:50 p.m.

OR

Section 02

- MWF 2–2:50 p.m.
- MWF 3–3:50 p.m.

Reflections will be held four times during the semester:

- Th 6–7:50 p.m.



BOSTON COLLEGE

Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences

CORE CURRICULUM

STOKES HALL S260
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CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467

Scan the QR code with
your smartphone to learn
more about the courses.



“Small class size,
passionate professors,
and engaging
discussions”

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