

# MARIST

---

## First Year Seminar: Fall 2021

---

### HONORS

#### **FYSH 101L - 901 Reading the Apocalypse**

People have long been fascinated by how the world ends, and that critical imagining has become even more intense since the turning of the last millennium. This course will sample literature written in the past ten years that takes as its premise the end of civilization as we know it, and we'll use film and television to supplement our investigation. Why are we so interested in the destruction of civilization, and why now? We'll use history, psychology, philosophy, and literary studies to try to answer this question.

#### **FYSH 101L - 620 The Mindful Learner**

Many college students feel pulled in a million different directions. Work, family, friends, relationships, roommates, coursework, internships, and career-related decisions are just some of the distractions the average college student must deal with on a daily basis. These stressors and responsibilities, coupled with our growing dependence on technology (e.g. smartphones) can make us feel disconnected, distracted, and alone. Have you ever wondered what impact this growing lack of mindfulness can have on our writing?

In this course, students will explore how developing a mindfulness practice—a practice of living in the present moment, without judgement or reaction—can help us to feel more grounded and connected, and improve our writing process. During this process of exploration, students will research the cognitive, emotional, and physical effects of various mindfulness practices, and experiment with these practices in order to determine which practice(s) provides them with the most benefits; that is, benefits to their writing process, as well as to their mental, emotional and physical health.

Some of the mindfulness practices that will be explored in this class include: yoga, meditation, reflective journaling, contemplative reading and listening, guided visualization, walking meditation, and mindful drawing. Please come to this class with an open mind and a desire to experiment with mindfulness practice.

# MARIST

## **FYSH 101L - 622 “I’m not racist, but...”: Racial Cognition and Responsibility for Bias**

Being overtly racist is widely regarded as unacceptable these days. But, while overt racism is justifiably denounced in the public square, many people exhibit behavior that suggests that their actions are often motivated by racial biases of which they are not directly aware. Moreover, people consciously deploy racial categories in their cognitive lives. Such thinking, while perhaps innocuous at times, can lend itself to irrational generalizations that result in actions and policies that contribute to the domination over and oppression of groups of people who are regarded as falling under a specific racial category.

In this course, we will focus on four problems that arise in reflecting on racial cognition by examining relevant work in evolutionary psychology, moral philosophy, neuroscience, philosophy of race, and social psychology. The first of these is over whether using racial categories in our cognition can be reduced and the extent to which the use of any such categories in our thinking ought to be retained. Second, we will consider whether there are any reasons for accepting that racial categories track any actual salient differences between groups of people that justify the use of such categories. Next, we will shift to how we may unjustifiably deploy racial categories in our unconscious cognition and exhibit implicit biases as a result. Finally, assuming that we agree that people can and should be regarded as morally blameworthy for explicit racial biases, we will consider whether people can also be held morally responsible for their implicit racial biases.

## **FYSH 101L - 623 The Painter of Modern Life**

In 1863 Charles Baudelaire published an essay entitled “The Painter of Modern Life” in which the French poet and art critic examined how the conditions of modernity (fashion, the city nightlife, prostitution, self-displays of all social classes) should consume the imagination of the modern artist. The Second Empire was a time of great prosperity during which Paris was modernized under Baron Georges Haussmann. Most of these improvements were seen as progressive and utilitarian, such as the new sewers, streetlights, and expensive apartment buildings for the bourgeoisie. The modernization of Paris, however, came at a cost. The working districts of Paris were destroyed and consequently their population displaced outside of the city limits. Some critics lamented the loss of the Old Paris. Others concluded that the true motivation of this modernization was to minimize the threat of the proletariat that emerged from the 1848 Revolution. In this seminar, we will analyze the social conditions of modernity in mid nineteenth-century Paris to understand why Baudelaire and avant-garde painters, focusing on Édouard Manet’s paintings, became fascinated with the concept of modernity. To do so we will examine the artistic production of such painters as Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot and Gustave Caillebotte and pay special attention to their representations of Modern Life.