Focus

Focus is a special, year-long seminar program open only to freshmen. Several Focus plans are offered every year, each built around a seminar topic reflecting the Focus faculty member’s particular area of expertise. All students in a Focus seminar also attend a companion course chosen by their professor to encourage exploration of the seminar topic from varying perspectives. The Focus program provides a coherent, group-oriented learning experience with out-of-classroom activities, while still allowing time for electives.

Focus seminars change each year and have included such topics as: Law and Society; The Theater as a Living Art; Writers as Readers; The Literary Culture of Modern Ireland; Women in Science; and Cuba: From Colonialism to Communism. Enrollment in each Focus plan is limited to 16 students to ensure highly mentored, personalized instruction. All Focus programs constitute integrations and therefore fulfill one of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Focus programs are open to all Arts & Sciences students, regardless of their intended majors, and complement any major or preprofessional curriculum.

Contact Person: Jennifer Romney
Phone: 314/935-7969
E-mail: jlromney@wustl.edu
Departmental website: http://college.artsci.wustl.edu/

Participating Faculty 2014-15

William Acree
Assistant Professor of Spanish
PhD, University of North Carolina
(Romance Languages and Literatures)

Marisa A. Bass
Assistant Professor of Art History
PhD, Harvard University
(Art History and Archaeology)

Barbara Baumgartner
Senior Lecturer
PhD, Northwestern University
(Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies)

Stan Braude
Senior Lecturer
PhD, University of Michigan
(Biology)

Sarah C.R. Elgin
Viktor Hamburger Professor in Arts & Sciences
PhD, California Institute of Technology
(Biology)

Erin Finneran
Lecturer
PhD, Washington University
(English)

Regina F. Frey
Florence Moog Professor of STEM Education
PhD, University of Utah
(Chemistry)

Robert Henke
Professor
PhD, University of California-Berkeley
(Performing Arts)

Dirk M. Killen
Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
PhD, Harvard University

Jeffery S. Matthews
Senior Artist-in-Residence
MFA, Virginia Commonwealth University
(Performing Arts)

Rebecca Messbarger
Professor of Italian
PhD, University of Chicago
(Romance Languages & Literatures)

Joseph Schraibman
Professor
PhD, University of Illinois
(Romance Languages and Literatures)

Chris Shaffer
Lecturer
PhD, Cornell University
(Biology)

Daniel B. Shea
Professor Emeritus
PhD, Stanford University
(English)

Elzbieta Sklodowska
Randolph Family Professor in Arts & Sciences
PhD, Washington University
(Romance Languages and Literatures)

Kathleen Weston-Hafer
Senior Lecturer in Biology
PhD, Washington University
(Biology)

Focus programs are special year-long seminar programs open to freshman students. There is no major available in this area.

Focus programs are special year-long seminar programs open to freshman students. There is no minor available in this area.
L61 Focus 1071 Focus: Memory and Memorialization in American Culture
What do Americans remember, and what do we choose to forget? Who decides? And what do our ever-proliferating memorials and at times obsessive acts of memorialization say about us? In this course, we study cultural memory in the United States from the Civil War to September 11, 2001, by looking at “official” and “vernacular” forms of memorialization, including monuments, roadside crosses, temporary memorials, reenactments, museum exhibits, etc. We seek to understand not only what public acts of memorialization look like and who gets to define them, but how memory is contested or reshaped by such practices. Along the way, we ask how controversies of memory are related to competing ideas of nation, citizenship and patriotism; debates about what happened in the past; problems of cultural representation and identity; and shame and erasure of memory. This exploration focuses on “crises of memory” that have fundamentally altered American practices of remembrance.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 1072 Focus: Writing Loss, Legacy and Memory
This class involves student writers in acts of remembrance as both a complement to the linked fall semester course Memory and Memorialization in American Culture and as an introduction to a central motive of writers in all traditions: art as a means of transcending trauma and loss, large and small. Writing in multiple genres, from essay to poetry, from reportage to memoir, we explore ways in which writers literally “come to terms” with the past, including idealization, justification and re-interpretation. The course stresses how individual experience, especially loss, can move from private meaning to public when writers can convey their experience as representative of others. It also explores the authority one assumes and creates when speaking for others. Travel to sites such as Washington, D.C., affords students an additional and exciting means of studying collective memory in a broader context that includes observing the interaction of a present-day audience. In addition to documents from field trips, course texts include examples from various genres, as well as selected readings from cultural critics and writers about writing.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 108 Focus: Constantinople, Queen of Cities: Part I
Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire (330 to 1453), was among the greatest marvels of the medieval world. Renowned for its wealth and sophistication, the city was one of the largest urban centers in the premodern era and the model that cultures both east and west sought to surpass. In this course, we explore the evidence behind this reputation, studying the architectural, social and artistic history of the Queen of Cities. Although renamed Istanbul when conquered in 1453 by the Ottomans, its fame did not fade, and some of its most impressive monuments preserved today, stand as witness to the remarkable achievements of Byzantine culture.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH CD A&S: IQ, HUM, LCD BU: HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 1081 Focus: From Constantinople to Istanbul
This course is a continuation of the Freshman Focus Program, Constantinople, Queen of Cities, and is limited to those students who are completing the sequence. It is a requirement for students participating in the summer study trip to Constantinople (Istanbul). This 1-credit course expands upon material covered during the fall semester by considering the post-Byzantine history of Constantinople, both under Ottoman rule and in the modern era. Requirements for this companion course include regular attendance, active participation and the presentation of two oral reports on site in Istanbul, which are based on fall and spring semester research projects.
Credit 1 unit. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 1701 Focus: The Italian Renaissance I
The Renaissance was one of the most dynamic and influential periods in the history of Western Europe. The Renaissance is replete with contrasts and contradictions, preserving numerous aspects of medieval thought at the same time as developing dramatic new ways of viewing, understanding and expressing the world. While these factors affected all of Europe to different degrees, it was in Italy that these trends first appeared and from which they traveled north, east and west, to influence profoundly the entire continent. This course concentrate on the Italian Renaissance in an effort to gain a panoramic view of its many aspects and the essential characteristics of each subject studied. The fall term examines geography and political entities; wars and political realignments; forms of government and their rulers; social life; manufacturing, trade and economics; the humanist movement; philosophy; the Catholic Reformation and natural sciences and medicine. The spring term concentrates on the arts: architecture, painting and sculpture, literature and music. Prerequisite: admission into The Renaissance Focus program.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 1702 Focus: The Renaissance: An Introduction II
The Renaissance saw a fundamental shift in the character and functions of the arts in Western society. This course examines the basic aesthetics and features of Renaissance literature (poetry, epic poetry, drama), plastic arts (painting, illumination, sculpture, bas-relief), architecture (both sacred and secular) and music (both sacred and secular, including dance). We examine the role of perception in the arts, the relationship of that perception to humanistic, religious and political thought, and the various ways in which the arts communicate that relationship.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH
L61 Focus 1910 Focus: Phage Hunters
A research-based laboratory class for freshmen. Students join a national experiment organized by HHMI, with the goal of isolating and characterizing bacteriophage viruses found in the soil in the St. Louis area. Laboratory work includes isolation and purification of your own phage, DNA isolation and restriction mapping, and EM characterization of your phage. Several WU phages are selected for genome sequencing over winter break, and are annotated in the spring in Biol 192 Phage Bioinformatics. Students who successfully isolate and annotate a phage may become co-authors on a scientific paper. Prerequisites: high school courses in biology and chemistry, at least one at the AP or International Baccalaureate level, and permission of the instructor. Limited to 40 students. One-hour lecture, one-hour discussion and three hours lab per week. Credit 3 units. A&S: NS A&S: IQ, NSM BU: SCI

L61 Focus 1920 Focus: Phage Bioinformatics
A research-based laboratory class for freshmen. Students join a national experiment organized by HHMI, with the goal of genomic characterization of a local phage. Laboratory work focuses on learning computer-based tools for genome analysis followed by annotation and comparative analysis of the genome of a phage (bacterial virus) that was isolated fall semester at WU and sequenced over winter break. Prerequisites: high school courses in biology, chemistry and physics, at least one at the AP or International Baccalaureate level; permission of the instructor. Limited to 40 students; preference given to those completing Biol 191 Phage Hunters. One-hour lecture, one-hour discussion and three hours lab per week. Credit 3 units. A&S: NS A&S: IQ, NSM

L61 Focus 201 Focus: Nationalism and Identity: The Making of Modern Europe
This course is a reading-and-discussion seminar designed for students interested in an interdisciplinary program in history, literature and language. It covers a series of major topics in French and German history, beginning with the French Revolution and culminating in the origins of World War I. The unifying theme is the concept of the nation and development of nationalism. Major topics include Napoleon, the revolutions of 1848, and German unification; related topics include such issues as women and the concept of the nation. The seminar reads texts such as the Abbe Sieyes’ *What is the Third Estate?* (in translation) and review excerpts from such films as Abel Gances’s *Napoleon* and Jean Renoir’s *La Marseillaise*. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: IS FA: SSP

Exploration of cultural expressions and depictions of nationalism in France 1789-1914 with emphasis on literary forms — poetry, prose, drama — against the background of social and political change and in particular against the background of Franco-German relations. Course includes investigation of the use of gender to construe the nation; founding myths; the roles of men, women and the family in the nation; the importance of language and other ethnic markers; the creation and function of heroes; versions of the past; cultural stereotyping of the French vs. the German, as well as contemporary critiques of nationalism. Taught in English. Course should be enrolled as 3 units, or 4 units with trip. Corequisite: each student should enroll in the level of French language instruction that follows his or her fall course. Credit variable, maximum 4 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H FA: SSP

L61 Focus 203 Focus on German Nationalism 1789–1914: The Formation of German National Identity
Exploration of cultural expressions and depictions of nationalism in Germany 1789–1914 with emphasis on literary forms — poetry, prose, drama — but including other symbolic modes of expression, against the background of social and political change and in particular against the background of Franco-German relations. Includea investigation of the use of gender to construe the nation; founding myths; the roles of men, women and the family in the nation; the importance of language and other ethnic markers; the creation and function of heroes; versions of the past; cultural stereotyping of the German vs. the French; as well as contemporary critiques of nationalism. Course should be enrolled as 3 units, or 4 units with trip. Credit variable, maximum 4 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM FA: SSP

L61 Focus 206 Workshop: Readers as Writers
In the Readers as Writers workshop, we consider the role of influence and revision in the making of a poem. While examining a wide range of poetry in both finished and draft form, we study the ways in which influence and revision bring a poem into existence and reshape its form on the page. Exercises are designed to guide the writing process, using the readings to inspire and inform our own creative work. Guiding texts include, but are not limited to, those being studied in Readers as Writers, which must be taken concurrently. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM FA: Lit

L61 Focus 2061 Workshop: Readers as Writers
In the spring Readers as Writers workshop, we move from the consideration and creation of poetry to the consideration and creation of prose. As a transition between the two genres, we begin by reading and writing the prose poem, a hybrid form that borrows from and is influenced by both genres. We move from there toward a progressive lengthening of line and narrative as we read and write flash fiction, short stories, personal essay and memoir. Guiding texts include, but are not limited to, those being studied in Readers as Writers, which must be taken concurrently. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H
L61 Focus 2070 Writers As Readers
Writing as a creative response to reading is examined through this seminar. Just as modern students are students of literature, so too were writers in the past students of their literary heritage. How did major English writers — Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Austen, Keats and Yeats, among others — respond to what they read? Students consider the ways these writers resisted, embraced and repudiated the efforts of those who had written before them. Readings and discussions elicit each student’s own creative and critical responses. As happened in the past, the reading writer is answered by the writing reader.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 208 Focus: Global Culture and the Individual: Intercultural Skills for the 21st Century
The emergence of a global society continues to create vast changes in all cultures. How do these changes impact our lives and the way we view ourselves and our place in the world? Students in this Focus seminar use the study of language, culture and literature to examine how they, as individuals, relate to self, community and culture. Students also learn to apply the skills needed to live and work most effectively within the university community and beyond. CBTCL course.
Credit 3 units. A&S: SS A&S: IQ, SSC BU: IS EN: S FA: SSP

L61 Focus 2081 Focus: Global Culture and the Individual: Intercultural Skills for the 21st Century
During the spring semester, we continue to find ways to practically apply the skills and knowledge gained during the fall semester. The course is built around projects proposed by students at the end of the fall semester. By the end of the academic year, you have gained a greater understanding of how you relate to, and affect, one another within your own immediate environment, your community, your culture and beyond. The companion course for this Focus seminar continues as a two-semester language sequence at your level of proficiency as determined by a placement test. CBTCL course.
Credit 3 units. A&S: SS A&S: IQ, SSC BU: IS EN: S FA: SSP

L61 Focus 209 Focus: Wild Ethics and Environmentalism
Fierce political battles are being fought over the preservation of wilderness, partly because wilderness means and has meant so many different things. European settlers saw the New World as a “howling wilderness,” redeemable only by human settlement and improvement. To Native Americans this same land was home, not wilderness. As the frontier of settlement moved west, attitudes toward the wild began to change, with Henry David Thoreau stating “In wildness is the preservation of the world.”
This course studies the changing experiences of wilderness and the wild through history, grappling with insights derived from literature, art, philosophy and ecology. The spring semester includes a study of wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone National Park, including a spring break trip to Yellowstone to study wolves in the wild.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 2091 Focus: Wild Ethics and Environmentalism
Fierce political battles are being fought over the preservation of wilderness, partly because wilderness means and has meant so many different things. European settlers saw the New World as a “howling wilderness,” redeemable only by human settlement and improvement. To Native Americans this same land was home, not wilderness. As the frontier of settlement moved west, attitudes toward the wild began to change, with Henry David Thoreau stating “In wildness is the preservation of the world.”
This course studies the changing experiences of wilderness and the wild through history, grappling with insights derived from literature, art, philosophy and ecology. The spring semester includes a study of wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone National Park, including a spring break trip to Yellowstone to study wolves in the wild.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 215 Focus: The Theater as a Living Art
Moving in and out of practice and theory, this Focus plan interweaves a traditional introductory acting course with discussions of dramatic theory and visits to rehearsals where directors and actors work to shape the play. Must be taken concurrently with Drama 228C. Prerequisite: admission into The Theater Focus program.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM FA: AH

L61 Focus 2151 Focus: Theater Topics Course
Companion course to Focus 215.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH

L61 Focus 216 Focus: The Theater as a Living Art
Continuation of the Focus program: The Theater as a Living Art. Topic varies by year, please see Course Listings for a description of current offering. Prerequisite: admission to The Theater as a Living Art Focus Program.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM FA: AH

L61 Focus 2171 Focus: Women in Science
Throughout the centuries, women were interested and involved in the sciences. Their scientific contributions, however, have often been overlooked and their abilities questioned. In this year-long course, we read biographies of famous women scientists and mathematicians, in addition to scholarly articles, to examine women’s involvement in science and mathematics from the 19th century to the present. We explore the ways in which women have pursued scientific knowledge, look at the cultural factors that affected them, and investigate the impact of scientific theory and social conditions on their opportunities and identities.
addition to reading about women in science, we hear a variety of women talk about their careers. Visiting lecturers may include faculty from chemistry, biology, engineering, earth and planetary sciences, medicine, physics, medical administration may visit, as well as female scientists who work in industry. This course is restricted to Women in Science Focus Program participants, who must have concurrent enrollment in WGSS 100B (p. 1) Introduction to Women and Gender Studies. Credit 1.5 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: BA EN: H

L61 Focus 2172 Focus: Women in Science: Contemporary Issues
Following the history of women in science that we explored in the fall semester, this class begins a discussion and analysis of current issues in gender and science. We look at the feminist critique of science and scientific objectivity before turning to women’s careers in science. Several questions are central to our inquiry: Do women “do” science differently? Could alternative science and mathematics education help increase women’s representation in fields that continue to be male-dominated such as physics, engineering and computer science? How do social expectations of men and women effect career choices and retention? In addition to exploring these issues, we hear from a number of women scientists. Drawing from both the Danforth and Medical School campuses, our visitors include faculty members from chemistry, biology, engineering, earth and planetary sciences, medicine, physics, medical administration, among others, who share their reflections about women and science. This course is restricted to Women in Science Focus program participants. Credit 1.5 units. A&S: SS, SD A&S: IQ, SSC, SD EN: S

L61 Focus 221 Focus in Law and Society
The legal system has assumed a major role in contemporary American life, a role that locates it as an essential governing authority that articulates the general rights and restraints for American citizens. The Law and Society Focus centers its attention on a few of the social controversies that depict the changes and diversity in the present-day American social order. The seminar particularly spotlights issues that are associated with status of America’s youth and on the privileges and restraints that our legal system extends to its young people. Regular topics for our inquiry include: students’ freedom of expression, privacy in the educational environment, religion in schools, abortion rights of minor females, juvenile criminality, and affirmative action in education. Combining students’ exposure to shaping the law in the abstract with the application of the law in live controversies is an important element of the year’s experiences. Thus the first semester’s course work exclusively involves reading major opinions of the appellate courts, while the second semester’s work entails an extensive commitment to observing the adjudication of disputes in trial courts. Prerequisite: admission to the Law and Society Focus plan. Credit 3 units. A&S: SS A&S: IQ, SSC BU: BA, HUM FA: SSP

L61 Focus 222 Seminar in Law and Society
The Law and Society Focus is designed to expose students to some contemporary legal debates in American society and to expand their understanding of those issues as they are adjudicated in our legal system. We explore these current topics within the basic liberal arts tradition, which emphasizes the view that the legal system is a social instrument for seeking a “just society.” The seminar, accordingly, is an introduction to legal controversies as questions of public policies that have philosophical, social, political and economic implications, as well as legal ones. Prerequisite: admission to the Law and Society Focus plan. Credit 3 units. A&S: SS A&S: IQ, SSC BU: HUM EN: S FA: SSP

L61 Focus 2341 Focus: Italy’s Temples of Knowledge: The History and Controversies of Museums
This course investigates the history of museums in Italy and the political and ethical issues that have developed alongside the institutions themselves to the present day. Our study during the fall semester unfolds chronologically, beginning with such ancient precursors to the modern museum as the Roman House of Pompeii. We study how the museum in Italy developed from an elite, private space — the Renaissance princely studio and curiosity cabinet — for the display to a select audience of individual and family social distinction to a public center for the cultural education of the masses and for the demonstration of state prestige, i.e.: the Louvre, the Vatican Museums and the Fascist Museum of Roman Civilization. We also visit local art and history museums. The course culminates at the end of the spring semester with a trip to Italy to tour the sites we have studied throughout the year. This course is restricted to Italy’s Temples of Knowledge Focus program participants. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 2342 Focus: Theaters of Knowledge, Part II
This Freshman Focus course divided its scope over two semesters. In the fall students studied the history of museums and in the spring students study the ethical, political, cultural and interpretive issues that surrounded these institutions. Students also prepare for the spring trip to Italy. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 2351 Focus: Moving and Being Moved: Human Movement in Art, Culture, Sport and Health
This course investigates the significance of movement, individually and collectively, in human experience. Movement can signal a wide variety of states of being — gender, age, ethnicity, mental and physical health — in addition to its stylized expressions as social and concert dance. We use readings, discussions, lectures and correlated movement work to deepen our understanding of what and how movement communicates.
The course is team-taught by members of the dance faculty and guest instructors. Concurrent registration in a dance or somatics course is recommended but not required. This course is restricted to Moving and Being Moved Focus program participants.
Credit 3 units. A&S: LA A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 2352 Focus: Moving and Being Moved: Further Explorations
Continuation of Fall Focus program. Students continue to explore a broad range of topics. At the same time each student deepens his or her experience of a specific movement discipline by enrolling in one of the many dance or somatic practices courses offered by Washington University. The weekly seminar meetings focus on connections between dance and other disciplines: for example, lighting and costume design for dance, arts management, movement and Native American culture, dance and literary theory that treats “the body” metaphorically. However, our weekly meeting also includes time periodically for students to share their experience in their chosen movement centered courses. In-class content continue to be supplemented by field trips and related practical applications. This course is restricted to Moving and Being Moved Focus program participants.
Credit 2 units. A&S: LA A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 2431 Focus: Missouri’s Natural Heritage, part 1
Missouri’s Natural Heritage is a multidisciplinary two-semester Freshman Focus course. The first semester of the sequence focuses on Missouri geology, climate, archaeology and native megafauna. This provides a foundation on which to examine the ecology, restoration and management of our diverse habitats (prairie, forest, glade and stream) and the biology of our diverse plant and animal wildlife (arthropods, mollusks, fish, salamanders, lizards, birds and mammals) in the second semester. We also introduce basic concepts in biodiversity and resource management with attention to resolution of conflicts of interest. In addition to weekly lecture and discussion, students in this class visit sites across the state during three weekend camping trips and a trip to the prairies of western Missouri during spring break. Attendance on field trips is an essential component of the course and grade. Lab fee of $480 covers transportation and meals for all field trips.
Credit 3 units. A&S: IQ, NSM

L61 Focus 2432 Focus: Missouri’s Natural Heritage, Part 2
Missouri’s Natural Heritage is a multidisciplinary two-semester Freshman Focus course. The second semester of the sequence focuses on the ecology, restoration and management of our diverse habitats (prairie, forest, glade and stream) and the biology of our diverse plant and animal wildlife (arthropods, mollusks, fish, salamanders, lizards, birds and mammals). We also apply basic concepts in biodiversity and resource management with attention to resolution of conflicts of interest. In addition to weekly lecture and discussion, students in this class visit sites across the state during three weekend camping trips and a trip to the prairies of western Missouri during spring break. Attendance on field trips is an essential component of the course and grade. Lab fee of $480 covers transportation and meals for all field trips.
Credit 3 units. A&S: IQ, NSM

L61 Focus 2601 Focus: The Argentine Experience: History, Literature, Culture
How have foreigners viewed Argentina over time? What was the meaning of bloodshed among gauchos? What are the origins of tango? And at one point, one third of Argentina’s population consisted of Afro-descendants — what happened to them? This Focus course helps students find answers to such questions and more. A history of Argentina from Spanish settlement to the present, focusing on the wars of independence; economic growth and urbanization; immigration; gauchos and popular culture; Juan and Evita Peron; the “Dirty War”; and the transition to democracy and neo-liberalism. The course complements an offering on Argentine Culture in the spring semester. It also provides historical background for a field trip by the students to Buenos Aires, Argentina. It covers the history of one of Latin America’s largest and most important countries and gives students the chance to compare processes of cultural, political and economic development with the United States and other countries in the Americas. Prerequisite: admission to the Focus Argentina program.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM, LCD BU: IS: EN: H

L61 Focus 2602 Focus: Buenos Aires and the Construction of Argentine Culture
In this course, we examine the various expressions of Argentine culture that have given us gauchos, tango, Jorge Luis Borges and one of the most prolific and honored cinematic traditions of Latin America. In particular, we explore the ways in which history and culture interact to express the experience of Argentina and Buenos Aires. We study films, popular music, dance, literature, sport and theater to gain insight into that experience. This course is part of the Buenos Aires Focus program; it includes a trip to Buenos Aires and is intended to be taken after Focus 2601 Argentina: Past and Present.
Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 267 Focus: Cuban Transitions: From Colonialism to Communism
This course examines the Cuban experience from its beginnings as a Spanish colony to its independence. We emphasize happenings in contemporary Cuba and its relations to other countries. Topics studied include, among others, the Tainos, slavery, the preeminence of sugar and tobacco as an economic and cultural force, social structures, race, the “Spanish-
American war, the press, the military and education. We screen documentaries, examine the paintings of Wilfredo Lam and the photographs of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. All topics studied also are put into contemporary contexts. Requirements: three short papers (four to six pages) and an oral report. Credit 3 units. A&S: SS A&S: IQ, SSC BU: IS FA: SSP

L61 Focus 2671 Stranger than Paradise: Cuban Experience of the Revolution
The word “Cuba” strikes a resonant chord with many of us — a mix of curiosity, anxiety and hope — shaped by many years of controversy and stereotyping, on one hand, and myth making, on the other. Whether you want to develop an understanding of Cuban literature on and off the island, or to learn about music and dance history that led up to the Buena Visa Social Club phenomenon, this is a seminar for you. Organized chronologically and thematically as a companion course to Focus 267 (p. 1) Focus: Cuban Transitions: From Colonialism to Communism, it covers a comprehensive range of topics related to contemporary Cuba. Faculty with ample firsthand knowledge of Cuba and invited speakers encourage wide-ranging discussions about the interplay of such issues as the politics of race and sexuality, repression and exile, censorship and dissent. African cultural heritage and syncretic religious practices are presented as both a source of pride for Cubans and a symbol of their unique Caribbean experience. By examining a variety of ideological perspectives in prose fiction, poetry, political speeches, artwork, musical forms, personal testimonies and film, this seminar allows students to exchange perceptions across various disciplines, question myths and erase the distance between theory and context-based critical practice. Prerequisite: successful completion of the first-semester course, Focus 267. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM FA: SSP

L61 Focus 2811 Focus: Literary Culture of Modern Ireland
This course examines the literature of Ireland from the fall of Parnell to the outbreak of World War II. This is the period of an emerging cultural nationalism, a great efflorescence of literature in many genres, and some of the most important political, social and military events in modern Irish history. One of the remarkable things about the period is the close relationship between prominent figures in the literary and artistic world and those in the realm of politics and social change. The result was a rich cross-fertilization of ideas and attitudes that had enormous implications for the future of this embattled island nation. We explore this vital and transformative exchange by close attention to some primary texts of the period. Writers studied include: Yeats, Gregory, Wilde, Synge, Shaw, Joyce, O’Casey and Bowen. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM BU: IS EN: H

L61 Focus 2812 Focus: Literary Culture of Modern Ireland II
This course explores the intersection of literature and culture in Ireland from the establishment of the Fianna Fail government of de Valera in 1932, through the lean years of the 1940s to ‘70s, to the economic boom of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s and beyond. To appreciate this small nation’s rocky road to a successful entrance into the European Union, economic security and national confidence, we closely read how Ireland’s rich and diverse literature casts a cold but feeling eye on its hard-earned independence and fraught nationalism. For the fiction, poetry and drama of Ireland not only mirrors but often moves the story of this nation’s growth and transformation over the decades of economic, social and political strife. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 2813 Focus: Literary Culture of Modern Ireland and Irish America: Irish-American Writers, Fitzgerald–Kennedy
Credit 1.5 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 2814 Focus: Literary Culture of Modern Ireland and Irish America: Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama
Building on students’ coverage of the early days of Dublin’s Abbey Theatre, this segment focuses on (mostly) living Irish playwrights whose work develops familiar themes in unfamiliar ways. Brian Friel, whose long career recently was recognized by an elite council of Irish Arts, is represented by Translations and Dancing at Lughnasa. We read plays by Marina Carr, the most important Irish woman playwright since Lady Gregory, often described as “Greek” for her scorching fatalism. Continuity with Synge is evident in work by Martin McDonagh, as is his transformation of Irish stereotypes into grotesques and deep resources of dark humor. Conor McPherson’s Shining City is not yet ready to banish a ghost from a psychiatrist’s office. Other playwrights represented may include Tom Kilroy and Christina Reid. It is notable that the work of three of these playwrights was produced in New York recently and nominated for Tony awards. Credit 1.5 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM EN: H

L61 Focus 287 Focus: Writers As Readers Seminar
Participants in this seminar examine how writing serves as a creative response to reading. Just as modern students are students of literature, so too were writers in the past students of their literary heritage and of their contemporary literary moment. We examine how writers, both poets and novelists, responded to, elaborated on, rebelled against and paid homage to their predecessors. Among the writers we consider are Jane Austen and Henry James, Charles Dickens and Dostoevsky, Tennyson and Keats, Kipling and Isaac Babel. Credit 3 units. A&S: TH A&S: IQ, HUM FA: Lit