PROFESSIONAL & LIBERAL STUDIES (PLS)

PLS 201 - CRITICAL REASONING AND SKILLS
This course offers an orientation to university-level course work by developing skills in analytical thinking, argumentation, and expository writing. Especially important for those who have been away from school for a period of time, this introductory course has an informal, supportive atmosphere, designed for adult learning. Through interdisciplinary readings, class discussions, writing, and/or oral presentations, students develop the ability to analyze, interpret, and synthesize related subject areas. Typical assignments may include the analysis of opinion articles, book chapters, and other similar texts, as well as the analysis of visual rhetoric, including advertisements, political cartoons, and other media. Subject matter varies by section.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.

PLS 202 - INFORMATION LITERACY AND RESEARCH WRITING
This course develops university-level research-based skills and writing, as well as develops an intellectual framework for understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information. Students are challenged to become informed consumers of scholarly and mainstream information. Via the examination and construction of reasoned arguments, students develop the ability to evaluate varied research sources and utilize them in their own research-based essay and/or project. Typical assignments could include thesis statement workshops, a short research proposal, a review of a scholarly article, a short research-based argumentative essay, a final abstract, and presentation.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 201 (may be taken concurrently) or PLS 302 (may be taken concurrently)
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.

PLS 217 - THE STORYTELLER'S ART
Storytelling from earliest oral myths to current experiments in literature and film. Elements of story; historical survey; discussion and analysis of the texts.
Credits: 1
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education

PLS 220 - TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY
This course develops technological literacy skills within a critical thinking context. Via discussion of historical and current technologies, students analyze the ways technology increasingly defines the way we interact, retrieve knowledge, and construct arguments. Students will explore various well-known applications, software, and other media tools, such as Powerpoint, podcasting, blogging, video presentation tools (YouTube, Jing), wikis, and online video conferencing (Skype, Zoom, Adobe Connect). Students will evaluate technology’s impact on society and ethical issues, including a critical review of social media and its problems and opportunities. Typical assignments could include online presentations and online group collaborations, blogs, wikis, and/or spreadsheets including graphs or charts.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 201 (may be taken concurrently) or PLS 302 (may be taken concurrently)
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.

PLS 257 - NUTRITION FOR EVERYDAY LIFE
Human nutrition; effects of nutrition on health and well-being. Food choices, advances in nutrition, and new research on diet.
Credits: 1
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education

PLS 331 - IMAGES OF WOMEN
Module one focuses on the ‘beauty myth’ which shapes women’s lives and society in general. Manifestations of the cult of beauty in fashion, pornography, dieting, cosmetics, and cosmetic surgery. Module two covers popular women’s magazines, women in TV, and women in the movies. Module three looks at the Senate hearings involving Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill as a case study in the power of images and how they can be changed by the media and the public will.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education, Women Gender Studies
Course Notes: Cr. Only for BGS215 or BGS331

PLS 332 - CHICAGO ISSUES AND TRENDS
The course studies how geography and technology shape Chicago. It covers the effect of railroads, manufacturing and retail on Chicago. Ethnic politics, crime and struggles for cultural supremacy are studied. Unions, reform movements and gangland corruption are discussed. The course focuses on the growth of the African-American community and the decline of the democratic machine. It analyzes the role of globalization on the future of the city.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education

PLS 332A - CHICAGO ISSUES AND TRENDS TO 1871
This course studies the importance of geography and technology to the growth of Chicago from an outpost fort to the second largest urban center in the US. It covers the development of water and rail transportation and the accompanying establishment of trading, processing, manufacturing, and retail enterprises. The city is ethnically diverse pre-Fort Dearborn beginnings through its rebirth after the Great Fire of 1871 are examined.
Credits: 1
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education
PLS 322B - CHICAGO ISSUES AND TRENDS 1871-1920
This course examines the growth of ethnic politics in Chicago and the struggle between Anglo-Americans and the Immigrant groups for cultural and political supremacy. Prohibition and the labor movement are also studied. The settlement house movement, the coming of Prohibition, the role of woman in Chicago and crime in the city are analyzed.
Credits: 1
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education

PLS 322C - CHICAGO ISSUES AND TRENDS 1920-PRESENT
This course examines the impact of the growth of the African-American community in Chicago. It discusses federal aid and the Democratic Machine. It reviews the accomplishments and decline of the first Daley machine. The rise of Harold Washington and the turmoil following his death are described. The course evaluates the era of Richard M. Daley. It concludes with an analysis of globalization in Chicago.
Credits: 1
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education

PLS 333C - LABOR & WORK 1920-PRESENT
The effects of the antiunion drive of the 1920’s, the depression of the 1930’s and World War II on the labor movement are evaluated. The founding of the CIO and its structural and philosophical differences with the AFL are examined. The increased role of government in labor relations; current trends and problems of the labor movement and its impact on working men and women are described.
Credits: 1

PLS 350 - SOCIAL SCIENCES SEMINAR I: CRITICAL SKILLS
Introduction to the wide range of approaches, worldviews, and research methods in the social sciences. This course explores the breadth and depth of social science research in the modern era, asking how scholars from various disciplines have approached the study of societies and social change. Major social science analytic concepts such as race, class, and gender are defined. Recent social science controversies and the production of social science knowledge are explored. Key requirements include class participation, student presentations, short critical essays, and/or exams. Key requirements include extensive reading, short critical essays, class participation, and a presentation.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 202 and ENG 102
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.

PLS 351 - SOCIAL SCIENCES SEMINAR II: SPECIAL TOPICS
Building on the foundation of PLS 350, this seminar conducts a genuinely interdisciplinary exploration of a major question in the social sciences. The course will interrogate a social problem from the perspective of various disciplines, examining the methods, approaches, and conclusions of each. For example, the course might examine the problem of poverty by engaging the relevant research of economists, psychologists, political scientists, historians, and sociologists. Topics will vary by course. Key requirements include extensive reading, short critical essays, class participation, and a research project.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 350 (may be taken concurrently)
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.
PLS 361 - NATURAL SCIENCES SEMINAR II
Interdisciplinary introduction to the methods and analytic framework of the natural sciences, an exploration of the relationship between science and society, and a critical examination of the values and assumptions associated with the production of scientific knowledge. Key topics addressed include the basic methods and philosophy of science, the relevance of quantitative reasoning to understanding scientific data, the critical analysis of scientific information within popular media and scholarly sources, and the assessment of scientific theories and evidence. Each section draws upon examples and case-studies from selected natural science disciplines, such as biology, ecology, geology, etc. Class activities include lectures, class discussions, student presentations, and/or field trips. Key requirements include class participation, student presentations, short critical essays, and/or exams.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 360 (may be taken concurrently)
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.

PLS 370 - HUMANITIES SEMINAR I: CRITICAL SKILLS
Culture and the arts as an expression of individual artistic vision or an expression of a society's values. Cultural expression that is produced anonymously within a culture; cultural expression that is supported by patrons or government; and cultural expression that is supported fully by the individual consumer.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 202 and ENG 102
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.

PLS 371 - HUMANITIES SEMINAR II: SPECIAL TOPICS
Exploration of a specific interdisciplinary topic and issues in the humanities, building on the critical, interpretive, research, and writing skills developed in earlier classes. Topics vary semester to semester, but each involves multiple humanities disciplines and art forms. Some possible topics for exploration might be themes (the humanities and technology, the humanities in postcolonial cultures) a particular historical period (the Harlem Renaissance, culture of the 1960s), or the relations between particular art forms or traditions (film and literature, hip hop and folklore, painting and photography).
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 370 (may be taken concurrently)
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or, have Advisor consent to register.

PLS 372 - PHILOSOPHIES OF ART
Ideas about art from the Classical period to the present. The roles of the artist, the audience, and the critic.
Credits: 1
Attributes: External Studies Program

PLS 373 - THE COMIC SPIRIT
Several traditions of humor in the arts. Theories of Susanne Langer and Arthur Koestler; nonsense and puns; exaggerative humor such as parody, satire, lampoon, burlesque, and "black humor"; and situation comedy.
Credits: 1
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education
Prereq: access to a television set.

PLS 376 - ART AND COMMUNICATION
The communicative function of art; how we determine the meaning of signs, codes, and texts; the role of different media; the relation of form and content; and the question of individual style.
Credits: 1
Attributes: Guided Independent Distance Education

PLS 381 - TECHNOLOGY & VALUES
Urgent questions of values raised by our technology, such as how computer networks affect our privacy, how automobiles conflict with environmental concerns, how we reconcile the benefits of nuclear power with its risks, how the emerging technologies of reproduction challenge our traditional ways of thinking, and how medical technologies have complicated the process of dying.
Credits: 1
Attributes: External Studies Program
Course Notes: Cr. Only for BGS381 or HIST326A

PLS 394 - SPECIAL TOPIC
Join the best science and nature writers as they journey into the rarely seen personal side of science: the heartbreaking work of a memory expert who for the first time hears her father's long suppressed story of the Holocaust; the tedium and horror of a single day in an Ebola clinic; the frustration and sadness of an earthquake specialist who confronts the death of loved ones in an earthquake; the surprise and delight of a researcher who discovers the crow he is studying figured him out first; the awe and wonder of astronomers as they chase those illusive aliens across the universe; the desperation of volunteers who scramble to aid newly hatched sea turtles, or save a critically endangered right whale entangled in fishing nets; the lurking suspicion of researchers that your cat's penetrating gaze conveys more than a request for dinner; or a doctor's poignant reflections on the limits of modern medicine in terminal patients.
Credits: 6
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: ENG 102 and PLS 302 or (PLS 201 or BGS 302 or BGS 201)
Course Notes: Online interaction required.

PLS 396 - TOPICS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE
Major ideas and methods used by practitioners in such areas as history, sociology, and economics. Content individualized to suit student interest. Topics may include technology and values, women and work, Chicago history, and humanity against disease.
Credits: 3
Attributes: External Studies Program

PLS 397 - ADVANCED RESEARCH DESIGN AND EVALUATION
The purpose of this seminar is to prepare the student for the final senior thesis project by exploring topic development, research design, the preparation of preliminary bibliographies, the evaluation of online, print, primary, and scholarly sources, and a review of the principles of academic writing and the effective use of evidence. By the end of the class, the student will have selected a topic for the thesis, a working annotated bibliography, tentative thesis statement, and a full formal proposal in preparation for the full thesis.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 201 or PLS 302 and ENG 102
Course Notes: Open to students in the Fast-Track Program for Adults.
PLS 398 - SENIOR THESIS
Using the materials developed during PLS 397, this course consists of writing and submitting a full draft of the thesis by responding to critiques from fellow students and the instructor, and learning to revise and reorganize as necessary. Learners will produce the completed thesis of 15-20 pages. Other typical assignments may include writing workshops, a formal abstract, and visual/oral presentation of the final results of the thesis.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 397
Course Notes: Open to students in the Fast-Track Program for Adults.

PLS 399 - SENIOR THESIS
The final course in the BGS/BPS program taken after completion of the senior seminars. A guided independent research project focused on a single topic, allowing the student to conduct a thorough, in-depth study in an area of interest. Thesis work provides an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained throughout the BGS/BPS program by developing the qualities of independent and critical thinking. The final 20-25 page research project is a thorough, clearly articulated representation of the student's educational accomplishments. Tutorial mode of instruction. Also available through External Studies Program in print-based format and over the Internet through RU Online.
Credits: 3
Attributes: Adult Flex Track
Prerequisites: PLS 351 (may be taken concurrently) or PLS 361 (may be taken concurrently) or PLS 371 (may be taken concurrently) or PLS 390 (may be taken concurrently) or PLS 391 (may be taken concurrently) or PLS 392 (may be taken concurrently)
Course Notes: Must be admitted to the Flex-Track Program for Adults or have Advisor consent to register.