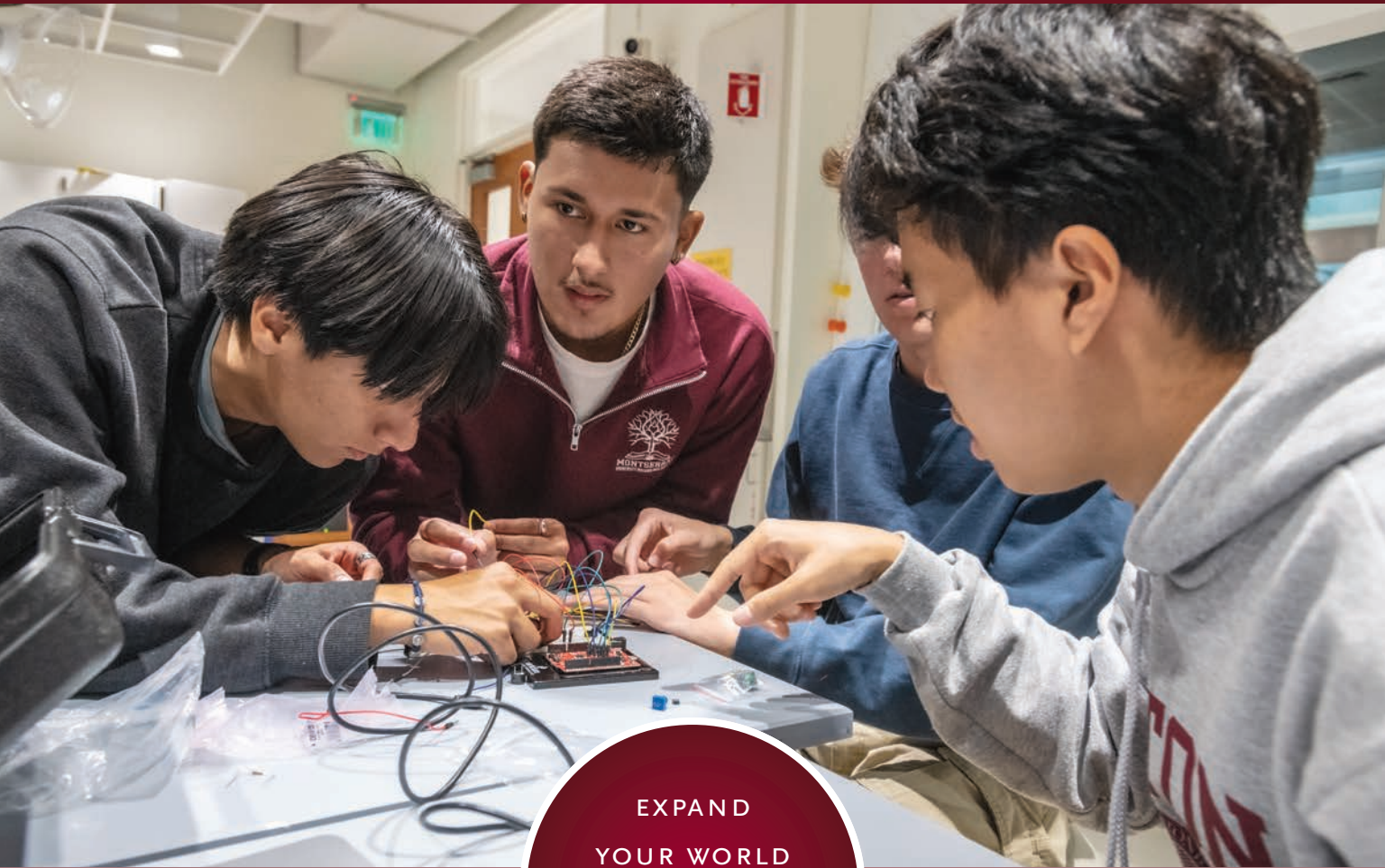


Complex Problems & Enduring Questions

SPRING 2023 COURSES FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS



EXPAND
YOUR WORLD

EXPAND
YOURSELF

BOSTON COLLEGE

THE CORE

The centerpiece of a Jesuit education has always been a common curriculum that emphasizes the study of defining works in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. 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 the 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 Arts: *Art, Art History, Film, Music, Theatre*

1 course in Cultural Diversity

2 courses in History: *1 course in History I
1 course in History II*

1 course in Literature: *Classics; English; Romance Languages and Literatures; Eastern, Slavic, and German Studies*

1 course in Mathematics

2 courses in Natural Science: *Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Physics*

2 courses in Philosophy

2 courses in Social Science: *Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology*

2 courses in Theology: *1 course in Christian Theology
1 course in Sacred Texts and Traditions*

1 course in Writing

To view all courses that satisfy Core requirements, visit:
BC.EDU/CORE

Student comments in this brochure taken from anonymous survey responses

COMPLEX PROBLEM COURSES

Each of these six-credit courses, team-taught by professors from different disciplines, satisfies at least two Core requirements. Complex Problem courses consist of lectures and weekly lab sessions, along with a weekly meeting during the evening for reflection.

ENDURING QUESTION COURSES

These linked pairs of courses are taught by professors from different disciplines, who collaborate on exploring a single, long-standing question for students to address throughout the semester. The same group of 19 students takes each class. Four evening reflection sections will be scheduled over the course of the semester. Taken together, the courses are worth six credits and fulfill at least two Core requirements.

Some Complex Problem or Enduring Question courses fulfill three Core requirements by also satisfying the Cultural Diversity Core requirement through either Difference, Justice and the Common Good in the U.S. (DJCG) or Engaging Difference and Justice (EDJ).

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



AS A MEMBER OF THE CLASS OF 2026, YOU ARE INVITED TO enroll in Boston College's innovative, team-taught Core courses: Complex Problem and Enduring Question. Each one is collaboratively taught by two faculty members from different academic departments, and each is designed to engage students in interdisciplinary explorations of topics of critical importance. These include areas such as ethics and engineering; race and violence; markets, cultures, and values; economics, law, and health policy; the value of freedom; psychological and literary perspectives of disability; 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 visits, creating an intensive shared learning experience for both teachers and students. They exemplify Boston College's innovative 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 Complex Problem and Enduring Question courses when you register for spring courses this November. Both are worth six credits and fulfill at least two of the University's Core requirements.

To view faculty members describing their courses and for more information, visit **BC.EDU/COMPLEXENDURING**





Some **Complex Problem** courses will use **PODs** for their weekly Reflection sessions. With **PODs (Purposeful, Ongoing Discussion)**, upper-class

students mentor first-year students in tackling course material through intellectual conversations and reflections. Through this engagement, students connect content to their daily lives. PODs help BC fulfill its mission to produce “men and women for whom discernment is a habit.”

Understanding and Protecting Our Ocean in the Wake of Global Change BIOL1706 + ENV51075

Heather Olins, Biology

Vena Offen, Core Fellow, Environmental Studies

Courtney Humphries, Core Fellow, Environmental Studies

► Fulfills 2 Natural Science

The ocean, which covers more than 70 percent of the Earth’s surface, is vital to human societies. Yet, we have better maps of Mars than our own seafloor. This course introduces students to what we know and don’t know about the marine realm, focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem services. It then describes the effects of global change on the ocean—including rising temperatures, acidification, and sea level rise—and the resulting impact on life within and outside of the ocean. We end discussing the importance of effective governance and explore innovative ways in which people are working to repair and protect the ocean.

These course lectures meet:

- T TH 10:30–11:45 a.m.

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

- M 9–10:50 a.m.
- M 11–12:50 p.m.
- W 9–10:50 a.m.
- W 11–12:50 p.m.

Reflection will be held:

- T 6–7:15 p.m.

Planet in Peril: The History and Future of Human Impacts on the Planet SOCY1509 + HIST1505

Juliet Schor, Sociology

Prasannan Parthasarathi, History

Robin Wright, Core Fellow, Environmental Studies

► Fulfills 1 Social Science + 1 History II

The 21st century opened with multiple crises—of climate, biodiversity, and ecosystem functioning. This class addresses these environmental crises from the perspectives of sociology and history, paying particular attention to the roles of inequality, the state, and power. We combine contemporary analyses with consideration of the long historical record of human impacts, considering both the familiar and the novel. We devote substantial attention not only to the causes but to solutions. Topics to be covered include the Columbian Exchange, forests, agriculture, water, climate change, toxins, and population. Solutions to crises may include public policy, social movements, individual action, and social innovation.

These course lectures meet:

- MWF 12–12:50 p.m.

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

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

Reflection will be held:

- W 6–7:50 p.m.



Faith, Ethics, and the Sciences in the 21st Century

THEO1723 + PHIL1723

Stephen Pope, Theology

Holly Vandewall, Philosophy

Russell Powell, Core Fellow, Theology

► Fulfills 1 Theology (Christian Theology) + 1 Philosophy

The rise of modern science has raised and continues to raise a wide range of questions for both religious belief and religiously based morality. The sciences have made it clear that the cosmos is much older and much bigger than the pre-moderns had recognized. The sciences are often taken as challenging traditional views of religion, morality, and the world. Contemporary critics regard religion as either obsolete or a threat to humanity. Why have the modern sciences been taken to carry these implications and need they be taken in this way? Alternatively, can the sciences play a constructive role in how we think about faith, ethics, and human nature? Can contemporary believers fully accept the findings of science? If so, how might doing so influence how believers think about God and God's relation to the world? This course will be team-taught by a philosopher and a theologian who have been researching the relationships between natural science and religious belief. We will explore the implications of modern physics and evolutionary biology for Jewish and Christian understandings of human origins, the good life, and ethical responsibility for ourselves, our communities, and our wider natural world.

These course lectures meet:

- MWF 10–10:50 a.m.

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

- T 9–10:50 a.m.
- T 11–12:50 p.m.
- TH 9–10:50 a.m.
- TH 11–12:50 p.m.

Reflection will be held:

- TH 6–7:15 p.m.

The “Other” Americans: Representation and Reality in Asian America HIST1621 + UNAS1729

Arissa Oh, History

Anthony Tran, Communication

Hongyan Yang, Core Fellow, History

► Fulfills 1 History II, 1 Arts + 1 Cultural Diversity through EDJ

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 US 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 US to understand how US 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 US history as both historians and media producers to examine the complex ways Asian-Americans have shaped America itself.

These course lectures meet:

- T TH 9–10:15 a.m.

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

- TH 1–2:50 p.m.
- TH 3–4:50 p.m.
- F 9–10:50 a.m.
- F 11–12:50 p.m.

Reflection will be held:

- Tu 6–7:15 p.m.



Why Do the Wicked Prosper? Portraits of Good and Evil in Literature UNAS1727

Why Do the Wicked Prosper? Portraits of Good and Evil in Film FILM1702

Susan Michalczyk, MCAS College Faculty

John Michalczyk, Art, Art History & Film

► **Fulfills 1 Literature + 1 Arts**

Why do the wicked prosper?

Why are we fascinated by accounts of good and evil, aligning ourselves with the forces of good, shunning the villains. While identifying with the righteous, we remain intrigued by the triumphs of this wicked, all too well aware of the phrase, “good guys finish last.” How does the writer or filmmaker approach this powerful theme and manipulate our emotions, and leave us asking questions about our own civic responsibility? Through reading literature and historical documents, and viewing films and documentaries, students will have opportunities to consider the power of written words and visual images to influence long-standing beliefs in society.

These course lectures meet:

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

Reflection will be held:

- T 6–7:50 p.m.

“This course got me and my peers talking about very touchy subjects that demand attention. It helped me develop language for topics I formerly did not know how to discuss and helped me understand the nuances of oppression in the US.”

Institutional Disparity: Equity and Global Health PHCG1702**Institutional Disparity: Equity and US Education** SOCY1729

Tara Casebolt, Core Fellow, Global Public Health and the Common Good

Nora Gross, Core Fellow, Sociology

► **Fulfills 2 Social Science**

How do societies perpetuate inequities and disparities in education and health?

Throughout history and around the world, there have been disparities in access to education and healthcare on the basis of socially constructed identity categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and disability status. These paired Enduring Questions courses will use sociological and public health methods and resources to investigate disparities in education and health and the inequities that result from them. We will explore the long-lasting implications of these inequities on individuals and society as a whole.

These course lectures meet:

Section 01

- MWF 9–9:50 a.m.
- MWF 10–10:50 a.m.

OR

Section 02

- MWF 1–1:50 p.m.
- MWF 2–2:50 p.m.

Reflection will be held:

- W 6–7:50 p.m.

St. Petersburg: Dream & Reality CLAS1703**Rome: Art, Regime & Resistance** CLAS1702

Thomas Epstein, Classical Studies

Christopher Polt, Classical Studies

► **Fulfills 1 Literature + History I**

To what kinds of life and culture do great cities give rise?

Rome is the West's oldest archetype of the imperial city; St. Petersburg the youngest, and perhaps last. To what kinds of life and culture do great cities give rise? Exploring artistic, intellectual, and social dimensions of Rome and St. Petersburg, we will ask about the responsibility of the human person to the society in which he or she lives. How do artists respond to official conceptions of identity and how, conversely, does the state view its artists and intellectuals? How are local and national self-identities made and unmade by art and artists? Our reflection sessions will explore how these questions find expression in our own first "great" city, Boston.

These course lectures meet:

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

Reflection will be held:

- TH 6–7:50 p.m.





BOSTON COLLEGE

Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences

CORE CURRICULUM

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"It changed my life."

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