* **How Do Human Brains Actually Learn Best? - by Dr. Matt Hearn**

This course aims to help first-year Honors students answer two important questions: 1) How can I learn more stuff faster and more permanently? and 2) What is a research library, and why should I care?  Aimed at students pursuing every discipline, it combines a basic introduction to cognitive neuroscience with a basic introduction to advanced information technology.  Our goal is to accelerate students’ adjustment to the higher standards of academic performance demanded by their university courses and to the more specialized research skills that strong academic performance requires.  In addition, we will spend some time examining the university as a unique social community and learning to find a home within it.

* **The Arts of Community and Culture: The Significance of Star Wars – Dr. Neal Allison**

With the release of The Force Awakens in December 2015, the Star Wars phenomenon seems to be as popular as ever. Why does it resonate so much with the human psyche? This course will examine these issues from a cultural and historical perspective, specifically focusing on the hero’s journey found in many traditional stories from around the world. How are these concepts tied to psychology, mythology, and anthropology? What does this say about us as humans, and our search for meaning in our culture?  Through film and readings, we'll analyze this ongoing event and its ties to global culture.

* **The Arts of Community and Culture: Exploring Perspectives Different Than Your Own – Dr. Brandi Kellett** Teaches students to think about the cultures from which they come and to critically assess their own bias so that they will thoughtfully and empathetically engage people from different communities.   We will think together about life as a college freshman, becoming an adult, and learning to live with intentional integrity.  This course assumes that success, in part, depends on your ability to pay attention to the variety of perspectives that exist in the global and local worlds in which you find yourself.  We will learn how to pay engaged attention to ourselves, to other people, places and things as we consider how to best observe and then interact with the world around us, rejecting easy assumptions about ourselves and others.  Students will think about how their perspectives have been shaped by family, socioeconomic class, language, race, nationality, gender and religion.  We will examine the communities to which we belong, and think about how we might encounter and explore perspectives different than our own.
* **Arts of Perceiving and Thinking: Defense Against the Dark Arts and Sciences - Dr. Alan Bradshaw.**

In the world of Harry Potter, the “dark arts” are “any type of magic that is mainly used to cause harm, control or even death to the victim.” While we can likely rattle off dozens of examples of such dark arts we confront, I propose that the first step toward a coherent defense against such dark arts (and I add the word “sciences” to acknowledge their role in the liberal arts) is to marshal the willingness and ability to formulate and articulate the most relevant questions about the issues we face, including questions of identity. The second step is to muster the courage to implement solutions even if the answers to our questions are not fully formed. How do we, students of the liberal arts and sciences in a Christian university, best situate ourselves to pursue these questions and their answers?

* **Learning to Tell Our (Family) Stories  - Dr. Kimberly Reed**

Each of us—no matter our age—has powerful stories to tell. And as we tell and reflect on those stories, we often discover both the meaning and the plotline of our lives—where we have been, where we are going, who has called us, and to what kind of life we have been called.   Sometimes we are called by family members and close friends, and sometimes by the most ordinary events of our lives. And if we are paying attention, we will often discover that the One who does the calling is God, working in our lives through the ordinary and the mundane. In this class, we will read several memoirs by people who, like us, have searched for the plotline and meaning of their lives, and we will then write and share our own stories and (optionally) our family’s stories as we engage in that inescapable human quest for purpose and meaning.

* **Telling Your Story– Dr. Steve Prewitt**

Our theme this semester is Telling Your Story. Allow me to quote my colleague Richard Hughes, our Scholar-in-Residence, who has been teaching a similar course at several other universities for years: “Each of us—no matter our age—has powerful stories to tell.  Often the most compelling stories grow out of suffering and tragedy, though profound and wonderful stories can often emerge from reflecting on the ordinary events of our lives.  We will try to discover the richest stories each of us has to tell, and we will learn to tell them in compelling ways.  We will learn the art of storytelling in part by reading several exemplary authors, but also by writing, sharing what we have written with one another and then reflecting on what we have written.”

* **The Arts of Perceiving and Thinking: Problem Solving in Life  - Dr. Gary Hall**

How good are you at paying attention?  Do you love watching a “who-done-it” and solving the mystery before the detectives because you paid attention to the clues?  When a problem comes in your life, do you feel at a loss for what to do to handle or solve the problem; have you paid attention to what the problem really is? In this class we will explore methods for paying attention to details, people, and people's backgrounds and differences to solve all sorts of problems including mysteries, but especially in relationships and in life.