RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
First-Year Seminar

The Universe in 2050

Course Information:
Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites: First-time, first-year student status
Class Meeting Day(s), Tuesdays and Fridays: 8:00-9:30 AM Room: XXXX

Instructor Information:
Instructor's Name, Title: Dr. Leo J. McKenzie, adjunct professor
Office Location & Phone No.: A-217
Office Hours: 9:30-10:15 AM, Tuesdays and Fridays, or by appointment
E-mail: imcken2@ramapo.edu
Mailbox Location: A-217
School Office Location: A-217
School Office Phone No.: XXXX

Common Course Description:

Designed for first-time, full-time, first-year students, First-Year Seminar (FYS) provides a comprehensive introduction to college-level learning. Seminar courses are developed around an academic theme or topic that is based on one of Ramapo College’s academic pillars. First-Year students will have the opportunity to select a seminar that best suits their interests while learning about Ramapo’s academic foundation. The First-Year Seminar course helps students in their transition from high school to college life both in and out of the classroom. The common learning outcomes of FYS are: critical and creative thinking, college-level writing, oral communication, information literacy, and technological competency. FYS classes are small to emphasize open discussion and experiential learning within the context of the theme of the seminar course. Peer facilitators play an essential role in each FYS class ensuring that first-year students have guidance from a more experienced student. FYS is also the home of the Ramapo Summer Reading Program; all first-year students read the same book and discuss and write about it in their seminars. FYS encourages new students to participate in a community of learners, to strengthen their critical thinking skills, and to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

Course Description of this Section:

Most members of the Ramapo Class of 2017 will be planning their retirement from the work force around the dawn of the year 2050. Most then will be 55 years of age or older and will have seen the world change drastically from what it is as they begin this course.

“The Universe in 2050” will examine what scholars today are predicting the world will be like in 2050. Students will research scholarly prognostications, evaluate them, and ascertain whether or not these predictions may impact their future careers and professions. Students will
examine whether Arctic Rim nations will become more prosperous, powerful and politically stable while countries near the Equator will face catastrophic fresh water shortages, massive aging populations, and uninhabitable megacities. Another theory that will be tested is whether, because of globalization, the world is becoming flatter thus rendering the United States almost powerless to maintain its superpower status. Artificial intelligence, it has been predicted, will be in 2050 one billion times more powerful than all human intelligence is today.

In 2050, the United States will have a population 100 million larger than it has today and Whites will be the largest minority in the population. In 2050, the Earth will have a population of nine billion people, of whom seven billion will be living in cities. Nanotechnology, now in its infancy, will develop exponentially allowing programmed molecular assembly to produce almost anything out of raw materials. Astrophysicists are reporting that our universe is in a state of constant expansion and that there is not a single universe but there are many universes, a multiverse.

**This seminar does not require a scientific background; it does require an open mind, a mind willing to learn, and an inquisitive mind.**

This seminar is essentially pragmatic as opposed to theoretical; it will used the theories of great modern thinkers and apply them to the world you are living in now and the world your work-life labors will help to create. In this seminar, students will assess the feasibility of scholarly predictions and analyze the impact they may have on the students’ future careers and professions.

**Course Goals:**

The following skill-development goals will be emphasized during the seminar and are to be acquired and/or improved by each student:

1. To enhance the students’ critical reasoning and reading skills;
2. To develop critical analysis skills;
3. To further develop students’ presentation skills;
4. To learn to participate constructively in group discussions;
5. To master the skills to manage a group discussion;
6. To enhance students’ research skills;
7. To improve the writing skills of each student by emphasizing succinctness, clarity and organization;
8. To expand the intellectual horizons of students regarding our universe in 2050.
Measurable Student Learning Outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will:</th>
<th>Research Paper</th>
<th>Class discussions and essays</th>
<th>Class Presentations</th>
<th>Course enrichment component</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate proficiency in written communication</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrate proficiency in oral communication</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrate information literacy</td>
<td>x</td>
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Peer Facilitators:

As an added resource for first-year students, each section of First-Year Seminar (FYS) will have a peer facilitator. These upper-level students will attend FYS classes and assist the instructor with the academic topics covered in this seminar. They will serve as discussion leaders on issues that pertain to your personal and social development and they will facilitate weekly discussions on the class readings. Your peer facilitator will be your mentor and will be available to you to provide guidance on navigating the different personal and social hurdles that you may encounter in your first year at Ramapo.

Our seminar will have two peer facilitators: Natalie Marek, ’14 (nmarek@ramapo.edu), and Courtney Renz, ’15 (crenz@ramapo.edu). If you have any questions during the summer, do not hesitate to contact either of them.

First-Year Academic Advising:

Each First-Year Seminar course is assigned a professional Academic Advisor from the Center for Academic Advising and First-Year Experience (CAAFYE) who serves as your Academic Advisor during your first year. This advisor will attend your First-Year Seminar class for a group advisement session to review general academic advising policies and procedures. They will also be available to answer any general questions regarding college policies/practices. Students are encouraged to schedule individual appointments with their CAAFYE Advisor for assistance with course selection and the development of a personal academic plan. If you have any questions regarding Academic Advisement please call CAAFYE at (201) 684-7441 or via email at: caafye@ramapo.edu
Texts, Readings, Materials:

Course Texts:


[Note: *Rules for Writers* and *Digital Vertigo* have been bundled together for purchase at the Ramapo College bookstore. The ISBN for the bundle is: 978-1-4576-7549-2.]

Library Reserves: The books listed below will be available in the library for supplementary reading and for your research:


Course Requirements:

1. **Active seminar participation**. The very nature of a college seminar requires the active participation of all its members. Etymologically the word seminar means a nursery, a breeding ground for ideas. Extending the metaphor further, a seminar needs the cross pollination of the insights, observations, and discernments of its member to be maximally successful.
The grade for active participation must be earned. It includes, but it is not limited to, meeting deadline for all assignments, sending all class assignments via the College email system, verbally contributing to class discussions, being prepared for each class topic as noted in the syllabus schedule, following the course cell phone prohibitions, abiding by the attendance and lateness requirements of the course. Being passive and not adding ideas and reactions to class discussions will not earn participation points.

2. **Convincing oral presentations.** One of the two indispensable personal skills every employer is seeking in an employee is the ability to communicate effectively orally his or her ideas to fellow employees. Hence, in this seminar each student will make three presentations to the class: two presentations of five minutes each and one presentation of ten minutes supplemented by PowerPoint and followed by a question and answer period. The topic for the longer presentation will be assigned.

   An outline for each presentation is to be sent to your professor via College email 72 hours before its schedule delivery.

3. **Effective writing.** A second personal skill every employer seeks with new employees is the ability to communicate ideas in writing to managers and co-employees. Hence students will have six written assignments during the semester to enhance their writing ability for future college courses and eventually for their careers. A research paper of ten pages will be due December 10. It will be written during the whole semester with opportunities for multiple drafts. The topic for the research paper will be assigned.

   A writing assignment will be based on *Digital Vertigo* and Professor Keen’s lecture at the College Convocation on September 3.

   There will be two brief papers based on the ideas of Kurzweil, Tyson and Kaku.

   A paper of five pages on a topic of the student’s choosing, but based on the topics being cover in our textbook, *The Future*, will be required.

   All writing assignments for this seminar will allow multiple drafts if needed. It is hoped that each student’s original written submission will demonstrate the student’s best possible work and additional submissions will not be needed. If additional submissions are needed they are acceptable and will not penalize the student’s grade. Writing is a learned skill and a student’s writing will improve the more the student writes. The writing-intensive objective for this seminar is to encourage each student to become a better writer throughout the course than the student was at the beginning of the course.

4. **Course Enrichment Component:**

   This course requires an unmonitored academic experience outside the classroom requiring a **minimum** of five hours of work. I am recommending students choose a career they have interest in and research what scholars are predicting for that profession by the year 2050. It
is recommended that TED Conferences, Aspen Institute, BookTV, and other on-line scholarly lectures be consulted.

Students will show the results of their independent research (CPC) through a paper or a presentation. The results of their independent work should be evident in their finished product.

**General Education Program Course:**

This course fulfills the First-Year Seminar category of the general education curriculum at Ramapo College. Common to all First-Year Seminar (FYS) courses, you will develop critical thinking skills that are basic to college level study, regardless of your area of interest. You will be reading, writing, and participating in thoughtful group discussions with the aim of developing the skills of a scholar. You will learn to support your arguments using a foundation of knowledge and facts rather than simply using personal opinions and experiences.

*The Universe in 2050* is an interdisciplinary studies course. It will explore topics that cross academic discipline lines such as artificial intelligence, an area of study originally found in computer science and now also studied in psychology and sociology. The various topic the seminar will cover will be examined from a multiple-disciplinary viewpoint.

**Writing Intensive (WI) Course:**

Writing will be integrated into the life of this course. You will receive comments, direction, and support as you work on strengthening your writing skills. Your writing will be evaluated and returned in a timely fashion, allowing you to incorporate my comments into your future work. For help outside the classroom, please see me during my office hours and/or work with a writing tutor in the Center for Reading and Writing (CRW), Room: L-211, x7557, crw@ramapo.edu.

**Weekly Class Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class topic, reading assignment</th>
<th>Exam/assignment/paper due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 3rd, 1:00 – 2:30 PM</td>
<td>Opening Convocation, Andrew Keen, author of <em>Digital Vertigo: How Today's Online Social Revolution Is Dividing, Diminishing, and Disorienting Us</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1, 9/6</td>
<td>Introduction to First Year Seminar. Discussion of <em>Digital Vertigo</em>. Discussion of course syllabus. Writing Assignment #1. Read textbook: Introduction and be able to discuss it in next class.</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #1 Due: 9/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>9/10-13</td>
<td>State of Universe today. Discussion of <em>The Future</em>’s introduction. Read text: Chapter #1 for next week, 9/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>9/24-27</td>
<td>Library Research Workshop. Presentation #1 this week.</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>10/1-4</td>
<td>Read for next week: Chapter #3 in text and be able to discuss it in class. Written assignment #3 will be discussed. Machio Kaku’s ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>10/15-18</td>
<td>Read for next week Chapter #4 and be able to discuss it in class. Will assign Presentation #3. Discussion of research paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>10/29-11/1</td>
<td>Read for next week Chapter #5 in the text and be prepared to discuss it in class.</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>11/5-8</td>
<td>Discussion: “Reinvention of Life and Death.” Discuss CPC requirement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>11/12-15</td>
<td>Read for next week Chapter #6 in the text and be able to discuss it in class on 11/19.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>11/19-22</td>
<td>Read Conclusion of text for 11/16.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving recess</strong> (Wednesday, November 27th to Saturday, November 30th). Review of <em>The Future</em>. Writing assignment #4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>12/3-6</td>
<td>CPC presentations or papers are due this week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>12/10-13</td>
<td>Research paper due: 12/10. All rewrites for assignments are due 12/13. All make-up presentations are due this week.</td>
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Important Dates
First Day of Classes: September 4th
Last day for Schedule Adjustments (on the Web): September 13th
Last day to withdraw from courses with “W” grade: October 23rd
Thanksgiving Recess: Nov 27th – 30th
Reading Day (no classes): December 15th
Final Exam Week: December 16th – 21st
Common Finals: December 21st
Last day to request “I” grades: December 20th
Residence Halls close (6pm): December 21st
Final Exam Snow Make-Up Day: December 23rd

Grading Policy
• Indicate the percentage of a course grade allocated to each component of the course, either here or within the descriptions of the course components in the ‘Course Requirements” section.
• Specify your grading scale (e.g. number of points for an A, B, C, etc.). Note that we do not have A+ or D- grades for undergraduate courses.
• Rubrics and assessment tools may be included in this section of the syllabus, or in the instructions for each assignment.
• You should also specify your policy on allowing incomplete grades (consistent with the college’s Incomplete policy) and make-ups for tests.
• This information is essential in the case of a grade dispute. Instructors frequently express such guidelines on grades proportionally, though other methods are certainly available. The issue is not the method used but that the student should have a clear understanding of how you will arrive at a quantitative evaluation of their work.

Attendance Policy
• The College does not have a common Attendance Policy; faculty are free to develop their own. It must be provided on the syllabus.
• Indicate how many absences are permitted, how they will affect the final grade, and how arriving late or leaving early will be handled. For example, do you limit the number of allowed absences; what policy do you practice in regard to giving make-ups for missed examinations?
• You must also include the following statement on religious observances:
  “College policy states that students must notify faculty within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing any classes due to religious observance.”

Electronic Forms of Communication:
In accordance with College policy, I will use your Ramapo College email address
(@ramapo.edu) to communicate with you about all course-related matters.

All written assignment and outlines of presentations are to be sent through Ramapo College’s email system.

**Students with Disabilities:**

“If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a disability that has been documented with the Office of Specialized Services, please make an appointment with me.”

Please note: Students must be registered with the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) to receive accommodations. As you develop or revise your course syllabus, consider ways to make your course material accessible to students with disabilities. For additional information, contact the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) at x7514 or email at oss@ramapo.edu. Please do not place a time limit on when students may request accommodation, as they may not be aware of their need until later in the semester.

Academic Integrity Policy:

All members of the community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Since violations of academic integrity erode community confidence and undermine the pursuit of truth and knowledge at the College, academic dishonesty must be avoided.

Procedures:

The Office of the Provost has responsibility for the oversight and enforcement of the Academic Integrity Policy and for making the policy an institutional priority. The Office of the Provost is also responsible for publishing the policy and for educating both faculty and students about the policy.

Faculty members play a crucial role in the Academic Integrity Policy. They are responsible for educating their students about the importance of academic integrity and for communicating to students their expectations with respect to academic integrity in course work. They are also urged to report alleged violations of the policy to the Vice Provost.

Students have the responsibility to understand the Academic Integrity Policy and to comply with the policy in their academic work.

**Criteria:**

There are four (4) broad forms of academic dishonesty:

1. **Cheating**

   Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents his or her mastery of material on a test or other academic exercise. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

   - copying from another student’s work;
   - allowing another student to copy his/her work;
   - using unauthorized materials such as a textbook, notebook, or electronic devices during an examination;
o using specifically prepared materials, such as notes written on clothing or other unauthorized notes, formula lists, etc., during an examination;

o collaborating with another person during an examination by giving or receiving information without authorization from the instructor;

o taking a test for another person or asking or allowing another to take the student’s own test.

2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a person represents someone else’s words, ideas, phrases, sentences, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work that includes such material, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific footnote or endnote references; additionally, verbatim statements must be acknowledged through quotation marks. To avoid a charge of plagiarism, a student should be sure to include an acknowledgment of indebtedness:

- whenever he or she quotes another person’s words directly;
- whenever he or she uses another person’s ideas, opinions, or theories, even if they have been completely paraphrased in one’s own words;
- whenever he or she allows another individual to contribute to the work in some significant fashion (for instance, through editing or sharing of ideas);
- whenever he or she uses facts, statistics, or other illustrative material taken from a source, unless the information is common knowledge.

Examples of standard citation formats can be found on the George T. Potter Library Website: Library Website: Citation Manuals and Style Guides

3. Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes the alteration of grades, involvement in the acquisition or distribution of unadministered tests, and the unauthorized submission of student work in more than one class. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- changing, altering, falsifying, or being the accessory to the changing, altering, or falsifying of a grade report or form, transcript, or other academic record, or entering any computer system or College office or building for that purpose;
- stealing, buying, selling, giving way, or otherwise obtaining all or part of any unadministered test or paper or entering any computer system or College office or building for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test;
- submitting written work (in whole or in significant part) to fulfill the requirements of more than one course without the explicit permission of both instructors;
- disregarding policies governing the use of human subjects or animals in research;
- sabotaging another student’s work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment;
o knowingly facilitating a violation of the academic integrity policy by another person.

4. Fabrication

Fabrication refers to the deliberate use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples of fabrication include, but are not limited to:

- citing information not taken from the source indicated;
- citing of sources in a “works cited” that were not used in that project;
- altering, stealing, and/or falsifying research data used in research reports, theses, or dissertations;
- submitting as one’s own any academic work prepared in whole or in part by others, including the use of another’s identity;
- falsifying information or signatures on registration, withdrawal, or other academic forms and records.

Reporting Violations

To ensure due process, any member of the Ramapo community who is aware of violations of the College’s academic integrity policy is expected to report the incident to the Office of the Provost.

Faculty members who choose to resolve the matter themselves are urged also to report the incident to the Office of the Provost, since the incident may be a repeat offense, or there may be a subsequent grade appeal.

More details on Ramapo College’s academic integrity policy can be found here: http://www.ramapo.edu/catalog_13_14/academic-policies.html