RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Fall 2015: First-Year Seminar
Dynamics of Self-Identity

Course Information
Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites: First-time, first-year student status
MWR 10-11:10am, Anisfield School of Business (ASB) 221

Michael A. Unger
Associate Professor of Political Science
unger@ramapo.edu, 201-684-7761
Office Hours: Monday, 1-2, Tuesday 1-3 A-Wing 214

FYS 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. 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.

LLC Description
This LLC will provide students with an opportunity to explore who they are, using theories in psychology, political science, and across the social sciences. We will learn how to define the “self” and the societal influences that help to create who one is as a person. We will explore politics (such as defining "otherness" and debates over who gets what, when and how) as it relates to ourselves. We will also examine the influence of our social identities (such as gender, class, race, and sexual orientation) on how we understand ourselves. Finally, we will engage in efforts to insert the “self” into society, by encouraging students to participate in civic engagement and social change initiatives. In addition to informative lectures, discussions, debates, and writing exercises, as a part of this LLC students will engage in immersive activities throughout the semester. For example, we will take two trips to New York City. The first trip will be a tour of ethnically diverse food trucks in New York City. The second trip will be to see the Broadway musical Cabaret. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to volunteer in local communities. We will also have several guest speakers and panels, such as a
panel that give students a chance to ask the questions they’ve always wanted to ask to people of different sexual orientations. We’ll also watch movies, such as “The Breakfast Club” in first year seminar to discuss teenagers’ identities and to talk about how identities change from high school to college. We’ll watch documentaries in Social Issues such as Miss Representation, which discusses issues how women are portrayed in media outlets.

**Course Description**

In this First Year Seminar, we will explore how politics is present in many aspects of life, which includes some surprising places. While politics is everywhere, this is not a political science course. Instead, it is a broad introduction to the idea that politics play an important role in our daily lives. Understanding politics helps one better understand the world and oneself. The required readings for this course highlight what some will see as a surprisingly political topic—food—and something more explicitly political—elections. We begin the course with a general discussion about the summer reading and how we view ourselves, others, and college life. Later in the semester, we will discuss citizenship, race, the politics of getting a college education, and use food as a way of understanding ourselves, others, and politics. At the end of the semester, students in the class will choose the final two course texts. Please think about short readings, television shows, movies, or documentaries that you would like the class to consider. After nominations, the class will vote on the two texts. We will also discuss relevant current events as reported by news outlets and blogs. By “current events,” I mean politics, entertainment, sports, lifestyle, and social media; in other words, any current events we think are related to the class.

**Course Goals**

This course will prepare students for the kind of academic inquiry expected at college and seeks to foster openness including a willingness to challenge assumptions and to acknowledge error. It strives to introduce students to the complexities of cultural interaction and foster the ability to think critically about such encounters. The course is designed to help students better understand their own identity and how identity shapes their view of the world. The goal is transformation, not mere transmission of knowledge.

**Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will:</th>
<th>Research Paper</th>
<th>Class Discussions &amp; Essays</th>
<th>Final Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate proficiency in written communication</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate proficiency in oral communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate information literacy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the discipline in which they plan to major, or explore a range of possible majors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an understanding of the complexity of human cultural experience and skills for interpreting</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identify the resources and support services Ramapo College offers to students
Define the “self” and the societal influences that help create who one is as a person.

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.

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 and Readings

Moodle: You can find many course readings on Moodle. If you are not familiar with Moodle, please take a few minutes to learn the basics like logging into the system, downloading readings, and submitting assignments. All written assignments will be submitted through Moodle.

Course Requirements
Attendance: Attendance is a required element of the course. Students are permitted three absences for any reason. Please see the attendance policy below, but note that students
are allowed three absences for any reasons. Any unexcused absences beyond three absences will result in a one third letter grade (3 1/3 points) reduction in your course average.

Participation: Students are expected to participate in class. I value participation and view it as an essential component of learning. There are many forms of participation: speaking in class, emailing the professor, and attending office hours. Some students are not comfortable with public speaking. This is understandable. Talking in class will improve your course grade and give you confidence to speak publicly. So, I encourage all students to speak in class, ask questions, and come to office hours.

Papers: Students will write three short papers (2-3 pages) and a research project (8-10 pages). The research paper will be completed in three stages: proposal, rough draft, and final draft.

Reading Notes: All students must take reading notes throughout the semester that will be regularly uploaded to Moodle / Turnitin.com. The reading notes must be uploaded before class begins. To receive credit for the reading notes, you must address the following five questions about the text (note: “texts” for this course include reading assignments, movies, television shows, and videos):
1. What is the main point of the text?
2. What is the strongest aspect of the text?
3. What is the weakest aspect of the text?
4. What is one question that arises from the text?
5. What did you learn about yourself or your life from the text?

Library Research: There will be one library session that is designed to help you find academic sources for the research paper.

Grading Policy
Students are evaluated based on their performance in several aspects of this course including participation, written assignments, and exams. I do not curve the individual components of student grades or overall course grades. The scale is 100-92 A, 91-90 A-, 89-88 B+, 87-82 B, 81-80 B-, 79-78 C+, etc. 60 is the minimum passing grade.

The grade breakdown is as follows:
- Attendance: 5%
- Participation: 15%
- Two Short Papers: 15% each
- Research Project Proposal: 5%
- Research Project Rough Draft: 10%
- Research Project Final Draft: 20%
- Reading Notes: 15%

Taking an incomplete in this course is not encouraged, but it is sometimes necessary for students to do so because of various events and pressures. If you are otherwise passing
the course and need to take an incomplete for a valid reason, you must contact me as soon as possible so we may discuss your standing in the course and situation.

**Academic Freedom**
Each student is strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions. Due to the nature of this course, we will sometimes discuss controversial topics and points of view. We will treat each other in a respectful manner and conduct discussions with an appropriate tone.

**Policy on Electronic Devices**
Students should not use cell phones or computers for non-academic purposes. All phones should be silenced or turned off at the start of class. Using electronic devices for personal reasons during class distracts all members of our class (you, me, and other students) from the task at hand. Consistently using electronic devices for personal reasons during class will have a negative effect on your course grade.

**Attendance Policy**
Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted to miss three classes for any reason. Starting with the fourth absence, student grades are reduced by 3 1/3 points per absence. Please consult the professor about any on-going issues or potential problems. Unless there is an emergency, students must contact the professor by email prior to class in order to qualify for an excused absence. Also, the professor, not the student, decides whether an absence is excused or not. Students are generally expected to be on time and stay for the entire class. For the research paper, late proposals, rough drafts, and final drafts are penalized five points per day. Late readings notes will not be accepted. 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.

**Students with Disabilities**
If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a documented disability, please make an appointment during my office hours. Students must be registered with the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) to receive accommodations. For additional information, contact the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) at x7514 or E-mail at oss@ramapo.edu.

**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.

**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.

This is an interdisciplinary course because we are drawing on writing and research from many different fields including journalism, education, literature, and political science. Throughout the course, we will explore how different approaches inform our understanding of politics in our lives, strengths and weaknesses of different approaches, and how combining different methods provides increased leverage on understanding important issues. I encourage all students to take an interdisciplinary approach to their research projects by using academic sources from at least two subjects.

**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.

**Important Dates**
- First Day of Classes: September 2\(^{nd}\)
- Last day for Schedule Adjustments (on the Web): September 9\(^{th}\)
- Last day to withdraw from courses with “W” grade: November 13\(^{th}\)
- Thanksgiving Recess: Nov 25\(^{th}\) – 29\(^{th}\)
- Reading Day (no classes): December 15\(^{th}\)
- Final Exam Week: December 16\(^{th}\) – 22\(^{nd}\)
- Common Finals: December 19\(^{th}\)
- Last day to request “I” grades: December 22\(^{nd}\)
- Final Exam Snow Make-Up Day: December 23\(^{rd}\)

**Academic Integrity Policy: Responsibilities and Procedure**
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.

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

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;
  - using specifically prepared materials, such as notes written on clothing or other unauthorized notes, formula lists, etc., during an examination;
  - collaborating with another person during an examination by giving or receiving information without authorization from the instructor;
  - taking a test for another person or asking or allowing another to take the student’s own test.

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: Citation Manuals and Style Guides

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;
• knowingly facilitating a violation of the academic integrity policy by another person.

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-2014-2015/academic-policies/
Reading Assignments. Please note that there may be changes to the reading assignments and due dates. All changes will be announced in class and students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convocation</th>
<th>2pm, Bradley Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Politics” Everywhere</td>
<td>Syllabus, Common Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics of High School and College</td>
<td>Breakfast Club (available for streaming on Netflix, rental on Amazon.com)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Critical Thinking & Expectations | Moodle: Mcraney “You Are Not So Smart: Why We Can’t Tell Good Wine From Bad”  
Moodle: Science Friday Audio, “Look, Listen, Taste.” |
| Viewing Ourselves & Others | Wallace, “Consider the Lobster”  
**Paper 1 Due: Common Reading** |
| Library Session | Meet in the Library: Information Literacy |
| Viewing Ourselves & Others | Moodle, Bradbury, “The Veldt”  
Peer Advisement: The First Year |
| Being “American” & Race | Moodle: *Scott v. Sanford*  
Peer Advisement |
| Advisement & Peer Discussion | Advisement Session and Peer Advising |
| Trip to NYC: Midtown Food Cart Tour | Contact Professor Unger regarding any potential conflicts |
Moodle: Bishin et. al. “Should We Fear Opinion Backlash on Gay Marriage?” |
| Food | Pollan, Introduction, 1.1 – 1.3 |
| Food | Pollan 1.4-1.10 |
| Food | Pollan, Part 2 |
| Food | Pollan, Part 3 |
| Library Session | Library |
| The ACA aka Obama Care | Moodle: *Hobby Lobby* |
| Advisement | No Reading, Bring Appropriate Four Year Plans |
| Politics of College Education | Moodle: Williams, “Saying No to College”  
Moodle: Steinfeld, “Is College Worth It?”  
Moodle: Bessette, “Saying No To College: A Response”  
Moodle: Astin, “In ‘Academically Adrift,’ Data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics of College Education</td>
<td>Moodle: Mettler on Inequality &amp; College Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Bring research paper draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Papers</td>
<td><strong>Research Draft Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip to NYC: Cabaret</td>
<td>Contact Professor Unger regarding any potential conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics &amp; Elections</td>
<td>Moodle: Noel, “Ten Things Political Scientists Know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Moss, Prologue, 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Moss, 4-6 <strong>Paper 2 Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Moss, 7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Moss, 10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
<td>No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Moss, 12-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Selection</td>
<td>Text: TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Selection</td>
<td>Text: TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch-Up &amp; Conclusion</td>
<td>No New Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Week: No Exam</td>
<td><strong>Research Paper Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Oral Presentations</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>