

web.uri.edu/general-education



KIN 375G
Exercise is
Medicine

CHRISTIE WARD-RITACCO

Dr. Christie Ward-Ritacco believes that it is essential for all of us to take a stake in our own personal health, and this is the driving message behind her course Exercise is Medicine – KIN 375G. In this course, students learn about the science of physical activity and how to best assess their own health. The course introduces students to the various methods of measuring physical activity, as well as the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate health based data and research. Working in the cardio disease lab and the bone density lab, students gain hands-on learning experience, making this a valuable course for all majors, not just those studying kinesiology. Dr. Ward-Ritacco asserts that “bad habits that lead to poor outcomes usually start in the college years. I can use this course to help students form good habits from the beginning.” KIN 375G also covers units on stress, anxiety, and depression because many college students are battling these issues every day. In these ways, this upper level course is designed to engage students through the lens of their own personal health. For Dr. Ward-Ritacco, empowering students to feel more self-aware and health-literate is the most gratifying teaching experience.



SAF 400G
Reimagining Food
Systems Through
Agroecology

JOHN TAYLOR

To say that Dr. John Taylor brings a breadth and depth of knowledge and experience to the classroom is a huge understatement. Integrating his knowledge of landscape architecture and natural resource management, his research interests in food production systems and urban agriculture, and his life experience growing up on a farm, Dr. Taylor has designed SAF 400G – Reimagining Food Systems through Agroecology, as an interdisciplinary examination of how we produce food and the cultural practices we develop around food preparation and consumption. Open to all majors, SAF 400G tackles the ever looming question – how do we sustainably grow food to support the population? Dr. Taylor explains “the lens of this course is agroecology. The goal of this course is to better understand how we need to grow food in order to feed the masses and build a resilient and sustainable local food system.” This course immerses students in real-world problem-solving, having them conduct case studies of local at risk food systems. Working in neighborhoods around Newport and Pawtucket, students collect food stories, identify food activities, and plot food production. The takeaway from this experience – food systems are complicated and in order to manage them we must recognize the integral biophysical and social aspects. For Dr. Taylor, it is a constant source of motivation and inspiration to introduce students to his life’s passion and something they otherwise would not consider.



PSC 116G
Introduction to
International Politics

MARC HUTCHISON

What do you get when you combine a 250-person large lecture, economic theory, history, environmental politics, the Prisoner’s Dilemma, and Dr. Marc Hutchison? The answer – one of the most engaging, interesting, and dynamic classes on campus – Introduction to International Politics – PSC 116G. Dr. Hutchison designed PSC 116G to introduce students to political science theory, while also helping them recognize and better understand the pervasive influence international politics has in their own lives. A course that is ideal for both majors and non-majors alike, PSC 116G integrates core concepts with real world antidotes to engage students’ individual perspectives and encourage them to get involved in the decision-making that is international politics. Dr. Hutchison believes the large lecture setting is ideal for employing simulations because they capture the dynamic exchange between the international system and self-interest. For Dr. Hutchison, the most rewarding part of teaching the course “is the look of recognition when you bring up a point about how international politics affects them. The energy that comes from the class... that’s when you know you’ve really connected students to the material.” Dr. Hutchison truly enjoys teaching this Grand Challenge course and the opportunity to share with students how international politics shapes them, and the world around them.



HIS 304
Western Europe in
the High Middle Ages

JOËLLE ROLLO-KOSTER

A diorama of the battle of Poitiers, a virtual museum, a power point presentation on the making of beer in a monastery, and a 3D replica of a fourteenth-century sword represent just some of the creative projects presented in HIS 304 – Western Europe in the High Middle Ages. Dr. Joëlle Rollo-Koster’s goal in designing this Integrate and Apply general education course is to provide students an opportunity to explore a very specific field of study like medieval history through the lens of their own majors and individual interests. One of the interesting ways Dr. Rollo-Koster accomplishes this is by using historical immersion. As she explains, “historical immersion aims to convey deep knowledge of one time and place. Immersion is limited to a special historical moment, it is history at the micro level.” This technique allows students to experience a particular time that is distinct from their own by interpreting literature and artistic works, political and economic dynamics, and weighing scientific facts in order to gain a greater depth of study. This gives students a sense of how people coped with life during that particular time in history. Dr. Rollo-Koster loves to see the students’ creativity and how involved they get in the class. Sharing her knowledge about this exceptional time in history is most rewarding and she hopes the class inspires students to think in a more critical manner.