

KNIGHT 401 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS SPRING 2026

Catalog Description

KNGT 401: Merici Senior Seminar (3 credit hours)

The Merici Community Engaged Seminar is the culminating experience in the Core. It provides an interdisciplinary setting for students to utilize their knowledge from the core and their major to explore a current issue relevant in society. Through collaboration with students from other majors and relevant community partners, students will explore an issue to create a meaningful, multifaceted, and multidisciplinary analysis and proposal in response. This collaborative and integrative experience provides students the opportunity to recognize the multidimensionality of real-life problems.

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

KNGT 401-01, Tuesday 6:00-8:45 pm

Instructor: Cecil

This course will cover a basic introduction to financial empowerment and the different tactics associated with it: Financial education, financial coaching, etc. Students themselves will be receiving financial education around the topics of banking, budgeting, credit, etc. We will look at what local and national agencies provide what services. We will look at emerging trends and technologies, as well as study demographically who is seeking these services, and why? We will look at local, state, and federal policy towards the field. We will analyze what national-level empowerment efforts there are. We will also be looking at case studies of what other cities are doing. We will be looking at themes of inclusion, access, and community. We will look at what barriers exist to asset building. This course will have a Louisville-first focus but will also identify what is going on in the field nationally. Students completing this course will achieve their Level 1 certification in the Community Financial Empowerment Certification program offered through Louisville Metro Government. This course will include a community engagement component.

QUALITY OF LIFE

KNGT 401-02, MW 12:00 – 1:15

Instructor: Catron

We need the basics of food, water, shelter, and clothing to survive. But is survival enough to make life worth living? Why do we strive to create improvements in our world and our lives? We hear the Quality of Life used in a variety of contexts: financial, medical, political, social, and spiritual. This course explores what is meant by Quality of Life.

Different disciplines require specific elements when discussing their definition of “Quality of Life.” Throughout the semester, we will explore these definitions and trace how they have evolved. This journey will encompass reading a variety of texts to see how “Quality of Life” has and is being used to make policies in the public realm and is used to make personal life choices. We will also explore the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching as they intersect and closely relate to quality of life. Students will strive to articulate their own personal definition of “Quality of Life” and in doing so discover how their definition has been shaped. The final project asks students

to take course concepts and the knowledge they have gained in their courses and in internships/work to propose a solution their future profession can enact to improve an element of Quality of Life. the time of Plato and Aristotle until that of contemporary thinkers such as John Rawls and Charles Taylor. It will include, as well, a debate about the cultural and historical development of the concept of justice. The current debate on the possibility of the development of a common language about human rights and social ethics, despite a diversity of religious and cultural foundations, will be presented. Can Eastern and Western societies advocate for justice and human rights even though they do not share the same moral and religious foundations? Is a universal declaration of human rights possible in a world riven by religious and cultural fragmentation? This course will include a community engagement component.

JUSTICE: WHOSE AND HOW?

KNGT 401-03, MW 1:30-2:45 pm

Instructor: Fuller

The problem of discerning what is just is ancient. Central to both political and legal philosophy, it is essential to Christian social thinking. Our political lives are shaped according to the way we answer this question. Every pivotal Western and Eastern philosophical and religious thinker proposes a response to our problem. From the Old Testament prophets and poets until the protesters in Ferguson, we have weighed the means and meaning of justice. Recent Catholic social teaching has advocated the belief that we cannot build our communities and political life on charity and love alone. To have a healthy community just institutions are necessary. The purpose of this course is to discover the basic resources which our beliefs and traditions offer us in addressing the problem of justice. In class we will discuss and study the history of the nature of justice from the time of Plato and Aristotle until that of contemporary thinkers such as John Rawls and Charles Taylor. It will include, as well, a debate about the cultural and historical development of the concept of justice. The current debate on the possibility of the development of a common language about human rights and social ethics, despite a diversity of religious and cultural foundations, will be presented. Can Eastern and Western societies advocate for justice and human rights even though they do not share the same moral and religious foundations? Is a universal declaration of human rights possible in a world riven by religious and cultural fragmentation? This course will include a community engagement component.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

KNGT 401-04, TTH 8:00 – 9:15

Instructor: Williams

In a vast number of professions, you will experience interactions with those that suffer from mental health challenges, intellectual/developmental disabilities, drug and/or alcohol abuse, and a wide array of other ailments. Working with divisions of Seven Counties Services, we will study how to recognize the difference between the diagnoses/aliment, how to interact

respectfully and effectively, how to approach the individual in an inclusive manner and the meaning, impact, and management of the different situations.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

KNGT 401-05, TTH 9:25-10:40

Instructor: Readus

Ever wonder how impactful programs that change lives and inspire communities are actually created? This course pulls back the curtain to show you exactly how the sausage is made when it comes to building effective, game-changing community programs.

Whether you're a budding social entrepreneur or just passionate about creating real-world impact, you'll learn to take an idea and turn it into a program that inspires action and drives results. We'll cover it all—how to craft a mission and vision that people rally behind, engage key stakeholders, design systems to measure success, and build strategies to recruit and retain participants. Plus, you'll gain insider knowledge on using data and program evaluation to ensure your ideas deliver meaningful, measurable outcomes.

This isn't just theory—it's your chance to tackle real-world challenges, work with peers who share your passion for social change, and develop the skills to lead in any community-driven space. If you're ready to think big, learn how programs are built from the ground up, and make your mark as a social innovator, this course is your blueprint for success. This course will include a community engagement component.

PEOPLE, POWER, and PLACE

KNGT 401-06: W 6:00-7:15 pm, and 75 minutes of online asynchronous material

KNGT 401- 07: W 7:30 – 8:45 pm, and 75 minutes of online asynchronous material

Instructor: Spalione

Land simultaneously unites communities and divides societies thereby entwining people and power with place. A survey of some of the most pressing concerns of social ethics in the modern world – such as the Syrian refugee crisis, the United States's deportation of immigrants, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, along with numerous issues of the environmental crisis – demonstrates the moral significance of the way humans interact with land. This inescapable connection between people, power, and place is reflected in Pope Francis's encyclical letter *Laudato Si*: “[we] must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (p.35). Thus, this class will discuss the ecological and social ethics of land dealing with challenging questions such as the following: What ecological responsibilities do societies have in the use of natural resources? What are the political ethics of national borders? What are the inalienable rights of displaced persons seeking a homeland? How can local communities care for their immediate environment in an effective and sustainable ways? This course will include a community engagement component.

THEATRE AND PRISON

Section ON - Online asynchronous

Section ON2 - Online asynchronous

Instructor: Stewart

For many, the individuals who populate our prisons are an avoided or entirely forgotten group of people. From moderate and maximum-security prisoners to those on death row, there are hundreds of men and women who are committed to using theatre and other art forms as a means of taking responsibility for their crimes. Through this engagement, these individuals work toward self-understanding, self-expression, rehabilitation, and redemption.

As a means of considering the agency and humanity of the incarcerated and the transformative processes and experiences of these men and women, this course will look at the organizations and people who create theatrical experiences in prison. Through this lens, we will collectively challenge our ideas about the incarcerated: the nature of our cultural and personal relationship to them, how we feel they should live, and who we believe them to be. We will supplement our research on arts practices in prison with articles, documentaries, written and recorded commentary, and guest speakers who will expand our understanding of prison life in general and what it means to be incarcerated in the US. This course will include at least one visit to the Luther Lockett Correctional Center in LaGrange, KY, to observe rehearsals of the Shakespeare Behind Bars and speak with the men about their experiences. This course will include a community engagement component.

HONORS 401H-01 STORY AND COMMUNITY

401H-01 TTh 9:25 – 10:40

Instructor: Weinberg

This course will encourage graduating seniors to consider “story” as a positive force for change—both their own stories and the stories of others. How might storytelling go hand-in-hand with social action? What are some of the most effective forms of storytelling? What are some of the ethical considerations when telling stories? We’ll take a close look at what kinds of important stories are being told, from the work of best-selling authors and popular podcasters to local work being published and broadcast on a grassroots level. Students can expect to explore their own stories and life-trajectories through progressive writing assignments and a supportive classroom dynamic. A community engagement component, currently being planned, will likely involve a creative arts nonprofit.