What is Gateway?

The Gateway Seminar is your “gateway” to academic life at a Christian college. At John Brown University, we believe that being a Christian institution makes a profound difference in how we do higher education. The Gateway Seminar course is designed to communicate that Christian college distinctive to our first-year students. Gateway is a small, interdisciplinary seminar consisting of approximately twenty students, a professor and a student mentor, so that students get to know each other and their professor on a personal level. The seminar will employ active learning strategies, such as class discussions and field trips.

HOW DOES THE GATEWAY SEMINAR WORK?
Each Gateway Seminar is organized around a particular topic ranging from community development to faith in fiction to creativity, among many others. Students in all sections of Gateway will read a common text about the nature and purpose of Christian higher education, and then apply these insights to their particular seminar topic. Rather than simply reading about a Christian perspective on learning, you will actually do Christian scholarship; that is, you will be challenged to apply a Christian worldview to a particular topic.

When you register for classes, you will have the opportunity to choose the Gateway seminar course that most interests you. Classes meet for two hours each week. In addition, you will attend a required session entitled “Discovering and Using Your Strengths” on one of two Fridays.

At John Brown University, we hope that you will find the Gateway Seminar an intellectually stimulating, challenging, and spiritually-enriching introduction to your life as a Christian college student!

OBJECTIVES

1. Introduce students to the nature and purpose of Christian higher education and JBU in particular.
2. Invite students into the communal intellectual life of JBU and to inspire in them a love for learning.
3. Engage students in applying biblical truth and a Christian worldview to a particular area of scholarship.
4. Help students transition to college life and to connect with faculty and other students.
Section Descriptions

**WHAT DO PEOPLE BUILD?**
Mr. Jim Caldwell, COR 1002-1, TR, 9 - 9:50 a.m.

Imagine what the world would look like if builders didn’t build.... Buildings and infrastructure have been an integral part of the historical development of societies and cultures. They are produced for a specific purpose: human dwelling, transportation, worship, manufacturing, and education; however, buildings and structures can also influence societal and cultural changes, sometimes of historical significance. We will discuss well-known buildings and structures of worldwide importance (e.g. Pyramids, Great Wall of China, Panama Canal, Eiffel Tower, others) as well as key biblical projects (the Ark, Tower of Babel, the Temple). Current issues such as immigrant workers, eminent domain, and the environment will also be explored. This Gateway section will conclude with a look at the construction profession in the modern era. You will never look at a building or highway the same after taking this class!

**WHY DO MYTHS ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS PERSIST IN POPULAR CULTURE?**
Dr. Brad Gambill, COR 1002-2, TR, 9 - 9:50 a.m.

This Gateway section explores the myth of the “vanishing Indian”. In spite of this myth, native people and tribal issues keep grabbing headlines: the Dakota pipeline protests; the Cleveland Indians retiring Chief Wahoo, the baseball team’s racist logo; Senator Elizabeth Warren’s false claim to Native ancestry, and the Cherokee response. Yet most of what we know about Native people comes from US popular culture, such as films like Dances with Wolves and Pocahontas, and not Native Americans themselves. Why do so many of these falsehoods persist? This class will explore myths about Native Americans still thriving in US popular culture (movies, museums, pictures, songs, and sports’ logos) and offer an in-depth look at the truth of tribal identity told from the vantage point of the Cherokee Nation. In short, what is the truth and what does it mean for both the US and for the 573 federally recognized tribes in the 21st Century?

**HOW DO YOU LEAD WITHOUT LIMITS?**
Dr. Marquita Smith, COR 1002-3, TR, 9 - 9:50 a.m.

You can create a tribe and become a great leader. A tribe is a tight-knit group of people working, living, and learning alongside each other. During your first year we want you to not only locate your tribe, but to embrace leadership opportunities. Leadership—and creating your own tribe—is sometimes left to those with a title. But you don’t need one to be a successful leader. In fact, every person has the opportunity to lead every day. This class will dispel the myth that leaders need positional power and organizational control. We will work with the idea that “genuine leaders make things better not just for themselves but for others, whether or not their contribution results in financial reward or popular recognition.” So, how might you serve? This Gateway section will help you discover small and big ways to lead, while highlighting the importance of good written and verbal communication and the value of strong interpersonal communication skills for leaders.

**HOW DO YOU PURSUE THE INCREDIBLE IN YOUR LIFE?**
Ms. Lauren Lane and Ms. Morgan Morris, COR 1002-4, TR, 11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.

What makes something incredible? How do you pursue the incredible in your life? The Incredible in the Ordinary Gateway section explores themes of love in action, compassion, and care through stories and Scripture. This Gateway section challenges students to take ordinary interactions and make them incredible in school, faith, and life. We will read works by Bob Goff to hear incredible stories and learn how to create our own.

**Note:** A section designed for transfers is available, see page 5. Honors sections are also listed on page 5.
WHY SHOULD LEADING AND FOLLOWING MATTER FOR CHRISTIANS?
Dr. Becci Rothfus, COR 1002-5, TR, 11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.
Why should leadership matter to Christians? Can leadership be learned? Who are you as a leader? What about the relationship between leaders and followers? What makes us willing to follow someone? Why do we rarely talk about followers? Exploration of these kinds of questions will form the core of this Gateway class. In this class, we will take a deep, interactive look at what leading and following may look like for you. We’ll explore your unique gifts and style and focus on what you bring to both leading and following. Through readings, popular film, storytelling, class discussion, and hands-on activities you will be invited to discover your potential and build your leadership skills.

HOW DOES NARNIA REFLECT THE THEOLOGY OF C.S. LEWIS?
Dr. Cary Balzer, COR 1002-6, MW, 10 - 10:50 a.m.
In this Gateway section we will explore the personal experiences of C. S. Lewis and the historical events of his day that influenced the creation of The Chronicles of Narnia. We will also explore the theological ideas expressed in Lewis’ works and assess how accurately the recent motion pictures communicate these ideas. As a result of exploring theology through the eyes of Lewis, students will be challenged to think theologically, to understand God’s word more deeply, and to communicate the Gospel in fresh, effective and creative ways.

HOW CAN WE BEST REFLECT GOD’S CREATIVITY?
Dr. Curtis Cunningham, COR 1002-7, MW, 10 - 10:50 a.m.
Can you stretch your brain to better imagine and invent? How do you think about thinking? In this Gateway section, we will study and practice habits of the creative lifestyle as described in James Adams’ book Conceptual Blockbusting. We will explore what makes companies like Pixar and Google cutting edge, evaluate the lives of leading innovators and put into action problem-solving techniques. This class is perfect for students of any discipline curious about how they can bring original and innovative practices into their field.

WHAT IS DISABILITY?
Dr. Jacob Stratman, COR 1002-8, MW, 10 - 10:50 a.m.
What is a disability? Who are the disabled? Who gets to decide? In this seminar, we will read books and poems, watch movies, listen to music, look at art, and discuss several scholarly articles as we begin to explore societal views of disability and the growing world of Disability Studies. This is a perfect Gateway section for future educators, counselors, and church-workers. As a complement to the class, each student will be required to engage with families at Ability Tree (a local, non-profit that “helps grow able families and accessible organizations by providing R.E.S.T. (recreation, education, support & training)” for at least twenty hours during the semester.

IS THERE MEANING IN SUFFERING?
Dr. Andre Broquard, COR 1002-9, MW, 12 - 12:50 p.m.
There are numerous stories of people who conquer and survive overwhelming and sometimes unfathomable situations of physical suffering and pain. But the mental, spiritual, and emotional survival in the midst of suffering is often the more amazing aspect of their journey. This Gateway section will explore the aspects of suffering in human survival. Suffering is a fact of life, but is there a point to the suffering? Viktor Frankl says that “if there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering... without suffering and death human life cannot be complete.” As people who desire to follow Christ, how do we view, endure, embrace, and overcome suffering to be more than conquerors (Romans 8:37)? This section will critically evaluate popular literature and film, classical writings, scripture, and scholarly research in the exploration of meaning in suffering.
Section Descriptions

WHAT CAN DETECTIVE FICTION TEACH US ABOUT GOOD AND EVIL?
Dr. Amanda Himes, COR 1002-10, MW, 12 - 12:50 p.m.
In this Gateway section we will be exploring works of detective fiction from its beginnings in the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century noir explosion through to the present day. The various readings will enable students to examine the way detective novels/stories are constructed and to explore the meanings of evidence, witnessing, even notions of right and wrong. Students in this section will perform several experiments in the laboratory to enhance our understanding of forensic science, a key component in the detection of crime. Throughout the class, we will consider the implications inherent in the detective’s quest for justice, for criminals as well as victims, and for society at large.

HOW MIGHT WE SERVE GUATEMALA?
Dr. Joe Walenciak, COR 1002-11, MW, 12 - 12:50 p.m.
COR 1002-15 MW, 1 - 1:50 p.m.
Many of us have been part of foreign missions/service projects and have had exposure to the developing world. We want to help...but do we? How do we truly make a difference that touches people’s hearts and lives? This Gateway section will examine the themes of creation, fall, and redemption by taking a close look at the causes and consequences of the 40-year Guatemalan internal conflict and its implications for economic, social, and spiritual growth and development. Students in this section will create a personal philosophy of redemptive community development and will organize the annual Guatemalan Children’s Art Expo that helps kids in difficult situations stay in school.

CAN HARRY POTTER AND CHRISTIAN FAITH BE FRIENDS?
Ms. Tracy Balzer, COR 1002-12, MW, 1 - 1:50 p.m.
Rarely have we seen the global influence on pop culture as we have through the wildly popular Harry Potter series. Though initially met with suspicion by Christians, the series has gradually become a springboard for discussion of such important biblical topics of life and death, truth and loyalty, and ultimately, redemption. In this Gateway section we will focus on the first book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, and the messages of hope and life that are communicated through author J.K. Rowling’s fanciful world.

WHAT ROLE MIGHT THE ENNEAGRAM PLAY IN OUR SPIRITUAL FORMATION?
Ms. Jen Edwards, COR 1002-13, MW, 1 - 1:50 p.m.
In a world filled with busyness, benchmarks, and comparison, what would happen if we took time to slow down, learn about, and settle into how God has uniquely made each one of us? In this Gateway section, we will explore The Enneagram, strengths assessments, and spiritual formation practices hoping to gain unique insight and appreciate for being made in God’s image. We will discuss how paying attention and being present in each moment can help us love God and love others with new excitement and understanding. We will learn to know ourselves better, appreciate others more, and apply that new knowledge to the journey of spiritual formation and higher education. If you love a good Buzzfeed quiz, this is the Gateway section for you.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION?
Dr. Charles Pastoor, COR 1002-14, MW, 1 - 1:50 p.m.
Most people read fiction as a form of escape, but novels also provide one of the most interesting, challenging, and enjoyable ways to think about the world around us. This Gateway section will look at several important novels written in the last two decades and consider what they tell us about contemporary society. We will look at various aspects of these works, but we will focus particularly on what they tell us about the role of religious faith, the Christian faith in particular, in contemporary life.
Section Descriptions

WHAT’S NEXT FOR CHRISTIANS LIVING IN A SECULAR AGE? (TRANSFER STUDENTS ONLY)
Ms. Jane Beers and Dr. Steve Beers, COR 1002-16, TR, 11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.
Culture is rapidly changing. Socialism is gaining popularity. Identity politics are king. Tech is exploding. The church seems uninformed. Gen Z wants change. Christians are losing confidence. Welcome to life in a secular age. In this Gateway section, we will explore how a richer, deeper understanding of the Gospel is leading the next generation of Christians to recognize that redemption is just the beginning of our participation in God’s mission to renew all things. These “next Christians” are creatively engaging in all aspects of modern culture in order to infuse the world with truth, beauty, goodness, grace, justice, and love as Christ’s representatives. Join us to be equipped for the difficult conversations and extraordinary opportunities that lie ahead.

NOTE: transfer students only (Choose this section if you desire to be in a Gateway class with other transfer students).

THE GOOD LIFE: WHAT STORY IS GOD TELLING WITH YOUR LIFE? (HONORS)
Dr. Jessica Hooten Wilson, COR 1002-17, TR, 9 - 9:50 a.m.
What does it mean to live a “good life”? How do you tell the story of God’s call in your life? From the fifth century to now, Christians have been writing spiritual autobiographies about how God brought them to rest in Him. We will read all of Lewis’ *Surprised by Joy* as well as excerpts from other wayfarers. Throughout this Gateway section we will focus on how to tell your story, and you will have the opportunity to write your own spiritual autobiography. Along with the other Honors Gateway classes, we will read *Liturgy of the Ordinary* and discover practices by which we can make our own lives good.

THE GOOD LIFE: WHAT IS FAITHFUL POLITICS? (HONORS)
Dr. Daniel Bennett, COR 1002-18, MW, 10 - 10:50 a.m.
What does it mean to live a “good life”? In many respects, the good life and politics may seem contradictory—after all, isn’t politics about conflict and self-interest? This Gateway section will challenge common assumptions about the relationship between faith and politics, and will consider how they can meaningfully interact in a democratic, pluralistic society. Our readings will include classic works and recent research in political science, as well as various reflections and perspectives on faith and political engagement. Importantly, we will not arrive at the approach to balancing faith and politics, but will instead encourage one another to wrestle with what it means to be faithful in our different approaches to politics. Along with other Honors Gateway classes, we will read *Liturgy of the Ordinary* and discover practices by which we can make our own lives good.

THE GOOD LIFE: HOW DO LEADERS RESPOND FAITHFULLY IN TIMES OF CRISIS? (HONORS)
Dr. Trisha Posey, COR 1002-19, MW, 1 - 1:50 p.m.
What does it mean to live a “good life”? For many leaders, the good life has not meant one of financial success or personal fulfillment, but one of sacrifice. This Gateway section will explore the lives of faithful leaders who gave up much—some even their lives—in pursuit of peace, justice, and the advancement of God’s Kingdom. We’ll explore the lives of faithful men and women such as Galileo Galilei, Oscar Romero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others who served as strong leaders in times of deep crisis in the church and society. We’ll learn from them that attentiveness to the “small things” can shape us into men and women who can make a big impact in the world. Along with the other Honors Gateway classes, we will read *Liturgy of the Ordinary* and discover practices by which we can make our own lives good.