FRESHMAN SEMINAR (FRSM)

FRSM 002 Research: From Curiosity to Knowledge
How does one act on curiosity about the physical and living world and the human cultures in it? This seminar will use case-study and brainstorming approaches to visit how people define good questions and practice research in a range of disciplines, from the humanities and social sciences to natural sciences and engineering. We are especially interested in common components (e.g., "evidence") and how it differs among a broad spectrum of phenomena and human behavior, and how might we observe and trace patterns in it, to find new ideas and answers. Our sessions, will also highlight field-specific approaches for translating evidence into knowledge. For example, we examine and interpret genomes and paintings in different ways by employing experiments and historical methods, respectively. In a comparative approach, we will explore what analysis and interpretation of primary evidence looks like, from statistical patterning or materials testing to visualization and narrative. The class will include some field trips to active research sites, like labs, archives and museums. Students will play an active role in the sessions, and try out various kinds of response, written and oral. Our goal is to enable students to participate in and appreciate how research is performed in a range of areas, as a stimulus to using the arts of observation and questioning for whatever might be their own objects of curiosity.
Taught by: Guild
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit