LIBERAL LEARNING SEMINARS (LLS)

LLS 410 | AGENCY EFFECTIVENESS | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
Seminar sections in this domain aim to explore various dimensions/dynamics associated with knowing, developing and engaging oneself as an agent in one’s experience and contribution. Central questions include: Who am I and/or who am I having myself be? Who am I becoming and/or who am I having myself become? What habits of mind, attitude and behavior am I choosing and reinforcing versus becoming victim to and stuck within? Am I living my life or is my life living me? etc. Embedded in these questions are core concepts regarding personal efficacy, empowerment and accountability.

LLS 410B | BUILDING & ENGAGING RESILIENCE (IN ADULT LIFE) | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
An ancient proverb reads: “Fall down seven times. Stand up eight.” But how? What’s involved in such flexibility, adaptability, tenacity, hardness and resilience? What understandings, values and skills help? How does one develop these and nurture them across an adult lifetime? Through this seminar, participants will explore various concepts, models and “best practices” for growing, rebounding and self-guarding one’s resilience—given the challenges and uncertainties of adult life.

LLS 410C | VOICES AND IDENTITY IN WRITING | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
The course will examine the power of the written word and the ways in which modern writers from various outlets (including mass-media) from diverse communities and fields represent their cultures, styles and passions for writing through their works. Students will explore these modern writers and examine some of their favorites as well as lesser-known authors while being challenged to understand and apply their own voice, identity and writing in multiple styles - with conventions and boundaries of academic style and without those boundaries. Students will analyze and identify and apply various styles, processes and motivation which keeps a writer going. This course will challenge students to use the learning and framework to build their own diverse writing portfolio.

LLS 410D | WRITING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
This course provides students with the strategies they need to successfully meet the expectations of graduate-level academic writing. With a focus on genre, conventions, style, and mechanics, students will advance beyond undergraduate-level research writing to deepen their understanding of scholarly writing and strengthen the critical reading, research, writing, and revision skills necessary to meet the rigorous of graduate level writing. Students will learn how to effectively contribute to the conversation in their discipline. To demonstrate their learning, students will design a research plan for a topic of their choice and write a scholarly article complete with literature review and abstract.

LLS 410E | EVIDENCED BASED DECISION MAKING | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
Is the information you rely on fake or trustworthy? Are you hoping to learn how to make more informed decisions using trusted techniques and data? We all know the importance of decision making for leaders, but often struggle with making decisions that are both rational and wise. In this class, students will explore a variety of decision making models and tips. They will also learn how to find, use and evaluate data and information from a variety of places, including organizational information, scientific data, publications, research and professional judgment. By the end of the course, students will have a toolkit of models, techniques and tips that will help them make decisions with greater confidence and success.

LLS 410F | GENDER IN BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
Women’s work is never done. Not only are women mothers and wives, but these days the expectation is that women will take on leadership roles outside the home as well. What makes a woman a leader? How did the workplace differ when women were not corporate leaders? Who are today’s prominent female leaders and how are they shaping our future? In this course, learners will study the lives and contributions of various important women from business, politics, and social action. Students will assess equality in management and leadership, the psychological make up of the woman leader, and the ways in which women’s contributions to leadership differ from men’s. Furthermore, the class will endeavor to define leadership, its consequences, and its personal ramifications. Students should expect to read extensively about the lives and characteristics of contemporary women who have surfaced in leadership roles. Learners will also identify women leaders in their own workplaces and communities and assess their involvement in the corporation and/or general public.

LLS 410G | ADVANCED LEADERSHIP THEORY & PRACTICE | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
In this course students will strengthen their knowledge and skills in leadership theories and examine successful applications in public, private, and non-governmental organizations. Students will examine classic and current scholarship to bridge between theory and practice. Emphasis is placed on understanding the efficacy of the theories in the context of implementation in a global business environment.

LLS 420A | ENGAGING SOCIAL MEDIA | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
Social Media is essentially communication to the world. For the first time in the history of human communication, an individual has the ability—using the latest channels to connect with anyone and everyone in the world. There have been many examples of the power of this media as we witnessed the events of the Arab Spring. This course will empower you to engage with the most important channels at your disposal to maximize your social media experience. We will investigate many questions including: What’s in it for me? But, more importantly, how will this help me in my future business endeavors and personal life.
LLS 420B | ENGAGING PLAY ON PURPOSE | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

A growing body of scientific research indicates that “play” is an essential element of both learning and expression across the lifespan. This course examines the role of play in adult life, the science and research behind play, and selected techniques for fostering healthful play. Participants will explore an established improvisational play practice called InterPlay, involving guided movement, story-telling and vocal activities. By examining play through the lenses of both experiential learning and current research, participants will deepen their understanding of what it means to “engage play on purpose” as a means of further enhancing their interpersonal effectiveness.

LLS 420C | COMMUNICATING (MORE) EFFECTIVELY | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

Being a better communicator and a more self-aware individual can lead to better performance on teams and to enhanced relationships in both professional and personal life. This seminar will explore ways for an individual to become more self-aware and more effective in a variety of settings. In particular, this awareness will contribute to better team interaction—whether the team is formal or informal—as well as better interpersonal dynamics overall. Basic characteristics of high-performing and dysfunctional teams will be explored, as well as various models of followership.

LLS 420D | APPLYING ETHICS IN THE PROFESSIONS | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

Moving from theory to applied practice, students will be invited to turn their new knowledge towards the field of engagement which is close to their own industry. Classic and contemporary case studies in business leadership, community organizing, nonprofit management, organizational development, education, healthcare, technology, and sports will all be made available.

LLS 420E | LEADERSHIP, CHANGE AND POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONS | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

This course examines leadership and change theories, with a particular emphasis on strength-based leadership and positive psychology. Students will examine a variety of leadership theories and discover how to craft meaningful change in our organizations. They will use appreciative inquiry, job crafting, storytelling and strength-based leadership to enhance themselves and others. Students will learn about the theories and concepts and apply them to self and others in practical, real-world assignments that include development plans, training programs and papers. Students will share these projects with each other virtually. Students and the instructor will also meet synchronously online for 2-3 short sessions.

LLS 420F | LEADERSHIP MODELS FOR STRONG ORGANIZATIONS | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

This course is designed to explore the research, practices, purposes and scope of leadership as a tool to develop leadership skills that will influence and inspire others. Both individual and organizational aspects will be presented and will include such areas as behaviors, ethics, communications, cultures and current practices. Emphasis will be on application of leadership theories and skill building through self-assessment exercises and cases. (4 quarter hours)

LLS 420G | EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AT WORK | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

One’s IQ (intelligence quotient) alone does not predict success in the workplace or in life. Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a vital role as well. This course provides an introduction to the field of emotional intelligence, evidence of its impact on individuals and organizations, and strategies for applying it in multiple settings. Participants will deepen their understanding of EI by exploring the research literature and completing an assessment of EI provided by 6 Seconds (http://www.6seconds.org). Strategies for applying EI to increase one’s success and satisfaction at work and in other social contexts will also be explored. There are several models of emotional intelligence, each with a measure used by individuals to create a profile of EI abilities, used as the basis for learning and development. Some focus more directly on the workplace or on therapeutic settings. The Six Seconds’ model of EI is designed to have broad application and enable individuals to draw on EI across the various dimensions of their lives. (4 credit hours)

LLS 420H | LEADING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

As the call to take action for social change across spheres of professional and personal life becomes ever stronger, those who seek to engage in the work of social change are compelled to think and plan critically and creatively about what social change means, what leadership for change means, and how it can be enacted effectively. In this course we will examine theories and models for social change in relation to social action-oriented modes of leadership. Through case studies, we will explore past and present social change movements that have been enacted in community, educational, organizational, and business settings— and consider the strengths and weaknesses of those movements and how approaches to change have been implemented. Using Chicago as a field site, students will deepen their understanding of real-world applications of social change leadership theories by studying current social change processes and interviewing leaders. Students will also chronicle the development of their identities as social change leaders and design an action plan that responds to an issue relevant to their professional or personal practice.

LLS 430 | ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)

This domain includes the larger systemic contexts within which individuals function. As the world grows increasingly complex and interconnected, the ability to understand and navigate people-in-groups (organizational, societal, and global) becomes increasingly critical. In this domain, students broaden and deepen their capacity to make a difference at ever-widening levels of system. Central questions include: How do we engage as organizational resources, community participants, members of society and global citizens? How do we get along? How do we get work done? How do we both fit-in and remain unique? Seminar sections in this domain might include such topics as project management, leadership, organizational culture, career management, performance improvement, context scanning, global citizenship, trend analysis, cross-cultural agility, future visioning, etc.
LLS 440A | UNDERSTANDING AND FLEXING MINDSETS | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
A mindset is a set of mind - a mental aggregate - that fixes thinking into a narrowed range of perceiving and behaving. Our expectations then conform and we indulge behaviors that align with those expectations. The mindset then sets the mind. Through this seminar we will explore both how mindsets (e.g. a fixed mindset vs a growth mindset) form and their benefits and liabilities. We will also consider dynamics and strategies involved in shifting/managing mindsets in order to develop/engage new approaches to learning, decision making, problem-solving and optimizing positive influence in various spheres of impact (personal, interpersonal, organizational and societal).

LLS 440B | LATINX CHICAGO | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
Through readings, films, pod-casts and field trips, his course will explore the histories, identities, and experiences of Chicago's diverse Latinx populations through an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary framework. In this course, we will study the history, formation and diverse cultures of Chicago's Latinx communities. We will investigate how Latinx groups define themselves and make sense of their immigration/migration experience. We will study the settlement patterns of these groups, explore questions of community formation, and study issues of housing, employment and education. This course will also explore how the diverse communities that make up Latinx Chicago have organized themselves politically and civically and how they have contributed to addressing issues within their communities and enhancing our City. We will study and use immigration as well as ethnic formation theories to understand Chicago Latinx realities. Because Mexican, Puerto Rican and Central Americans represent the largest Latinx groups in the Chicago metro region, we will focus our studies on these communities. You will, however, have opportunities to study other Latina/o/x groups as well.

LLS 440C | TRAVEL, VALUES & IDENTITY | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
Sit at the gate at any airport waiting for a flight and you may find a vacationer, a business traveler, a commuter, and an immigrant heading toward a new home - all about to board the same plane. Stand in the immigration line after disembarking, and each of these travelers might have a very different experience. This seminar explores the concept of 'travel' and the deeper significance behind our own and others' choices concerning physical movement from place to place. We will consider topics ranging from 'enjoying the view;' curiosity, and the mundane to ideas of the exotic, expectations, conflict, privilege, and choice versus forced removal - all within the context of travel. While this is not a travel course, experiential travel components will be built into some class sessions. Through in-class activities, selected readings, written assignments, and participant/observer field trips, students will be asked to reflect on their own and others' travel experiences. The goal is that students will emerge with an expanded awareness of travel not just as journey and destination, but also as mindset and learning experience; in turn, this can inform one's identity, choices and relationships as global citizens.

LLS 450A | FINDING & ASSESSING INFORMATION | 2-4 quarter hours (Graduate)
This domain includes methods and processes of systematic inquiry regardless of domain. Adults must be able to engage in self-directed inquiry in order to understand and act effectively in their personal, professional, social, and civic lives. In this domain, students learn methods for systematically and strategically exploring questions, problems, ideas, and experiences. Central questions include: How do I formulate viable questions? What information do I need to understand a problem and what is the best way to obtain it? What are different ways to analyze an idea? How can I make sense of what I have experienced? Seminar sections in this domain might address topics such as strategies and methods for generating and utilizing primary research, gathering and managing information, analyzing and presenting data, pursuing targeted methods of inquiry, etc. (2 quarter hours)

LLS 450B | APPLYING SYSTEMATIC INQUIRY (IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE) | 4 quarter hours (Graduate)
The two required sections in this domain, LLS-450a & LLS-450b, aim to explore various dimensions/dynamics associated with investigating sources of information and conducting primary research. Central questions include: How do I formulate incisive questions? How do I find and gather relevant and credible information? How do I assess/analyze information and its sources, including my own experience as a source? How do I make sense of confirming and disconfirming information? How do I differentiate knowledge from opinion from reasoned judgment? Embedded in these questions are core concepts regarding the authority of systematic observation/inquiry and evaluated experience.