All educated people rightly value being able to think for themselves. This requires some understanding of the principles of good reasoning as well as the courage and confidence to question authority and the ‘received opinions’ of the group. Builds on the skills of the First Year Seminar to help students become aware of themselves as critical thinkers in a society where critical thinking is crucial for us as informed citizens and responsible participants in the business of the community. Students apply the principles of good reasoning—including fallacy-spotting and assessment of evidence—to the arguments and persuasive techniques of political leaders, advertisers, talk show hosts, news analysts, entertainers and others. Through short papers, oral reports, class discussions and debates, students apply the lessons of good critical thinking to some of the most important issues of the day. Falls and Springs. (SSDI)

PYDI 1050 Building a Civil Society (3)
Focuses on the role of the individual in creating a civil society leading toward the advancement of peace, human rights and democracy. A main premise is that the individual and society have a reciprocal influence: societies nurture and shape the individuals that comprise it; but individuals also have the power to change society in significant ways. The dynamic of social change from the point of view of both the society and the individual are explored, and ways are suggested for individuals to contribute to this social dynamic. Special topics include nonviolent societal transformation, institutional barriers to growth and change, and revolutionary techniques for the resolution of conflict. Falls. (SSDI)

PYDI 2410 Creative Problem Solving in Ethics (3)
Introduces creative thinking tools and techniques for creating personally relevant ethical decisions in an ever-changing world. Engages traditional ethical problems such as abortion, capital punishment, and gun control, while encouraging students to view themselves as creative beings capable of tolerating ambiguity. Outlines formal elements of creative expression while encouraging creativity as an essential component in forming sound ethical judgments. Fall of even years. (CTDI)

PYDI 2415 Death and Dying (3)
Explores various historical and contemporary perspectives on death/dying. Readings include philosophical, psychological, sociological, practical, and artistic aspects of death, dying, and responses to human mortality. Considers how conceptions of death/dying change across time and vary between cultures. Spring of odd years. (PPDI)

PYDI 2710 Science or Superstition (3)
Utilizes scientific methodologies to investigate, analyze, and interpret data to propose answers, offer explanation, and make predictions to philosophically analyze the power and limitations of science. Distinguishes science from irrational opinion and superstition. Explores the extent science is a way to knowledge, and finds philosophical principles that can guide us in evaluating controversial beliefs. Springs. (SIDI)