

Top 25 Strangest (US) College Courses

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anything like these in Australia????

College is a time for self-expression, freedom from parents, the pursuit of knowledge and exploration of a new career. If Mom and Dad (or the bank) knew what kind of courses their savings were funding, you might be yanked out of your academic bubble and into a much more economical and practical community college. Read on for more of the 25 strangest college courses.

1. Mail Order Brides: Understanding the Philippines in Southeast Asian Context: If you're an anthropology or women's studies major at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, consider getting your credits with this class, which is designed to "help explain the stereotyping of Filipino women." While the class is expected to be taught in all seriousness, PhilippineNews.com reports that Professor Fenella Cannell "cautions prospective students not to submit fake applications for pen pals and/or spouses and to view the information as purely part of academic exercise."

2. Tightwaddery, or The good life on a dollar a day: Alfred University's demonstratively anti-capitalist course attempts to debunk contemporary culture's popular myth: "Spend money and you'll be happy." According to the official class description, "On a theoretical level, we will consider how living frugally benefits your mind, your body, your relationships, your community, and the environment. On a practical level, we will examine personal spending habits [and] sharpen bargain-hunting rip-off-detecting, and haggling skills." While they're at it, maybe they can help drive down gas prices?

3. The Phallus: When the Los Angeles Times printed the headline "I Got an A in Phallus 101, readers were no doubt confused. But not so confused, we'll bet, as the parents of the Occidental College students who really did come home with grades from the course simply titled The Phallus. Occidental's Critical Theory and Social Justice department plans to discuss topics like "the relation between the phallus and the [I have to remove this word to keep filters from blocking some of the e-mails, RR], the meaning of the phallus, phallogocentrism, the lesbian phallus, the Jewish phallus," and even "the Latino phallus."

4. American Dreams/American Realities: Duke University is known for its excellent undergraduate and graduate academics, legendary basketball team, and Hart Leadership Program, which offers thought-provoking classes like American Dreams/American Realities. The class will follow immigrants to America from their first landing and all throughout American history, as their hopes and dreams were dashed and their fears were realized. All in all, a terrific class for our future leaders.

5. Cultural Aspects of Food: The College of Oneonta's Human Ecology Department offers the Cultural Aspects of Food. Does everyone get to bring their favorite snacks to school each day?

6. The Evolution of Low Brow: Modern Popular Arts: Canada's School of Interactive Arts and Technology spends an entire semester on a style and culture that "art critics doubt...is a "legitimate" art movement." Then again, van Gogh wasn't considered a "legitimate" artist until well after his death.

7. Whiteness: The Other Side of Racism: Associate professor Sandy Lawrence teaches this course at Mount Holyoke College wants her students to "to be aware that while racism disadvantages people of color, it provides benefits to whites. By examining the other side of racism--whiteness--we can see the advantages in education, health care, and employment that white people continually accrue." Lawrence's ultimate and noble goal is to help her students combat racism, but I think we already knew that whites are the prime beneficiaries of what our country has to offer.

8. Sex, Rugs, Salt & Coal: Ivy League school Cornell University makes the list for its "Sex, Rugs, Salt & Coal" course, which asks the questions "Why are "oriental" rugs collector's items? How did we come to keep salt shakers

on our dinner tables?" and "Is prostitution really "the oldest profession," as reported by Brandeis University's The Hoot. We're sure that lots of in-depth debate occurs in the classroom, but couldn't you just Google those questions?

9. The Adultery Novel In and Out of Russia: University of Pennsylvania's Slavics Department holds that no topic is too taboo for the classroom. Students will learn about the "sociological descriptions of modernity, Marxist examinations of family as a social and economic institution [and] Freudian/ Psychoanalytic interpretations of family life and transgressive sexuality," among other topics.

10. The American Vacation: Maybe your family never got to take the great American vacation. Or maybe yours did, and you're nostalgic for a road trip or Disney World adventure with Mom and Dad. At the University of Iowa, students can study "how American families' varying backgrounds shape their vacation experiences," as reported by MSN Encarta.

11. Queer Musicology: UCLA's Queer Musicology class was ranked No. 2 in the annual Dirty Dozen list of America's Most Bizarre and Politically Correct College Courses. The LA Times writes that the course will promote debate about "the idea that if you're gay, then music by gay composers such as Benjamin Britten will sound different to you than it would if you were straight."

12. Finding Dates Worth Keeping: Relationship therapist and teacher Laurie Chaplin admits that "some people may think it's a slack course" but is hoping her University of Sioux Falls students will "come out with something that changes their lives." Dating tips, lessons in recognizing infatuation, and knowing when it's time to break up will be discussed.

13. The Art of Sin and the Sin of Art: MSN Encarta reports that students at the Rhode Island School of Design will soon be ""lust[ing] with the saints and burn[ing] with the sinners" as they study how sin and the art world are interconnected.

14. Art of Walking: Kentucky's Centre College is stoked about its new class the Art of Walking, which plans to discover how Immanuel Kant's writings can reveal "a new way [of understanding] a pleasure apparently foreign to aesthetics but very much at home in human nature: the pleasure of walking," according to author and professor Ken Keffer. Maybe the course should also grant credit to health and fitness degrees?

15. Daytime Serials: Family and Social Roles: Class 350 in the University of Wisconsin's Women's Studies Program doesn't discriminate: daytime soap operas and prime time TV shows will be dissected in order to discover "what impact these portrayals have on women's and men's roles in the family and work place."

16. The Science of Harry Potter: Don't tell me that Harry Potter isn't all magic? Maryland's Frostburg University provides this honors seminar, which is actually a physics class that investigates the supposed magic of Harry Potter.

17. The Road Movie: New York's esteemed Barnard College includes in its Film Studies curriculum a course entitled The Road Movie. Students will read novels like On the Road and Huckleberry Finn and watch films like Thelma and Louise to consider "how this genre became so knowing, so assured about itself, even at the relatively early stages in its emergence."

18. Maple Syrup: The Real Thing: Alfred University makes this list twice with its now famous course, Maple Syrup: The Real Thing. The course description reads, "the method of producing maple syrup is one of the things in our society that has endured even in today's culture of constant change," which is why it deserves an entire semester of attention and dissection. Students mustn't worry though, as the course comes with a neat disclaimer: "No prior experience expected."

19. American Golf: Aristocratic Pastime or the People's Game?: Carnegie Mellon students have the option of taking this course, which attempts to turn the study of golf history into "a legitimate academic subject," according to The Princeton Review's report.

20. Nonviolent Responses to Terrorism: The Peace and Studies Department at Swarthmore College encourages its students to remain proactive about voicing their opposition to terrorism, but this class intends "to consider feasible nonviolent alternatives and their historical precedents" in an effort to cultivate change. If it proves effective, maybe

the course should be offered at all schools.

21. Border Crossings, Borderlands: Transnational Feminist Perspectives on Immigration: One class at the University of Washington asks students to consider the feminist reaction and consequences of existing immigration policies in the United States in order to propose possible solutions to the debate. If only the border patrol agents had thought of that!

22. Philosophy and Star Trek: Georgetown University in Washington D.C., claims that "Star Trek is very philosophical. What better way, then, to learn philosophy, than to watch Star Trek, read philosophy, and hash it all out in class?" I ask you, what better way? Well, we hate to say this, but The Art of Walking might be one answer.

23. Star Trek and Religion: Indiana University at Bloomington lists Star Trek and Religion as one of its course offerings in the Arts and Humanities section. As "an introduction to the critical study of religion by way of popular culture," it is "possible to find [Star Trek] episodes whose themes are hostile to religion," among other relationships between the sci-fi show and religion.

24. Campus Culture and Drinking: No, this course doesn't actually pass around plastic cups frothing from cheap beer, but Duke's class does intend to study "the societal understandings that motivate and shape undergraduate drinking." We guess the pursuit of liquid courage and rebelling against high school curfews aren't on the syllabus.

25. Learning from YouTube: California's Pitzer College has jumped on the new media bandwagon and now offers a class called Learning from YouTube. TechCrunch reports that "the class consists of students watching YouTube videos and then discussing them. They also leave comments on the videos themselves." Sign us up.

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