



2025 National Seminar Descriptions

“Art, Design, and Biology”



Timothy Barringer

Mellon Professor in the History of Art
Yale University

This interdisciplinary seminar asks teachers who specialize in fine art, language arts, social sciences, and sciences (especially biology), to think together about how to use skills of close looking in teaching. How can looking at art help us understand science? And how can scientific thinking enhance our understanding of art? We'll consider significant issues in the history of science and in contemporary cultural discourse, such as botany and the politics of classification, ecological theory and theories of evolution.

“The Art of Writing and Revision”



Jessica Brantley

Hilles Professor of English
Yale University

This seminar will explore the craft of writing through a workshop model. We will read nonfiction essays in a range of styles from personal narrative to cultural criticism, and we will try our hands at a few. Depending on the desires of the Fellows, we may also study a selection of genres of creative writing including poetry, fiction, and drama. From the level of the sentence to the poetic line, we will pay attention to the details that make a writer's voice vivid and compelling on the page.

“Graphic Narratives as Teaching Tools”



Marta Figlerowicz

Associate Professor of Comparative Literature
Yale University

This seminar will focus on the history of graphic novels and how they can be useful in teaching a variety of topics, ranging from history, science, and philosophy to art. It would give the Fellows a transferrable language for appreciating what makes comics an art form and how different artists innovate within it. The range would be a bit less global here, but still introduce some unexpected examples. (Japanese manga about Buddhism, for example, and some surprisingly accessible comics about language philosophy.)

“Infectious Respiratory Disease”



Jordan Peccia

Thomas E. Golden Jr., Professor of Environmental Engineering
Yale University

Infectious respiratory disease is a major cause of illness and death in the world, and we still lack effective therapeutics as new viral strains and antibiotic resistant bacteria continue to emerge. This seminar will start with the biology of pathogens and human infection and then move to routes of transmission, focusing on how one catches a cold. We will cover technical and social concepts of infection control measures including vaccines, masking, and building ventilation. This seminar is well suited for junior high and high school teachers in science and the humanities, as well as elementary grade teachers.

“Teaching with and through Maps”



Ayesha Ramachandran

Professor of Comparative Literature
Yale University

This seminar begins with the premise that maps both create narratives about space and influence how we experience and shape our worlds. As historical objects, maps offer stories about how we imagine and organize ourselves in psychological, spiritual, social and political terms. This interdisciplinary seminar will offer a brief history of mapping--from the “cartographic revolution” of the seventeenth century to Google Earth--as well as strategies for teachers of all subjects to incorporate map-making and cartographic thinking into the K-12 classroom.

