

Freshman Seminars

FALL 2015

|

Sector I - Society

Desire and Demand

Marilynne Diggs-Thompson, House Dean, Riepe College House

Does consumption shape culture or does culture shape consumption? As even the most mundane purchase becomes socially symbolic and culturally meaningful, we can persuasively argue that the concept of "need" has been transformed. Analyzing a variety of physical and virtual consumer venues, the goal of this seminar is to understand and to analyze historical and contemporary issues related to a culture of consumption. We investigate social and political-economic factors that impact when and how people purchase goods and argue that behavior attached to consumption includes a nexus of influences that may change periodically in response to external factors. Readings and research assignments are interdisciplinary and require a critical analysis of global/local linkages. The city of Philadelphia becomes the seminar's laboratory as we ask how have issues of culture, consumption, and global capitalism become intertwined around the world?

Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

ANTH 086 301

Monday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Euro Zone Crisis - The EU in a Currency War for Survival?

Susanne Shields, Lauder Institute, Senior Lecturer

"Let me put it simply... there may be a contradiction between the interests of the financial world and the interests of the political world.... We cannot keep constantly explaining to our voters and our citizens why the taxpayer should bear the cost of certain risks and not those people who have earned a lot of money from taking those risks."

Angela Merkel,

Chancellor of Germany, at the G20 Summit,

November 2010

In January 1999, a single monetary system united Germany, a core nation, with 10 other European states. Amidst the optimism of the euro's first days, most observers forecast that Europe would progress toward an ever closer union. Indeed, in the ensuing decade, the European Union became the world's largest trading area, the euro area expanded to include 17 member states, and the Lisbon Treaty enhanced the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the Union. In 2009, Greece's debt crisis exposed deep rifts within the European Union and developed into a euro zone crisis – arguably the most difficult test Europe has faced in the past 60 years. After two years of a more benign EURO debt situation, the risk of recession, EU sanctions against Russia, and a possible collision of a newly-elected Greek

government with its creditors, the euro crisis returns with a vengeance in 2015. Does the EU have what it takes to emerge from this crisis? Will the European nations find a collective constructive solution that will lead to a fiscal union that implies further integration?

At a time when Germany is increasingly expected to provide leadership to prevent the collapse of the EU, the goal of this seminar is to explore how and why the euro zone has arrived at the situation in which it now finds itself, and to consider how major European euro and non-euro members see the consequences of the crisis for their own role in the EU and what role the United States has to play in the future of the euro zone. Two major issues, the complexity of decision-making within the EU and the challenges to forming a European identity, further compound the issue. Studying different perspectives, the goal is to stimulate thinking about if and how different national identities of European member states and varying political, economic, and cultural climates still pose major obstacles to potential solutions to the crisis.

GRMN 027 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Risky Business

J. Sanford Schwartz, *Professor of Medicine, Health Management & Economics*

This freshman seminar on medical decision-making will focus on personal and public medical and health decisions - how we make them and how they can be improved. While in theory medical decisions are in large part both informed and constrained by scientific evidence, in reality they are much more complex. Drawing upon a range of information sources including textbooks, original research and popular media, the seminar will introduce students to the challenges of making personal and public (i.e., policy) decisions under conditions of inherent uncertainty and resources constraints and how research and scholarship can inform and improve decision making processes and decisions. Using a variety of highly engaging approaches (in-class discussions, examination of primary research, popular media, simple experiments, expert panel debates) this highly interactive seminar will provide students a strong introductory foundation to medical decision making specifically and, by extension, to decision making under conditions of uncertainty more generally. The seminar will take a multi-disciplinary perspective, drawing upon knowledge developed from psychology, sociology, economics, insurance and risk management, statistical inference, neuroscience, operations research, communications, law, ethics and political science.

HSOC 032 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Autism Epidemic

David Mandell, *Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, School of Medicine*

The CDC estimates that 1 in 150 children have autism. Three decades ago, this number was 1 in 5,000. The communities in which these children are identified in ever increasing numbers are ill prepared to meet their needs. Scientists have struggled to understand the causes of this disorder, its treatment, and why it appears to be rapidly increasing. Families, policy makers, schools and the healthcare system have argued bitterly in the press and in the courts about the best way to care for these children and the best ways to pay for this care. In this class, we will use autism as a case study to understand how psychiatric and developmental disorders of childhood come to be defined over time, their biological and environmental causes identified, and treatments developed. We will also discuss the identification and care of these children in the broader context of the American education and healthcare systems.

HSOC 052 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Medical Missionaries and Partners

Kent Bream, *Assistant Professor of Clinical Family Medicine and Community Health*

Global health is an increasingly popular goal for many modern leaders. Yet critics see evidence of a new imperialism in various aid programs. We will examine the evolution over time and place of programs designed to improve the health of underserved populations. Traditionally categorized as public health programs or efforts to achieve a just society, these programs often produce results that are inconsistent with these goals. We will examine the benefits and risks of past programs and conceptualize future partnerships on both a local and global stage. Students should expect to question broadly held beliefs about the common good and service. Ultimately we will examine the concept of partnership and the notion of community health, in which ownership, control, and goals are shared between outside expert and inside community member.

HSOC 059 301

Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Social Identity in Language

Meredith Tamminga, *Assistant Professor of Linguistics*

Language and social interaction are fundamentally intertwined. In this course we will explore their influence on one another. In the first part of the semester we'll ask what we learn about someone from the way they speak: how social meaning is extracted from language. In the second part of the course we will ask how our social judgments about speakers influence the perception and processing of language itself. Themes throughout will include linguistics as a science, hypothesis formation and testing, experimental design, and the social impacts of linguistic bias.

LING 060 301

Monday and Wednesday | 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Ethics

Milton W. Meyer, *Lecturer in Philosophy*

Three sorts of questions belong to the philosophical study of ethics:

- (a) Practical ethics discusses specific moral problems, often those we find most contested (e.g., abortion, euthanasia, killing noncombatants in war).
- (b) Ethical theory tries to develop systematic answers to moral problems, often by looking for general principles that explain moral judgments and rules (e.g., consequentialism, contractarianism).
- (c) Meta-ethics investigates questions about the nature of moral theories and their subject matter (e.g., are they subjective or objective, relative or non-relative?).

We will rigorously investigate all three of these types of questions. A large part of the course will be focused on two highly contentious moral problems, abortion and killing noncombatants in war.

The central aim of the required readings and discussion is a) to develop each question deeply and sharply enough for us to understand why it has been contentious; b) to see what new evidence could change the nature of the problem; and c) to suggest how to seek that further evidence. We will focus on how to read complex contemporary philosophical prose in order to outline and evaluate the arguments embedded with it. This will provide the basis for writing papers in which you defend a position with evidence and arguments.

These skills are central to the practice of Philosophy. This course does not presuppose that students already have these skills. It is intended to teach them and presupposes a willingness on the part of students to do what is necessary to learn them. What this involves is detailed in a note on Penn in Touch called "Success in the Course". You should read this note before deciding to enroll in the course so that you understand the commitments this course involves.

Graded work: weekly paragraphs on a topic of your choice; three papers in multiple drafts; take-home final exam; class participation.

PHIL 002 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The Contemporary American City and Its Challenges

Dan Hopkins, Associate Professor of Political Science

This course explores the economic and social challenges facing large US cities since roughly 1965 as well as the cities' political responses. Its major topics include the changing relations between racial and ethnic groups, the political impact of suburbanization, and the political effects of deindustrialization and economic transformation. The course readings are drawn from recent urban political history and sociology as well as political science. The course pays special attention to the changing distribution of political and economic power in US metropolitan areas, and considers regional coordination and other potential policy responses.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

PSCI 010 301

Monday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Planning to Be Offshore?

Srilata Gangulee, Assistant Dean for Academic Advising

In this course we will trace the economic development of India from 1947 to the present. Independent India started out as a centrally planned economy in 1949 but in 1991 decided to reduce its public sector and allow, indeed encourage, foreign investors to come in. The Planning Commission of India still exists but has lost much of its power. Many in the U.S. complain of American jobs draining off to India, call centers in India taking care of American customer complaints, American patient histories being documented in India, etc. At the same time, the U.S. government encourages highly trained Indians to be in the U.S.

SAST 057 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Work and Careers in the 21st Century

Jerry Jacobs, Professor of Sociology

This course will introduce social-science perspectives on work and careers. The focus will be jobs as they currently exist, and prominent emerging trends that are likely to affect careers and opportunities in coming decades. We will be investigating a number of questions, including the following:

How we will train the 21st century workforce? What skills will be needed? What technological changes are in progress that will affect where work is done, how it is done, and whether any workers at all will be needed? For example, will information technology make it easier to balance work and family, by facilitating work from home, or will the long reach of mobile communication technology make it difficult, if not impossible, to leave work and the workplace? How are relationships between employers and employees changing, and what are the implications of these changes going forward? Will the 21st century labor force be more diverse than ever before? If so, are adjustments going to be needed to effectively incorporate these diverse groups and capitalize on their talents and abilities?

SOCI 041 301

Monday and Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Diversity, Technology and the Penn Experience

Janice Curington, *Assistant Dean for Academic Advising*

Penn is diverse in many ways. Let's explore this diversity together and understand its subtleties. How has the word "diversity" evolved over the years? Why is it (at times) such a loaded concept? When, where and how does diversity change within various contexts? What does the concept mean in a university context? How might it change in the future? We will explore different constructions of diversity at Penn, in the context of new media. Have new technologies changed the ways in which we perceive culture, communicate and share ideas? Increasingly, we construct notions of ourselves and of others using video and social media in addition to personal experiences. How do such technologies define who we are, and the boundaries we draw to define "us" and "them"? Do sub-cultures thrive now in new ways? How does each student's journey to Penn (childhood, high school) bring in new perspectives on the university?

Reflections on personal experiences in the context of theories (cultural capital, social capital and self-efficacy theory) will be a core part of this seminar. Readings and research assignments are interdisciplinary and will require critical analysis of both classic and contemporary perspectives.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

SOCI 041 302

Monday and Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Poverty and Inequality

Regina Baker, *Assistant Professor of Sociology*

What does it mean to live in poverty in the land of plenty? In this seminar, we will explore this question and others related to poverty in contemporary America. We will discuss topics such as poverty measurement, current poverty trends, the causes of poverty, and poverty-related outcomes. We will also consider inequalities in other related domains (e.g. the labor market, health, family, education, and the justice system) and how they help produce, maintain, and reproduce poverty and inequality. Throughout the semester, we will consider the roles of race/ethnicity, gender, age, and place. Lastly, we will examine anti-poverty policy programs in the U.S, their effectiveness, and how they compare to programs in other countries. To encourage engaged class discussions, students will complete short weekly response papers regarding course readings.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

SOCI 041 303

Tuesday and Thursday | 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Homelessness & Urban Inequality

Dennis Culhane, *Professor of Social Policy and Practice*

This freshman seminar examines the homelessness problem from a variety of scientific and policy perspectives. Contemporary homelessness differs significantly from related conditions of destitute poverty during other eras of our nation's history. Advocates, researchers and policymakers have all played key roles in defining the current problem, measuring its prevalence, and designing interventions to reduce it. The first section of this course examines the definitional and measurement issues, and how they affect our understanding of the scale and composition of the problem. Explanations for homelessness have also been varied, and the second part of the course focuses on examining the merits of some of those explanations, and in particular, the role of the affordable housing crisis. The third section of the course focuses on the dynamics of homelessness, combining evidence from ethnographic studies of how people become homeless and experience homelessness, with quantitative homelessness, research on the patterns of entry and exit from the condition. The final section of the course turns to the approaches taken by policymakers and advocates to address the problem, and considers the efficacy and quandaries associated with various policy strategies. The course concludes by contemplating the future of homelessness research and public policy.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

URBS 010 401 AFRC 041 401 SOCI 041 401

Friday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sector II - History & Tradition

Race and Identity: Coming of Age in 20th Century America

Heather Williams, *Professor of Africana Studies*

In this First Year Seminar we will use coming-of-age autobiographies to explore some of the most significant historical developments of the 20th century. By coming of age I mean autobiographies in which the author focuses primarily on the periods of childhood and adolescence into young adulthood. We will read books by people who lived during segregation in the South, the Great Depression, Japanese

Internment during World War II, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. We will consider many issues, including: race, racism, immigration, religion, social class, and gender. We will contemplate questions about identity, family, honesty, and memory. As we read each book we will examine an individual life in a particular place and time, and we will move out beyond the confines of a person, family, or town to explore the broader historical moment in which the individual lived. To make this deeper contextualization possible, the course is divided into segments that will allow us to study the historical context of the autobiography as well as engage in focused discussion of the texts themselves.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

AFRC 015 401 HIST 104 401

Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Feith Family Seminar: The Messianic Impulse in Jewish History

David Ruderman, *Joseph Meyerhoff Professor of Modern Jewish History*

Among Judaism's foundational ideas is the notion of a messiah, a messianic age, and a final denouement of history culminating in a perfect world of harmony and peace. The idea has served both to inspire Jews that, despite hardships of their collective past, there was a bright future waiting for them on the horizon. At the same time the messianic idea was also unsettling and destabilizing, assuming a quick and unnatural disruption of their normative Jewish life in Israel and the diaspora. This dual or dialectic function of the messianic idea, as Gershom Scholem once described it--to restore the previous existence and stability Jews once had but had lost or to establish instead something entirely new, a supernatural utopia unlike anything previously experienced--represents one of the principal foci of this course. The seminar will discuss the history of Jewish messianic ideas and messianism from antiquity until the present through reading primary sources in translation, including how rabbis, philosophers, and kabbalists understood the idea. It will

linger on the most important messianic figure of pre-modern times, Shabbetai Zevi, the seventeenth century messianic mystic and his movement. It will also consider the secularized versions of messianism in the modern era as reflected in Reform Judaism, Zionism and socialism; and it will consider the contemporary manifestations of messianic behavior in modern Israel and among diaspora Jewry.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

HIST 101 401 JWST 103 401

Wednesday | 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Life Stories in Early America

Robert St. George, Associate Professor of History

This seminar explores the social and cultural history of early America by focusing on the lives of specific individuals, ranging from Jesuit priests in early Quebec to Philadelphia politicians to Saramaka slaves to Maine midwives. As we critically examine biography and autobiography as two of history's most powerful narrative frames, we will concentrate on the spaces and places in the social landscape that shaped individual understandings of work, sense of self, gender, beliefs, and political power, and why.

HIST 103 301

Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Africa in World History

Lee Cassanelli, Associate Professor of History

This seminar examines Africa's connections--economic, political, intellectual and cultural--with the wider world from ancient times to the 21st century, drawing on a diverse sample of historical sources. It also explores Africa's place in the imaginations of outsiders, from ancient Greeks to modern-day development "experts." Whether you know a lot or almost nothing about the continent, the course will get you to rethink your stereotypes and to question your assumptions about the importance of Africa in world history.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

HIST 106 301

Monday and Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Snip and Tuck

Beth Linker, Associate Professor of History and Sociology of Science

Before the discovery of anesthesia in the nineteenth century, surgery was often a grizzly and horrific affair, inevitably involving extreme pain. Surgeons had a reputation as dirty, blood-thirsty "barbarians," and patients rarely sought out their services. But all of this changed during the twentieth century. Today surgery is one of the most prestigious medical specialties, and patients--especially those who long to look younger, thinner, and trimmer--voluntarily submit to multiple procedures. This course will investigate the cultural and scientific sources of these dramatic changes, with readings ranging from graphic descriptions of "bonesetting" and suturing during the Middle Ages to contemporary accounts of childbirth and plastic surgery in antiseptic hospitals and clinics.

HSOC 042 301

Thursday | 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Proto-Indo-European Languages

Rolf Noyer, Associate Professor of Linguistics

Most of the languages now spoken in Europe, along with some languages of Iran, India and central Asia, are thought to be descended from a single language known as Proto-Indo-European, spoken at least six thousand years ago, probably in a region extending from north of the Black Sea in modern Ukraine east through southern Russia. Speakers of Proto-Indo European eventually populated Europe in the Bronze Age, and their societies formed the basis of the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, as well as of the Celtic, Germanic and Slavic speaking peoples. What were the Proto-Indo-Europeans like? What did they believe about the world and their gods? How do we know? Reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European language, one of the triumphs of comparative and historical linguistics in the 19th and 20th centuries, allows us a glimpse into the society of this prehistoric people.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

LING 051 301

Monday and Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Bilingualism in History

Alison Biggs, *Senior Lecturer in Linguistics*

Throughout the course of human history, and still around much of the world today, it has been the norm to find more than one language in regular use in a single community. How do individual speakers handle multiple languages? How does language contact influence languages? This course takes an historical approach to tracing and reconstructing the nature of language contacts and bilingualism in order to understand what happens to languages spoken by bilinguals. We find that contacts between groups of people speaking different languages, motivated by trade, migration, conquest and intermarriage, are documented from earliest records. At the same time, differences in socio-historical context have created different kinds of linguistic outcomes. Sometimes languages are lost; sometimes new languages are created. In still other cases, the structure of a language is radically altered. The course introduces the basics of linguistic structure through a discussion of which aspects of language have proved to be relatively stable, and which are readily altered, under conditions of bilingualism.

LING 054 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Making Meaning: Local, Global, and Historical Perspectives

Annette Reed, *Associate Professor of Religious Studies*

This for-credit Residential Program, directed by Annette Yoshiko Reed and Benjamin Fleming, explores the ways in which people around the world make meaning in their lives and communities. We will survey religious, artistic, and philosophical traditions from around the world — drawing especially on the rich resources here in Philadelphia. Field trips will include chances to see ancient artifacts and medieval manuscripts from Asian, European, and Middle Eastern world cultures; visits to local museums, art galleries, temples, churches, mosques, and synagogues; and opportunities to engage the local histories of communities in West Philadelphia. Guest speakers, films, novels, and other readings will cover different cross-cultural and historical approaches to sanctifying time and space, understanding the human condition, and creating meaning as individuals and communities. This course is over two-semester where students register for .5 cus each term for a total of 1 cu over the entire academic year.

RELS 035 301

Friday | 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Voyages of Discovery

Ian Petrie, *Associate Director, Center for Teaching and Learning*

Across the nineteenth century, voyages of sail and steam made possible the creation of empires and a globalized world, through the transportation of people and commodities. Similarly, this course is a voyage of discovery based on

the study of actual ship's logs held in Penn's Rare Book collection. We will use these accounts to guide our investigation into the science, technology, medicine, economic and environmental history of life at sea and in the ports of call for these ships around the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. Collectively, the seminar will produce an online exhibition built on logs, diaries and other sources held at Penn, in other local collections and gleaned from archives around the world.

STSC 077 301

Monday and Wednesday | 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sector III - Arts & Letters

Modern Sci-Fi Cinema

Christopher Donovan, *House Dean, Gregory College House*

Science Fiction has been a cinematic genre for as long as there has been cinema—at least since Georges Melies's visionary *Trip to the Moon* in 1902. However, though science fiction films have long been reliable box office earners and cult phenomena, critical acknowledgement and analysis was slow to develop. Still, few genres reflect the sensibility of their age so transparently—if often unconsciously—or provide so many opportunities for filmmakers to simultaneously address social issues and expand the lexicon with new technologies. Given budgetary considerations and the appetite for franchises, science fiction auteurs face a difficult negotiation between artistic expression and lowest common denominator imperatives, the controversy over Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985) being perhaps the most infamous example. Nevertheless, many notable filmmakers have done their most perceptive and influential work in the scifi realm, including Gilliam, Ridley Scott, David Cronenberg, Paul Verhoeven, James Cameron and Alfonso Cuarón. This course will survey the scope of contemporary science fiction cinema, after looking first at seminal works like *Metropolis* (1927) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) that continue to cast their shadow over the genre. We will then devote considerable time to a pair of more modern films, Scott's *Alien* (1979) and *Blade Runner* (1982), which drew from earlier movements (German expressionism, noir), influenced new ones (cyberpunk) and inspired a rare wave of academic discourse. Over the course of the term we will sample smaller, more independent-minded projects, such as Michel Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) and Spike Jonze's *Her* (2013) as well as higher profile but much more risky epics from filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg and Christopher Nolan.

CIMS 016 301

Monday and Wednesday | 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Writing About Art

Susan Bee Laufer, *Lecturer, Creative Writing Program*

The seminar will engage critical issues related to visual arts, with a focus on writing about contemporary exhibitions. Most weeks there will be both a writing assignment and suggested reading. Members of the seminar will visit and review Philadelphia area exhibitions, including shows at the Institute for Contemporary Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and local galleries. In the seminar, students will be able to practice different descriptive and critical approaches to writing about art works. We will also focus on editing and the role of the editor in creating the final written work. There will be ample time given to discuss a wide range of contemporary visual art. [See video description.](#)

Offered in conjunction with Penn's [Art and Culture Initiative](#).

ENGL 016 301

Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Kerouac in Context

Jean-Christophe Cloutier, *Assistant Professor of English*

This course will take an in depth look into the life and career of one of the most influential writers of the 20th Century, Jack Kerouac (1922-1969). Born Jean-Louis K  rouac to immigrant parents from north of the border, the famed author of *On the Road* grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts, speaking only French until he was 6 years old, and becoming fully bilingual only in his late teens. And yet, this son of a printer and factory worker, this football player and Ivy Leaguer, this open-road hitchhiker and reclusive hermit, this Proustian Joyce, this Catholic Canuck, this budding Buddhist, somehow ended up labeled "King of the Beats," and leaving an indelible, transnational impact on literature and culture. Today, all his works are still in print and continue to be translated into new languages around the world. This seminar will explore the historical and cultural context in which Kerouac lived and died—childhood in the Great Depression, the advent & aftermath of World War II, the rise of containment vs counter-culture, the birth of cool, bebop, and rock n' roll, the highway act of 1956, hippie and drug culture, and so on—as well as that of his immediate counterparts & collaborators like Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Amiri Baraka, Diane DiPrima, Robert Frank, and others. Assignments will consist of brief weekly responses to the readings, one or two short essay(s), and will culminate in an oral report on Kerouac's international reception.

ENGL 016 304

Monday and Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Representing Africa

Lydie Moudileno, *Professor of Romance Languages*

The purpose of this seminar is to provide students with some basic tools with which to understand and evaluate representations of Africa from colonial times to the present. Using a range of sources including early travel accounts, autobiography, fiction, film, visual arts and contemporary media, we will examine various ways in which discourses on "Africa" as a continent have been produced by the West, but also by Africans themselves. We will pay particular attention to how these discourses and representations compete with or echo each other, all the while emphasizing, beyond stereotypical representations, the diverse histories, nations, regions, geographies and peoples that make up this vast continent.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

FREN 200 401 AFRC 200 401 AFST 200 401

Tuesday and Thursday | 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Bad Taste

Catriona MacLeod, *Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures*

"Beauty is not a quality inherent in things: it only exists in the mind of the beholder." (David Hume)

"Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier." (Pierre Bourdieu)

"Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass. The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass! The second tear makes kitsch kitsch." (Milan Kundera)

Most of us can recognize bad taste as soon as we see it: Harlequin romances, Elvis on black velvet, lawn ornaments. But bad taste also has a history, and kitsch has been identified as a peculiarly modern invention related to capitalism and consumerism. Beginning with a discussion of taste in the eighteenth century (Hume, Kant), we will investigate under what conditions good taste can go bad, for example when it is the object of mass reproduction, and, on the other hand, why bad taste in recent times has increasingly been recuperated as an art form. Categories such as the cute, the sentimental, the miniature, kitsch, and camp will be explored. We will also ask what forms of ideological

work have been done by this brand of aesthetics, for example in the connection between politics and kitsch, femininity and the low-brow, or camp and queer identity.

GRMN 011 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Saints and Devils in Russian Literature and Tradition

Julia Verkholtantsev, *Associate Professor of Slavic Languages & Literatures*

This course is about Russian literature, which is populated with saints and devils, believers and religious rebels, holy men and sinners. In Russia, where people's frame of mind had been formed by a mix of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and earlier pagan beliefs, the quest for faith, spirituality, and the meaning of life has invariably been connected with religious matters. How can one find the right path in life? Is humility the way to salvation? Should one live for God or for the people? Does God even exist?

In "Saints and Devils" we will examine Russian literature concerning the holy and the demonic as representations of good and evil, and we will learn about the historic trends that have filled Russia's national character with religious and mystical spirit. We will start with medieval fanciful stories and legends of crafty demons and all-forbearing saints. The master of Russian fantastic writing, Nikolai Gogol, will teach us how to triumph over the devil, while a great storyteller, Nikolai Leskov, will take us through Russia's vast expanses. In Romantic and modernist poetry, we will discover the artistic power of the demonic. Together with Anton Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy, we will contemplate an ambivalent cultural image of woman as a victim or a sinful agent of the devil. Leo Tolstoy, who founded his own religion, will give us his philosophical and moral lessons. Finally, immersed in the world of Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, we will follow the characters in their search for truth, faith, and love. (All readings are in English.)

Cross-Cultural Analysis

RUSS 213 401 COML 213 401 RELS 218 401

Monday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Theatre in Philadelphia

Rose Malague, *Senior Lecturer in Theatre Arts*

The focus of this course will be on investigating and experiencing live theatre in Philadelphia. This semester we will have the opportunity to see numerous plays in production. We will examine the theatre experience in its entirety, considering: place and space of performance; audience; production elements such as directing, acting, and scenic design; as well as the play or performance piece itself. In addition, we will examine the state of the contemporary theatre culture of Philadelphia by looking at: the history of theatre in the city; the theatre buildings themselves; as well as the history, mission, and current state of selected theatre companies. Our readings will include: historical and theoretical context for attending the theatre and viewing plays in production; scripts for plays we will see; and local newspaper coverage of the Philadelphia theatre scene. The course will also include tours of local theatres as well as discussions with local and visiting theatre artists. [See video description.](#)

Offered in conjunction with Penn's [Art and Culture Initiative](#).

THAR 076 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sector IV - Humanities & Social Sciences

Cultural Heritage, Politics and War in the Middle East

***Salam al Kuntar*, Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology**

Political upheaval in the Middle East has brought cultural heritage studies to the forefront. From playing a role in the making of national identity and economy of Middle Eastern countries to falling prey to armed conflicts, cultural heritage remains an important element of the political and social scene. This seminar will examine the relatedness of cultural heritage to questions of identity and politics in the Middle East, and the impact of recent wars on such heritage.

The seminar will start by outlining the ancient and modern history of the Middle East, and reviewing the production of cultural heritage and its contemporary management in several Middle Eastern countries. It will then proceed to discuss the following major topics:

- Cultural diversity of modern Middle Eastern societies, the perception of cultural heritage in these societies, and the survival of long-living historical places, old traditions and material culture of all kinds.
- The influence of ancient cultures on common fixation and beliefs of modern identity in Middle Eastern societies (e.g. particular ethnic and religious groups see themselves as direct descendents of one or a number of ancient groups such as Phoenicians, Israelites, Assyrians).
- The use of archeological and historical data to create narratives of the past that promote specific political ideologies in the modern Middle East and, in some cases, to fabricate novel cultural and political realities.
- The damage to cultural heritage caused by recent wars in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, and (i) how these wars are/were the makers of a new time that disrupted the living past through the destruction of cultural landscapes; and (ii) the involvement of cultural heritage institutions and archaeologists in rescuing cultural heritage in the event of war.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

ANTH 055 401 NELC 033 401

Tuesday and Thursday | 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sushi & Ramen: Global Food

Linda H. Chance, Associate Professor of Japanese Studies

Who defines Japanese food? Is it the chef at a top establishment in Tokyo, a home cook in Osaka, a tea master in Kyoto, the ancient capital? Or is it the midwestern American who thinks sushi means raw fish? Is it the person who scarfs cup noodles, or the devotee of artisan ramen stock? Perhaps it is the Japanese government, which in 2006 sent undercover agents abroad to guard against inferior Japanese food outlets. In this class we will consider how Japanese food came to be defined in distinction to Western and Chinese foods beginning in the nineteenth century, and how Japanese food became a global cuisine. Among our questions: What makes a dish Japanese? How did Portuguese or Spanish frying habits (tempura) and Chinese lamian (ramen) become hallmarks? How traditional is the diet of rice and fish, and in what ways does it interact with the environment? How did Buddhist vegetarians justify sukiyaki? What relationship does food have to the longevity of Japanese today? How does gender affect Japanese food cultures? What are the origins of Iron Chef and bento? We will survey the Philadelphia Japanese food scene and learn to make our own sushi. Some controversies we will discuss include the consumption of whale meat in Japan. We will also investigate Japanese government controls of food to combat obesity and to make food safe after the Fukushima nuclear catastrophe. Materials include essays, films, novellas, menus, cookbooks.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

EALC 064 301

Tuesday | 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Copyright and Culture

Peter Decherney, *Professor of English and Cinema Studies*

In this seminar, we will look at the history of copyright law and explore the ways that copyright has both responded to new media and driven art and entertainment. How, for example, are new media (books, photography, recorded music, film, video, and the internet) defined in relation to existing media? How does the law accommodate shifting ideas and circumstances of authorship? What are the limits of fair use? And how have writers, artists, engineers, and creative industries responded to various changes in copyright law? A major focus of the course will be the lessons of history for the current copyright debates over such issues as file sharing, the public domain, and fair use.

ENGL 015 401 CIMS 015 401

Tuesday and Thursday | 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Writing on the City: Letterforms, Technology, and Philadelphia Culture**David Comberg**, *Senior Lecturer, Department of Fine Arts*

This seminar explores the rich history of writing and typography from colonial to contemporary Philadelphia through primary source research at the city's many libraries and collections and through direct engagement with professional designers, crafts workers, and manufacturers.

The course will be divided into two parts. The first phase will be devoted to information gathering: lectures, readings, and visits, including presentations, demonstrations, and hands-on research. Students will keep a journal of their inquiries and regularly share their insights during class sessions, developing a plan for final documentation.

In the second phase students will synthesize and distill their research, developing theories, defining individual and group projects, and collectively writing, designing, and publishing a public framework (web/print/exhibition, etc.) to chronicle their scholarship. [See video description.](#)

Offered in conjunction with Penn's [Art and Culture Initiative](#).

FNAR 130 301

Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Human Nature and History**Michael Zuckerman**, *Emeritus Professor of History*

In this seminar, we will take up the topic of human nature as a gambit for establishing common ground and stimulating a deeper intellectual community among incoming University Scholars. Or perhaps we will work the other way round. Perhaps we will draw upon that deeper community as a way of enriching our conversation as we take up the perennially challenging topic of human nature. Either way, we will engage in a wide-ranging reconnaissance of major theories on the topic. We will examine conceptions of humankind drawn from such disciplines as economics, psychology, religion, literature, linguistics, anthropology, and philosophy. Lurking behind all of our endeavor will be questions of time and place, questions, if you will, of history; is human nature best understood as constant or contingent, stable or changeful with time and circumstance? We should have a lot of fun. (Open only to first year students in the University Scholars Program.)

HIST 104 301

Wednesday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Music in Urban Spaces**Molly McGlone**, *Assistant Dean for Academic Advising*

Music in Urban Spaces explores the ways in which individuals use music in their everyday lives and how music is used

to construct larger social and economic networks that we call culture. We will read musicologists, cultural theorists, urban geographers, sociologists and educators who work to define urban space and the role of music and sound in urban environments, including through music education. While the readings make up our study of the sociology of urban space and the way we use music in everyday life to inform our conversations and the questions we ask, it is within the context of our personal experiences working with music programs at West Philadelphia High School or Henry C Lea Elementary, both inner city neighborhood schools serving economically disadvantaged students, that we will begin to formulate our theories of the contested musical micro-cultures of West Philadelphia. This course is over two-semester where students register for .5cus each term (for a total of 1cu over the entire academic year) and is tied to the Music and Social Change Residential Program in Fisher Hassenfeld (<http://fh.house.upenn.edu/musicandsocialchange>) where most class participants live together. All participants volunteer in music classrooms for 3 hours per week, are expected to go to at least two concerts in the community during the year, attend the seminar weekly and complete all assignments.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S.

MUSC 018 402 URBS 018 402

Friday | 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Middle East Through Many Lenses

Heather Sharkey, Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations

This freshman seminar introduces the contemporary Middle East by drawing upon cutting-edge studies written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. These include history, political science, and anthropology, as well as studies of mass media, sexuality, religion, urban life, and the environment. We will spend the first few weeks of the semester surveying major trends in modern Middle Eastern history. We will spend subsequent weeks intensively discussing assigned readings along with documentary films that we will watch in class. The semester will leave students with both a foundation in Middle Eastern studies and a sense of current directions in the field.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

NELC 036 401 CIMS 036 401

Monday | 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Scrimmage over Scripture

Talya Fishman, Associate Professor of Medieval Middle Eastern Religion

Course explores the disparate ways in which elements of the Hebrew Bible have been used by faith communities that inhabited the empires of Byzantium, Sassanian Iran, Latin Christendom and Islam, from the 2nd through the 12th centuries. Analysis of literary passages produced by Jews, Christians, and Muslims will problematize the "text vs. interpretation dichotomy," while occasioning reflections on "canon," and on modes of transmission. Examination of polemical writings will shed light on the dynamics of "textual communities" and their formation. All readings are in English; no previous knowledge assumed.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

NELC 151 401 JWST 149 401

Tuesday and Thursday | 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Beyond Biology--Enhancing the Human Mind through Technology

Gary Purpura, Assistant Dean for Academic Advising

Some people have claimed that the prevalence of various information technologies in modern society is triggering a radical alteration to the structure of the human mind. The development of cognitive-enhancing drugs and of devices that interface with nervous systems to restore cognitive functioning in brain-damaged people provides further

evidence to some of the transformative potential of technology on the human mind. In this course, we will examine the philosophical hypothesis that the human mind is a product of the interaction between biology, technology (broadly conceived), and culture. We will consider whether technologies that enable or enhance human mental faculties are best viewed as proper parts of the human mind or instead as merely external aids/tools. We will also consider the moral issues surrounding the use and accessibility of such technologies. The questions that we consider in this course will get to the heart of what it means to possess a human mind and indeed to be a human being.

PHIL 032 301

Monday and Wednesday | 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

From Darwin to DNA

Susan Lindee, *Professor of History and Sociology of Science*

Very few scientific ideas have been as charged with social and political meanings as "the survival of the fittest." Evolution has provoked social controversy from its earliest elaborations into the present. Critics have objected on religious, moral, ethical and political grounds to the ideas that they associate with Darwinism, including eugenics, social Darwinism, sociobiology, racism, even genocide. Some authors have drawn a direct line from Darwin to Hitler; others have claimed that Darwinism properly understood undermines all morality and religion. Evolution is therefore both a scientific explanation of change through time, and a powerful social and cultural idea with broader implications. In this course, we explore the history of ideas about evolution, heredity, DNA and genomics, attentive to the profound social dimensions of biological ideas.

STSC 021 301

Thursday | 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Introduction to Acting

James Schlatter, *Senior Lecturer in Theatre Arts*

Rooted in the system devised by Konstantin Stanislavsky, this course takes students step by step through the practical work an actor must do to live and behave truthfully on-stage. Beginning with relaxation and physical exercise, interactive games, and ensemble building, students then learn and put into practice basic acting techniques, including sensory work, the principles of action, objectives, given circumstances, etc. The semester culminates in the performance of a scene or scenes, most often from a modern American play. This course strongly stresses the responsibility of the actor to work and especially to one's fellow actors. Practical work is supplemented by readings from Stanislavsky and a variety of other acting theorists that may include Uta Hagen, Robert Cohen, Stella Adler, among others. Students are required to submit short essays over the course of the semester in response to the readings and in preparation for their final scene project.

THAR 120 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sector V - Living World

Neurobiology of Brain Disorders

Marc Dichter, *Professor of Neurology*

The human brain is clearly the most complicated and magical organ in the body. We don't completely understand how it works, but we do know, unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, the human brain is prone to failure, either by acute injury, chronic degeneration, genetic flaws in its composition, or unknown disturbances in its behavior. Diseases of the

brain can take many forms but are all uniformly devastating for individuals, families, and our society, and are also very costly. This course will explore the ways in which various brain disorders (both neurological and psychiatric) manifest themselves and discuss their underlying neurobiological mechanisms. In addition, the social and economic impact of these diseases on society will be considered, as well as some well publicized political issues surrounding many of these brain disorders. The course will consist of lectures, readings, discussions, and organized debates.

BIBB 030 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This is Your Genome! Fascinating Experiments in Heredity

Greg Guild, *Professor of Biology*

Your genome represents the complete set of genetic instructions that guides your development from a single cell into a living, thinking, and reproducing organism. This course will examine the ideas that led to our current understanding of genomes with particular emphasis on the molecular biology that revolutionized our concepts of gene and genome structure and function. We will fast-forward through the heredity/chromosome/DNA/gene-structure era and spend some time in the genome-sequencing era of the late 1990s and early 2000s. We will then consider how genome science is revolutionizing our understanding of gene variation, human disease, population biology and evolution. The course will include field trips to the Penn genomic core facilities.

BIOL 021 301

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday | 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Sector VI - Physical World

Introduction to Environmental Earth Science: How Earth Works. A freshmen seminar for ENVS200 students

Alain Plante, *Associate Professor of Earth and Environmental Science*

This seminar is offered to interested students enrolled in ENVS200: Introduction to Environmental Earth Science. The course as a whole exposes students to the principles that underlie our understanding of how the Earth works. The goal of Earth System Science is to obtain a scientific understanding of the entire Earth system by describing its component parts (lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, biosphere) and their interactions and by describing how they have evolved, how they function, and how they may be expected to respond to human activity.

Students in the seminar will undertake the same recitation work as the rest of the ENVS200 course. In addition, the seminar extends the work of the main course with in-depth discussions of relevant current events and a social media project.

Students must enroll in both the freshman seminar (section 301, below) and each of the following:

ENVS 200.001 | Tuesday and Thursday | 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

ENVS 200.201 | No separate meeting, but registration is required.

Quantitative Data Analysis

ENVS 200 301

Monday | 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Honors Physics I: Mechanics and Wave Motion

Alan Johnson, *Professor of Physics and Astronomy*

This course parallels and extends the content of PHYS 150, at a significantly higher mathematical level. Recommended for well-prepared students in engineering and the physical sciences, and particularly for those planning to major in physics. Classical laws of motion: interaction between particles; conservation laws and symmetry principles; rigid body motion; noninertial reference frames; oscillations.

Students must enroll in both the seminar (PHYS 170.301, shown below) and one of the labs (PHYS 170.302 or PHYS 170.303, below). The seminar meets for a fourth hour on Mondays from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

302 NG 15 T 0300PM-0500PM STAFF 15 OPEN LAB

303 NG 15 R 0100PM-0300PM STAFF 15 OPEN LAB

PHYS 170 301

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday | 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Sector VII - Natural Sciences & Mathematics

Structural Biology and Genomics

Ponzy Lu, *Professor of Chemistry*

Structural biology is the scientific method of describing, predicting and changing the properties of living organisms, including humans, based on "complete" genome chemical structures (sequence) and 3-dimensional structures of cellular components. The intellectual and technical revolutions that occurred during the 20th century made this possible. It is today's approach to understanding biology and solving problems in medicine. We will discuss how macroscopic biological properties, such as reproduction, locomotion and viral infection, are determined by the physics and chemistry of proteins and nucleic acids. Changes in biological function, in hereditary diseases like cystic fibrosis or sickle cell anemia, result from minute changes in individual proteins. Much larger changes in genome and protein structure are often tolerated without consequence. Understanding and exploiting these phenomena at the molecular level is the basis of new technology in the agricultural, energy and drug industries. The broad range of medical, social and political problems associated with the advances will be considered. We will attempt to distinguish real progress from fads and fashion. The weekly reading assignment will be *Science* and the Tuesday *New York Times*. This is a two-semester seminar with 0.5 credit unit each semester of the academic year.

CHEM 022 301

Tuesday and Thursday | 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Other seminars open to freshmen (no sector)

Vagelos Integrated Program in Energy Research (VIPER) Seminar, Part II

Andrew Rappe / John Vohs, *Professor of Chemistry/Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering*

This is the second part of the two-semester seminar designed to introduce students to the VIPER program and help them prepare for energy-related research. In this semester, we will continue to discuss research articles on various energy-related topics, best practices for library research, presentation of data, basic research methods, research ethics, data analysis, and funding options. A large focus of the course will also be on presenting (in both written and oral form) the work from the students' summer research internships.

VIPR 121 301

Tuesday | 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.