HON 290 Seminars: Spring 2016

HON 291: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Media
Emily Davalos

We will explore the ways rhetoric shapes our understandings around race, gender, and sexualities as conveyed in pop culture artifacts. The course will focus on the intersection between theory and our everyday practices. We will begin the course exploring processes of socialization as well as the nuances amongst prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. We will analyze messages in tv, movies, music, social media, and videogames. At the end of the semester, students will produce their own cultural criticism addressing the larger questions of how we shape and how we are shaped by these images in the media.

HON 292: Virgin, Mother, and Whore: Images of Women
Anne Scott

The Virgin/Whore dichotomy was popularized by Sigmund Freud and remains common in American media representations of women. Potentially negative representations of women are not uncommon because most archetypal depictions of women are culturally created by our (conscious and unconscious) participation in the overarching social system of patriarchy. Analysis of the effects of media on women began in the 1960s and has become incredibly important to understanding how women are perceived in America today. In this class, we examine how American popular culture represents women, creates and defies stereotypes, the roles the

HON 291: The Craft of Fiction
William Cordeiro

In this creative writing course we will examine the elements of crafting various genres and styles of fictional narratives, focusing especially on the short story. Through practice (individual and collaborative writing assignments, workshops, revisions, and readings, we will explore the techniques that help writers produce engaging and compelling fictional characters, stories, and worlds.

HON 291: The Fairy Tale
Emily Davalos

During this course, we will reflect critically on the ways in which fairy tales connect us with each other and teach us about the human condition. This course will create space for us to explore the role and function of fairy tales by applying a range of literary theories to our analysis, which include New Criticism, Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, Postcolonialism, Gender studies, Queer Theory, and Ecocriticism. We will explore the interdisciplinary nature of fairy tales by adopting various critical perspectives in order to investigate the intricate dance of human freedom in service of human and ecological communities.

HON 291: Wild Writers Writing Outdoors
Ted Martinez

In this course we will discover the magic of nature writing, why writers do nature writing, and the magic of writing outdoors about place. An emphasis will be placed on the creation of nature writing and discovering nature through experience and writing. We will analyze the elements that make good nature writing and attempt to emulate what we have learned by writing about place while writing in the outdoors. We will read classic nature authors such as Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams and John Muir. We will also foray into the philosophical underpinnings of nature writing and environmental philosophy.

HON 291: Stand Up Comedy & Solo Performance
Season Ellison

From ancient and early modern philosophers Aristotle, Plato, Henri Bergson, and Soren Kierkegaard; to mid-twentieth century and contemporary American comics Lenny Bruce, Anthony Jeselnik, Sarah Silverman, and Amy Schumer, the role of solo comedy has always carried a significant, and often contested, weight in Western and American cultures. In this course we explore the various functions of stand-up comedy and solo performance within this Western tradition. After laying a foundation for our study of humor, we primarily focus on contemporary American comics who bring to the fore of their work: social and political critique; gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, and personal identity; the role of obscenity and vulgarity; and more. In addition to close viewing and analysis of various contemporary stand-up performances, listening to and reading historical stand-up routines, and writing a research paper focused on a stand-up comedy topic of your choice, students will also create a stand-up comedy routine or solo performance in a safe and welcoming atmosphere with the Professor's and peers’ guidance! Bring your life experiences, a great attitude, and your willingness to laugh and learn!

HON 291: Power of Love: Love of Power
Anne Scott

What drives human beings to do what they do? What lies at the root of so much human achievement, whether for good or ill? This class will examine two great driving forces, love and power – their nature, function, interrelationship, motivations, and manifestations – as these forces appear in selected works of literature; short stories, novels, poetry, treatises, and contemporary documents, to list a few. Our examination of these concepts will be both cross-cultural and interdisciplinary, and we will feel free to explore the corollaries and “kissing cousins” of love and power, i.e., the other traits, emotions, forces, and elements that shape our successes or failures, make us beautiful or ugly, or earn us praise or blame.

HON 292: Cultural Understanding
Season Ellison

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media promotes women to play, behaviors and attitudes that the media deems appropriate for women, and the few archetypes to which women in the media are often regulated. Our focus is primarily on imagistic media: film, television, magazines, advertising, and the Internet. We conduct extensive analysis of visual media and we seek to find new ways of representation that may be more all-encompassing of women's various identity positions and point of view.

HON 293: Applied Science

Ted Martinez

Plants and people have co-evolved for thousands of years, but how much do you really know about the plants we depend on so much? Learn about plants as a source of medicine, food, fiber, alcohol, nutrition and health. Plants provide for us from our birth to death, exist in our culture and rituals, economy and industry, and comfort us in our homes. In this class we will examine plants in our everyday lives. There will be a focus on the principles of plant biology and taxonomy with an emphasis on human reliance upon plants including those used as a source of food, fiber, medicine, and other commercially important uses. Focus will also be on human nutrition, important plant families such as grasses and legumes, starchy foods, stimulating and alcoholic beverages, herbs, spices, and medicinal and psychoactive plants. There will be field collections and plant walks to foster a scientific appreciation of the plants around us.

HON 294: Social and Political Worlds

Will Cordeiro

This class will examine visions of dystopias—including, yes, the zombie apocalypse!—and their social, political, and ecological implications, primarily by examining films and science fiction along with historical and philosophical context. We will also look at a few utopian movements, discussing the different values by which visionaries sought to shape ideal societies, thereby gaining insight into their failures, and, ultimately, the problems and potentials of our own society and culture today. HON 294: A Life of Meaning: Contemplation, Compassion and Community

Cassie Dakan

HON 294: A Life of Meaning: Contemplation, Compassion, and Community

What does it mean to “stop the noise” or to experience “quiet ego”? In a hurry-up, want-it-now, future oriented modern Western world, how can we live in the present – in immediate, reflective and meaningful experience, among caring and supportive people? In this class we will read about, discuss, and practice the course title.

HON 294: 1980's

Robyn Martin

Why study the 1980s? Was it much different than any other decade? How true, really, were the stereotypical representations of the so-called vapid, hedonistic, amoral years of America's new gilded age, when yuppies reigned and greed was good?

Using a variety of pop culture sources (movies, TV, fashion, music including videos, as well as literature and art) as a foundation for analysis and connections, we will examine this decade from historical, socio-political and cultural perspectives. By studying these various representations of pop culture, we will discover why this period in the United States still resonates in our collective thought and action and how events in the 1980s continue to shape our country’s direction today.

HON 294: Trans/Gender Studies

Will Cordeiro

From Caitlyn Jenner to Chaz Bono, from Chelsea Manning to a wide-range of fictional characters in pop culture, trans folk are becoming increasingly visible in contemporary American society; in this course we will look at the emerging field of Trans Studies as it intersects and overlaps with—as well as differs from—“traditional” Gender Studies, Feminist Studies, and Queer Studies. This interdisciplinary course will look at Trans culture and activism from a global perspective through the fields of popular media, literature, history, film, theory, social sciences, art, law, medicine, and politics.

HON 294: Into the Future: Visions of Tomorrow

Cassie Dakan

Foresight is the newest term for the study of envisioning the future. How do people imagine and theorize multiple possible, probable, and preferable futures, seeking to understand what may continue and what may change for life on Earth. Foresight study merges the social and natural sciences, and parallels the field of history. Importantly, it examines how humans will behave and interact as complex world systems and dynamics shift.

HON 294: The Tao of Animals

Season Ellison

The “Tao of Animal” essentially translates to “the way of the animal.” As Linda Kohanov writes in The Tao of Equus, humans generally live in a world of cultural conditions that “downplay experiential, somatic, sensory, emotional, and intuitive knowledge to focus on secondhand knowledge from authority figures” (172). Oftentimes people turn to other animals to seek these first-hand and instinctive knowledges that come from our immensely varied and incredibly complicated relationships with non-human animals. In essence: We forget that we, indeed, ARE animals as well. With our human forgetfulness comes a lack of awareness and an influx of power, privilege, and problems that obscure these potentially fulfilling relationships and commonly make the lives of the animals in our world increasingly troubled. In this class, we turn to the quickly growing field of Animal Studies to examine our uneasy human-animal relationships with non-human animals. Through a combination of anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, performance, art, biology, mysticism, and spiritual studies, we explore the intersections of these fields with the animals that populate our lives, whether as pets, products, or philosophical subjects. A guiding question is: What can the way of the animal teach us about the way of the human, on the levels of the society and the individual, and as both public and personal?