

Topics Course Descriptions – Spring 2010

AMST300N 001

Topics: Hustlers, Homeboys, and Homicidal Maniacs

Bratyanski

American movie audiences no longer accept depictions of the black “Sambo” or the “Savage Indian” as authentic representations of America racial and ethnic identity. But consider the following contemporary film characters: the black street hustler, the Chicano “vato,” or the sociopathic transgender serial killer. These are just a few of the new cinematic identities that have emerged in American film over the last forty years. This course will examine the debates and controversies concerning the representation (and misrepresentation) of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in contemporary American films.

ART 407 N001

Topics in Art History: Asian Art

Pastryk

This course will consider the art and architecture of India, China and Japan within their historical and religious contexts.

BIOL 430A 001

Topics: Animal Behavior

DeJaco

This course will serve as a comprehensive introduction to animal behavior, including both the underlying mechanisms and evolutionary causes of behavior. Basic topics covered include mechanisms of behavior, learning, foraging, defense against predation, aggression, sensory systems, communication, mating systems and parental care behavior. This course will be useful for any student interested in learning how and why animals of all sorts (from ants to humans) do what they do. Prereq: BIOL 208 (Principles of Biology I), its equivalent, or consent of instructor.

CORE 122A

Paper or Plastic? Environmental Choices in a Complex World

Sections 001, 007, 009, 016

Professors Rhodes, Kelso, and Staff

We all leave environmental “footprints” as we move through life, impacting the environment just by living in it. How big is your footprint? Are you a Sasquatch or a

Tinkerbelle? This unit will investigate the impact of daily life on our environment and some common myths and misconceptions about environmental issues and our footprints. We will begin with a history of the environmental movement, focus on several important current issues and investigate ways to reduce the footprints of ourselves and others around us. By the end of the unit, we will be wiser citizens in this complex world, better prepared to make those difficult environmental choices.

CORE 122A

Truth, Lies, and the Media

Sections 08, 012, and 015

Professors Cooper-Guasco, Commins, and Staff

In a modern, media-saturated society, debate over critical issues plays out in an increasingly complex set of interlocking systems of communications media, juxtaposed with entertainment programming and commercials. When leaders make decisions about war and peace or other issues of national policy, we, as citizens, must sort through the various claims about those decisions that are offered in the media. How do we critically assess what we see and hear? Does the media fulfill its responsibility as “watchdog” for the public? What are the consequences of engaging in these kinds of debates through our modern communications media? These are some of the questions we’ll consider in this unit.

CORE 122A

Food for Thought

Sections 003, 005, 011, and 013

Professors Henderson, Braswell, Harper, McGavran

How safe is our food supply? What are you really eating? What are the politics of agriculture? What influences our eating choices? How are we to deal with the epidemic of obesity? Are there enough resources and food to feed everyone on earth? In this unit we will attempt to answer these questions by investigating issues in modern agriculture, personal health, nutrition, and hunger. During our journey through fields and meat-processing plants, we will use a variety of texts, films--including *Food, Inc* and *Super-Size Me*--and service projects to examine the connection between food and modern citizenship, researching and debating solutions to some of these issues.

CORE 122A

No Child Left Behind? Public Education in America

Sections 004,006, 010, and 014

Professors Johnston, Pardue, Easterwood

This unit will focus on public education in American history and contemporary American life. We will examine a number of issues related to public education: ensuring universal

access to free education, guaranteeing equal access for all children, unifying a diverse population, preparing people for citizenship in a democratic society, preparing people to become economically self-sufficient, and using education as a means of improving social conditions. Students will be asked to analyze these issues in the American educational system, to generate ideas for change, and to propose solutions. The service-learning activity for the unit will be determined by students in consultation with their instructors.

FREN 370A 001

Topics: Molière et le 17^{ème} siècle

Lien

This course will examine the history and literature of 17th-century France. This pivotal moment in French history—when France reigned supreme artistically and culturally as well as politically and militarily—remains a cultural touchstone for the country even today. Students will read works of literature from throughout the century with a particular emphasis on the comic genius of Molière who stands as one of the most important writers in all of French literature. 3 credit hours

HIST 391A 001

Topics in World History: The History of Ireland

Whalen

The history of Ireland offers a unique perspective on European, and indeed, on world history. For a small country, Ireland has had a very big impact on the world. Some 70-90 million people worldwide claim some link to Ireland, and Ireland has produced a remarkable number of world-famous artists. Ireland, nevertheless, is a small, not a large country; for most of its history it has been poor, not rich. Ireland was Europe's first modern colony, and the Irish struggle for independence was one of the world's first modern anti-colonial struggles. This course will survey the Irish experience from Neolithic times to the present, and will focus on key events in Irish history such as the ways in which medieval Ireland "saved civilization;" the 19th century famine (one of the world's worst ecological disasters); Ireland's long struggle for cultural and political independence; and the ways in which Irish emigration has influenced countries around the world. 3 credit hrs. no prerequisite.

HONR 210A 002

Satire: From Aristophanes to The Colbert Report

Goode

In a democracy we speak to our government officials with our votes. But who speaks for us between elections? Who shames the contemptible, deflates the pompous, and unmasks the frauds among us? It is the satirist who speaks truth to power while making us laugh. This course examines masters of the satiric trade, including Jonathon Swift, Mark Twain,

Richard Pryor, George Carlin, Mel Brooks, Louis Black, Jon Stewart, and Stephen Colbert. Materials will include satiric stories, essays, TV shows (*South Park*, *The Daily Show*, etc.), films, plays, songs, stand-up routines, magazines (*Mad*) and online newspapers (*The Onion*). Students will have the opportunity to produce their own works of satire for publication on the course website. Open to all students with GPA 3.25 or above.

HONR 220A 001

Zen in America

Frederick

The 1950's was the decade of "The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit," a novel and movie about a man experiencing emptiness in the corporate world. The 50's also saw Zen Buddhism burst into the American consciousness, with writers including Alan Watts, who wrote about how Zen could mystically transform our consciousness, and Jack Kerouac, whose *The Dharma Bums* featured dropouts trying to combine Zen insights with their drinking and drug use. Many Americans still are attracted to Zen Buddhism for its answers to questions about meaning and happiness, seeing Zen practice as a path to profound psychological and spiritual insights that address the emptiness of Western culture. This course will examine various forms of Zen in America, using texts and video from the 1950's to the present day, to see how individuals interpret Zen and apply it in their lives. The course will offer students opportunities to use the teachings of Zen in their daily lives, using our readings, discussions, and the resources of Charlotte. Open to students with a gpa of 3.25 or better.

MUSC 357N 001

Topics in Music Therapy: Music and Health Promotion

Staff

It is often said, "Music soothes the savage beast." How, precisely, does music reduce stress? This course will cover topics including negative physiological responses to stress and positive physiological responses to music. Elements of "relaxing" music will be explored and different uses of music within relaxation programs discussed. This course will include lecture as well as demonstrations and a music-based project.

PHIL 400A 001

Major Thinkers and Issues: An Inquiring Community

Henderson

Thinkers in philosophy and religion have written much in recent years about the value of communities of inquiry; this course will put those ideas into practice. Students in this course will pursue the academic study of their chosen topics in the field of religion or philosophy. The professor will facilitate this seminar-style class as each student identifies

a pressing issue or question; conducts and presents research of primary and secondary texts; shapes a sustained written argument; and presents her/his findings to the class and departmental faculty. Students who are interested in working toward presentation at a professional meeting or publication in a professional journal will be encouraged and equipped to do so. Prerequisite: open to junior and senior majors in philosophy and religion, and others by permission of the instructor and chair. This course may be taken as RELG 400.

PSYC 352A 001

Topics in Psychology: Adolescent Psychology

Neal

The study of major physical and psychological changes that occur during the period of adolescence that affect the emotional, cognitive, and social development of the individual. This course will examine all of these aspects of adolescent development and the related psychological theories and research. 3 credit hrs. Prerequisites: Psyc 201

RELG 349A 001

Topics in Religion: Lived Theology

Mowrey

What does it matter where we live, or when, or with whom? How is it that Germany in the 30s produced both a Hitler and a Bonhoeffer? Or how is it that the U.S. South in the 50s and 60s produced a George Wallace and a Martin Luther King, Jr? This course on “Lived Theology” will explore those questions by examining narrative accounts of the everyday lives of individual and communities who have worked for peace and justice amidst contexts that would challenge that work. We will examine the writings and lives of people like Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mohandas Gandhi, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Thich Nhat Hanh. By setting these individuals and their writings in their historical and cultural context, we will attempt to understand how the sacred or “God’s presence is felt, tasted, and touched in experience” (as Charles Marsh put it.) Prerequisite: RELG 205, 206, or 210, or permission of the instructor.

RELG 351N 001

Topics in World Religion: Islam

Sanyal

This course examines some of the major events in the history of Islam, ranging from its beginnings in seventh-century Arabia to current events in the Islamic world. In the first part of the course we will look at the life of the Prophet Muhammad, major themes in the Quran, Islamic law, Sufism, and Shi’ism. In the second half of the course, our focus will shift to contemporary issues, with an emphasis on Muslims in the United States. At the end of the course, students should have a basic knowledge of the major beliefs and practices of the Islamic world and an appreciation of some of its richness and diversity. Prerequisite: RELG 210.

RELG 353N 001**Studies in Religion, Culture, and Ethics: Heroes and Warrior Women**

Sinclair

What is a hero? Who are heroes and why do we need them? This course looks at heroism from the ancients to contemporary societies, from Hercules to Hollywood. We will examine mythologies (from the Greeks to Marvel comics) and models from the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism in both ancient texts and popular culture. Theories arising out of religious studies, philosophy, social psychology, and gender studies will inform our examination of altruism, mentors, unsung heroes and warrior women. No prerequisite.

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SPAN 370A 001**Topics: Hispano-American Humor**

Galleno

What do Hispano-Americans laugh about? Through a variety of texts and visual media we will explore both themes and circumstances that produce humor in order to reflect upon socio-cultural interactions, the importance of laughter and, the Spanish language. In this course students will expand their cultural awareness by learning particular idiosyncrasies with which humor is created. 3 credit hours