

CENTER FOR EXPERIMENTAL HUMANITIES (CEH-GA)

CEH-GA 1012 Oral History (4 Credits)

Typically offered not typically offered

This class uses oral history to consider the role of unappreciated labor and invisible knowledge in an urban setting. Working in collaboration with current and former members of New York City's Department of Sanitation, we will explore the dynamics of a historically significant work force to consider overlooked elements of the city's past, to become acquainted with the complexities of a vital but largely hidden infrastructure, and to uncover narratives about a dynamic, culturally rich, and often unseen community. The final interviews and edited transcripts will become part of the DSNY Oral History Archive. As an academic discipline and as a research methodology, oral history serves many functions. It can be a documentary technique, a fact-finding strategy, a tool of investigation, a casual practice, or a personal reflection. It is useful to historians, anthropologists, museum curators, educators, journalists, playwrights, and novelists, among others. Some who use oral history are quite self-conscious about the larger intellectual conversations in which it fits, while others simply find it a helpful way to learn details about particular events, individuals, or moments in time. Within the academy, oral history is considered through a variety of theoretical frameworks that ask questions about truth (who claims it, who contests it), perspective (whose voice is heard, whose is ignored, by whom, in what contexts), relevance (who cares? why or why not?), bias (of everyone involved), access (to the stories, to the people telling the stories) and power (woven through the entire enterprise, but not always easy to measure). We will delve into these and related concerns throughout the semester, but we will give equal attention to practicalities such as project design, research techniques, interview skills, equipment choices, archiving systems, finding aids, and transcription software and protocols. Sanitation work is an ideal theme for oral history. It is fundamental to the city's well-being, but is ignored in most formal histories of the region. By hearing directly from individuals whose lives have been structured around labors of waste, we create the opportunity for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of how a global metropolis has been shaped, by whom, and at what cost.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 1016 Special Topics (4 Credits)

Typically offered all terms

A seminar offered on a range of interdisciplinary topics within the humanities and/or social sciences.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 1018 Tpcs Sem: (4 Credits)

Typically offered Fall and Spring

A seminar offered on a range of interdisciplinary topics within the humanities and/or social sciences.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: Yes

CEH-GA 1045 International Human Rights: Latin America. (4 Credits)

Typically offered Fall and Spring

In this graduate seminar, students will study international human rights standards, topical case studies in Latin America, the role of international and local NGOs in the human rights movement, popular resistance and social movements in the Latin American human rights movement, the role of media and representation in reporting and promoting human rights, educational initiatives for human rights, and the many choices society has after collective violence. Same as LATC-GA 1045

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 1048 International Studies in Human Rights (4 Credits)

Typically offered Fall and Spring

Focusing on human rights as positive peace, students will study the major themes and events in the contemporary human rights movement. Students will be exposed to the international standards, how NGOs respond to violations, the role of media, and the transformative potential of human rights education.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 1089 Topics: (4 Credits)

Typically offered Fall and Spring

A seminar offered on a range of interdisciplinary topics within the humanities and/or social sciences.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: Yes

CEH-GA 1813 Garbage in Gotham (4 Credits)

Typically offered not typically offered

Traces changing definitions of value and worthlessness through Enlightenment, modern, and postmodern theory. Considers these through the perspective of trash, which is read as a reflection of contemporary social mores, time/space compression, and fragmentations of cultural identity, among other themes. Uses New York City as a case study.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 2223 Topics: (2 Credits)

In this seminar we will explore temporality as the backbone of history, but not in the traditional, chronological way. Instead, we will examine the possibilities of a temporality that is not linear but moves in different directions, starting from the present. During the four weeks we will closely read selected chapters from three novels, in view of their potential for transmediation into visual, or audio-visual texts: -Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary 1856 -Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote (part 1) 1605 -Domnica Radulescu, Train to Trieste 2008 Each novel lends itself to reading with a contemporary slant that we will take as primary in view of making a "pre-posterous" connection between present and past. Each has been or will be audio-visualized: the first one into a feature film, alternatively shown with photographs as installations; the second consists of installations only, and the third will be a feature film only. For the latter we will be able to read the script based on the novel, written by someone else (not connected to my own projects). The question of time will be studied in view of order (sequence, chronology, preposterousness); duration; and rhythm. This 2-credit course will be conducted in English.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: Yes

CEH-GA 2917 Topics in Modern Lit & Culture II (4 Credits)

Topics may include the formal properties of literary modernism, its social and political contexts, or particular modernist authors.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: Yes

CEH-GA 3000 Independent Study (1-4 Credits)*Typically offered not typically offered*

An Independent Study offers students an opportunity to do advanced work on a topic about which they have already taken a course during their time in XE, and about which no advanced courses are being offered.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**CEH-GA 3001 Independent Study (1-4 Credits)***Typically offered not typically offered*

An Independent Study offers students an opportunity to do advanced work on a topic about which they have already taken a course during their time in XE, and about which no advanced courses are being offered.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**CEH-GA 3002 Independent Study (1-2 Credits)***Typically offered not typically offered*

An Independent Study offers students an opportunity to do advanced work on a topic about which they have already taken a course during their time in XE, and about which no advanced courses are being offered.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CEH-GA 3003 Topics in The City (4 Credits)***Typically offered not typically offered*

A seminar offered on a range of interdisciplinary topics within urban studies.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**CEH-GA 3004 Topics in Gender and Sexuality (4 Credits)***Typically offered not typically offered*

Topics in Gender Politics seminars examine particularly focused subject matter and themes, which change frequently.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**CEH-GA 3005 XE Master's Project (1 Credit)**

The final academic research paper and/or creative project that serves as a culmination of the master's degree.

Grading: GSAS Pass/Fail**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CEH-GA 3015 Interdisciplinarity (3 Credits)**

As an introduction to interdisciplinary research and scholarship, this course seeks to determine how the humanities and social sciences shape both the public imagination and creative practice. It examines the way different scholarly fields challenge, confront, and mutually constitute each other by introducing students to key concepts in various disciplines—anthropology, philosophy, art history, urban studies, politics, and literature—and to scholars and practitioners in these fields.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CEH-GA 3019 Master's Project Workshop (2 Credits)**

This course is for all students in their last semester in the program who are prepared to finish their master's project. The semester blends bi-weekly class meetings, one-on-one consultations with the professor, in-class presentations, readings from various texts, regular structured writing assignments, collaborative peer support, and project presentations.

Grading: GSAS Pass/Fail**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CEH-GA 3027 Nothing: The Aesthetics of Absence (4 Credits)**

Blank books. Empty canvases. Silence, waiting, boredom, refusal. These choices in art, literature, music, and film over the past century have reconfigured the boundaries between aesthetic practice and philosophical thought. This class will examine how modern and contemporary art and literature have engaged with absence in its manifest forms.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CEH-GA 3028 Magazines, Art, and Public Culture (4 Credits)**

This course examines magazines as collaborative sites for artists and writers internationally, leading the way to a global, networked cultural sphere. We will consider periodicals as both commercial and artist-driven enterprises and as material objects to be studied through the lens of the history of photography, journalism, and design.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CEH-GA 3030 Internship (1-4 Credits)**

Internships offer students an opportunity to gain experience in a professional setting in a field of their choosing.

Grading: GSAS Pass/Fail**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**CEH-GA 3031 Correspondences: Letter Writing, Literature, and Art (4 Credits)**

From love letters to letters to the editor, letters have been fundamental to recording public and private life for centuries. They also constitute part of our material culture, whose mark making transforms them into visual objects of interest. This class revisits this so-called lost art of letter writing and its role in novels, visual culture, and our daily lives. Considering the roles of privacy, surveillance, censorship, this class begins with a history of the postal service and then examines epistolary novels, postcards, mail art, and other literary and artistic responses to letter writing. Readings include: Edgar Allan Poe, "The Purloined Letter" (1844), Franz Kafka, "Letter to my Father" (1919), Emily Dickinson's envelope poems, Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe's love letters, Derrida's *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, and artworks ranging from mail art by Ray Johnson and On Kawara, Fluxus postage stamps, Yves Klein's "mail scandals," postal works by Yayoi Kusama, Alighiero Boetti, and Eugenio Dittborn, and Moyra Davey's series *Mary, Marie*, 2011 on Mary Wollstonecraft's letters. The class will visit archives to consider correspondence between historical figures and students will be asked to reflect on letters found in the archive, write three short comparative papers, pen their own letters to the editor, and produce a final research paper or project.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CEH-GA 3033 Image Culture: Interdisciplinary Histories of Photography (4 Credits)**

This class historicizes and theorizes photography and the political, commercial, and aesthetic discourses that shaped it. We consider photography in relation to identity, to other media, and explore its status as an artifact, document, and digital file, to determine how photography evolved in both the public imagination and in practice.

Grading: GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

CEH-GA 3035 Global Modernisms (4 Credits)

The course considers the global expansion of modernism by both analyzing various means of conceptualizing of the period—the construction of modernism, modernity, and the avant-garde across the arts—and by theorizing the politics of race, gender, nationalism and anti-colonial movements that were constitutive of the time.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3036 Global Surrealisms: Revolutionizing Art and Life (4 Credits)

Typically offered not typically offered

Surrealism was decidedly an international phenomenon. The class considers its manifestations in Spain, Mexico, North America, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia, and critically reexamines the movement through the lens of ethnography, gender, and psychoanalysis across the writing, photographs, magazines, and artwork that emerged from it.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3038 Participation: Activating the Spectator in Contemporary Art (4 Credits)

From the 1960s through the present much art has relied on the active involvement of the spectator—from Brazilian neo-concrete art that required audience participation to contemporary debates over relational aesthetics and social practice—and in this class we will look at the development of theories and histories of contemporary art through the lens of what constitutes “activating” artwork. Fluxus, happenings, Gutai, conceptual art, public art, performance art, activist art—all model the interaction of the artist and the public very differently. We will examine how these different movements and artists stage the interaction between art and the public, and the relationship that they propose between gender, racial, and national identities through the politics of participation. Together we will reflect on the evolving debates surrounding theories of spectatorship, art and activism, performance art, the politics of public art, recent curatorial practices, and the rise of new media. Readings will include artists’ writings by Hélio Oiticica, Allan Kaprow, Guy Debord, Sol LeWitt, Cildo Meireles, and Rirkrit Tiravanija, and work by critics such as Mari Carmen Ramírez, Nicolas Bourriard, Claire Bishop and Grant Kester. The class incorporates site visits to museums, visiting guest lectures, and assignments include art criticism, short analytical papers, and a final conference paper, which students will present to the class.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3039 The Copy: Media and the Culture of Replication (4 Credits)

Copies, reproductions, replicas, facsimiles, fakes, forgeries, reissues. What is the status of the copy in our culture? This class will look at modern and contemporary copying in fiction and in art, as well as considering zines, appropriation art, sampling, and artists remaking their own or others’ work.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3040 Art and/as Direct Action (4 Credits)

This course examines a series of aesthetic strategies that have placed art at the center of political interventionism. Topics include the art strike, anti-art, ritual iconoclasm, art activism, détournement, participation, improvisation, public art and community video. How do such strategies attest to, intervene in, or complicate claims for art’s critical capacities?

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3046 Queer Commons (4 Credits)

This course explores the recent history of queer culture, theory, and activism through the lens of “the commons,” a concept mobilized to reimagine alternatives to late capitalism. Topics include queer approaches to questions of sexual freedom, privacy and access, climate change, land dispossession, care labor, knowledge production, and the politics of enclosure and land dispossession.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3050 Topics in Experimental Writing (4 Credits)

A seminar offered on a range of experimental writing and interdisciplinary research methods.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: Yes

CEH-GA 3053 Genre Trouble: Monsterous Texts and Experiments in Writing (2 Credits)

Genres are not to be mixed. I will not mix genres. I repeat: genres are not to be mixed. I will not mix them. So begins Jacques Derrida’s 1979 lecture, “The Law of Genre,” in which he argues that systems of generic taxonomy depend on principals of exclusion and reveal anxieties about “mixing,” “crossing,” and “hybridity.” Derrida’s argument becomes even more significant when we consider the fact that the French word “genre” also means “gender.” In this course, we will get messy and examine what happens when we play with genre. We will undertake this exploration by analyzing the relations between genre and identity through figures of monstrosity and experimentation. How do works of literature exploit and violate the “law of genre?” How do disparate forms of writing negotiate meanings around gender and racial identity? How do figures of the “monstrous” invite us to analyze the definition of the “human,” as well who is included and excluded from this category? We will read literary and critical texts by authors such as Mary Shelley, Toni Morrison, Marie de France, Judith Butler, Susan Stryker, Hélène Cixous, Assata Shakur, Jacques Derrida, and Frank Wilderson. Writing assignments will encourage students to experiment with their creative and critical voices.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3055 Trans Narrative as Method (4 Credits)

In this course, we will study and compose autofictions, making use of three lenses or methodologies. We will ask what it may mean—and what use it may be—to write fiction that discusses the very nature of fiction-writing and authorship (metapragmatics). We will explore the ways in which autofiction may allow the writer to experience vulnerability or discuss their own life and identity, perhaps under the sheltering pretext of fiction (vulnerability). And we will investigate the stylishness of autofiction, its relevance to the present moment and contemporary media, as well as its (frequently innate) wit and aplomb. We will read such authors as Roland Barthes, Percival Everett, Renee Gladman, Chris Kraus, and Tan Lin, among others, and we will devise and workshop our own autofictions. Participants will conclude the course with an expanded knowledge of contemporary and historical trends in experimental fiction, as well as a polished short story or excerpt from a longer work of prose.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3057 Climate Justice (4 Credits)

Climate change is a planetary crisis with unevenly distributed impacts. In this course, we will begin by establishing a foundation in the biophysical and social drivers and impacts of climate change, with particular attention to disparities and theories of justice. We will explore challenges related to attribution and accountability, and we will evaluate a range of proposals for climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience. We will then draw lessons from histories of environmental and climate justice resistance movements, including reviewing storytelling efforts by frontline communities and considering the transformational potential and underlying motives behind proposed climate solutions. In particular, we will critically evaluate proposed natural climate solutions related to soils, vegetation and land use, and we will explore case studies of greenwashing, false solutions, and tensions between technical potential and environmental justice. Finally, we will explore visions of just climate futures, drawing from climate fiction and environmental activism. Students will engage with scholarship from the environmental humanities, ecology, histories and anthropologies of environmental justice activism, policy proposals for addressing environmental and climate pollution, and climate fiction. Readings will include reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Ashlee Cunsolo Willox, Farhana Sultana, Robert Bullard, Julie Sze, and others.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3058 Microbial Cultures and Ecologies (4 Credits)

Hidden belowground or otherwise unseen, a tremendous diversity of fungi, bacteria, and other microorganisms drive carbon and nutrient cycling, process waste, shape global climate, impact public health, facilitate agriculture and food systems, and underlie several environmental justice and land-use issues. Despite their ubiquity, impact and intimate connection to us, these microbes are rarely foregrounded. How do we conceive of and connect with the invisible and belowground? How do we position ourselves in relation to decomposers, waste-processors, potential pathogens or partners, and other hidden organisms? How are various relations with microbes and microbial processes criminalized, stigmatized or endorsed culturally and politically? Where do we situate micro-organisms in biodiversity conservation and environmental protection? How do microbes shape climate and respond to global change? In this course, we will draw from scholarship in microbial ecology, conservation science, science and technology studies, environmental humanities, and the visual arts to explore these and other questions. Course readings include texts by Patricia Kaishian, Amber Benezra, Asterid Schrader, Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing and others. In addition to seminar discussions, we will engage in guided explorations of microbiomes, create a collaborative microbial biogeography reflecting our relationship to fungi and bacteria in surrounding ecosystems, and explore methods of culturing and visualizing microbial communities. Students will produce a final research project deepening their connection to a microbial taxa, community, or system of their choosing.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3059 Decomposing Science (4 Credits)

This seminar invites students into the multispecies muddle of soil to decompose disciplinary boundaries between the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Beginning with an introduction to methods and theory shaping environmental science, this course explores topics related to soils, rot, waste, and pollution. We will turn piles of compost and sample soils to develop an understanding of soil formation processes and decomposition across environments. We will engage with a broad range of scholarship from the sciences and humanities to investigate how human-soil relations and conceptions of human, plant, and microbial labor have been shaped by agricultural productivity and capitalism. We will peer through microscopes and care for decomposers while reading literature on multispecies communication, attunement and togetherness by theorists and practitioners of composting and fermentation. We will keep journals tracing the pace of rotting organic matter and perform close readings of cracks in the sidewalk to consider theories of dirt, decay, preservation and pollution.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3060 Global Perspectives and Conflict (4 Credits)

"Tell the truth and shame the devil". This is what Walter Lippman called the higher law of journalism. But the simplicity of this injunction unravels quickly in conflict situations. Whose truth? And what if there are multiple devils - or none? This course explores the various roles played by local and international media in covering conflict situations. We will analyze how the media in Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America have become both tools for propaganda and encouraging violence, and also means for fostering dialogue, solidarity, and reconciliation among communities.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3061 Genre Trouble: Monstrous Texts and Experiments in Writing (4 Credits)

How do works of literature exploit and violate the "law of genre?" What emerges when genre boundaries are transgressed? How do disparate forms of writing negotiate meanings around gender and racial identity? How do figures of the "monstrous" invite us to analyze the definition of the "human," as well as who is included and excluded from this category? How do choices around genre inform how we narrate the "self," and how do attempts at writing the "self" transform our understandings of genre? To answer these questions, we will read literary and critical texts by authors such as Aristotle, Mary Shelley, Mikhail Bakhtin, Toni Morrison, Sophocles, Giorgio Agamben, Marie de France, Mel Chen, Judith Butler, Susan Stryker, Hélène Cixous, Jacques Derrida, Dionne Brande, and Saidiya Hartman. The course invites students to play with their creative and critical voices through collaborative in-class exercises and writing prompts that encourage experimentation derived from Bernadette Meyer's Experiments, Eve Sedgwick's "Experimental Critical Writing," techniques associated with OULIPO school, and surrealist games.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CEH-GA 3062 Performance Anxiety: Text, Stage, Self (4 Credits)

This course takes up the polysemous dimensions of the word “performance” as well as it what it means to “perform” through a range of disciplinary perspectives. We will begin by discussing the relations between performance and religious ritual before assessing when performance practices begin to become conceived as discreet “arts” and “disciplines” in their own right. We will examine philosophy’s often anxious relation to practices associated with performance, and we will probe deeply into the kinds of “performance anxieties” we might experience or encounter in our everyday lives and our mediated worlds. Drawing from philosophy, literature, anthropology, sociology, gender studies, queer theory, and performance studies, this course is an invitation to think about performance in theory and practice. Readings will include writings by people like Fred Moten, Ann Pellegrini, Judith Butler, Amiri Baraka, Leo Tolstoy, Martha Graham, Constantin Stanislavski, Allan Kaprow, Peggy Phelan, Richard Schechner, Erwin Goffman, Diana Taylor, Susan Leigh-Foster, Una Chaudhuri, and José Muñoz, among others. Moreover, students will take advantage of various performance events at NYU’s Skirball Center.

Grading: GSAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No