

FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS (FYSEM-UA)

FYSEM-UA 203 The Nazi Racial State: Jews and Other Minorities 1933-1945 (4 Credits)

The destruction of European Jewry has been a central focus in studying Nazi extermination policies. This course will look at Nazi policies towards the Jewish people and examine how the "racial state" (or racist state) dealt with those it deemed "racially unfit" to belong to the German Volk. It will analyze the ways in which the Nazis sought to create a nation based on blood and race. By studying policies towards the so-called "enemies" of the Third Reich—including Jews, Sinti and Roma (Gypsies), the physically and mentally disabled, homosexuals, Afro-Germans, "asocials," etc.—the course will also highlight how these policies interacted with each other. It will examine measures that the government enacted to delegitimize, isolate, rob, incarcerate, sterilize, and/or murder many of these minorities, as well as measures intended to increase the "Aryan" population. The course will also examine theories that attempt to explain why many German perpetrators and bystanders participated in discrimination or murder, or allowed it to happen.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 205 Understanding Terrorism (4 Credits)

This seminar examines terrorist attacks and movements from an interdisciplinary perspective, seeking to reach a better understanding of the attackers themselves, their motivations and backgrounds, and their plots and ideologies—whether secular or religious. We also consider the challenges of countering terrorism in societies with many "soft" targets and extensive global entanglements. We will read case studies of terrorism and counter-terrorism, including moral and legal arguments about torture, detention, and targeted killings. We will also try to understand how and why young men and women can be so powerfully drawn to violence, particularly violence against non-combatant (and often randomly targeted) civilians. We will visit various sites in New York City and meet with people with direct experience of terrorism and radicalization, including representatives of both the police and the immigrant communities who have suffered profiling, prejudice, and mistrust. Looking towards the future, we will examine local, national, and international strategies to prevent such attacks and to halt the radicalization that brings fresh recruits to terrorist movements.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 210 Language & Reality in Post-Classical Science and Postmodern Literature (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course explores the possibility that a common ground exists between the so-called two cultures of science and the humanities. It posits the hypothesis of a correlation between postclassical science (e.g., quantum theory) and "postmodern" literature and philosophy. Among the key notions examined are Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle" and the "undecidability" of deconstructive theory. The discussion of these notions, and their implications in literary works, revolves around their effect on classical logic, the referential function of language, and the traditional goal of a complete explanation/description of reality. Readings include selections from the works of Borges, Kundera, Pirsig, and Pynchon and from nontechnical texts on quantum and chaos theories.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 212 Social Challenges of Climate Change (4 Credits)

Climate change is a "wicked problem," so daunting, complex, and consequential that it's difficult to comprehend and analyze, let alone solve. It's also an urgent problem, because in all likelihood we have a limited time frame to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lest we create irreversible and catastrophic changes to the ecosystem that sustains human life. This seminar examines whether and how the social sciences can help us understand the challenge of climate change. We will briefly overview climate science and learn about the rise of "weird weather," but the core themes of the course concern questions about communication and cognition, cultural values and material consumption, politics and persuasion, mitigation and adaptation, economics and social justice, power and social movements, and the possibility of creating new, more sustainable ways of living on earth. We will dedicate several sessions to Superstorm Sandy and its aftermath, with a focus on the question of how to rebuild a more resilient city and region in anticipation of more extreme weather events.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 215 Reclaiming the Narrative: Contemporary West Africa Writers unleash their Africa (4 Credits)

Comprehensive news coverage of Africa is scant. The sparse coverage is often a variation of an incomplete portrait that has dominated the Western media for the last fifty years: tales of starvation, political instability, and disease are mainstays. There is often little or no historical or political context in most of this coverage. In recent years, a cadre of West African writers has begun to change that narrative. These writers, often educated in the West and equally comfortable on the streets of Lagos, Accra, Rome, or New York, have churned out works of fiction and non-fiction essays about their homelands. Their writing offers a nuanced, balanced portrait of contemporary African life, giving a detailed understanding of issues and events and succeeding where their counterparts in mainstream journalism are not.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 218 The Supreme Court and The Religion Clauses (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Should members of the Native American church be allowed to smoke peyote at religious ceremonies? Can a public high school invite a rabbi to give a benediction and convocation at graduation? Should a state legislator rely on his or her religious convictions in forming a view about the legality of capital punishment or abortion? The course divides these questions into three subject areas: religious liberty; separation of church and state; and the role of religion in public and political life. It focuses on how the Supreme Court has dealt with these areas and, more important, invites students to construct a new vision of the proper relationship among religion, state, and society in a 20th-century liberal constitutional democracy.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 219 Why People Believe Weird Things or, Science and Pseudoscience" (4 Credits)

This writing-intensive seminar focuses on the scientific method and understanding what makes science different from other ways of knowing, including philosophy and religion. Students will gain an understanding of the scientific method sufficient to detect pseudoscience in its many forms: paranormal phenomena, alternative medicine, intelligent design creationism, denial of human-induced climate change, propaganda, science-based-medicine denialism, misuse of data and statistics, and many others. Students will learn to think critically and to question bizarre claims, hype, and outright nonsense. By the end of the semester students will be able to distinguish credible sources of information from nonsense and will become intelligent consumers of information. Students should expect to do a lot of reading, writing, and, most of all, thinking.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 235 First Amendment Freedom of Expression (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Political dissent and debate fills the public square at every turn. Citizens demonstrate in the streets, social media carries vitriolic material, speakers are disinvited on college campuses, and President Trump attacks the media. This seminar will enhance your understanding of these conflicts. You will study the First Amendment freedoms of speech and press, and the role that they play in a democratic society. The course engages students in a close study of history as well as law, emphasizing how the American commitment to freedom of expression grew during the nation's founding period and culminated in ratification of the First Amendment. The course begins with the protests against British authority in colonial times, when the law permitted prosecution of citizens who criticized the government. We examine the conflicting meanings that the founders themselves attached to freedom of speech and press. In our own day, we learn how the Supreme Court has interpreted freedom of expression by studying the Court's opinions in key cases. We apply those principles to contemporary conflicts, and discuss how new media raise questions that will test the boundaries of freedom of expression in the future.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 255 School & Society: NYU in The Sixties & Seventies (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s brought profound changes in American society, changes mirrored in the history of the nation, academe, and New York University. It was a time that witnessed the struggle for civil rights, assassinations, war abroad and riots at home, and a youth-led revolution in music, dress, and values. This course aims to develop an appreciation of those years by examining the events and the reactions as they affected campuses and students across America. Students will prepare reports on different aspects of the era. In addition, through shared background reading, class members will work on group projects. In both cases, and in the spirit of the times, the topics will be self-chosen with the approval of the group and the seminar leader.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 306 Latin America at Start of The 21st Century (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This seminar focuses on several aspects of Latin America's problems in the past and their possible solutions today. It takes up such topics as the absence of orderly, peaceful, and steady democratic rule during the first 160 or 170 years of independence from colonial rule and the consolidation of representative democracy today; the absence of economic growth during the last 20 years and the possibility of a new economic takeoff today; the widespread persistence of violence in Latin America and the growing respect for human rights today; and the weakness of civil society in Latin America in the past and the growing strength and vigor of civil society today. For each topic, there are readings dealing with its political, economic, and cultural dimensions in both past and present.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 312 Memoirs and Diaries in Modern European Jewish History (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course analyzes modern Jewish history through the use of memoirs and diaries, which can offer an abundance of detail about the public political, economic, social and religious worlds and provide valuable, often rare glimpses into the motivations and expectations of Jews regarding the non-Jewish world. Moreover, these ego-documents reveal crucial concealed thoughts and emotions, as well as attitudes and behaviors within the family, friendship networks, and the Jewish community. They allow students to delve into relations between parents and children, spouses, generations, neighbors, and friends. The course begins with a memoir written by a Jewish woman, Glikl of Hameln, in the late 17th century, and continues through the mid-20th century and the Holocaust. It includes the autobiographies of Leon Modena, a 17th-century Venetian rabbi; Solomon Maimon, an 18th-century Jewish philosopher/bohemian/heretic; Pauline Wengeroff, a traditional Jewish woman in 19th-century Russia; and Puah Rakowski, a Polish radical. Students will study a variety of readings from the period of the Holocaust. Students are responsible for reading the primary sources, and the instructor assigns introductory materials to place the memoirs in their historical context in each class.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 371 Welcome to College: The Novel (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Starting college can be exhilarating—and terrifying. A chance for intellectual enlightenment—or intense loneliness. An escape from a stultifying small town of narrow-minded people—or a riot of alcohol, sex, and drugs. In this class we read a selection of college novels from different historical periods, spanning about 100 years. We discuss these novels from a variety of perspectives: literary, historical, and journalistic. In addition to presenting biographical and historical and cultural reports on at least two of the authors and their novels, students write about their own experiences as first-year students at NYU in several genres, including fiction and nonfiction. Together we explore this important life passage, examining life as we live it. This is a class for people who love to read fiction—we read a full novel every week, and some of them are long—so please don't sign up for it if that doesn't sound like fun.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 377 Lethal Passions: Medea & Her Legacies (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

The mythic figure of Medea has held our imagination for nearly 2,500 years. What kind of woman is capable of casting such an enduring spell? Best known as the partner of Jason and the murderer of her own children, Medea has been the name of an exploration into the passion and violence, the devastation and vengeance, the complex relations and modes of betrayal that so often punctuate our everyday existence. She has demanded that we think about the relations between the sexes, the meaning of home and exile, the experience of the foreigner, the ethical and moral dimensions of agency and decisions, and the meaning of motherhood. Because these issues have remained vital, her popularity has outlived the ancient Greek texts in which she was born and has found new expressions in various forms—including tragic drama, poetry, novels, painting, cinema, and music. This course seeks to understand the reasons for her longevity in the rich complexity of her character and actions and to explore the ways in which her story has been revised and recontextualized across the ages for new and different ends. We will consider a range of texts from antiquity to the present in order to think about how they understand the tensions, contradictions, and conflicting desires embodied and enacted in this mesmerizing figure.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 379 The Doctor's Dilemma: Being Correct & Right (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Dr. Saul Farber, former Dean of the NYU School of Medicine, frequently cautioned that an action or a conclusion might be correct, but would it be right? Ethics, laws, and religious and cultural beliefs intersect in every medical encounter and healthcare issue and affect patients' options and care. Determining how to treat patients correctly and safely is difficult, but figuring out what is right is even harder. The challenging issues to be studied and debated in this seminar include the following: Should doctors help terminal patients die to relieve intractable suffering? Should doctors participate in executions or in the interrogation of terrorists? Do we want to know so much about our genetic makeup that we are faced with terribly difficult consequences of that knowledge? Is "alternative medicine" a reasonable alternative? What makes a good doctor good? Who should pay for your healthcare? The course aims to teach students how to address such questions by learning to think like doctors and scientists, to apply logic tempered by human values and experience, to analyze information critically, and to present ideas effectively and honestly. Students submit weekly essays on subjects assigned in class and write a long essay at the end of the semester.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 384 Journalism of War, Revolution, Genocide, and Human Rights (4 Credits)**

In this seminar we will read some of the key journalistic works on war, revolution, genocide, and human rights that have been written in the past one hundred years. We will attempt to answer such questions as: How, and why, has the nature of war changed in the past century? Why do some revolutions, such as those in Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism, largely succeed, while others, such as those of the Arab Spring, fail so miserably? How do we understand senseless, sadistic violence—what Primo Levi called "useless cruelty"? Why do sufferers of violence and oppression so often become perpetrators of it? What is the difference between war and genocide, and why did the latter emerge in the 20th century? Why has terrorism re-emerged with such vengeance in the past two decades? What are "human rights"—another invention of the 20th century—and how, if at all, have they become a reality?

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 389 Living Off The Laughter: Comedy in America (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

The history of comedy in America is the history of America. Comedians have provided a funhouse mirror as well as a perceptive lens for American society and culture. Silent film comedians, for example, were instrumental in establishing the movie industry, while the physical nature of vaudeville's humor reflected the linguistic diversity of its immigrant audience. An overview of American comedy, this seminar will be history with a laugh track, taking the significant periods and players of modern America and analyzing them against their historic context and their legacy, using their humor as the platform. We will examine how their comedy was shaped by and responded to American society, and how they in turn influenced and shaped American life. The great comedians and moments from film, radio, and TV to be studied in this seminar include Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, the screwball comedies of the 1930s and 40s, The Golden Age of Television, the Sitcom, Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor, George Carlin, Mel Brooks, Woody Allen, Jerry Lewis, Eddie Murphy, Sarah Silverman, Dave Chappelle, as well as new comedians and trends. We will also focus on how comedians and comedy built and builds bridges between gender, culture and racial and ethnic groups. Clips and segments from classic TV and movies will enrich our discussion of the evolution of comedy, its place in history, and its similarities in time.

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

FYSEM-UA 432 Science & Policy of Climate Change (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

Your time in high school was an exceptional period for our planet: 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 were the four warmest years in recorded history. It is likely the hottest the Earth has ever been since the last interglacial period 125,000 years ago. The first predictions of human-induced global warming were made over a century ago, but the topic remains controversial despite the fact that the world has warmed almost 2 degrees Fahrenheit over the intervening years. In this seminar, we will investigate observational evidence as well as the physical and mathematical foundations upon which forecasts of future climate are based. We will find that it is not the science of global warming that is controversial, but rather, what to do about it. We must weigh the costs of taking action today versus responding to potential consequences tomorrow, and come to grips with the ethical implications of the fact those who benefit from the use of fossil fuels are not the ones who will bear the costs. Armed with a scientific and policy background, you will conduct a research project on the response to global warming—delving into the details of climate engineering, alternate energy, psychology, ethics, and/or economics—thus giving you a chance to enter the debate, and perhaps even contribute to the solution.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 434 Trials of The Century (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

How does a trial become viewed as a “trial of the century”? What does that designation say about the crime and the personalities involved, about the legal, social, and political implications of the case, and about the nature and extent of the attendant media coverage? Since the trial of Socrates, the public has been intrigued, galvanized, and even entertained by the real drama of real trials. These trials have provided a prism through which society’s strengths and weaknesses are often revealed. This course will offer in-depth examinations of select “trials of the century.” Some, such as the Lindbergh kidnapping case and the O.J. Simpson trial, will focus on the impact of celebrity on the justice system. Others, such as the trials of the “Scottsboro Boys,” will examine the effect of race inside the courtroom. Political issues often find voice in the justice system, as in the case of the “Chicago Seven.” And religion, that great uniting and dividing force, played a critical role in the Scopes “Monkey Trial.” Such trials have historically held a mirror up to society and have provided an instructive reflection of what transpires within our courts of law.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 435 Frederick Douglass and the Transformative Life (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Few figures in American history are as compelling or inspiring as the former-slave-turned-abolitionist-editor Frederick Douglass, whose eloquence and moral passion resonate still. A complex and at times conflicted figure, his life intersected with some of the most interesting and charged characters of his age, including Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Tubman, John Brown, and many others. This seminar will take a deep and sustained look at the life of this American prophet, probing his thought and character and examining his trajectory through a freighted era. Though he claimed to have written with “the ragged style of a slave’s pen,” he is now considered one of the most important and original writers of the 19th century. Students will read a wide selection of his works, as well as several biographies and scholarly treatments, and will explore important questions in the light of Douglass’s thinking, for example: How does the religion of slaves relate to the religion of slave-holders? Is there a legitimate use of violence in the pursuit of noble ends? Does there exist, as Douglass believed, a force of progress in history? How do self-awareness, moral insight, and public eloquence undergird the effectiveness of a reformer?

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 437 Hist, Memory, & Quest for Social Justice in U.S. (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course explores the relationship between history and memory, between what we know and how we know what we think we know. One of its primary objectives is to address the ethics of memory. Do we remember events not as they are but as we are? Do we have an obligation to remember events from the past? If we do, which events must we remember, and how do we remember those we did not experience? Or, as Marc Auge argues, is it essential for the health of the individual and of society that we know how to forget? We begin by looking at three major aspects of life in the United States in the early 1940s: the response to the Holocaust, the establishment of internment camps for Japanese-Americans, and the impact of Jim Crow laws. We then consider such events as the bombing of Dresden and Hiroshima, *Brown v. Board of Education*, McCarthy and the blacklist, the civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam, the destruction of the World Trade Center, and the response to genocides in Rwanda and Darfur. To understand better the lives of those people most affected by acts of injustice, we will read works by such writers as Baldwin, Roth, and Salinger. We will also consider the role that museums, photography, film, and popular culture have in defining our individual and collective memory.

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

FYSEM-UA 449 Wiseguys, Spies & Private Eyes: Heroes and Villains in Modern American Culture (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

Through thematic analyses of books and films by topic and genre, this seminar explores the ways in which specific American archetypes and themes are perceived and articulated—from the rugged Old West individualist, to the persevering underdog who becomes a boxing champ, to the evolving perceptions of government, to the Cold War-era uncertainty that spawned a generation of literary and celluloid superspies. We will examine representations of heroes and villains in modern American popular culture and how great films and novels of three particular genres, the Detective, the Gangster, and the Spy, influenced our understanding of these archetypes. From the early influences of Hamlet and Macbeth to Sherlock Holmes, Raymond Chandler's Phillip Marlowe, Mario Puzo's (and Francis Ford Coppola's) *The Godfather*, James Bond, and Batman, we will look at the mythology and evolution of heroes and villains through popular and high culture icons, the genesis of the genres and how they developed over time, and how great directors, actors, and writers influenced audiences worldwide and were themselves influenced by culture and history.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 456 Laboratories for Democracy: Making American Cities Better (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

At a time when many Americans have become increasingly frustrated with what government has produced, there are places that are getting it done right. Cities, states and municipalities serve as what Justice Brandeis called "little laboratories for democracy"—where ideas flourish and problems get solved. From fighting crime in the streets of New York City, to banning smoking in bars and restaurants, to making the power grid more efficient, to encouraging the arts and culture in urban environments, innovations in American cities have spread across the globe. This course examines the intersection of ideas, politics, and action. We study best practices from around the country (and the world), evaluate their effectiveness, and determine whether and how successful programs can be replicated. This course asks students to not only think critically issues of public policy but also to think anew about the role they play in shaping it. Topics for student projects are drawn from current issues and problems facing decision-makers and elected officials in America today.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 466 Dostoyevsky: Modernity and the Novel (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

In this course we will examine Fyodor Dostoevsky's fiction as a particularly helpful prism for understanding the conditions, experience and philosophical ramifications of modernity. The novel is often understood as the genre best capable of representing and reckoning with the complexities of modern life. This is, in fact, how Dostoevsky himself understood his mission as a novelist. Following his cue, then, we will try to understand what it is about his writing that is specifically modern. Readings of Dostoevsky's novels, early as well as late, will be supplemented by a number of canonical statements about the modern. Readings from Dostoevsky will include *Poor People*, *Notes from Underground*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Supplementary readings from Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, Mikhail Bakhtin and others.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 474 What is College For? (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Why did you decide to attend college? To broaden your intellectual horizons and become a more open minded person? To gain specialized knowledge in a specific subject? To achieve a more successful and financially rewarding career after graduation? To have a fun social life and make new friends? To become an engaged participant in a democratic society? To satisfy your parents' plans for your future? Or perhaps some combination of these reasons that you are still figuring out? This seminar examines historical and contemporary discussions about the personal and societal goals of higher education. It will also prompt you to be more reflective and purposeful about your own academic choices during your time as an NYU student. At the beginning of the 21st century, current models and practices of higher education are receiving increased scrutiny. During the semester we will study issues that have the potential to profoundly transform the college experience. Does higher education need to redefine its academic mission? Should everyone attend college? Will new technologies change how professors teach and how students learn? Finally – and most importantly – how can students, professors, and administrators all contribute to creating a successful college environment?

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 476 Political Theater (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course offers a survey of political theater, and of the use of theatrical elements in practical politics, from the ancient Greeks to the present. How have dramatic depictions of politics changed over time? In what ways have political plays been used to advance political agendas, both by the powerful and by dissidents and protest movements? To what extent can we understand political speeches and political campaigns as essentially theatrical productions? This course offers an interdisciplinary perspective on these questions. In a typical week, students will read one full-length play, accompanied by appropriate readings from political science or social psychology. Through these readings, writing assignments, and class discussion, students will learn about the development of different dramatic techniques and forms through the history of theater, about the co-evolving relationship between politically-themed spectacles and changing ideas about citizenship and political legitimacy, and about the political psychology of speeches and campaign techniques.

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

FYSEM-UA 484 Globalization and its Discontents (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

The seminar explores the notion and practice of global citizenship – the capacity and willingness to think across and beyond actual and imagined boundaries, and to develop skills that can solve problems and explore opportunities in unfamiliar contexts. The course examines globalization as a historical, economic, and cultural phenomenon. Other topics will include local resistance to global homogeneity; the notion of universal humanism; human rights; the role of language in global contexts; the idea of citizenship; the specificity of culture and arts; the idea of film or photography as universal languages; and an exploration of how New York City is an international city that has turned diversity into strength. The seminar will bring in guest speakers who identify as global citizens, and ask how your own actions – ranging from activism to business leadership – may affect change that impacts those outside of your immediate world. Who is a truly global citizen: Mark Zuckerberg, Lady Gaga, or Hillary Clinton? How would we assess their reach? How do you decenter your perspective and see the world from another point of view? As part of the seminar we will travel to NYU's Constance Milstein and Family Global Academic Center in Washington, D.C., to visit an international organization, NGO, or federal agency that is engaged globally.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 496 Cultural Nature of Language (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

From accents, pronouns, swearing, and spelling, how one uses language is never value-free. In this seminar we examine language-using as a social practice, and analyze how speakers and their language(s) are evaluated and regulated across a range of contexts and cultures. Starting with how children learn to talk, or don't (e.g., feral children), we examine speech and silence across a range of societies. We look at popular attitudes toward language and the practices by which people regulate its use in the media (e.g., political correctness), in legal and educational institutions (e.g., "English Only"), and in multilingual cities (e.g., Barcelona, Montreal) in order to understand how ideas about language are often recruited to non-linguistic concerns, such as who should be included and who excluded. In thinking about the cultural nature of language in this way, we critically explore issues of identity and authority.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 497 How We See (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Do we see the world the way we do because we are the way we are or because the world is the way it is? The ease with which we comprehend the visual world, and recognize objects and events, makes it tempting to think that the world is just the way we see it and to take our perceptual capabilities for granted. But when we comprehend that we cannot process all the information available in the environment, when we try to build machines that can see, or when we encounter people who have lost some specific visual capability—for example, persons who can no longer recognize faces—we realize how extraordinary and intricate are the machinery and mechanisms of sight. This course looks at what we know about vision from multiple scientific perspectives: perceptual psychology tells us about the process of seeing, and provides important insights into the workings of visual mechanisms; neuropsychology shows us what happens to perception when these mechanisms malfunction; neuroscience tells us about processes at the level of cells and neural systems. At the same time, we discuss modes and techniques of scientific inquiry from these different perspectives. How do vision scientists learn? What kinds of experiments do they conduct? How has the development of new neuroimaging techniques (fMRI, for example) shaped the field?

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 500 New Worlds of Work and Care (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

We live in a period of immense social change in the public world of work and the private world of family life. New technologies have blurred the boundary between home and work. New economic opportunities and pressures have sent women into the workplace. The rise of the "new economy" has created jobs with more short-term flexibility, but less long-term security. And new options in intimate relationships have created more diverse and voluntary, but less predictable family ties. These intertwined shifts signal a social transformation that is reshaping the daily lives and life pathways of 21st century women and men. To explore the twin revolutions in work and care, the class will address several questions: What does an overview of changes in work, family, and gender patterns tell us about where we are now and where we are going? What are the major dilemmas and dislocations created by these changes, and how are people coping with these conflicts? What are the implications for the future? And what can we do to enhance the opportunities and limit the insecurities and inequalities of these new arrangements for women, men, and children?

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

FYSEM-UA 503 In Search of Lost Time (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

We will read Proust (in translation) as he should be read: hedonistically—with respect and admiration but also with delectation. A prodigious novel of more than 4,000 pages, *In Search of Lost Time* is one of modern literature's most challenging and deeply pleasurable reads. The richest of the themes it explores is desire—its remembrance, transformation, perversion, defeat, and final resurgence in the form of art. Often said to be the first modern fiction, *In Search of Lost Time* is still unparalleled in how it combines finesse and wit with raw emotion, self-examination with social history, profound psychological acuity with a dazzling portrait of the French beau monde at the outset of modernity, how it merges an audacious explosion of literary form with explorations of memory, attachment, deception, lust, jealousy, ambition, and disappointment. Although Marcel Proust (1871–1922) is often cited as France's greatest novelist (and the novelist's novelist), his prose is so layered and brilliant that, unfortunately, many readers begin at the beginning and never move past the first fifty pages, reading the same gorgeous sentences again and again. But while *In Search of Lost Time's* prose style may have been its most radical contribution to the art of fiction, its vast, thrilling architecture cannot be understood until it has been read once in its entirety. In this intensive class, we will move at a brisk pace through the work, merely glancing at its riches on our way, until we arrive at the uniquely euphoric experience of reading the final volume, when we begin to understand the extraordinarily intimate relationship Proust creates with his reader. In-class creative writing exercises are designed to help with the reading and to expand an expressive, personal response. Reading assignments average 350 pages per week.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 506 Game Theory and the Humanities (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Game theory is a mathematical theory of strategy that has been applied to the analysis of conflict and cooperation in such fields as economics, political science, and biology. In this seminar, we discuss more unusual applications to history, literature, philosophy, the Bible, theology, and law. No mathematical background beyond high school mathematics is assumed, but a willingness to learn and apply sophisticated reasoning to analyze the interactions of players in games is essential. Among the applications to be discussed are Abraham's decision to offer his son, Isaac, for sacrifice in the Bible; choices made by accused witches and their persecutors in medieval witch trials; Lady Macbeth's incitement of Macbeth to murder King Duncan in Shakespeare's play; several strategic games played by presidents and their antagonists in domestic crises (the Civil War, the Great Depression, Watergate) and international crises (the Cuban missile crisis, the Iran hostage crisis); and coping mechanisms used by characters in catch-22 games (including those in Joseph Heller's novel, *Catch-22*).

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 507 What is Memory? (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Thanks to the written records that serve as our cultural memory, we know that memory has been a topic of inquiry at least since those records began. Today's philosophers, psychologists, and literary scholars are continuing to hone the concept of the self as it was understood by John Locke, David Hume, and Sigmund Freud among others—namely, as a dynamic tension between memory and consciousness. These investigators pursue such questions as: How is memory embodied? What is the connection between memory and: the self, language and storytelling, moral and ethical reasoning? What events are best forgotten and how do we go about forgetting them? This course is structured as five units: Autobiographical Memory, Ideas and Metaphors of Memory, The Science of Memory, The Art of Memory, and Collective Memory. Readings represent the full spectrum of western thinking about memory, from Plato's *Theaetetus* to works by contemporary neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux. It is our hope that this seminar will give students new insights into the workings of their own memories and help them develop a personal practice of memory that will serve their growth as individuals long after their memories of the course itself have dimmed.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 514 Xenophon of Athens (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

The greatest ancient you've never heard of, Xenophon of Athens (c. 425–355 B.C.E.) was a brilliant general, student of Socrates, and renowned author. His heroism leading the army of the Ten Thousand inspired the conquests of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. His political philosophy informed the thought of Cicero, Machiavelli, Franklin, and Jefferson. When knowledge of Greek was still required for admission to college, his fame was ubiquitous, as his writings formed the basis of the pre-college curriculum. Readings, in English translation: *Apology of Socrates*, *Symposium*, *Oeconomicus*, *Memorabilia*, *Cyropaedia*, *Cavalry Commander*, *Anabasis*, and the film based on the latter, *The Warriors* (1979).

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 536 Race and Culture in Brazil (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Brazil is often invoked in conversations about race and culture. Whether as an example of presumably more egalitarian race relations, or as a regional culture embodying an exceptional fusion of African, Indigenous, and European elements, Brazil is a model for understanding heterogeneity and difference. And yet it is also a nation frequently cited for its incidence of violence and extreme economic inequality. We explore some of the unique contradictions shaping Brazilian reality as related to notions of race and culture by tracing the history of race relations in the ongoing transformation of Brazilian culture, examining such key examples and events as slavery and the plantation economy, popular music, Carnival, populism, racial democracy, affirmative action, and urban and rural violence. How do race and culture coincide and diverge in Brazil? And what may we gather about these convergences and divergences from textual, musical, and cinematic examples?

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

FYSEM-UA 539 Facing Fascism: The Spanish Civil War and U.S. Culture (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

The Great Depression. Liberal democracy in crisis. On the rise: a spectrum of ideologies ranging from anarchism to fascism, promising solutions to the afflictions of people all over the planet. July 1936: a right-wing military coup attempts to overthrow a democratically elected left-wing coalition government in Spain, and war begins. This course explores the place occupied by Spain and the Spanish Civil War in American culture from the 1930s forward; how journalists, writers, artists, and citizens reacted to the war; and how the legacy of the war has affected U.S. culture over the last 70 years. It also introduces students to research methods in history and culture, as they carry out a major archival research project based on unique sources in NYU's Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives (ALBA), a vast collection of materials that chronicles the lives of the 2,800 Americans who, between 1936 and 1939, volunteered to fight fascism in Spain.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 545 Media and Communication in the Middle Ages (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Medieval tools of communication and methods of transportation circulated news, rumors, propaganda, and revolutionary ideas; permitted contact with the supernatural; equipped governments with bureaucratic powers of local subjugation and global interaction; and enabled people to travel far away from their homes on pilgrimages, diplomatic missions, entertainment tours (jongleurs, troubadours), commercial ventures, explorations, and conquests. With a focus on Western Europe, we will consider modes and means of communication: languages, speech and writing, gestures, fashions, rituals, images, artifacts, and maps. Assessing the breadth of medieval mobility will elucidate a pre-modern world system that extended across Eurasia, including the Mongol Empire, the Middle East, and China. Weekly readings will be presented by one student and then discussed by all. A research paper will be prepared through several intermediary shorter essays, each dealing with material relevant to the paper's topic.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 546 Travel and Communication in the Ancient World (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course explores traveling, communicating, and spreading news in antiquity. Unlike moderns, the ancients did not travel for leisure, and the notion of travel as "routine" would have been foreign to them; their journeys had mythic and epic significance and took place under precarious conditions. Likewise, whereas today we are able to communicate with each other in multiple convenient ways, sending letters and messages in the Greek and Roman worlds was cumbersome and time-intensive. Nonetheless, people did get in touch with each other and exchange news. Indeed, one of the goals of the course is to question what might be called a "progressive model" of understanding communication(s) that automatically assumes the superiority of modern technology.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 548 History of Disbelief (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This seminar takes up an extended history of atheism and doubt (in the context of a history of religion). It begins with references to anthropology, the Hebrews and India, before discussing the skeptics and the development of disbelief in Greece and Rome. The course then follows the uneven progress of this idea and its consequences in continental Europe during the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Romantic period, and in 19th-century England and America, where disbelief was allied with radical politics. Finally, we move on to the connection between disbelief and realism, modernism and postmodernism. The main arguments for and against the existence of God are considered. However, the main purpose of this course is to force students to confront and grapple with some of the most sophisticated and profound human expressions of disbelief.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 564 Modern Poetry: Craft and Revolution (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course thrusts students headlong into the dark cobwebby interiors of the modern poem. We look at several revolutions in thinking about what poems are, beginning in England in 1798, coming to Walt Whitman's and Emily Dickinson's America in the 1850s, stopping in Harlem in the 1920s, and ending up online. We look at how modern poems are actually put together, considering such elemental concerns as image, voice, and structure. And we also write our own poems, sometimes with these examples as our models. Students leave this course with a deeper understanding of the lineage of the modern poem and what makes the modern poem go, as well as, thanks to the generous and critical attentions of the workshop, the same understanding of their own work.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**FYSEM-UA 572 Literature and Machines (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Machine metaphors play an important role in modern literature, conveying beliefs, anxieties, shifts, and reflections on key topics, including the nature of consciousness and creativity; the dynamics of desire and gratification; gender roles; the organization of society; the meaning of "nature"; and the function of technology. This course explores different manifestations of the machine theme, broadly clustered around the following categories: imaginary machines constituting the centerpiece of narrative plots; machine aesthetic as modernist ideal; and mechanization of the inventive process (text-generating machines). Students read and discuss a selection of works from different cultural contexts, primarily from the late 19th and 20th century (e.g., Belle Époque, Futurist, and postwar), representing a wide spectrum of attitudes toward the machine, from dreamy immersion in virtual realities to enlightened machine-assisted awakening, from the fear of dehumanization to the desire for man-machine fusion.

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

FYSEM-UA 587 A Global History of Food (4 Credits)

Few things seem more natural in human history than our basic need for sustenance, but the history of food and hunger have a long and complicated past—looking, meaning, feeling, and, indeed, tasting quite different at distinct moments and places in world history. Thinking historically about the role that food has played in the development of several regions of the world, both in the global North and South, we consider large-scale transformations in how people have fed themselves, tracing the road from subsistence agriculture to industrial agricultural practices. We examine the role that demands and desires for particular foods played in producing historical encounters, labor systems, and ideas that continue to shape the world around us—everything from the conquest of the “New World” to the expansion of slavery and the development of modern scientific knowledge. We also explore the evolving meaning of “hunger” and “plenty” in the modern era, and the role of food in constructing empires and producing ecological change. Throughout, we pay particular attention to the ways in which important social categories, like race, gender, sexuality, and social class, have been constructed in relation to the politics and economics of food availability, or the lack thereof.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 593 Rethinking Orientalism (4 Credits)

Scholars have argued that since the “fall” of Byzantine Constantinople to the Ottomans in the fifteenth century, Western European intellectuals have framed cultural difference in terms of the “East” and the “West.” Renaissance humanists, for example, resorted to ancient and medieval texts to create a religiously and culturally defined “other”—the “Ottoman Turks.” Their writings then spread across Europe and generated problematic conceptualizations of what the West ought to be, as different from the East. This is by no means an isolated case: in the nineteenth century, for example, we begin encountering systematic categorizations of peoples imbued with discourses of civilizations. Critic Edward Said identifies such problematic representations of the so-called East as “Orientalism” and offers a productive category to analyze how such representations have informed power relations and policies. This seminar will examine a wide variety of cultural representations pertaining to the modern Middle East that have contributed to the “East/West” divide conceptualized as Orientalism. We will explore politics of cultural representation in such fields as cinema, literature, visual culture, political economy, and humanitarianism. Some questions we will address: What are the politics of cultural representation over (at least) the last two centuries that have marked modern day politics? How do such representations lend themselves to problematic interpretations of East and West in general, and the Middle East in particular? What are the racial, historical, and cultural implications of these representations and the policies that they inform?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 597 Problem Solving (4 Credits)

Many problems in science, business, and politics require heuristics—problem-solving techniques that often work well but give imperfect guarantees. This course teaches heuristics as they apply to the design of scientific experiments, the resolution of economic or political negotiations, and the construction of engineering devices in hostile environments. Students will work in small teams that will solve puzzles, conduct experiments, and build strategies for a competitive auction game. Students will use and learn computational tools, such as Python. The intent is to make you better able to face complex problems in any field of study you choose.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 598 After the End: Post-Apocalypse Novels in the 20th Century (4 Credits)

Many authors have speculated about what would happen if (most) humans were destroyed. Authors have removed humans by natural disasters like floods, fires, earthquakes, and mysterious poisonous clouds or rays. They have imagined alien invasions, plagues, epidemics, agricultural collapses, and reproductive failure. More recently, humans themselves have become popular as causes of apocalypses because global thermonuclear war, lethal pollution, disastrous over-population, genetic engineering, and climate change have become realistic possible scenarios for the collapse of our species. This seminar will examine a variety of apocalypses from the 20th century with special attention to ones that have implications for the nature of humanity and human society. Most of the novels we will read treat an apocalypse as a kind of thought-experiment: what would happen if . . . ? Some focus more on the collapse of human institutions, culture, morality, and religion, others on the challenges the survivors face, and still others focus on the potential for the re-creation of human society or the creation of an alternative kind of society.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 599 Poetics of the Unsayable (4 Credits)

Silence, blank space, gaps, and fractures: attending to these formal elements in works of literature and art can pique understanding about some of the most difficult matters in human experience. Poet Rainer Maria Rilke claimed, in 1903, that “most experiences are unsayable,” and in this course we will study the ways writers and artists, through expressions of silence itself, attempt to communicate those very experiences. How might we better understand the human through attention to those most hard-to-express experiences? With a special emphasis on works that blend the creative and the critical, this course will examine how scholars and creative thinkers over the past century have addressed problems of power, gender, oppression, and trauma, exploring means of expressing those urgent concerns that often feel unsayable. Through active exploration, students in this seminar will practice creative and critical approaches to investigate and convey difficult subjects that are often invisible or silenced. Exploring interdisciplinary fiction and non-fiction readings (as well as works of art), we ask: What are we finding difficult to say? What are we seeing or hearing or reading that helps us make sense of the difficulties in our world? And when and how might we powerfully, after all, break our silences?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 600 La Vie de Bohème: The Starving Artist in Fiction (4 Credits)

Not long ago, SoHo was home to hundreds of artists looking for affordable spaces to live and work. Now the streets are lined with high-end shops and bank branches. So it went with Paris's Latin Quarter, and the fate of Brooklyn looks much the same. The question of how to earn a living in the arts is a perennial one. In this course we will examine how fiction addresses the economic and social instability faced by artists in the post-industrial age. While most narratives romanticize the starving artist, the texts we'll read this semester challenge that image. Our protagonists (such as Lucien in Balzac's *Lost Illusions* and Jasper in Gissing's *New Grub Street*) begin with uncompromising devotion to their craft but gradually give way to the strain, selling their work to tawdry outlets or (heaven forbid) teaching at universities. We consider the ways in which creative professions have and haven't changed since so-called "starving artists" gave up their crusts of bread for bowls of ramen. Would the protagonists in these novels have the same concerns today? What new obstacles must emerging poets or painters contend with? We will examine how changes in economic policy and technology have altered the way artists and writers live and work, and by extension, the art they produce. Finally, with historic Greenwich Village as a backdrop, we'll discuss what it actually means to "sell out" and consider the future of creative culture in our own fair city.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 603 Hoarding before *Hoarders* (4 Credits)

The early years of the twenty-first century have seen an overwhelming cultural interest in people who accumulate things. Hoarding is the subject of medical research, as well as documentary and narrative films, novels and memoirs, theater, painting, photography, and television episodes and series—including A&E's "megahit," *Hoarders*. These texts, along with related newspaper and magazine articles, are characterized by two contradictory yet often overlapping analytic frameworks: hoarding is understood both as a result of the excesses of consumer culture and as a response to material deprivation. Though the behaviors that define hoarding today have existed at least since the development of a market economy and probably much longer than that, the contemporary obsession with hoarding is both staggering and suggestive. This seminar is guided by the questions "Why hoarding?" and "Why now?" We will ask whether the emergence of contemporary hoarding discourse reflects anxieties about the immateriality of digital culture? Or about the scarcity of the earth's resources? Or about what it means to be human? We will address these questions by studying the contemporary hoarder within a broader literary and cultural context that encompasses fetishists, collectors, misers, rag-pickers, gleaners, and other figures defined (and pathologized) by their attachments to things.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 605 Writing the Body (4 Credits)

We can't escape our bodies, even though there are times when we might want to. Fundamental to our experience, identity, and expression, bodies can also be a source of contention and oppression: we can be defined and controlled by them. This course explores representations of the body through captivating novels, poems, and a few essays, as well as films and photography. We'll watch one protagonist switch gender and adventure through four centuries, another struggle with a facial disfigurement that will devastatingly circumscribe her life. We'll become more alert to the way in which bodies are gazed upon, surveilled, and policed. We'll investigate our relationship with our own bodies and the bodies of others, assessing whether empathy is a redemptive relationship of attunement or perhaps an act of trespass. We'll wonder over the binaries and boundaries, politics and pain, the erotics, the robotics, and even the boundlessness of our bodies.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 609 Children of Immigrants in Contemporary American Fiction (4 Credits)

In this course we will read, discuss, reflect, and write about contemporary fictional narratives of first-generation Americans—children born in the US to parents from somewhere else. These characters straddle a cultural divide between the homeland of their ancestors and the country of their birth. Imbued with the older generations' hopes for a better life, they must also negotiate existing social and economic orders and, frequently, an anti-outsider climate that threatens to unravel the very fabric of the American Dream. We will write through multiple forms—creative, researched, expository argument, and personal response. Through the novels, stories, and film adaptations, we'll examine questions of language and identity—how these stories forge their own sense of self through the families, cultures, experiences and desires that shape them.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 610 Decolonizing Narrative: Human Stories of the War on Terror (4 Credits)

The phrase "War on Terror" was first used by then President George W. Bush on September 20, 2001, just after the 9/11 attacks, and has since been echoed by the media and the US government as a rallying cry for multiple wars and numerous actions and offensives against enemies abroad and at home. This class seeks to help students see beyond political interests and news stories to gain a nuanced understanding of today's world by reading narratives by survivors of this "war"—including civilian witnesses, veteran soldiers, a prisoner, and people at a distance seeking understanding of what is happening far away. Their stories connect our histories to our future; they elucidate ties between public and private; and we will read them in a variety of forms, including fiction, drama, narrative journalism, essay, government-redacted manuscript, blog, podcast, online think-piece, and graphic novel. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we will use scholarly texts (from philosophical discussions of the representation of violence to the public's changing relationship with modern war) as lenses, to peel back the layers of our preconceptions and ask underlying questions about political, religious, and personal identity, representation of the Other, moral duty, and mental health.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 612 Nobody and Everyone: Queer American Poetics (4 Credits)

The history of modern American poetry is a queer one. In this course, we will look to the enduring presence of queer poets throughout different periods, movements and aesthetics in American poetry to understand how queerness has functioned as a constitutive force within our canon. Our title refers to works by Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, whose contrasting expressions of queer selfhood will serve as our point of departure; from there, we will read our way up to the contemporary poetic moment. Throughout, we will interrogate notions of queerness, Americanness, and history with the help of critical texts from multiple disciplines, presupposing that we cannot consider questions of sexuality or gender without considering questions of race, ethnicity, and class. We'll also write some poems.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 616 Planet Human: Reading and Writing the Anthropocene (4 Credits)

"Anthropocene" is a new and still unofficial term, but a mind-blowing one. It signifies we are living at a moment both exhilarating and terrifying: The dawn of a new historical epoch in the 4.5 billion-year history of Earth. For the first time, just one of the 8.7 million species on this planet will determine (though not necessarily "control") the fate of all the rest. We humans are not only reshuffling the kaleidoscope of life forms on Earth, we are also altering the chemistry of its sky and oceans, and terraforming its surface as easily as if it were made of Play-Doh. All of this is occurring at an accelerating pace that has now overwhelmed the various non-human forces that shaped our planet until now, forces like natural selection, plate tectonics, glaciation, volcanism and orbital variation. Can there be a more powerful concept, or a more frightening one? Yet the scientists, philosophers, essayists and activists who have looked deeply at the concept of the Anthropocene (most of them, anyway) tell us that this is not about apocalypse. The end is not near, if by "end" we mean the imminent destruction of our planet and ourselves. The Anthropocene is a transformation, and where it will lead is both unknowable and entirely dependent on the choices we humans make, both individually and collectively. Our inability to know our future does not leave us powerless, however, because a rich body of scholarly and popular work has already scouted this terrain, and can assist us in our own explorations. In this class, we will mine this work, approaching the Anthropocene as both a scientific and cultural construction. We will read, research and write, and most of all we will think—all with the goal of understanding how we got here, and where we might go next.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 618 Humans, Nature, and Human Nature in 19th-Century Literature (4 Credits)

The nineteenth century witnessed profound changes in the way humans understood the natural world and their place within it. Fossil records began to make clear that human history occupied only a tiny portion of the geological time scale. New cell theories posited that life-forms might be reducible to physical and chemical processes, throwing into question the concept of a human soul. Evolutionary theories claimed that human were not the culmination of creation but, rather, animals in the vast and ever-changing web of life. This seminar will look at some of the ways these new controversial ideas shaped, and were shaped by, the literature of the period. Focusing on English, German and American texts, we will consider how some writers were disturbed by the newly diminished status of humans, but also how others celebrated humankind's newly understood kinship with the rest of creation. We will pay particular attention to the way these scientific theories spawned new thinking about the dynamic interrelatedness of organisms (the word "ecology" was coined in 1866) and the application of biological theories to the understanding of race, gender, and human society generally. Some of the questions that will guide our inquiry will include the following: Is there such a thing as "human nature," and if so, is it the product of innate nature or environmental forces? Are humans distinct from non-human animals? How does the concept of biological evolution promote the idea of a single "family of humanity" (all of its members descended from a common ancestor) but also justify claims of superior human types within that family? Is human society inherently competitive or cooperative? Do social institutions productively tame base human impulses or do they repress instincts and create psychological conflict?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 619 Fact and Fiction Since the Famine: The Stories and History of the Irish in America (4 Credits)

This course will examine what the stories of a people can tell us of their past and their influence on the present. We will take an interdisciplinary look at the history of the Irish who settled in American cities in the mid-nineteenth century and explore how this immigrant group established foundation communities that became the model for the immigrant groups who followed them to America. Using their own words through novels, film, memoir, and oral histories to complement the historical record we will investigate who the Irish are and the impact they have had on the urban landscape and American culture.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 621 Animated Word: Workshop/Seminar in Contemporary Poetry and Performance (4 Credits)

We tend to think of poetry and theatre as two very distinct genres; one built for page and one for stage. However, a quick look the work of Shakespeare, Homer, Brecht, Derek Walcott, Ntozake Shange, Sarah Ruhl, and many others suggest an intimate tie between poet and playwright. What's more, beginning in the 1950's, poetry readings became an official practice in literary scenes. In this course students will be introduced to many contemporary poets (and some comics) whose live performances seem particularly singular and moving. Drawing on ideas from the fields of Linguistics, African-American and Performance Studies, students will be encouraged to consider 1) the persistence of oral traditions in our rapidly-changing, tech-driven culture, and 2) the politics of poems presented by the body and voice of the writer. They will also learn to close-read powerful oral and written texts, and to craft expressive poem-monologs of their own.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 623 Drawing Borders: Latino-American Literature and Representation (4 Credits)

Throughout life we are asked to draw discrete boxes around categories of race, ethnicity and national-belonging—college applications, job applications, the census, and so on. For Latino-Americans it can be difficult to know which of the inflexible checkboxes regarding those categories of identity to tick off. The logistical designations of the US census (which has designated “Hispanics” as the fastest growing US population by birth) cannot account for the complexity of the American racial imaginary and the incongruities of self-identification, and lived experience. In *Drawing Borders*, we will examine literature and popular culture both about and by American Latinos (of different national heritages) to trace out the complex and varied ways Latino-American identity is understood, performed, written through, and historically situated. In particular, we will be looking at both graphic literature and memoir as sites that establish a matrix for that necessary visibility, and consider the role of notions of masculinity, youth subcultures (like punk and hip hop) and the representation of Latinos in mainstream media influencing those ideas.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 627 Language, Religion and Ethnicity (4 Credits)

This seminar asks fundamental questions, such as: What is a language? What is religion? What is ethnicity? And above all, what is the connection between them? The course offers a linguistic view of religion and ethnicity and examines the sociolinguistic history, society, and culture of the United States and other nations. We will consider the great diversity of communicative systems we encounter both as a source of enrichment for individuals and the nation as a whole, and as a source of problems. In addition, we will study the universal phenomenon of language change and how it affects our understanding of language behavior both religiously and ethnically. Related topics include the interplay of language with power, gender, and education.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 629 Death in Rome (4 Credits)

Death was an ever-present fact of life for an ancient Roman. A list of some of the topics covered by this course will immediately provide a sense of that. Extremely high infant mortality. The exposure (throwing away, quite literally) of newborn babies. Widespread diseases and epidemics. Death at the hands of your doctor—in most cases. Astonishingly violent, and deadly, entertainments. Spartacus, and his roughly 6,000 followers, crucified for miles along the Appian Way. Individuals constantly falling prey to bandits, or pirates—and simply disappearing from the face of the earth. Roads just beyond city gates lined with tombs—where you might read about the departed, or have a banquet with your dead relatives. And much more. Given, then, that a Roman was constantly confronted by numerous forms of death and dying, how did (s)he come to terms with this aspect of his or her life? What did death mean for the typical resident of that long-gone world? To understand the varied ramifications of the end of life is arguably to understand much about what transpires before the end. This course will attempt to grapple with this complex, as it played out in ancient Roman culture and society.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 630 Epics 4.1: The Odyssey, The Aeneid, Paradise Lost, Moby Dick (4 Credits)

The question of what it means to be human is the fundamental concern of all works of literature. Lyric poetry focuses closely on the interior life of the individual, as a kind of snapshot or psychological x-ray—the poetic example of a selfie. Drama opens up the wider social and familial perspective on individual identity by exploring the relationships among an ensemble of actors in a theater, asking what it means both to act and to “act.” The epic, by contrast, sets the human protagonist on a global stage, in its very amplitude opening a wide expanse of time and place and history. Its fundamental question: what does it mean to be a human in the world? This seminar will examine the epic, with a careful study of Homer’s *Odyssey*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and Melville’s *Moby Dick*, supplemented by briefer related readings; as time permits, *Paradise Lost* will be accompanied by selections from Milton’s other poetry, and *Moby Dick* by Melville’s *Benito Cereno* and/or “*Bartleby*.”

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 634 BlackLanguageMatters (4 Credits)

This course is about language, specifically the myriad of ways that many African Americans express their personal and community identities. The course focuses primarily on the language variety known as African American English, which often serves as a guise for deep-seated racial ideologies about African Americans and Black people more generally. In this course, students learn about the linguistic structure of African American English and theories about its origins. We explore how language is used to convey social identity, particularly regarding race and ethnicity, and make meaning of one’s life. Issues addressed include language variation, language contact and change, in addition to social and linguistic discrimination. Finally, we consider African American English as the nexus of ideas on race, identity, sexuality, violence and equality in the United States and globally found in Cornel West’s *Race Matters* (1994) and the more recent #BlackLivesMatter movement. Students develop research projects on African American English regarding language production or perception.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 647 Irony from Antiquity to the Alt Right (4 Credits)

Irony is dead; long live irony. With the recent wave of nationalist populism across the globe, an old debate—one that goes back to Plato—has been revived. We read in the *New York Times* that the irony of Stephen Colbert is now obsolete, and elsewhere that irony is a value that all humanity must cling to for the sake of self-knowledge and the dimming hope of civilization. Meanwhile, the flavor of irony that attached to the 21st-century version of the hipster phenomenon and the Gawker media empire has passed—defeated in part by Trump adviser Peter Thiel. And yet irony lives on, weaponized by the so-called “Alt Right” and wielded triumphantly by the new user of the @POTUS Twitter feed. This seminar is a crash course in how politics got so literary. Fundamental readings in rhetoric, the Platonic dialogue, Friedrich Schlegel, Søren Kierkegaard, and Richard Rorty will be complemented by cross-media ironies from Don Quixote to Pepe the Frog. We will read Tristram Shandy and watch *Seinfeld*; view *Pulp Fiction* and read Baudelaire, Faust, and *Catch-22*. If irony is a weapon, this course asks, then how can one wield it?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 648 Exploration: New Worlds (4 Credits)

For millennia, peoples and cultures here on earth lived in a series of separate worlds, isolated by the oceans and landscapes that divided them. Then, in the fifteenth century, that isolation was forever shattered as new maritime empires violently brought everyone into contact with one another. As people explored this new shared world they repeatedly had to decide, “Who is human?” We will examine the maps, letters, journals, pamphlets, and fiction that spread the knowledge of these cultural encounters in order to illuminate how people understood themselves. We also will consider how our own, continuing search for new worlds still raises this question today.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 649 America In The World: Benevolent Giant or Just Another Superpower? (4 Credits)

From the moment of its birth, the United States has told a story about itself: that it was not simply a nation among nations but a beacon of democracy and individual freedom. As it became a world power at the end of the 19th century, the US began to deploy its wealth and force abroad to advance its national interests, as other great powers did—but also, or so it said and so its people deeply believed, to shape a more peaceful, democratic, and just world order. The United States continued to pursue that self-assigned mission through two world wars and the Cold War, and now in the face of terrorism. America is unlike any previous world power both in the beliefs on which it was founded and in its geographical situation, surrounded by oceans and far removed from the conflicts in which it intervenes. And yet it is also a hegemon—a dominant power—and shapes the world to its perceived interests, as all hegemons do. Over the last century, critics have never stopped accusing the US of hypocritically pursuing narrow interests in the name of global good. In electing a new president, American voters may finally have put that claim to rest by choosing someone who does not accept the nation's historic mission. This class will examine a series of critical points—war, colonialism, the founding of global institutions, interventions abroad—in order to understand the tension between America's idealistic global mission and the brute fact of its power and dominance.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 651 Lyric, Song, Poem: Music and Poetry from the Greeks to Hip Hop (4 Credits)

Music and poetry have deep and mutual cultural and evolutionary roots. This seminar will examine how poets, singers, and writers of songs have borrowed from each other across different cultures and periods. After surveying several ancient and early modern examples of cross-influence (including Greek lyrics, Elizabethan song and poem cycles, minstrelsy, and German Lieder), we will concentrate on how lyric poetry has been interpreted by musicians and how musicians have written poetry. Modern authors and song-writers will include William Blake, W. B. Yeats, Woody Guthrie, Johnny Cash, Ani DiFranco, Paul Muldoon, Kendrick Lamar, and others. We will also consider the performance context of poetry, from poetry readings to poetry slams, competitive rapping, and other forms of improvisational verbal performance.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 652 How We Read (4 Credits)

Reading is said to be “at risk” in the 21st Century, presumably because of the digitally mediated environment in and amid which we read, browse, and multitask. Predictions of doom follow from the decline of reading, although there is very little consensus about what reading is, what its particular virtues are, or how best to find out. Writing leaves a trace, after all, but empirical evidence about reading can be harder to imagine. This course will address the question of how we read in three ways. First, we'll consider a few episodes in the long history of reading and misreading, using works of fiction and nonfiction. Next, we'll propose and explore varieties of not reading that might help circumscribe our subject. Finally, we will do some work to understand more explicitly how we read today, onscreen and online, in this era of algorithms, fake news, click bait, and the cloud.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 654 Searching for a Musical Ethics in the Twentieth Century (4 Credits)

The twentieth century witnessed an ethical discourse about the scope of the human. Shaken by two world wars, a great depression, and a global expansion of industrial power, people in the United States searched for ways to maintain their integrity as human beings in the face of these upheavals. An important part of this search took inspiration from imagining how people should sound when they made music together. Movements growing out of that inspiration—in folk music, medieval and Renaissance music, and world music—will be the focus of this class. We will explore these overlapping attempts to reclaim ethical human communities within the perceived dehumanizing processes of modernity. Ultimately, our goal will be to attempt to understand why the tones and timbres of certain kinds of musical activities mattered to people as an expression of their ethical and political positions within modern urban industrial capital.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 656 How Do You Know Anything? (4 Credits)

What is the nature of knowledge? What kinds of knowledge are there? How is it gained, stored, and retrieved? How accurate is it? This seminar will introduce students to the basics of social cognition (using Fiske and Taylor's Social Cognition: From Brains to Culture, 2013), with additional readings from epistemology (from Plato to Popper) and the psychological research literature. Topics will include introspection, the accuracy of self-knowledge, automatic and controlled cognition processes, heuristics and biases, memory systems, the Big Lie, implicit attitudes and knowledge, spontaneous inferences, unconscious goals, theory of mind in both adults and children, and cultural differences in cognition and perception.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 657 Political Gesture: From Art to Activism (4 Credits)

On February 1, 1960, four African American college students sat down at a lunch counter at Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina; when refused service, they remained in their seats, thus initiating the dramatic Greensboro Sit-in. In Argentina in 1977, a group of mothers whose children had been "disappeared" by the military dictatorship began to march in front of the presidential palace, holding large pictures of their missing children; those marches continue to this day. In 2003, the Guatemalan artist Regina Galindo created a piece meant to remind the public of the genocidal killings in Guatemala's internal civil war; in *Who Can Erase the Traces?* (*Quién puede borrar las huellas?*) she walked barefoot through the streets of Guatemala City carrying a basin filled with human blood into which she periodically dipped her feet, leaving a trail of bloody footprints. What do sitting, holding a picture, and walking in these examples have in common? Each functions as a political gesture—a codified way of using the body to interrupt everyday life and pose a public challenge, demand, or critique in relation to abuses of power. We consider: How do political gestures establish relationships with the public (at times an unwitting or unwilling public), and how do such gestures directly impact the social and physical context? We read the work of artists, activists, and philosophers, and consider cases drawn primarily from North and South America from the 1960s to the present, allowing a broad comparative approach. Where possible we leave the classroom to visit relevant museums and archives.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 658 Lennie, New York, and the World of Music (4 Credits)

Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, composer of *West Side Story*, compelling educator, performer, social activist, and philanthropist, Leonard Bernstein was one of the most important musicians of the 20th century. This course celebrates the centenary of Bernstein's birth by exploring his legacy against the backdrop of today's musical world. We will attend concerts of the New York Philharmonic and other groups, meet with leading musicians, look at Bernstein materials in the archive of the New York Philharmonic, and ask questions about future developments in music and how music is presented to a broader public.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 660 Love: The Sociology of Intimacy (4 Credits)

If a toddler does not receive physical affection and companionship from a caregiver, it will die—but even the mere sight of a caregiver, on a daily basis, can avert the tragedy of death from lack of social and physical intimacy. Love is a powerful social force; this course provides an opportunity for students to read, learn, think, write, and talk about research into, theories of, and essays about love—mostly from a sociological perspective—with a special focus on romantic relationships and pairings. Much has been written about love from every conceivable point of view, but sociology asks very specific questions about how social contexts influence how people love across different eras, societies, groups, and so forth. American society has undergone many changes that profoundly affect how we love, including what forms we expect our relationships to take; when we expect to form enduring relationships with romantic partners; and what it may take to move from exploration to commitment. Sociology de-bunks many "love" myths that we've told ourselves as a society and instead highlights realities we've lived but not understood well—providing clarity on the distance between "idealized" and "realized" love. This course is for the skeptic and romantic alike and asks students to develop their own sociological theory about what love will look like as their generation shapes it anew.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 662 Molecular Modeling and Simulation: From Theory to Applications (4 Credits)

This seminar introduces students to the science and art of modeling molecular systems and simulating their structures and dynamic pathways on modern computers. We trace the historical trajectory of the field, from the early systematic force-field development and computations of small molecules to simulations of huge molecular machines like viruses and ribosomes—even approaching single cells. The basic structural elements of life's biological molecules (proteins and nucleic acids) and the universe of protein folds and RNA motifs will be presented. Practical ingredients of biomolecular modeling will be introduced: the governing force fields, computations of the nonbonded molecular interactions, energy minimization algorithms, sampling algorithms for describing molecular configurations, and Monte Carlo sampling and molecular dynamics simulations and their analyses. Finally, selected applications to molecular design and medicine will be discussed, to illuminate the practical utility and immense success of the field.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 663 Telling Stories: Journalists and Ethnographers (4 Credits)

This course will introduce students to the various methods journalists and ethnographers use to explore the human condition. Using the written word, still photography, audio, and some combination of the three (slideshow, etc.), students will create portraits of communities and individuals. We will read such classic ethnographies as Mitchell Duneier's *Sidewalk*, as well as oral histories by Studs Terkel and narrative journalism (like Adrian LeBlanc's *Random Family*). We will listen to audio pieces produced by StoryCorps and Radio Diaries, and look at photographs by Diane Arbus, Gary Winogrand, and Lee Friedlander.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 665 Emotions: The Passions in Early European Literature (4 Credits)

This seminar focuses on such emotions as love, joy, anger, fear, sorrow, and awe as major "drivers" of narratives and other texts. We examine how the "passions" (as emotions were called) are represented in major works of medieval literature, including epic poetry, Arthurian legends, the *Lais* (short narrative poems, often on the topics of chivalry and love) of Marie de France, and others. Were the passions seen as spontaneous, or as culturally constructed? How were they treated differently in various literary genres? Did male and female writers handle them the same or differently? How did the passions vary by class, gender, and age? How did medieval people understand the passions and place them within such larger conceptual frameworks as the vices and virtues or the bodily humors? We will also look at some modern theories of the emotions and see how they apply (and don't) to medieval works.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 666 Battle of the Sexes: Love, Desire, and War on the Stage and Beyond Beyond (4 Credits)

The theme of love is possibly one of the oldest in world literature. This course examines the ways this theme has been manifested on the stage and in poetry, spanning the period from antiquity to today. From the classics onwards what we may today consider as primarily a private expression and activity transpires as deeply embedded in broader historical and political narratives. For example, we examine the constitutive relationships between private desire and public politics. The family unit and all its multiple manifestations acts as a microcosm that mirrors but also challenges dominant power structures. The relationships between the genders, between siblings, and between parents and children all provide a fertile ground that helps to shape our personal subjectivity, but also our civic identity. The seminar looks at the ways great plays and poems have approached the theme of love in both its private and public dimensions, and also examines the formal and aesthetic experiments that resulted from this engagement. Authors covered will include: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats, Gertrude Stein, Lillian Hellman, Caryl Churchill, and Tony Kushner.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 667 Tales Out of School: Fiction and Film about Teachers, Students, and Schooling (4 Credits)

By investigating a variety of recent films, short stories, and novels about schools and schooling, participants in this seminar will seek to add complexity to their own and each other's understanding of education and its purposes. Our central questions will include the following: What images of students, teachers, and schools are presented in contemporary literature and cinema? What do these images suggest about the place of schooling in American life? In our discussions of a body of texts ranging from literary fiction by Sherman Alexie and Don DeLillo to blockbuster tales depicting fantastical academies of magic, we will also investigate the seams between our identities as people and our personae as students and teachers. Over the course of the term, students will write a handful of short response papers, a concise analytical essay, and a final project that can be fiction, non-fiction, or a hybrid of both.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 668 Russia, 1917: Politics, Class, and Culture in the Russian Revolutions (4 Credits)

"Who are we? Where are we? When are we?" So wrote Zinaida Gippius, modernist poet and eyewitness to the hungry, confusing, effervescent months of revolution in Petrograd, capital of the recently-collapsed Russian Empire. By the end of 1917, the year of Russia's great revolutions, Gippius recognized neither the city around her nor the time in which she lived, nor her very essence, her own self. This course will examine the startling transformations wrought by the revolutions of 1917, which succeeded in establishing the world's first socialist state, against the expectations even of its leaders. Together we will study the political, social, cultural, and intellectual roots of the Russian Revolutions; the experience of everyday life in a time of upheaval; and the dizzying rise to power of a numerically tiny band of revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks. Was the Russian Revolution a socialist revolution? A communist revolution? How did it start, why did it succeed, and when did it end? To answer these and many other questions, we will examine works of history, literature, visual art, and memoir. No prior knowledge of the Russian language or Russian history is necessary for enrollment. In addition to shorter writing assignments and an in-class presentation, students will work toward the composition of a final research essay on a topic of their choosing.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 669 Colonial to Postcolonial Archives: Histories of Caribbean Collecting (4 Credits)

General Washington reminds the hero in Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* that people have no control over "who tells your story." This is no news to Caribbean-born Alexander Hamilton, who grew up in a region where archives have had a fleeting history: pirates looted them; colonial administrations shipped the archives' contents to Europe; corrupt governments erased records entirely. Because of these circumstances, it has been argued that Caribbean nations have no recorded history. Contrary to historical narratives that have denied the existence of the region's archives, like Miranda's *Hamilton* we will reimagine the ways in which from the 19th-century revolutionary period to the digital present Caribbean nations have assembled private and public archives and transformed them into a political tool to produce historical knowledge about their people. Through readings in theory, Caribbean historiography, literature, film, and visual art, we will consider important archival functions such as colonial governance, state coercion and corruption, and the forming of race and gender identities, and will also examine the role of art and technology. While discussing how and why societies build their archives, students will become familiar with current debates on cultural heritage and reflect on how theoretical frameworks function in cross-cultural contexts. Drawing on field trips to museums, libraries, and archives in New York City, students will also curate an archive of Caribbean records online and put together a final digital exhibition.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 670 Encountering New York: Memoirs of Place (4 Credits)

In “Washington Square, 1946,” Cynthia Ozick recounts the most embarrassing of freshman mistakes: how she arrived at New York University for classes the day before they started. She walked around, unaware of the rich history of the neighborhood and the artists working nearby, having faith that her education and her experience in the city would eventually “awaken” her. In this class we will immerse ourselves in writings about New York and will come to know the city through the eyes of the people who have come before us. Readings will cover major authors who have written about the city but will also include pieces by lesser-known writers, like the journalist Wong Chin Foo, who can help us glimpse what it was like to be a Chinese journalist in the city in 1885. This will serve as a jumping off point for students to write a series of urban mini-memoirs as a way to explore their writerly voices, their experiences of the city, and the voices and experiences of those who came before them.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 671 Crime and Punishment in Western History (4 Credits)

After defending against external enemies, punishing misdeeds at home is arguably the state’s primary function. How it did so has changed dramatically over the course of the West’s development. At first, it was the family’s duty to take vengeance on those who harmed its members. Even as feuds were beaten back by a slowly emerging state, individual citizens remained the ones who accused and prosecuted miscreants. Only gradually, with the development of law as the rules by which all citizens must abide, did the idea of crime emerge. And only by the early modern era did it fall to the state to enforce that law. Punishment, in turn, has also evolved. Death, mutilation, exile: those were the tools at the disposal of the early state. The modern prison emerged only when the authorities accumulated the resources to keep the incarcerated immobile and maintained. In our own day, the focus of punishment has shifted from the state’s external application of force to the internal restraints we are raised and educated to impose on ourselves. The dramatic fall in everyday violence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries raises the question of whether punishment is becoming obsolete. Topics to be covered include: feud and its end, the emergence of law, treason as the ultimate crime, murder and its decline, torture, the development of the prison, the death penalty, and thought crimes.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 672 Immigrants, Ethnics, Illegal Aliens: The Irish in America (4 Credits)

This course will take an interdisciplinary look at the history of the Irish who settled in American cities in the mid-nineteenth century, and explore how this immigrant group established foundation communities that became the model for successive generations of Irish and other the immigrant groups who followed them to America. However, at the end of the twentieth century, legislation in the US and social changes in Ireland resulted in a blip in the trajectory of uninterrupted legal migration producing an illegal community known as the New Irish. Using their own words through novels, film, memoir, and oral histories to complement the historical record we will investigate not only who the Irish are and the impact they have had on the urban landscape and American culture, but what it means to be an immigrant, legal and illegal, in the United States.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 673 Penning the Self(ie): Writing the Human Condition (4 Credits)

We walk around, phone in hand, with looming questions in our head: is digital technology destroying memory, communication, and interpersonal relationships? Will our kids read and write cursive? Is print media disappearing? The notion of writing as a technology seems far removed from today’s fast-paced world of computers, social media, and AI; but it was not so long ago in human history that writing constituted a technological advance that permeated Western societies. This course examines key moments in writing’s history, with a focus on medieval texts in particular, in order to understand its role in shaping the literary subject. We will begin by tracing the shift from oral to written traditions in romance and courtly literature, followed by the invention of the printing press, notions of copyright and intellectual property, and an examination of how our relationship to writing in the past can inform our current relationship to changing technologies. Over the course of the semester, students will engage in an experiential group learning project through the creation of a literary hero/heroine whose story evolves from oral tradition, to written romance, to social media subject.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 674 Unsolved Mysteries: Reimagining the Detective Novel (4 Credits)

In this class, we will study literary stories and novels that borrow from the mystery genre to pose larger questions. We’ll consider political questions about race, class, gender, and power as well as metaphysical questions about human desire, moral courage, and our place in the universe. After reading a genre classic by Raymond Chandler, we will study diverse literary works that may not fit neatly into the crime genre but that play with the desire to uncover truth. Students will be required to read and analyze the texts in a series of response papers and longer essays, and will embark on a creative “detective” project involving multiple modes of research.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 676 Immortality: From Biology to Culture (4 Credits)

I want to live forever! Since antiquity, humans have confronted mortality and immortality in culture, literature, and the alchemists’ search for an elixir of life. The notion of immortality did not disappear even as science evolved into a discipline that seeks to understand the natural world through experiments. In fact, scientists continue to ask whether we must die. This course examines immortality—and death—principally from the viewpoint of biology, but also from the perspective of psychology and culture. We confront the fundamental human concerns of birth, growth, aging, sickness, and death as we explore immortality and the human desire to live forever.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 677 Art, Politics, and the Crisis of Humanism in the 1960s (4 Credits)

The 1960s were a momentous decade in European politics, aesthetics, and culture at large. As former empires unraveled, as the Cold War intensified, and as the postwar welfare states established greater equality, stability, and economic growth than could have been imagined among the middle and working classes even a decade prior, social tensions rose rapidly and sharply. Art, philosophy, and political thought both responded and contributed to these seismic shifts. Our seminar will concern itself with this latter notion: how culture serves as a catalyst for change, rather than simply a mirror of ideological shifts or political history. We will focus on this most international of decades as it was experienced in western Europe (France, Italy, Britain, West Germany) in relation to the rest of the world (including the US, former English and French empires, and the other side of the Iron Curtain). Within these parameters, we will examine a range of topics focusing on the intersection of politics, intellectual thought, and aesthetic form: the "new Enlightenment" in philosophy; early anxieties about cybernetics and computerization; the crisis of Marxism and the emergence of the New Left; Antonio Gramsci's notion of a "passive revolution" and Pier Paolo Pasolini's arguments about "anthropological change"; Situationist theory and practice; civil rights, decolonialization, and the struggle for racial equality; the politics of happenings, aesthetic dematerialization, and "no art for war"; the international student movements as they culminated in the events of 1968; and the fraught legacies of humanism and humanist thought.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 678 Stuff of Inequality (4 Credits)

We are the 99%! Black Lives Matter! These rallying cries bring inequality to the front-and-center of western political and media discourses. Yet a social system dividing the haves and have-nots is hardly a modern phenomenon. As a discipline dedicated both to the study of "stuff" and to the understanding of long-term cultural change, archaeology can make a unique contribution to these debates. This seminar considers injustice diachronically (i.e. over time) and on a global scale, examining ways in which the material world is created by—and creates—social divisions. Regular written assignments rely on the "stuff" left behind to understand current protests, explore the physical dimensions of social unrest, point out examples of inequality on campus and across New York, and create alternate narratives of the groups often forgotten in historical accounts.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 679 Time (4 Credits)

"Time": a single word, a simple word, and—beyond reading the face of a watch—a term few understand (although one we all "worry about"). We sometimes "reflect upon it," but usually—for most—just for a few brief seconds (as we "don't have the time for this"). In this course, we will take the time to consider "time" and to build a personal philosophy reflecting what we choose to do with our "time," often combatting what our culture tries to impose upon us. Students will further develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills while examining how ideas about "time" are constructed and interrelated and how they can inform, limit, or inspire the way we see ourselves in our social worlds. Our weekly work will consist of reading a range of texts, viewing film clips, writing in a variety of modes, and collaborating closely with one another. Class time will be devoted primarily to discussion of readings. While there are no in-class examinations, there are six papers as well as a final project—the creation and presentation of each student's own original cartography timeline.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 680 Tell It Like It Is: The Art of Nonfiction Narrative (4 Credits)

How do we tell the truth? We tend to take nonfiction for granted as a kind of narrative that simply transmits the "facts." But what else is there to this picture? What ideas and preconceptions mediate the ways we read a work of history, or watch a documentary film? We examine a broad range of nonfiction and documentary genres, including but not limited to historiography, memoir, testimony, ethnography, and reportage. Major assignments and class discussions focus on identifying and analyzing the varying conceptions of truth and verifiability at the foundation of these different genres. Our coursework also interrogates the ethics of narration, as well as the methods through which nonfiction writers combine the project of truth-telling with an aesthetic or poetic vision. Readings are drawn from works of: C.L.R. James, Herodotus, Ibn Khaldun, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Frederick Douglass, Bartolomé de las Casas, Joan Didion, Elena Poniatowska, Truman Capote, James Agee, Joe Sacco, and Alison Bechdel. Writing assignments ask students to analyze and experiment with the nonfiction styles encountered in our readings.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 681 Growing Up French: Cultivating Identity in 20th & 21st Cent French/Francophone Literature and Film (4 Credits)

The Dutch Renaissance humanist Erasmus stated, “Man is not born but fashioned.” According to him, identity is not inherent and fixed but is instead cultivated and transmitted. Since the Third Republic, France has actively sought to transmit a national identity, resulting in investment in a particular developmental period: childhood. Children, after all, become future citizens. However, many recent coming of age narratives question the notion of a singular French identity. Instead, they emphasize diversity, fractures, and contestation. We situate the concept of French republicanism in its socio-historical context through questions such as: What are the foundations of French identity? How has this identity historically been shaped, and is it open to all groups? In contemporary French society, how does one reconcile republicanism with increasing pluralism? As language and its artistic expression are fundamental components of French identity, we will analyze contemporary literary and cinematic representations of youth in France and the broader French-speaking world. These sources interrogate French republicanism and present a less unified image of French identity through their representations of friendship, love, school, rebellion, injustice, and shame. Readings include Azouz Begag’s *Shantytown Kid*, Annie Ernaux’s *Shame*, Maryse Condé’s *Tales from the Heart*, Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*, Julie Maroh’s *Blue is the Warmest Color*, and Édouard Louis’ *The End of Eddy*. Films include Ousmane Sembene’s *Black Girl*, François Truffaut’s *Small Change*, Nicolas Philibert’s *To Be and To Have*, Laurent Cantet’s *The Class*, Céline Sciamma’s *Tomboy*, and Isabelle Boni-Claverie’s *Too Black to be French*.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 682 Infrastructure (4 Credits)

We examine the multifaceted ways in which humans shape and are shaped by infrastructure, and how infrastructure provides not only the material but also the cultural foundations of everyday life. How does infrastructure both create and reproduce social and economic inequalities? How are various infrastructures shaped both “from below” and from the top down? We treat these themes and questions in a variety of case studies. On the level of geopolitics, the Suez Canal raises issues of global finance, national sovereignty, and decolonization. Likewise, the structures needed to produce different forms of energy give rise to different economic formations: coal mining requires a vast labor force (which thus has political leverage over management) whereas oil does not. A recent analysis of Pokémon Go’s comparative absence from poorer neighborhoods is a starting point for addressing wider issues of inequality and the “digital divide.” Other infrastructures are less spectacular but exert tremendous influence in daily life—these include sewers, street lighting, and street layouts—and have all been objects of political, economic, and social contestation in different times and places. Students complete a fieldwork assignment to “think spatially” in their examination of some part of New York City’s infrastructure.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 688 Art and Science of Approximate Reasoning: Physics, Sustainable Energy, and (4 Credits)

Because physics works over a vast range of scales, and because of simple requirements for the forms of physical laws, it is possible to make progress on important problems with extremely simple physical arguments. We learn and practice the methods of approximation, estimation, and dimensional analysis in the context of questions about energy, the environment, and sustainable solutions to the problems of humans on Earth. Themes include the following: What roles do wind and solar energy have in the future of humanity? What are the fundamental physical limits on the efficiencies of vehicles used for transportation? How can we make buildings and cities run as energy-efficiently as possible? How could we travel from the Earth to other solar systems? The techniques developed in this course are among the most important items in the toolbox of a research physicist, and also apply in most scientific and engineering domains. Understanding these techniques and concepts, however, is within the reach of anyone concerned about the future of our planet, and this seminar has no science or mathematics prerequisites.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 689 Homer Versus Vergil (4 Credits)

The epics of Homer (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*) and Vergil (*Aeneid*) are key foundational texts of the West. But they also represent competing narratives of what it means to be human, particularly with regard to the individual’s role in society. Moreover, not only do these texts offer starkly different paradigms, but they are also acutely aware of their differences and subtly engage with one another. Thus, the *Odyssey* questions the heroic assumptions underlying the *Iliad*, and the *Aeneid* imitates Homer while, at the same time, drastically reworking the Greek myth to explore contemporary Roman concerns. This course will read these texts with particular attention to changing concepts of the individual (a/k/a “hero”)—e.g., the Greek warrior Achilles, who is alienated from his society not only by pride in his military prowess, but also because he makes moral demands out of step with the prevailing values of his society; his comrade Odysseus, more cunning than brave, whose difficult homecoming represents the recovery of a self defined by the domestic joys of family and friends; and, finally, the Trojan Aeneas who also wanders after the war, but as a refugee, for his home has been destroyed, and whose piety (rather than bravery or cunning) compels him to lead his people to a new promised land which, like Moses, he will not live to see. The catastrophic losses suffered by both sides in war, the mass migration and displacement of peoples, the tension between political expediency and ethical choice, and the achievement of public good at great personal cost—these themes are as relevant today as they were in Greece of the 8th century BCE or the Rome of the emperor Augustus. No prior knowledge of these texts or of the ancient world will be assumed. Students who have never read these “great books” will delight in encountering them in the company of other smart readers; and those who are familiar with the works will deepen their understanding of their richness and enduring relevance.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 690 Redesigning College: The Student Perspective (4 Credits)

Like many institutions in our society, higher education has recently been the subject of heated public discussion and debate. Much of the recent focus has been not on the extraordinary achievements of American colleges and universities, but on problems, real and perceived. Also, most of the conversation has been driven by legislators, trustees, faculty, parents, and journalists; it is striking that, to date, the voice of students has not always received sufficient attention. This seminar will function like a workshop: students will participate in the design of the syllabus by selecting five key issues on which to focus, and they will then work in small teams to review the literature and come up with concrete proposals for how to improve the college experience in these areas. Possible topics from which they will choose include: access and affordability to higher education, diversity and inclusion, time to degree, the college rankings industry, the content and quality of the curriculum, learning outcomes and assessment, the use of metrics and predictive analytics, the challenge of globalization, the higher purposes of education and the practical value of a degree, the role of college in perpetuating or combatting inequality, the politicization of the academy (including questions about free speech on campuses), health and wellness issues, the role of extra-curricular activities (including recent scandals involving fraternities and athletics), the use of technology and the relationship between residential and online education, the role of private philanthropy and state support, academic integrity, and the relationship between research and teaching. The final product of the seminar will be a "white paper" written by the students. No prior familiarity with the scholarship on higher education is required; what is required is a passion for your education, a willingness to work hard and collaboratively as a member of a team, and (perhaps most importantly) a commitment to avoid facile assumptions and generalizations in favor of evidence-based recommendations. Class readings and discussions will be supplemented by guest presentations by leaders in higher education, both from NYU and elsewhere.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 691 Narrating Climate Change (4 Credits)

Global warming is, by many accounts, the gravest danger facing human life on the planet at the present moment. Unlike other potentially catastrophic crises, however, climate change lacks clear divisions between people or nations or apocalyptic symbols. Climate change does not split the globe into a Free World and an Evil Empire, or a sacred Motherland and a nation of Capitalist Running Dogs. As the author Per Espen Stoknes writes, "There is no clear enemy with climate change. We're all participating in the climate crisis—if there is an enemy, it's us. And it's hard to go to war against ourselves." The transformations associated with climate change do not appear as sudden explosions or even exist as perceptible on a daily fashion; instead, they exist as graphs that climb ever upward, as never before heard of glacial shelves cracking, and droughts, fires, and storms "correlated to but not caused by" disruptions in climatic patterns. Its changes are long term, it poses collective action problems, and its agents are generalized and often indistinct. Climate change, in short, poses narrative problems. This seminar will examine six separate, but interrelated, disciplinary means of narrating climate change—scientific writing, historical narratives, journalism, political explanations, personal memoir, and fiction. The emphasis will be not, primarily, on what narratives "work" but on investigation of the commonalities and differences in which climate change is explained and put in time according to different fields and disciplines. Students will explore the differing ways that disciplines attempt to convey knowledge, learn how to recognize and understand different narrative forms, and determine for themselves what makes for effective narration.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 692 Knights, Ladies, and Chivalry (4 Credits)

This course examines the concept of chivalry as a social and literary phenomenon from its inception through the medieval and early modern period and into its more modern manifestations. We will explore the changes in what constitutes a knight as the militaristic facets of the title are separated from the social and political distinction the name implies. We will also discuss the role of the lady, in relation to the knight and as an independent figure, including female warriors. Finally, we will look at the decline of knighthood as feudalism gives way to a moneyed, commercial society. Looking toward our modern times, we will ask the inevitable question: is chivalry dead? Readings from the Iberian Peninsula such as *El Cantar de mio Cid*, Ramon Llull's *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, Joanot Martorell's *Tirant lo Blanch*, and Cervantes's *Don Quixote* will be considered alongside works by the likes of Geoffroi de Charny, Christine de Pizan, Torquato Tasso, and more contemporary authors including Mark Twain and Michael Chabon. The course also will include a visit to the Arms and Armor Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 693 Making Sense of Doubles and Masks (4 Credits)

Among the more significant activities of human beings is that of giving shape to fears and desires through art. All cultures participate in this form of emotional exteriorization, including creating through myths and literature “doubles” and sculpting in textures and words various types of “masks.” In this seminar, we will concentrate on doubles and masks in several different cultures. We will thus chart the meaning and impact of the archetypal masked figures of the *commedia dell’arte* in French and Italian theatre (Molière and Goldoni); the obsessive concern with the grotesque (the monstrous mask) in French romanticism (Hugo) and in Victorian fantasy (Mary Shelley); and we will look at excessive doubling in South American magical realism (García-Marquez). We will think about zombification, carnival figures, and ghostly doubles in Latin American, North American, and African cultural forms (Morrison and Fanon). We will build a repertory of approaches to interpreting and uncovering the many layers of masking and doubling by reading in anthropology, psychoanalysis, aesthetics, and literary theory. As interesting as the masks and doubles “peopling” culture are, we will be especially alert to the different ways in which human beings at various points in time have attempted to understand what making masks and creating doubles means.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 694 Federico García Lorca: Life, Work, and After-Life (4 Credits)

An exploration of the question of historical memory in Spain, focused on the life, works, and legacy of the country’s most important playwright and poet of the twentieth century. García Lorca (b. 1898) was at the height of his career when he was executed by fascist thugs in his native Granada at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936). A kind of secular martyr, his unlocated remains still haunt Spain. We will read and analyze his works and his biography, as well as key texts from contemporary debates about the legacy of Civil War and dictatorship in Spain.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 695 Gestures, Movement, and Literature (4 Credits)

Working in the space of articulation between dance, literature, and politics, this seminar examines movement(s) and dance as a key element with which to read transformative moments of history, culture, politics, and philosophy. How do philosophers use the body dancing as a metaphor for thought? How do we read the body dancing before Columbus’ arrival as the first archive of knowledge and resistance? How does the dancing body enter the stage of race relations in 19th century Cuba? What impact does US modern dance have in the political history of the nation and how is it that a Mexican, José Limón, stands as one of the leading figures in US modern dance? Why is it that political movements use the term “movement” to speak of a politics, and what impact does that have on the political histories of bodies? The course will include texts by Cirilo Villaverde, García Lorca, Luis Palés Matos, Alejo Carpentier, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Andrés Caicedo, Claudia Salazar and Mario Bellatin; the films of Almodóvar; and flamenco dance and the dances of José Limón, Martha Graham and Pina Bausch, Oscar Araiz and Alicia Díaz. The theoretical and philosophical bases will be provided by Nietzsche, Agamben, Rancière, Marie Bardet, Lepecki, and Badiou, all of whom talk specifically about the art of movement, about movement and politics, or about movement and dance as metaphor for thought. The course understands as a premise that we can use the history of dance and movement as a way of understanding history and politics in Latin America.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 696 Native Peoples and Sovereignty in the Americas (4 Credits)

This course will take a broad view of the critical issue of sovereignty that arises in the history of European colonialism in the Americas and in the political struggles of native peoples. A first challenge in the course will be temporal: we will trace the long arc of power relations involving indigenous people, focusing on the conquest and colonial periods from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, but considering later ramifications in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well. A second challenge will be spatial: to compare and connect the histories of Iberian, English, and French colonial powers and the processes in the Caribbean, Latin America, and North America. We will reflect on problems of sovereignty in conceptual, legal, political, and administrative dimensions.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 697 Unusual Encounters with the Ancient Greeks and Romans (4 Credits)

In this course, we will read, and discuss, a series of less popular texts from the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, which reveal some of the lesser known aspects of that world. We will not read Homer, or Sophocles, or Plato, or Vergil, or Cicero, or Caesar. Here are a few examples of the kinds of thing we will read. Apuleius’ *Apology*: This is the court oration, given by a man named Apuleius from Madauros in Numidia (Algeria). He had been charged with using magic to cause a rich widow to marry him – a capital crime. Juvenal, *Satires*: Juvenal wrote vicious, biting satires, about Rome, about women, etc. We will read some of these, to try to understand this kind of abusive literature, and its attractions for the Romans. Petronius, *Satyricon*: Here, we have the story of a boorish, newly rich man, and the group of gross hangers-on that surrounds him. Again, a fairly scurrilous document, about a bunch of Roman low-lives. Plautus, *Pseudolus*, *Miles Gloriosus*: Two comedies by the playwright Plautus, again portraying the antics of some Roman low-lives. These plays formed the stuff of the Broadway musical (and then film) *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. We will read the plays, watch the movie, and then compare and discuss. Pliny the Younger, *Letters*: Here, we will read selections from his letters, e.g.: his description of the death of his uncle in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. These are a few samples of the texts we will read. The plan will be to have one text per week, which we read, discuss, and try to understand against the background of the complex worlds of ancient Greece and Rome. In particular, we will be observing aspects of the life of these worlds, which are generally not touched upon by courses in Classics.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 698 Human Evolutionary Medicine (4 Credits)

Disease, and the human response to it, has been a dominant factor in the biological and cultural evolution of our species. This course integrates evolutionary biology, genetics, immunology, ecology, and behavioral ecology, along with sociocultural anthropology, politics, and economics, to better understand newly emerging and reemerging diseases as they affect human health. General evolutionary theory and an introduction to Darwinian medicine are provided before the course examines viral, bacterial, parasitic, and prion-based diseases along with their hosts, vectors, and other organisms. Particular attention is paid to how humans have purposely and inadvertently created both biological and cultural environments for the transmission of different diseases. Media representations and misrepresentations are examined throughout the course. The seminar is writing intensive and will include a series of short papers investigating different topics throughout the course, due approximately every three weeks. By the end of the semester students will be able to view states of health and disease through the lenses of evolution from both our own and other organisms' perspectives.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 699 When Science Gets It Wrong: Retractions and the "Replication Crisis" (4 Credits)

Fraud. Cutting corners. "Why Most Published Research Findings Are False." Could this possibly be describing science today? We look to science to answer the big questions. And when it's done right, it gets us closer to the answers. But lately, cracks in the scientific edifice have appeared. Retractions of scientific papers—the "nuclear option" of correction—are breaking records every year, and researchers in a number of fields are realizing that many of their highest-profile findings do not hold up. Some even refer to a "reproducibility crisis," while others are concerned that such language erodes the public trust, particularly among those who may use science's weaknesses to promote their own agendas. Starting with the writings of Kuhn and Merton, we will explore how scientists see themselves, and grapple with how the incentives and structures that govern scientific research have led us to where we are. This is not a science course, and should not intimidate students who are not studying science. This is a seminar about how science is done, and will offer a view into solutions that some researchers hope will make science even more robust.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 700 Free Speech, Hate Speech, and Political Correctness (4 Credits)

This seminar begins with first principles of free expression, especially as articulated by such 18th century figures as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison and the great 19th century philosopher John Stuart Mill. We examine closely the origins of the First Amendment to the Constitution and some of the modern Supreme Court cases that have interpreted its guarantees. Then we turn to recent controversies, particularly about offensive, insulting, or hateful speech, both on and off campus. We try to understand the concept of a "hostile environment," first developed as part of the law of sexual harassment but extended in our time to racial and religious insults or indignities, in classrooms, workspaces, and such public spaces as parks and sidewalks. We also weigh the various uses of the loaded concept of "political correctness." Finally, we seek some comparative insights from the more restrictive laws of such nations as Germany, where the Nazi past has shaped a strong sense of restraint, and France, where a strict conception of secularism has led to prohibitions on religious displays that are usually protected by the First Amendment in the United States. Because many people have passionately held but quite divergent views about what should or should not be allowed to be said (or written) in a democracy, the readings in this seminar come from activists, philosophers, and artists as well as from judges and scholars.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 701 Adventures in Interviewing: Oral History Theory and Practice (4 Credits)

Oral history is a very important tool for a historian. It is compelling in its ability to bring forward the voices of those who were frequently excluded from more typical sources and it often leads to new interpretations of history. As a method, it presents challenges and rewards as the sources are not confined to the library or an archive. In the process of interviewing the historian is confronted by sources that speak, think, remember, forget and recount—human beings. This course will explore theories of memory, how memory is constructed and forgotten, and how historians contend with this type of source. Preparing for and conducting an oral history interview will be a significant portion of the load for this course. The goal is to uncover the richness of oral history in complicating our explanations of the past.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 702 Music, Sound, Film, Television (4 Credits)

Some of the most powerful, expressive and effective moments created by human beings involve the combination of sound and moving image. Yet we do not really understand how or why such effects actually work, especially because the experience of music and image together is radically different from either one on their own. This course explores the use of music, and sound broadly in film, television, MTV, and advertising and even considers the possibility that through our use of portable listening devices we have turned our entire lives into one vast soundtrack. In this course we shall watch films, engage criticism related to music and the moving image, and work together to create projects that test various approaches.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 703 Photography and Identity: Images of the Self (4 Credits)

We all use photography to express, show, and prove our identity (just think about your student ID). But to what extent does photography shape and construct who we are? Do our various identities really exist outside their many representations and images? We investigate a wide variety of photographic images from the nineteenth century to the present day, including art images, historical archives, internet imagery, and press documents, so as to explore the role of photography in constructing, mediating, and circulating a wide range of identities—including not only race, gender, and class, but the very idea of the individual, as well as that of the human. We discuss: what does the multiplication of images do to our sense of self? What are ethical ways of representing identities other than one's own? How does photography confirm or contest identities? We also examine the works of major thinkers, including Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Roland Barthes, closely associating the study of theoretical texts with the discussion of specific images.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 704 Humans in the Environment from the Ice Age to the Present (4 Credits)

In a time of unprecedented man-made climate change, the term Anthropocene has gained currency as the geological epoch defined by human impact on the world. But what exactly does that mean, and when did it start? In this course, we will explore the long history of the back-and-forth relationship between the humans and the environment, and examine how past human activity has shaped the world around us. We will review the interactions of climate and environment with the evolution of our species, and explore the effects of the ice ages on human societies and cultures, and on our dispersal across the globe as the ultimate invasive species. We will discover the effects of climate change on societies as diverse as the ancient Middle East, the pre-Columbian Maya, and the Norse settlers of Iceland and Greenland. We will also see how past peoples did not simply react to environmental change, but often induced it, from the earliest domestications of animals and plants, to the manipulation of entire landscapes by Europeans, Native Americans, and Aboriginal Australians. We will examine cases where past societies collapsed due to climatic change, and other examples of societies which continued to thrive despite it, and we will take an anthropological approach to explore how past societies understood environmental change, and its political, social, cultural, and economic ramifications.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 705 Banned Books (4 Credits)

What does it mean when we ban a book? What can a book's absence tell us about a society? In this seminar we will read and analyze censored literature, but we will also consider meanings that are constituted by erasure. We will confront controversial and offensive writing, consider its worth, and weigh its right to exist through nuanced thinking about cultural context, practical implications, and moral philosophy. Drawing on theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, and JM Coetzee, we will connect our readings of twentieth-century poetry and novels to the issues of free speech and censorship that we confront in our daily lives. Students will have the opportunity to conduct archival research in NYU's Special Collections in order to restore public consciousness of texts that have been censored, overlooked, or otherwise silenced.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 706 New Orleans in Literature and Film: From the Old St. Louis Hotel to Hurricane Katrina (4 Credits)

"There are a lot of places I like," writes 2016 Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan, "but I like New Orleans better. There's a thousand different angles at any moment." Due to its status as a mercantile port, New Orleans was/is where much of what we now think of as "American" originally entered America, either literally or metaphorically. These different angles include the direct and indirect results of slavery, colonialism, immigration, war, corruption, and natural disaster. Over the course of the semester, we will read writers such as Tennessee Williams, John Kennedy Toole, and Anne Rice, as well as viewing films such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, and *When the Levees Broke* as a means of considering the relationships between slavery, colonialism, etc. and words that more often come to mind when one considers New Orleans—jazz, Bourbon Street, "The Big Easy." How does thinking about New Orleans help us think differently about America in general, as well as even larger concepts such as time, memory, history, and place?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 707 Borderlands and Belonging in the Americas (4 Credits)

Migration has shaped the Americas in powerful ways, creating immigrant communities and diasporas that transcend national boundaries. As people continue to move across borders, the relationship between identity and place has been reimaged, offering new possibilities for connection. Yet, this has also sparked political anxieties about belonging and citizenship for both individuals and nations, rendering some immigrants as perpetually outside the "imagined community" of the nation, effectively living on the borderlands of belonging. How do those on the borders navigate belonging, citizenship, and identity in the Americas? What are the implications of these struggles for understandings of nations and selves? This seminar explores the lived experience of those moving across national borders as they negotiate various borderlands in their search for home. We turn to testimonial accounts and ethnographies to explore life on the borderlands, also drawing on key conceptual frameworks in migration and diaspora studies related to borders and identity. Readings primarily draw on ethnographies of diaspora groups (Caribbean, Latin American, Jewish, and Asian communities), as well as testimonial accounts in various genres—including fiction, memoir, and the narrative testimonies of undocumented migrants and Dreamers in public protests.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 708 Dream Homes and Heartache (4 Credits)

Throughout much of the last century, the “dream home” has been almost synonymous with the American Dream itself. But as the 2007-2010 mortgage crisis dramatically highlighted, dreams of “the good life” in late capitalist societies can unexpectedly turn into nightmares. This course investigates the fantasies, disappointments, and psychopathologies—both everyday and aberrant—that have accompanied twentieth and twenty-first century experiences of dwelling. We examine a series of existing, or formerly existing, architectural spaces (from large scale housing projects to O.J. Simpson’s Brentwood estate and Donald Trump’s Fifth Avenue penthouse) alongside an array of artworks and narratives from literature and film that center on built environments. We also look at how the fundamental human activity of dwelling has been thought about by philosophers, critics, psychoanalysts, urban geographers, and political theorists. Students’ research will explore how the problems associated with dwelling intersect with issues such as economic inequality, racial and sexual marginalization, creative and emotional growth or arrestation, and the everyday strategies involved in coping with large-scale social and political upheaval. Of particular concern to us will be the ways in which the private spaces people inhabit—even, or especially, when they are designed to embody their most sought-after dreams—fail to provide the sense of comfort and security associated, in the popular imagination, with “home.”

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 709 Spectacle of Cruelty: A Theatrical Investigation (4 Credits)

This course takes as its hypothesis that cruelty, at least in its political forms, is a form of spectacle: a performance designed to horrify or dazzle an intended audience. Perhaps for this reason, some of our most potent theatrical writers, from Euripides to Suzan-Lori Parks, have performed cruelty for us, shown us its face, explored its dimensions, invited us to live in its world. We will use theatrical texts to explore basic questions about cruelty—what it is, what drives it, in what forms it appears, how it can be resisted—but also to think about what these staged performances do for us. Why do we need them? In what way do they reflect the times and cultures that produced them? What themes and images remain consistent? What does a performance of cruelty allow us to see and experience? We’ll put a range of theatrical texts in conversation with writers like Susan Sontag, Maggie Nelson, Antonin Artaud, Hannah Arendt, and Albert Camus. Equally important will be our own investigations: the resources we reach for, the discoveries we make, the difficulties we encounter in trying to answer our questions about this most troubling aspect of being human.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 710 Fiction, Feminism, and the #MeToo Movement (4 Credits)

When Kristen Roupenian’s short story “Cat Person” was published in the *New Yorker* in December, 2017 amidst a larger public conversation about power, gender, and changing definitions of sexual harassment, it went viral, becoming the magazine’s most-read story of the year. The story—which represents the murky and often unspoken power dynamics that influence how we act towards ourselves and others—resonated with the recent #MeToo movement, but it also speaks to farther-reaching questions about sex, gender, and inequality. In this seminar, we will read novels and short stories (from the very recent, to the not-so-recent) that have grappled with these questions, as well as some work in feminist theory, in order to think about how literature has been used in the past—and might be used today—both to critique existing inequalities, and to imagine a more just world.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 711 How the Irish Turned Right (Or Have They?) (4 Credits)

The starting point for this freshman seminar will be an article published in the 24 October 2017 *Newsweek*, titled “Why are all the Conservative Loudmouths Irish-American?” First, we will analyze author Van Gosse’s argument, which claims that the current generation of Irish-American conservative commentators (e.g., Sean Hannity and Bill O’Reilly) are direct descendants of Senator Joe McCarthy’s reactionary populism. Then, we will use other texts to begin interrogating and refining many of Gosse’s foundational assumptions about Irish-American socio-economic and political history, including the fracturing of the Democratic party, the decline of organized labor, the effects of suburbanization, the relationship between Irish-American identity and whiteness, and the relationship between Irish-American identity and Catholicism. In addition to Gosse’s article and other recently published thought-pieces, course readings will include seminal essays written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Andrew Greeley, David Roediger, Peter Quinn, Linda Dowling Almeida and Diane Negra. During the seminar, students will craft their own research questions related to Irish-American studies, and/or related to other American ethnic groups that might be fruitfully studied in comparison to Irish Americans. The culmination of each student’s research will be a sophisticated essay that explores an inquiry related to the complex relationship between ethnicity and/or class and/or race and/or gender to American politics, an exploration that will ultimately develop an idea of the student’s own.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 712 West Meets East: English-Language Literature about China from the Middle Kingdom (4 Credits)

Xanadu, “Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,” was how Samuel Taylor Coleridge described China in his poem “Kubla Khan.” Such romantic images might have been the only encounter that many nineteenth-century readers in England had with the Asian country. Today, on the other hand, the global movement of information and people (students included) creates increasingly diverse and discerning audiences. This course will examine what literature about China written in English reveals not only about cultures of the “East” but also about assumptions and interpretations in the “West.” We will read classic novels by the Americans Pearl Buck and Maxine Hong Kingston, along with the work of American journalists Peter Hessler and Leslie Chang, historical fiction about the Opium Wars by Indian author Amitav Ghosh, and new fiction by Chinese expatriate Yiyun Li and Hong Kong resident Xu Xi.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 713 Artful Lives (4 Credits)

How, and to what unique ends, have artists, performers, and writers crafted art from the materials of lived experience? We will explore a variety of works across genres, including diaries, graphic memoirs, auto ethnographies, films, performances, and theater works that innovatively and directly draw upon lived experience. We will consider autobiographical as well as documentary projects as we ask: what does it mean to represent ourselves and others in art? And what aesthetic and ethical questions arise in the making of such works? For example, what is the relationship between memory and memoir? How do we understand the complexities of reading and writing essays that fall into the category of “creative nonfiction”? And what changing roles do social media play in our representations and comprehension of ourselves and selfhood? Along the way, we will experiment with making our own artful representations in multiple modalities from written language to playing with sonic, visual, and kinetic forms. Artists under consideration may include: Jamaica Kincaid, Maggie Nelson, Alison Bechdel, Cynthia Hopkins, Reverend Billy, Coco Fusco, Kara Walker, Agnes Varda, Lucy Grealy, Ana Mendieta, Anna Deavere Smith, and Spalding Gray.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 714 Crystallization in Life: Stories about Shells, Bones, and Kidney Stones (4 Credits)

This research-oriented course will introduce students to the world of biomineralization, the branch of chemistry that deals with crystal formation under the influence of biomolecules. Students will be exposed to the fundamentals of crystal formation, crystal properties, and the structure of crystals that surround us. We begin with crystallization theory and the various aspects of the biomineralization process in nature and then move on to specific case studies, with attention to biomolecules (proteins, lipids) and their roles in controlling the crystallization process. Understanding the biomineralization process in the formation of kidney stones can lead to a preventative drug development, which illustrates a practical application of the field in biomedical science. In addition, studying the crystallization process in nature can lead to new bioinspired materials, such as optical fibers.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 715 Who Speaks for God? Prophecy and Kingship in Antiquity (4 Credits)

The human process of communication lies at the core of ancient Near Eastern, biblical, and classical prophecy. From the construction of temples to the promise of military or diplomatic success, the utterance of the prophet and prophetess lends legitimacy to the king because they speak on behalf of a deity. When do gods speak directly to humans via prophets, and when is a third-party human intermediary necessary to mediate between that prophet and the ruler? We probe the limits of political authority in Mesopotamia, Ancient Israel, and Ancient Greece with a particular focus on the role of prophets and diviners in society. Through critical analysis of ancient texts from Mari (modern-day Syria), ancient Israel and Judah, Delphi, and Claros, we investigate the system of mediation among prophets, intermediaries, and kings to undertake an interdisciplinary study of ancient prophecy. Such communication among these three groups facilitates the transmission of the words of a deity to legitimize political governance and regulate human experience.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 716 Human Sacrifice in the Ancient World (4 Credits)

Human sacrifice formed an integral part of ritual practices in many ancient societies across the globe. In this seminar, we will use a cross-cultural perspective to compare the sociopolitical conditions and world views that gave rise to, sustained, and eventually halted practices of human sacrifice in the ancient world. Readings will review diverse sources of evidence, including: contemporaneous texts, pictorial representations and iconography, material culture, and the bioarchaeological analysis of human skeletal remains. This course takes an anthropological approach and challenges students to critically evaluate the intersecting functions of ritually-sanctioned violence in the past.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 717 Arthurian Legend: Arthur and The Celts (4 Credits)

The legend of King Arthur has continued to fascinate audiences from the early medieval period until the modern day. But was there a real Arthur? How did his story begin and how did it grow? Why did he become such an iconic hero? This seminar will search for the roots of the legend of the famous king as a hero in medieval Wales and look at its development, plotting the many depictions of its main character from villain to tragic hero. We will also explore the origins of his companions, with particular emphasis on the wizard Merlin. From there, we will travel across the sea to Ireland and examine how the legend developed, to what extent it took on elements of Irish mythology, and how the Celtic Arthur compared with that of the continental Romances. Students will be encouraged to investigate such elements as the legend’s interpretation of Christianity and the pagan past, the depiction of “magic” and “miracles” within the story, and the role of gender in medieval writing. In assessing the creation of the Arthurian legend, this course will delve into medieval understandings of history, the construction of identity, and the concept of the “hero” in Celtic literature, and will give students a grounding in critical thinking and how to approach historical texts.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 718 Walking the Global City: Spatial Practice, Cultural Production (4 Credits)

New York, the city that never sleeps, is also a city that never stops walking. The automatic act of putting one foot in front of the other is a vital part of urban experience, determining our relationship with the city and with our fellow city-dwellers. Pedestrianism propels us into the vibrant dynamism and diversity of the metropolis and navigates us through neighborhoods and streets, where we discover the unexpected and interact with a dizzying accumulation of people and objects. We investigate representations of walking in literature, film, and art produced in and about New York, Paris, and London from the nineteenth century to the present. Immersing ourselves in the work of peripatetic artists, writers, and thinkers from a range of epochs and cultural backgrounds, we treat walking as a framework for cultural and social analysis. Tracing the itineraries of walkers from the Parisian flâneur to the London “streethaunter” to the exiled wanderer of New York, we view the city as a space that is both bordered and borderless; as a site of community, connection, and belonging; and as one of alienation and exclusion. Walking provides a lens through which we can investigate the evolving dynamics of race, gender, and sexuality in modern society; the relationship between urban experience and creative production; and the notion of the city as palimpsest. Students also engage in their own projects of walking the metropolitan landscape of New York City, cataloguing their experiences with words and images.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 719 Daughters, Mothers, and Sisters: Women Who Shaped the Irish Diaspora in America (4 Credits)

Any successful immigrant community relies on both its men and its women to thrive and survive. Since the late nineteenth century, Irish female immigrants have been an undeniable and atypical force in the rise of the Irish in America from servant class to elite. Traveling alone without male protection, young Irish women found work and oversaw the social mobility of their families from the home, in the classroom, and within the community. This interdisciplinary course will look at the experience of female Irish immigrants and their descendants over the last 125 years. Using fiction, historical sources, personal testimony, and film, we will consider both the conventional and the unique factors that characterize the Irish-American female experience and that contribute to their influence on this ethnic community and the country.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 720 Irish and Chinese in the Modern Pacific World (4 Credits)

The Pacific Ocean covers almost one-third of the earth's surface, roughly one-third of the world's population inhabits its islands and shores, and many have dubbed the twenty-first century the "Pacific Century" to reflect major shifts in global power from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This course surveys the history of the Pacific world (the immense space that includes the Pacific Ocean, west coast of the Americas, Pacific Islands and Oceania, and East and Southeast Asia) from the perspective of Irish and Chinese diasporas in the Pacific since the late eighteenth century. We will chart Irish and Chinese involvement in the processes that shaped the modern Pacific world, such as migration, imperial expansion, maritime commerce, diplomacy, nationalism, and cross-cultural exchange. Utilizing comparative and transnational approaches and drawing on an array of primary sources, we will examine the nature of interactions between Irish, Chinese, and various other people who inhabited and traversed the Pacific Rim, study the similarities and differences between the experiences of Irish and Chinese migrants in the Pacific world, and explore the influence of Pacific Irish and Chinese on receiving societies and their respective homelands.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 721 Women, Gender, and Sexuality in the Islamic World (4 Credits)

Discussions about women's rights in the Middle East and in Islamic communities in the West have become increasingly prevalent, revolving around hot-button issues such as veiling. However, many modern politicians and writers have little understanding of how issues surrounding gender and sexuality in Islam have developed and changed, including the plurality of ideas and opinions in different times and places. We examine the status of women and issues of gender and sexuality in the Islamic world from the emergence of the religion in the 7th century until today. Topics include the discussion of women in the Quran; the various roles of women in early Islamic, medieval, and modern societies; how Islamic law conceptualizes gender (including eunuchs and intersex individuals); and issues of masculinity and homosexuality. We contend with several overarching questions: What were the roles of women in different societies and cultures? What do religious texts say about women and gender, and how have Muslim scholars interpreted these texts over time and place? How did premodern texts conceptualize gender and sexuality? And do those interpretations reflect modern rather than historical notions?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 722 Italy and North America: Contact, Conflict, and Exchange (4 Credits)

In tackling cultural representations from epic poetry to film, we piece together a transhistorical mosaic of artistic and material products of exchange and explore how Italians of different eras grappled with the North American continent, its inhabitants, and its many facets of influence. As students analyze canonical works of Italian film and literature, they develop new perspectives on Italian and American cultural histories and question how cultural contact and exchange shape our own understanding of national identity. We consider how Italy's diaspora has affected its conception of itself and examine 500 years of North America as artistic inspiration, as cultural and political influence, and even as a source of existential anxiety. For example, how did European discovery of a "new" continent impact Renaissance authors like Ariosto and Tasso and destabilize the center of their known world? How did American literature like Hemingway and Steinbeck offer 20th-century Italian writers new possibilities of literary expression and political resistance? We consider literature of immigration and travel in the 19th and early 20th centuries, as Italians documented their journeys to North America (and New York City) in poetry and prose. We investigate how Fascism, war and recovery—as well as the physical presence of American soldiers on Italian soil—shifted the political and social stakes of this relationship. Finally, we explore American cultural influence throughout the increasingly globalized 20th century, as US models permeated Italian politics, film, television, music, and food, and pop singers teased teenagers who tried to "fa' l'Americano." Throughout, we take advantage of our location in New York City to explore aspects of cultural exchange within our urban environment, including an excursion to the Italian American Museum and Little Italy.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 723 Death Talk: How We Write About Death, Dying, And Grieving Today (4 Credits)

It has long been said that death has been hidden from view in the modern West. Most people now die in hospitals or old age institutions rather than at home. Older rituals of grief and bereavement have grown marginal, making death less visible in our daily lives. Our media culture privileges youth and vigor rather than aging and death. Certain deaths, such as a child's, are almost taboo because they contradict our prevailing beliefs about progress, happiness, the sanctity of childhood, and the elimination of risk. And yet, in recent years, there has been an apparent surge of books about death and grief, assisted dying and loss in its multiple forms. These include memoirs and novels, poems and essays by doctors, works of history, sociology, and anthropology. A number of these works have attained critical and popular success. Our goal in this course will be to put these different works in conversation. By analyzing the ways in which these different authors approach the matter, we will seek to determine what may be said about death today. What is audible? What is permissible and publishable? Are we living through a significant transformation of our public discourse about death? Students in this course will engage in both analytical and personal forms of writing about death, grief, and loss.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 724 How Cities Remember (4 Credits)

Since the earliest pre-urban settlements of the Neolithic, city dwellers have needed to reckon with the physical remains of history. Earlier buildings, streets, and public spaces are either maintained or demolished to make way for new developments. Some people or events are celebrated with monuments or memorials, others are left to fade from memory. But who chooses what figures are commemorated, and what things we might forget? Which buildings are preserved for generations, and which are removed? How has the past influenced the present in cities throughout history? This seminar explores how the built spaces of cities—and the people who live in them—interact with the past. Examples will be drawn from ancient and modern sites across the globe, relying on the cities of different places and periods to understand how memory shapes urban life. Weekly topics include the beginnings of urban memory, monuments to events or individuals, burial practices, memory in the household, and deliberate erasure. Regular trips to places of remembrance (or forgetting) in New York City connect the theory and themes of the course to the city we live in.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 725 Seeing Through Ghosts (4 Credits)

From Hamlet to Harry Potter, ghosts have long haunted books and film. This seminar asks them questions: What do they want? What do we owe them? When and where do they appear? What are they good for? What do writers and readers use them for? We begin with one of the most famous ghosts in the Western canon, the ghost of Hamlet's father, to lay the groundwork for our own thinking and responding to the spectral. With the help of Freud's essays on "The Uncanny" and "Mourning and Melancholia," and Jacques Derrida's concept of "hauntology," we will then pivot to nineteenth-century and contemporary literature—the invention of the "ghost story," the use of ghosts to confront the history and legacies of slavery in the United States, and a contemporary novel's cross-cultural exploration of US history and Tibetan Buddhism. In addition to Hamlet (and we will keep an eye out for performances in New York), texts will include Henry James's "The Jolly Corner" and "The Turn of the Screw," Mary Wilkins Freeman's "The Lost Ghost," Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and George Saunders's *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Students will work collaboratively, sharing responsibilities for leading discussions and reporting on research. Frequent writing assignments will include one personal essay, on-line forum posts, a final research essay, and opportunities for work in creative genres.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 726 Language and Thought (4 Credits)

Does the language we speak influence the way we think? If so, how? Can thought exist in the absence of language? These questions have been at the heart of a recurrent (and often heated) debate within the cognitive sciences (e.g. linguistics, psychology, philosophy) going back to the eighteenth century. The claim that structurally diverse languages can affect the thoughts of their speakers is referred to as the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis. This course examines this hypothesis primarily through the lens of cognitive science but with consideration of views from linguistic anthropology, fiction (e.g. George Orwell's *1984*), and film (e.g. *Arrival*).

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 727 Headlessness, Desire, and Political Failure in Literature and Beyond (4 Credits)

Taking as our point of departure early mythological and literary descriptions of violence and dismemberment enacted upon literal and political bodies, in this course we will examine corporal fragmentation as metaphor for national disintegration and failure. From classical antiquity to the present, violence has often circumscribed the way in which politics and authority are discussed in literary texts. Examples of extreme physical violence such as decapitation, disembowelment, and drawing and quartering, have often been used as vicious propaganda to flaunt the despotic power of a nation; headlessness and dismemberment are also frequently used as metaphors for the writing process and the negotiation of authority, gender, exemplarity, and power. As preoccupations with honor, integrity, and authority were some of the most obsessive anxieties of the pre-modern period, we will give particular attention to the societal, cultural, and religious pressures that combine to facilitate acts of violence such as torture, beheadings, and even cannibalism in literary, historical, and operatic works.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 728 How We Learn (4 Credits)

How do humans and other animals learn, and how do we study this in the laboratory? What is the neurobiological basis of learning and memory? What are the genetic and environmental factors that have shaped the learning process throughout evolution? What other cognitive processes influence learning, and how can we apply this knowledge to our own studies? In trying to address these questions, this seminar gives an overview of modern neuroscience and psychology research on learning and memory, and illustrates how cognitive science can be used to develop strategies for effective learning, while also discussing implications for societal issues, disorders, and artificial intelligence.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 729 History and Aesthetics of Music Videos (4 Credits)

Situated between art and advertisement, between television and experimental filmmaking, the music video sells much more than music. What used to be played on a loop on TV now gets millions of views online, making the music video a must-have for any singer or band. These three to five minutes of content can shape an artist's career, launch a new dance or fashion trend, and even go viral. We examine the history and aesthetics of music videos from MTV to YouTube and consider their impact on popular culture. As we view videos from Michael Jackson, Madonna, Nirvana, Radiohead, Daft Punk, Bjork, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, and many others, we will question the representation of gender, sexuality, and race and their impact on audiences of different ages around the world. We study auteur directors such as Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry, and David Fincher to question the relationship between music videos and cinema and look to the future of videos as they migrate online and change their shape to fit industry needs.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 730 Countercultural Encounters in Latin America (4 Credits)

The impact and legacies of countercultures in Latin American literature, film, music, and the visual arts, with a focus on Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina in the second half of the 20th century. We discuss key concepts for the analysis of recent Latin American literary and cultural production, such as regional, national, communal, and sexual identities; high, popular, and counter-culture; and tradition, modernization, (under)development, revolution, and (neo)colonialism. We trace how new forms of political contestation interfaced on the one hand with the cultural traditions of the Left in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, and, on the other, with “modernist” notions of art and literature’s critical power. We also reflect upon the relations between this spreading of countercultural practices and the supposed death of art and literature, the figure of the author, and ideas of autonomy and specificity. Our focus is on interdisciplinary cultural artifacts and practices that fostered the creation of new subjectivities and alternative communities.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 731 The Mathematics of Ramsey Theory (4 Credits)

Ramsey theory answers the question, “under what circumstances can we find order in disorder?” For example, suppose six people are at a party and each pair of guests is either friends or strangers. Can we always find three people at the party who are mutual friends (or strangers)? How many people must we invite to the party so that four people are mutual friends? Five? The Ramsey number is the smallest number of people we must invite to the party to ensure a certain number of guests are mutual friends. We will generalize the “party problem” in the context of Ramsey’s Theorem for graphs and discuss bounds for Ramsey numbers. We will then explore other results and variations of this theory.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 732 Nature vs. Nurture: The Neurobiology of Individuality (4 Credits)

Psychologists, biologists, philosophers, and neuroscientists have historically questioned the impact of heredity vs. the environment in shaping the uniqueness of individuals. Modern scientists have arrived at a consensus whereby both genes and experience contribute to distinct behaviors. Indeed, “nature” and “nurture” are not isolated components. Understanding the constant and complex interaction between the two is the key to unlocking the mysteries of animal and human behaviors. We examine the nature vs. nurture debate over time by studying Darwin and Lamarck, as well as novel genetic tools that explore the interaction between DNA and the environment and papers treating the topic of genes and behavior. Group assignments will involve case studies that require students to gather evidence, propose solutions, or offer possible explanations for specific intrinsic vs. extrinsic situations. Students will also write research papers on topics and in a style accessible to the general public. Examples of paper topics include: inheriting trauma; the genetics of neurological disorders; the microbiome and your brain; and the science of addiction.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 734 Derrida’s Archive Fever (4 Credits)

What is an archive? Is it a library, a legacy, a school of thought? For that matter, what does each of these terms mean? Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995) has provoked intense conversations among archivists, philosophers, historians, psychoanalysts, and social scientists about the archive and its relation to questions of memory. In this seminar we will read Derrida’s *Archive Fever*, and the writing that underlies and is necessary to understand it: Freud’s controversial *Moses and Monotheism*; Freud’s famous essay on the death drive, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”; Jensen’s novella *Gradiva: A Pompeian Fancy*, and Freud’s response to it; and Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi’s *Freud’s Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable*. Students will learn to read Derrida’s famously difficult writing accurately and with pleasure, and will visit Derrida’s own archive at Princeton University.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 735 Food for Thought: Narrating the Global Food System (4 Credits)

Culinary traditions—and culinary innovations—are forged at the intersection of culture, history, politics, economics, geography, and ecology. In the twenty-first century, amid animated conversations about globalization and climate change, we are increasingly aware of where our food comes from and how our individual food choices affect our neighbors and the rest of the world. This course examines how we write and read about our food system—and ultimately what we do with that information. Our conversation begins with two seminal works about food’s relationship to its surrounding environment: anthropologist Sidney Mintz’s study of sugar production and consumption, *Sweetness and Power*, and environmental activist Rachael Carson’s polemic about pesticide use in American agriculture, *Silent Spring*. We then shift to the contemporary moment, considering new ideas about the combination of global politics and local food by journalist Michael Pollan, novelist Jonathan Safran Foer, and chefs Dan Barber and José Andrés. In written assignments, you will analyze the assigned texts as well as write your own food system narratives.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 736 The Living and the Dead, from Prehistory to the Present (4 Credits)

Every individual eventually faces mortality, every religion addresses death and the afterlife, and every society devises rituals to cope with bereavement. This seminar explores the entanglements between the living and the dead in cultures across the world and through time. Weekly discussions will focus on readings from the anthropological and sociological literature on death, burial, and funerary rituals, followed by an in-depth examination of the topic through case studies from the ancient and the modern world. Topics include imaginings of the afterlife in world religions, art, and literature; funerary rituals and expressions of grief; the space and place of death (cemeteries, hauntings, and dark tourism); the commodification of death; the materiality of the human body after death (including the adornment, beautification, manipulation, or preservation of the corpse); holy relics; public commemoration and funerary art as a means of expression of social identity; death and gender; and the exploration of death (and the undead) in 21st-century American pop culture.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 737 TASTE: History, Theory and Ideology of a Concept (4 Credits)

When and how did it become possible to possess what we call taste? What theories have been advanced to explain, defend, and critique taste as a phenomenon? What can we learn from “bad” taste (kitsch, camp, vulgarity, Russian poshlost’)? We examine primary sources from the Russian, English, French, and American traditions, including novels, stories, poems, films, philosophy, and the visual arts. We also read theoretical and historical works addressing such topics as connoisseurship, class, gendered tastes, dandyism, details and femininity, minorness, the slavery/luxury nexus, and Russian/post-Soviet sovok.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 738 Literature and Film of Human Rights (4 Credits)

This course is an introduction to the study of human rights through literature, creative non-fiction, photography, and documentary film. The course is divided into three units—one on foundational texts for understanding human rights ideals (including grappling with both bystander and official complicities in injustice), a second that considers the uses and limits of photography and documentary film in raising awareness about human rights stories, and a third that examines how (and undertakes case studies of how) climate change and immigration have become fundamental, often intertwined, human rights problems today. We seek to understand a number of questions, including: the connection between the modern notion of the individual and the ideal of human rights; why some bystanders and spectators develop empathy and others do not, and what separates those who are merely moved from those who are moved to act; what blocks awareness and guilt among those who are culpable for inhumane acts; and why, how, and where climate change and immigration are core and intertwined human rights issues today.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 739 Stories to Live By (4 Credits)

The stories we choose to tell about ourselves are crucial in defining our sense of possibility. How we understand our past (what constellations of cause and effect we craft from our history) helps us navigate the choices we have to make in the future. What stories have we learned already? What others are latent? This course offers a history of narratives of the self. When and how did self-consciousness in texts begin to manifest itself? To what end? And how does the process of narrating changes of the self alter our very understanding of it? Cutting across a wide range of disciplines—from literature to narrative theory and narrative therapy, from Bildungsroman to evolutionary theory—this course considers textual representations of interior space. Students will complete a narrative writing assignment and two analysis papers in order to both experiment with their own stories and learn to interpret others.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 740 It's All a Plot: Uncovering the Conspiracy Narrative (4 Credits)

The Masons, the grassy knoll, birtherism. While we seem to live in an especially paranoid moment, conspiracy narratives have been around as long as people have been able to whisper and needed to explain social inequities, major calamities, or the workings of power and oppression. This course will explore the nature of conspiracy narratives, both those we find in fiction and those that circulate among us in the “real” world. We will examine conspiracy narratives across genres and media, including novels and film, as well as investigate their appearance on various news platforms. Do these narratives share common attributes and motivations? What roles do race, class, and gender play in their construction? What are the ramifications of their proliferation for democratic societies? The texts we explore may include novels like Ishmael Reed’s *Mumbo Jumbo* and Don DeLillo’s *Libra*, as well as films like the 1962 version of *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and *Sorry to Bother You*. We’ll also analyze some of the more well-known conspiracies promulgated by such internet sites as InfoWars. Bring your tin hat, your powers of analysis, and a healthy dose of skepticism.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 741 Staging Power: Political Ceremonies and Pageantry (4 Credits)

Participants in this seminar will investigate how displays of lavish ceremonies and pageantry have been used in history to legitimize political power. Sessions will focus on a series of political figures from the Western tradition such as Caesar, Charlemagne, Elizabeth I, Louis XIV, and Napoleon. Students will be encouraged to research political figures from other traditions as well as more recent ceremonial practices. Our main goal will be to deepen our understanding of the role artists and writers have played in the fabrication of political leaders. The reading list will include works of political theory, philosophy, aesthetics, and fiction. Emphasis will be put on the mediation of the events through monuments, images, print, and audio-visual recordings.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 742 Apocalypses: Reflections on the End of the World (4 Credits)

In this seminar we will explore, discuss, and dissect several important works of post-apocalyptic fiction. As we examine these works (through close readings, small-group and class discussions, lectures, reflective writing assignments, and considerations of cinematic adaptations), we will pose such questions as: What do the different ways in which we envision the end of the world as we know it reveal about our society’s collective concerns and fears? How might society play a central role in precipitating its own demise? Who will survive the apocalypse (or rather, the different types of apocalypse that we consider) and what does that survival mean? How do survivors try (or not try, or try and fail) to restructure a new society? Students will work to improve their ability to present ideas and arguments in a clear, concise, well-structured, and convincing manner both in writing and speaking. Furthermore, students will discover how best to find, read, and appreciate relevant research on literary work and genre and apply it to their own work.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 743 Archaeology of Ireland: Land of Saints and Scholars (4 Credits)

Archaeology uses material culture, including artifacts and structures, in order to understand the daily lives of people in the past. Large-scale excavations carried out in the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries have shed new light on Irish history, from the island's initial settlement at the end of the Ice Age through the nineteenth century. This course will explore how archaeology can be used to reconstruct Irish history. Particular emphasis will be placed on the Irish "Dreamtime," the Iron Age and early medieval periods (ca. 600 BCE to 1100 CE). We will also examine the role that the Irish monastic tradition played in perpetuating and passing on to posterity many of the classic texts of Western civilization.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 744 Venice, A Tourist History (4 Credits)

In 2018 an estimated thirty million people visited Venice. While New York City gets about twice as many annual visitors, Venice has a stable population of only 55,000 inhabitants and occupies an area smaller than Central Park. Venice is also, famously, a city built on water in the middle of a tidal lagoon. Its small size and unusual site render Venice exceptionally vulnerable to the more pernicious effects of modern mass tourism, including over-crowding, pollution, and an economy increasingly reliant on a single source of revenue. Indeed, for Venetians it has become commonplace to describe the situation as both a social and environmental crisis. Venice, locals often say, is drowning in tourists and under rising sea levels. But in many ways this situation is not new. Venice has always been overrun with outsiders, whether medieval pilgrims, crusaders, and merchants; eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cosmopolitan elites on the so-called Grand Tour; or twentieth- and twenty-first century mass tourists arriving by train, plane, and cruise ship. This seminar will explore the longer history of Venice as a travel destination through documents, literature, and film. In so doing we will consider how Venice has been shaped by its history as a travel destination; how representations of the city affect people's desire to visit it and their perceptions of the challenges it faces; and how the city's current tourism-driven economy, when combined with rising sea levels, threatens the city's very existence.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 745 Future of Medicine (4 Credits)

How will medicine evolve in the future? Will doctors ever be able to prevent disease rather than react to it? And how can your DNA sequence be used to develop personalized treatments? Healthcare is arguably the most important place where science meets society, and technical advances are raising important ethical issues about healthcare, such as genetic discrimination and designer babies. This course will look at the science, economics, and politics behind medicine and healthcare systems and use healthcare as a tool to study the relative roles of the individual and government.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 746 Poetry and War (4 Credits)

There can be no poetry that is not about destruction and survival, and this is especially the case in the poetry of war. We might even say that the poetry of war tells us what is true of all poetry: that it bears witness to the enigmatic relation between death and survival, loss and life, mourning and courage. The poetry of war often speaks of the death, if not the impossibility, of poetry. But what makes poetry poetry is its capacity to bear the traces of what it cannot say, to go on, in the face of this inability, to suggest its potential for speaking. What is at stake is the emergence and survival of a poetry that bears witness to what history has silenced, to all the vanished who, arising from the darkest nights of memory, haunt us, and encourage us to remember the deaths and losses for which we remain, still today, responsible. This is the lesson of twentieth-century poets who speak of war. Responding to the violence and trauma of war, to the deaths and suffering that result from wartime conflict, these poets seek to offer us a critical genealogy of war. They stage and enact their own troubled understanding of the capacities and incapacities of poetry in the face of disaster and catastrophe, even as they assert the necessity of remembering the uncertain traces and legacies of war, and of doing so without traducing or reducing the experience of war, without betraying the dead.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 747 Graves, Bodies, and Books: Funerary Commemorations from Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century (4 Credits)

In 2014, the start-up company Eterni.me began offering its services to preserve deceased loved ones as 3-D avatars. In the first four days of its existence, the company registered 3,000 people on its site and, consequently, joined the ranks of many other companies in the "e-death" industry that promise to prolong the life of a family member or friend beyond biological death. Companies like Eterni.me—and the digital age, more generally—will surely change the way that societies commemorate their dead; yet humans have always named their dead and marked their final resting places with a monument to ensure that they will be remembered beyond a single generation. We explore the human tendency to locate the dead in society and to engage with them postmortem through a series of literary case studies with a focus on the commemoration of deceased poets, and ask why it is that poets' tombs are the destination of much literary tourism. Who visits poets' tombs? What do they do there? How does the tomb help ensure a poet's "immortality" after his biological death? To answer these and similar questions we study ancient Greek and Latin poetry and the tombs that ancient poets imagine for themselves in their verse. We then turn to a selection of funerary monuments dedicated to Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Romantic poets. Finally, we will consider the twenty-first century's evolving relationship to traditional modes of commemoration, as well as to digital and experimental forms of memorialization. Authors include: Propertius, Tibullus, Ovid, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Voltaire, Keats, Shelley.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 748 Childhood and Youth in Cinema (4 Credits)

We look at a wide range of films that offer different cultural and historical representations of children, childhood, and youth, paying close attention to how they manifest certain themes both aesthetically and narratively. The figure of the child in cinema may simultaneously convey crude realism and romantic nostalgia; but, beyond this tension, children in films also stand for tropes of innocence, dependence, inaptitude, sexuality, desire, and suffering, among others. We consider several questions: Why and how do filmmakers focus on child characters in their critiques of society, history, power, and discrimination? How do children on screen convey realism and/or nostalgia, future and/or past? Is the thematic rigidity of “childhood in cinema” a productive or a reductive analytical framework? We explore a range of visual and written texts from around the globe as a means of questioning and understanding changing notions of childhood and its representation in cinema.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 749 Feeding the Future (4 Credits)

How is what we eat connected to how we understand our past, present, and future? Food is often at the heart of narratives about the formation and preservation of key societal institutions such as the family and national identity, or about humans’ relationship with nature. More recently, food has been the subject of a host of TV shows, documentaries, and policy conversations about how to balance convenience, efficiency, and tasty foods with health, equity, and sustainable production. In this course, we examine both historical and contemporary controversies and developments to investigate how food generates social relations, structures of power, economies, ecologies, and ontological realities. We look to an array of marketing campaigns, social movements, and government initiatives, asking how producing and eating food has material and symbolic consequences for building solidarity among social groups (such as families, clans, voluntary associations, and religious communities) as well as for creating hierarchies and distinctions within such groups. Through reading and analysis of primary source documents and ethnographic, historical, and other social scientific accounts, we reflect on the myriad ways food shapes our local communities and global society at large.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 750 The “Other” on Film: From Natives to Terrorists (4 Credits)

From *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961) to *Aladdin* (1993), there are many examples of problematic representations of non-Western peoples and cultures in film. We consider the history and evolution of the “other” on film, including feature films, documentaries, and ethnographic visual anthropology, going beyond popular films and recognized stereotypes and focusing instead on how images and narratives create knowledge through the mediation process. Films include: *Nanook of the North* (1922), *The Searchers* (1956), *Battle of Algiers* (1966), *Black Girl* (1966), *Petit à Petit* (1969), *The Axe Fight* (1975), *The Deer Hunter* (1978), *Babakieuria* (1988), *The Siege* (1998), *Caché* (2005), *Argo* (2012), *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), and *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014).

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 751 Reading Religion in the Anthropocene: Religious Ecology and Environmental Ethics (4 Credits)

What does the dawning of the Anthropocene—a new geological era in which humans determine the fate of the planet—mean for our common identity? If nothing else, its realization has pointed to a new discontent with civilization and the terrifying possibility of social collapse. Some scholars and activists have pointed to foundational texts of world religions as the root causes of our current ecological crisis. Still others have cited these very traditions as resources for societal and personal renewal in the face of global climate change. We probe the limits of ecological awareness, intergenerational responsibility, and animal welfare in a range of religious traditions and texts including the Hebrew Bible, the Gospels, the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tripitaka, and the Babylonian Talmud. Through critical analysis of these texts, with an eye toward the nonhuman, we investigate both the accusations against and the promise of these traditions. We assess whether religious texts themselves can ever be the cause of real social and political change, or whether they only “come alive” when read and acted upon. Along the way we explore various discourses in the environmental humanities and consider their efficacy in understanding ancient religious traditions.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 752 Vikings and Celts: Ireland, Scandinavia and the North Sea World during the Long Viking Age (4 Credits)

This seminar explores the late eighth to twelfth centuries, from our earliest evidence of Scandinavian raiders, known to the modern world as Vikings, sailing across the seas to Ireland, Scotland, and England, to the establishment and fall of dynasties at home and abroad, conversion and cultural assimilation. This period allows students to investigate different aspects of medieval history ranging from political, military, and economic events and processes to the myriad of social and cultural changes that were to have a long-term impact on Ireland and the North Sea world. We will work with historical and archaeological sources to understand some of the challenges and scholarly debates that surround the long-term interaction between the Irish, their neighbors, and the Scandinavians. Although the Irish experience of the Viking Age will be at the heart of this course, the entire North Atlantic region will be examined both to add context to our consideration of this period and to appreciate different facets of this interrelated and varied area during this time. Text-based classes and discussions focusing on particular sources, individuals, and events will give students a grounding in critical thinking and how to approach historical texts and offer the chance to gain an in-depth understanding of this exciting period of change, conflict, engagement, and opportunity.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 753 Heroic Journeys: Homer, Vergil, Dante (4 Credits)

Homer's *Odyssey*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, and Dante's *Inferno* are key foundational texts of the West. These works span two millennia and very different cultures—archaic Greece at the dawn of literature, pagan Rome of the first century BCE, and Florence during the Christian Middle Ages. Reflecting very different social, political, and religious values, they explore very different visions of what it means to be human, particularly with regard to the individual's role in society and the individual's relationship to the divine. But for all their differences, the three poems self-consciously engage with one another, building on, competing with, and correcting their predecessors' visions. Thus, all are cast as journeys by a hero, and these journeys are both literal and metaphorical. All three also involve a descent into the underworld, from which the hero is, in a sense, reborn with a greater understanding and a new sense of purpose. As if to underscore the way in which these texts talk with one another, the Homeric underworld in the *Odyssey* is actually Vergil's model for the underworld that his hero, Aeneas, will visit; and Dante goes even further by making Vergil a character in his poem, the pagan spirit who will guide him through and out of the Christian hell. This course will involve close reading and discussion of the three poems. In addition, the seminar aims to develop students' research skills. These skills include how to ask the right questions about a text, how to conduct an internet search of relevant scholarship, how to write up a literature review, and, finally, how to build on that work to produce a paper that sets forth one's own conclusions. No prior knowledge of these texts and no familiarity with research skills are required. What is required is intellectual curiosity and a commitment to work hard and collaboratively.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 754 Rural Queerness in Literature and Film (4 Credits)

How do queer lives and communities form in rural spaces? How is the lived experience of rural queers taken up in literature and film? What particular vulnerabilities, risks, pleasures, possibilities, and social forms contour queer life outside the city? Urban spaces have long held a privileged position in literature and critical theory as sites of queer possibility. We reexamine that narrative by looking at the complex relationship between the country and the city, and investigate the ways in which our particular geographies determine what queerness means, and how it is experienced and made visible. We also focus on more directly "urban" texts—especially the literature of New York City—to ask what role figures, fantasies, and myths of the rural, the natural, or the agrarian play in producing queer desires, fantasies, and communities within the city limits. Readings range from antiquity to today and include a diverse array of literary and cultural texts, including history by Thucydides; poetry by Frank O'Hara and C.A. Conrad; memoirs by Eli Clare and David Wojnarowicz; Shakespeare's plays; fiction by Toni Morrison and Annie Proulx; theoretical writings by Jack Halberstam; and films by James Bidgood, John Waters, Todd Haynes, and Clair Denis.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 755 Theories of Reproduction (4 Credits)

What does the printing press have to do with condoms? Photography with the human genome project? We examine theories of reproduction in literary, philosophical, and scientific thought. A necessary condition for biological life and a fundamental mechanism for understanding mass culture, reproduction connects human sexuality to the history of technology and the life sciences to the debates of cultural politics. Drawing connections between disparate theories of visual reproduction, audio reproduction, textual reproduction, human reproduction, and historical reproduction, we consider ideas of birth control and eugenics in the context of memes and photocopies, situating the issues of sexual politics and reproductive rights in a wider cultural history of reproduction, and using alternate theoretical paradigms to reframe contemporary political debates. Students learn to apply an interdisciplinary approach to the historical construction of biological categories including race, gender, and sexuality.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 757 Impressionism, the True Picture (4 Credits)

Impressionism—a luminous and sensuous way of painting developed in France in the nineteenth century—is for many people the gateway to art. In its own time, impressionist painting was rejected by the art establishment and the general public. But today impressionism is prized because there are no prerequisites, no symbols to decode, and no obscure subject matter demanding insider knowledge. It is a democratic art form. This course will try to understand the original, radical intentions of the impressionists—their rejection of tradition, their embrace of modern life, their competition with photography. We may learn that there is, after all, more than meets the eye in impressionism. We will work with the artists Manet, Degas, Pissarro, Renoir, Monet, and Cézanne as well as with their realist predecessors Courbet and Corot and the post-impressionists Seurat, Gauguin, and van Gogh. We will also read literary and other texts from the period.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 758 Seeing the Universe (4 Credits)

The universe is full of stuff, but our ability to see it is quite limited. In this seminar we will aim to understand the limits of our perception, and how and what we humans have done to see beyond it. In short, we will discuss the universe we can see, how we see it, and how we see the universe we cannot. This will include how we see with light, and what we can see with different forms of light. We will discuss other ways of seeing, including relying on neutrinos and gravity. We will discuss how we can see things from the early universe; how we see things like dark matter; and whether it makes sense to talk about things we cannot see, like beyond the observable universe. Along the way, we will develop a basic picture of the history of the universe.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 759 Dictadura: Stories of Tyranny and Liberation in Central America and the Caribbean (4 Credits)

The figure of the dictator is one of the recurrent tropes in twentieth-century Latin American literature. The dictator in his fiefdom—the “Banana Republic”—is also one of the classic stereotypes about “dysfunctional” and “unstable” Latin American states. In this seminar we will study some of the canonical Spanish American novels about dictators along with documentary films, primary sources, and selected historiography. We discuss how it is that oppression and seduction so frequently combine to sustain tyrannical regimes. What kinds of fantasies and hopes do tyrants draw on? How do these fantasies compare to what we know from historical sources? What is the role of gender and race in these fantasies about “patriarchs,” “benefactors,” and “liberators”? How do writers, journalists, and artists understand their role in relation to tyrannical regimes? How do they narrate stories of resistance and tyrannicide, and why are these stories so rarely happy ones? What happens after the death of the dictator? Cases to be discussed will likely include the dictatorships of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Duvalier in Haiti, Juan Vicente Gomez in Venezuela, and Somoza in Nicaragua. There will be a current affairs component to the course. Students will be asked to research recent events and/or follow the news on the countries we discuss. All texts will be provided in English translation.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 760 Writing About the Past in the Ancient Near East (4 Credits)

From writing one’s own résumé to chronicling political events, piecing together and presenting the past in written form is a complex combination of factors: availability of sources, conventions and tradition, audience, interpretation, intention, and unconscious bias. Shortly after the invention of writing in the Near East in the late fourth millennium BCE, scribes of the most ancient full-fledged writing system, cuneiform, started to chronicle their own recent or remote past in written form. The texts they left behind include annals, king lists, (pseudo-)biographies, historical omens, and chronicles. These earliest historiographic sources offer a fascinating glimpse into preclassical antiquity and into the events recorded. They also reflect how people in the ancient world perceived time, and how they may have understood their own place in it. The texts studied (all in translation) will be principally Babylonian and Assyrian; a number of Hittite, Biblical, and Greek sources will also be discussed.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 761 Landscape and Environment from Prehistory to the Present (4 Credits)

Landscapes are dynamic products of interactions between human activities and environmental elements, and landscape archaeology is a discipline that investigates the ways past people formed and transformed their surroundings through time and space. In this seminar, we use an interdisciplinary approach and explore how landscapes have been constructed or influenced by both cultural and natural processes. We will review the main theoretical perspectives and a wide range of methods used in landscape archaeology that can be applied to other disciplines as well. We particularly focus on technological applications including satellite remote sensing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), geospatial analysis, methods in field survey, and archaeological site prospection. We will analyze multiple case studies from the ancient Near East and other parts of the world and learn about settlement distribution, water management systems, and diverse land use strategies. Finally, by exploring issues of sustainability, productivity, and microenvironmental diversity, we discuss how archaeology benefits longer-term views of change.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 762 Materials Science in the Ancient and Modern Worlds (4 Credits)

Materials science is an interdisciplinary field involving the fabrication of new materials that have different functions. While chemistry is often seen as a science involving matter on a small scale (such as atoms and molecules) and technology is typically thought of on larger scales, materials chemistry bridges these extremes and typically deals with matter in the micron size range (100 times smaller than the width of human hair!). This field uses advancements from chemistry, engineering, physics, and other disciplines and applies them to the real world. Breakthroughs in materials science readily become implemented in technology and influence how humans interact with each other and the world around them. In this seminar, we will explore different types of materials developed over the span of human history (during the Stone and Bronze Ages, the Industrial Revolution, modernity, etc.). We will investigate how the development of these materials then inspired the fabrication of tools and technology across different time periods. Finally, we will highlight developments that led to recent breakthroughs, including materials that are used in smartphones, solar cells, batteries, self-healing devices, and much more.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 763 Library for the Perplexed: Essayism and the Contemporary World (4 Credits)

The essay is the appropriate genre for our time and its perplexities and reflects our need to make sense of the contemporary world. In this way, the essay derives its energy and momentum from the desire to understand rather than from the authority of knowledge. A good essay has a distinctive voice that persuades its reader to go along for an extremely particular ride that may very well end up nowhere. Idiosyncrasy, fragmentation, intuitive and unexpected connections, sudden illuminations, and even dead ends are all part and parcel of the essay as a genre that refuses to be pinned down (it is very much not the college essay we have all been taught to master!). This course will not attempt to define what the essay is, but rather explores essayism as a “literary drive,” a compulsive need to engage with and take pleasure in the complexity of the world rather than explain it away.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 764 Music and Those Pesky Emotions (4 Credits)

Everyone talks about music in terms of emotions, taking it on faith that music communicates, expresses, or contains emotions. But no one has ever seen an emotion under a microscope, and no one seems clear about whether the word represents something real, or whether it is a metaphor or a fiction, a stand-in for what we absolutely do not understand. We also do not fully know whether these emotions, if they really exist, can be meaningfully detached from what we call "ideas" without vastly misrepresenting human experience. This seminar examines a wide variety of musical works from different styles, genres, and geographical locations, as well as a series of interdisciplinary readings, to ask questions about just how (and why) we respond to music and what role "emotions" might actually play in that process.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 765 Democracy, Avant-garde, and Counterculture in Contemporary Spain (4 Credits)

The social and political imaginaries of General Franco's Spain (1939-1975)—that is, its institutions, laws, and values—created a singular instance of temporal dislocation in the avant-garde of the 1960s and 70s, in the countercultures of the 70s, and in the social fabric of political militancy and resistance against the Francoist regime. This course proposes an examination of those political, historical, and aesthetic conjunctures and their effect on the subjectivities of a generation that felt "infinitely foreign" in its own country. Artists, poets, filmmakers, activists, and militants introduced a sense of desire into a political context of discipline and obedience, and by doing so they redefined the meanings of work, sexuality, and everyday life. In addition, they often paid homage to the democratic legacies of the Second Republic of the 1930s and to the avant-gardism of its cultural milieu. Similarly, the recent indignados movement that occupied Spain's public squares and demanded more radical democratic practices (a movement similar in many ways to Occupy Wall Street) recalled, in turn, the countercultural practices of the 70s. We will study these cross-generational alliances in an effort to understand the relationship of art and aesthetics on one hand and politics on the other.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 766 Dimensions: Art, Nature, and Human Survival (4 Credits)

This seminar introduces students to the mathematical definition of dimensions, including non-intuitive fractional dimensions. The human understanding of the concept "dimension" can be viewed through its evolution in art: two dimensions in medieval tapestries, three dimensions in da Vinci's Renaissance masterpiece depicting the Last Supper, and four dimensions in Cubist art and the Bolshevik era. The existence of fractional dimensions is observed throughout nature in the beautiful patterns of snowflakes, pineapples, and the rings of Saturn. At the intersection of generative and computer art, fractional dimensions can also be experienced through never-ending patterns called fractals. The course culminates with studies of higher dimensions (or hyperspace) and theories of wormholes and parallel universes as an escape for humanity from the death of our star.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 767 Dead Sea Scrolls and the Foundations of Judaism and Christianity (4 Credits)

This seminar investigates the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for our understanding of the history of Judaism in ancient times and the development of Christianity. The course will deal with these long-lost scrolls as ancient documents testifying to the Judaism of the Greco-Roman period and the manner in which they influenced early Christianity. The seminar will also explain the modern drama of their discovery and publication as well as the ways in which they have reshaped our understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Each student will engage in a research project, working closely with the instructor throughout the semester.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 768 Manifestoes and Modernism: Art and Politics in Europe, 1915-1945 (4 Credits)

This seminar examines visual and literary culture produced in Europe between World War I and World War II, a period in which artists and writers were actively involved in forging new ideas about the relationship between themselves, their craft, and the world. Most often, these new ideas were announced to the world in the form of manifestoes that were often published and distributed widely, reaching local and international readers; sometimes they were published in limited numbers and handed out on street corners. The intent of their revolutionizing tone, the ambition of their writers, and the impact that these tracts had on the development of modern art will be our central focus throughout the semester. We will develop a critical understanding of the relationship of art to politics during a period of time that saw the development of new political parties, régimes, and models of citizenship across Europe. It was a time in which artists operated as avant-gardists: challenging the status quo and pushing the limits of representation. So, we will also examine the historical "isms" that defined this moment in European modern art (Futurism, Dada, Expressionism, Surrealism, etc.). Field trips to museums, collections, and archives to view art and publications of the period are an integral part of the course.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 769 Bodies and Nation in Contemporary Latin American Cinema (4 Credits)

The recent success of *Gravity* (2013), *Birdman* (2014), and *The Shape of Water* (2017), films directed by Mexican directors in Hollywood (Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and Guillermo del Toro respectively), and the global recognition of other Latin American filmmakers in international film festivals are indications of a clear revolution in Latin American cinema. This new generation of filmmakers has not only inherited political agendas from the 1960s, but has also seen in bodies, sexualities, and gender a terrain on which to postulate social concerns and ideological positions that attempt to reshape the idea of the nation itself. In this course, students will view and analyze a selection of recent films from Latin America (Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma*, Lucrecia Martel's *Zama*, and Sebastián Leilo's *A Fantastic Woman*, among others). Readings will provide a theoretical framework in gender and sexuality studies, film history, and political theory, as well as methodological background in film analysis and cultural studies. Students will attend a screening of a Latin American film, and a New York City based Latin American filmmaker or film distributor will visit the class to discuss current trends with students. The seminar includes a creative project.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 770 What is Evil? (4 Credits)

When we try to describe, understand, and respond to such atrocities as rapes, genocides, or serial killings, we often use the word evil. We will discuss the historicity of the concept of evil, its relativity, and the diversity of feelings that it inspires in us—such as fear, disgust, shame, contempt, hate, or compassion. We will also analyze the complexity of this concept, and its many symbolic representations. The seminar considers such questions as: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions to label an action or character as “evil”? What happens when we qualify something or someone as “evil”? What causes this moral judgment, and what effects may it have? We ground our investigation in the wider context of moral philosophy and ethics, introducing such topics as cultural relativism (“what’s right here is not necessarily right there”) and subjectivism (“what’s right for me is not necessarily right for you”). The goal is to better understand, and improve our thinking about, questions of right and wrong.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 771 The Art of Doing Nothing: Idlers, Drifters, Slackers, and Fugitives in Literature and Film (4 Credits)

What would it take to stop working? To refuse work? Give it up? To do something else besides productive activity and labor, or nothing at all? And how might doing nothing introduce radically different senses of freedom than what we are used to? In this seminar, we will think about some of the ways that modern literature and film reflect on the art of doing nothing, turning the city or its outskirts into a locus for personal and collective struggle, resistance, and transformation. Our aim will be to examine strategies for breaking free from the dominance of work, as illustrated by figures like the slacker, idler, fugitive, drifter, ambler, and so-called flâneur/flâneuse, primarily but not exclusively within the urban topographies of Paris, New York, and London from the nineteenth century onwards. We will pay special attention to the critical potentialities of unmanaged and wayward lives at the intersection of race, class, and gender. We will read stories by Beckett, Breton, Calvino, Chamoiseau, Cole, Melville, Rhys, Rousseau, and Woolf; poetry by Baudelaire, Boyer, Hughes, and Poe; and theoretical work by Benjamin, Federici, Hartman, and Wilde. We also view films by Varda and Chalfant.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 772 The Journey of Journalism and History: How We Got Here (4 Credits)

This course is more than a survey of important journalism of the twentieth century. Through intensive reading and discussion, we will explore both how significant historical events affected journalism and how journalism helped shape those events. If journalism is truly “the first draft of history,” then looking at significant cultural and political moments through the eyes of contemporaneous journalism yields new insight on who we are as a nation—for better or worse. We examine such historical events and movements as the robber barons of the Gilded Age and their antagonists the Muckrakers; the early Anarchist and labor movements; the coverage of the World Wars and government censorship; the role of the press in the civil rights movement; and the golden age of investigative journalism. We will read and discuss the work of a wide range of media notables, including Ida Tarbell, Jacob Riis, H. L. Mencken, Walter Winchell, Edward R. Murrow, Sy Hirsch, Woodward and Bernstein, Tom Wolfe, Matt Taibbi, Amanda Bennett, Judith Miller, and Glenn Greenwald.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 773 How to Look at Chinese Painting (4 Credits)

New York City’s museums house extraordinarily rich collections of Chinese painting. Through site visits and in-class discussions, this seminar will teach students how to analyze and understand traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy. We will investigate formats, materials, and techniques, and will also examine classical ideas about representation and expression. Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to different kinds of artifacts as well as how they are conserved and displayed.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 774 Cuba: An American History (4 Credits)

This seminar explores the question of how Cuba, one Europe’s longest-lived colonies, became so intricately tied to the United States. It asks: how did a place that on several occasions almost became a U.S. state and that for a long time served as a favorite haunt of American mobsters and missionaries, honeymooners, and businessmen reinvent itself as a beacon of third-world socialism, brought the world to the brink of nuclear destruction, outlived the Soviet Union, and now once again beckons American travelers and investors. Starting (briefly) with the arrival of Columbus and the indigenous communities he encountered, and ending with the Cuba policies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump, this course will explore in depth the intimate, fraught relationship between the two countries.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 775 Ethics and Activism (4 Credits)

What is empathy? Does it aid or complicate activism? Does it influence scholarly activities such as ethnography? Working among communities, whether as scholars, journalists, human rights workers, or health care practitioners requires grappling with positions or persons one may find sympathetic—or not. Either perspective is multidimensional and complicated because such work requires spending extended time with interlocutors. Fieldworkers must generate rapport, empathy, and intimacy with their subjects—but without losing objectivity. The ethics of such encounters hinge both on doing no harm and on doing good—through advocacy, opposition, or expressions that are not so straightforward. Doing no harm is a clear-cut ethical imperative. But do empathy, intimacy, and approval fall within the same categorical imperative? What happens when boundaries break down between researcher and subject, sympathy and ambivalence, rapport and incompatibility? This seminar explores exemplary cases from across the globe, paying particular attention to the production of knowledge—both as text and as “activism” that engages the ambiguities and conventions that structure our societies and lived experience.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 776 The Work of Translation: What Does Translation Do? (4 Credits)

The founding mission of NYU as a global university is purposeful engagement in the world. In this multilingual world, our goal can only be achieved with the help of translators and interpreters. Reflecting on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' prediction that translation jobs will increase by 29% between 2014 and 2024, this seminar considers translation as a scholarly, professional, and lay activity. As we consider the wealth of languages and cultures in the NYU students' community and the way in which the curriculum is indebted to the work of translation, students will critically discuss what is gained or lost—or perhaps, simply transformed in translation. We ask: Why are source texts often privileged over translations? What is a good or faithful translation and why are translations mistrusted? How does a written translation differ from spoken interpreting? What does the study of translation teach us about power relations and border crossings, or the role of gender, race, or class in translational transactions? What are the ethics of translating and interpreting? What do translators say about their art and practice?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 777 Beyond Athletics: Sports, Politics and Belonging in Europe and the U.S. (4 Credits)

This course examines sports as politics, exploring sports as a site for debating national identity, rights, and citizenship across Europe and the U.S. From Greek NBA star Giannis Antetokounmpo to the “multicultural” French and German World Cup soccer teams, athletes find themselves as political symbols at the center of public debates on immigration and multiculturalism, racial justice and gender equity. Sports can be a site for negotiating changing gender norms: for example, the use of sex testing to determine who can compete in gender-segregated competitions shows how ideas about culture and biology intersect with the legal regulation of identity. Sports shape international relations, from Cold War diplomacy to boycotts, in ways that reflect national ideas about gender and race. And in the U.S., athletes have used celebrity status to protest histories of racial injustice. We will examine these cases to explore: How is belonging determined, based on what criteria? How are cultural norms, political systems and ideas about the nation reproduced or challenged through sports? What is the potential, and what are the limits, of sports as a site for rights activism?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 778 Youth and Youth Movements in the Modern Middle East (4 Credits)

During the past year (2019-2020), young people have led major uprisings in Iraq and Lebanon, demanding an end to sectarianism, corruption, and economic inequality. These events are reminiscent of the 2011 “Arab spring” uprisings that overthrew dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere, and that many referred to as a “youth revolution.” Meanwhile, in between the 2011 and 2019 events, the Islamic State became famous for recruiting young people across the Arab world and beyond for its campaign to restore a so-called Islamic caliphate. Does it make sense to associate these revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements with young people? Do young people in the Middle East (or elsewhere) have political sensibilities different from those of older people? Does the focus on youth distract from issues such as those of class or gender? What is the relationship between political mobilization and other expressions of youth counter-culture, such as drag racing or hip hop? In what ways are the current uprisings similar to or different from earlier upheavals in the region, such as the student uprisings that challenged European colonialism from the 1920s to the 1940s, the widespread youth rebellions of the 1950s and 1960s, or the disproportionate participation of young people in the Palestinian Intifadas since the 1980s? Are there “political generations” in the Middle East, and if so what have been the characteristics of different political generations across the past 100 years? Using “youth” and “generation” as lenses onto the history of the modern Middle East, this course will explore these and other questions related to political mobilization and revolution; religion and secularism; gender and sexuality; colonialism and nationalism; sectarianism and democracy; and experiences of war, dislocation, and migration.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 779 Socrates and His Critics (4 Credits)

That Socrates remains one of the most—if not the most—influential figures in the Western tradition is due in large part to the emergence in the years following his death of a new literary genre, the Socratic discourse, and the output especially of the two most prominent Socratic authors, Plato and Xenophon. Extending in the next generation through the distinctive rhetoric of Diogenes of Sinope, and through him into the figures of the Cynic philosopher and the Stoic sage, Socrates provides the literary precursor of a character tried and executed for idiosyncratic political and religious views four centuries before the presumed time of Jesus. Already in his own lifetime, Socrates' literary influence is apparent in Aristophanes and other writers of comedies. In modernity, the image of Socrates both fascinates and repels the attention, notably of Nietzsche. Apart from the rough outlines of his biography, it is all but impossible to recover any sense of the “historical Socrates”; at the same time we must ask whether Socrates' influence is not the result of his intellectual contributions, but rather an artifact of the doxography itself. Even though he did actually live, isn't what we have of him really just literary fiction?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 780 The Sea in History (4 Credits)

Over 70 percent of the Earth's surface is water, most of it residing in the planet's great seas and oceans. But how have those vast watery spaces, together with the world's lakes and rivers, shaped the millennia? Have these bodies of water been connective tissues bringing peoples together or barriers pushing them apart? They have, of course, been both, providing highways for commerce and migration, life-sustaining fisheries, battlefields that determined the fate of civilizations, and powerful stimulants to the advancement of technology on a broad front. This seminar will explore the many—and often surprising—faces of the sea in history. It will, likewise, ask students to contemplate their own responsibility in preserving the rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans that have shaped the destiny of mankind.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 781 Happiness in Film (4 Credits)

This seminar investigates the representations of happiness in film, drawing on a variety of sources and disciplines including cinema studies, history, philosophy, positive psychology, ethology, and cultural studies. We will discuss the notion of “happiness” through the lens of different historical and cultural contexts, and consider how film techniques are used in those contexts to convey positive emotions. Topics include: the transformation and rebirth of heroes in myths and fairy tales in film; the building of the self away from social determinisms; “happy-endings” in classical Hollywood cinema, including comedies and musicals; the politics of happiness, race, class, and gender in world cinema; happiness and the practice of frugality; the building of common ground across communities, nations, and species.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 782 At World's End: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Societal Collapse (4 Credits)

Why do societies collapse, and when they do, what happens next? What does it mean to say a society has collapsed? And what might the failures of past societies tell us about our future? Using case studies on collapse from the past (Western and Eastern Roman Empires; the Maya; Angkor; Cahokia), the present (the post-Soviet world; Detroit; Syria), and the future (the zombie apocalypse), students will learn what societal collapse is and how it functions. We will examine the potential causes of collapse as well as its social and material effects, and we will explore the usefulness of collapse as an analytic framework and examine potential alternatives. This course emphasizes the importance of the current moment in shaping interpretations of the past and will include discussions of contemporary topics relating to collapse, including environmental change, urban ruins, and the Anthropocene. This course will enable students to bring knowledge about societal collapse to current conversations in scholarly fields, as well as to discussions of collapse in popular culture.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 783 DNA: From the Double Helix to Nanotechnology (4 Credits)

DNA from the basics to some of today's sophisticated applications. We begin with the experiments that first identified DNA as the molecule of heredity and read *The Double Helix* by James Watson, which gives a lively (and biased) first-person account of the discovery of this crucial building block of life. The seminar then moves on to technical issues and considerations: how does DNA store genetic information, and how does a cell process this information using the genetic code? At the end of the seminar, we build on these foundations and learn about DNA nanotechnology and its many potential applications in science and healthcare.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 784 Italian Renaissance: A New Reading (4 Credits)

The Renaissance remains one of the great iconic moments of Western history: a time of remarkable innovation within artistic and intellectual culture, and a period still widely regarded as the crucible of modernity. Italy was the original heartland of the Renaissance and home to some of its most powerful and enduring figures, such as Leonardo and Michelangelo in art, Petrarch and Ariosto in literature, and Machiavelli in political thought. This seminar provides an overview of Italian culture from the 14th to the 16th century, examining not only literary, artistic, and intellectual history, but also material culture, cartography, science, technology, and the history of food and fashion. It reflects recent trends in scholarship in investigating the extent to which Renaissance ideas and cultural trends became diffused beyond the social elites to a wider public, and the extent to which women participated in literary and artistic culture alongside men. The course is based on the instructor's most recent book, *A Short History of the Italian Renaissance*.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 785 Becoming Ecospheric: Embracing Life on a Damaged Planet (4 Credits)

This seminar explores current theories and practices for understanding—and learning to live responsibly and creatively on—our deeply damaged planet. The theoretical readings will be drawn from the fields of critical climate studies, environmental humanities, new materialism, and multi-species ethnography, and will include such thinkers as Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, Bruno Latour, and Jane Bennet. Their ideas will be explored with the help of a range of imaginative works in many genres: film, theatre, graphic novels, visual art, and performance. A central interest of the course will be in trying out new ways of creating knowledge beyond reading and writing. To that end, we will experiment with a variety of activities and practices, including creative work, to engage with the question: what do we need to know and to do—as individuals and groups—in order for the planet's geophysical systems, landscapes, and species (including our own) to thrive?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 786 Quixotic Fanfiction: Cervantes, Don Quixote, and Their Afterlives (4 Credits)

Don Quixote is often considered the first modern novel. However, few critics have paid attention to the fan phenomenon that Don Quixote generated after its first publication in 1605: the adventures of Quixote and Sancho were quickly forged, adapted, imitated, modified, and appropriated by authors from all over Europe. The quixotic fever has continued up to the present, and even Disney has announced its own adaptation of Don Quixote. The purpose of this seminar is twofold: on the one hand, we will read the original novel in its historical context; on the other, we will examine quixotic fanfictions, reboots, and crossovers by writers, graphic novel artists, filmmakers, musicians, playwrights, and painters such as Gustave Doré, Salvador Dalí, Kathy Acker, Salman Rushdie, Jorge Luis Borges, and Terry Gilliam, among others. As part of this course, we will make a class trip to the Hispanic Society of America, where the first edition of *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* and most of its first translations are preserved.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 787 Born, Not Made? (Mis)understanding Genius (4 Credits)

The concept of “genius” celebrates originality and the advancement of ideas across the arts and sciences (there’s even a grant for it), but it has also been associated with inaccessible material, personal suffering, and perceptions of an unstable mind. This seminar explores genius as a cultural category used to understand knowledge production and artistic achievement from the romantic period to the present. Engaging with a wide range of texts from a variety of genres—philosophical treatises, artists’ notebooks, essays by and about scientists, plays, poems, musical recordings, and more—we’ll trace the ways genius transforms from a category mediating between earthly and spiritual realms into one that celebrates intellectual and creative labor while simultaneously rendering it rare and precarious. Some questions we’ll take up together include: How did “genius” become associated with individual creators in the first place? What is the relationship of genius to intelligence, talent, labor, and perseverance? Does genius have a gender? What stories do we tell about genius, and why is the narrative of the tragic genius, in particular, so persistent? And what is our role as consumers of the work of so-called geniuses?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 788 Technology vs. Democracy: Can the American Experiment Survive American Innovation? (4 Credits)

From the Founders to the Facebook generation, Americans have regarded technological progress as an existential threat to American democracy. In this seminar, you will explore a range of texts—written by scientists, novelists, and religious and civic leaders—questioning whether the American experiment can survive American innovation, and whether its institutions can, or even should, evolve with its technologies. As citizens and apprentice scholars, students will devise their own possible answers to these questions (and related questions they generate themselves) and share their ideas using a range of modes and genres: class discussions, blog posts, research proposals, and formal research projects.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 789 Power Hungry: Food as a Tool for Social and Political Change (4 Credits)

In this seminar we examine the role of food in social and political change, with an eye toward how historic events can provide a model for understanding how change can be made today. We begin with an historic overview of riots, initiatives, marches, and boycotts, considering how food was crucial to movements for social and political change in the United States and around the world. Then we move to present-day New York City and beyond, considering activism in the field of food justice as well as activism that uses food as a tool for broader justice initiatives. If scheduling permits we will visit some locations where this work is taking place across New York City and invite guest speakers to tell us about their efforts.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 790 “We are Not in a Post-Fact World”: Wikipedia and the Construction of Knowledge (4 Credits)

Where do you get your information? Do you trust it? How do you assess the credibility and reliability of what you read, see, and hear? We interrogate these questions through the hands-on work of writing, editing, and commenting on articles in Wikipedia. We join arguably the largest collaborative writing project in history, comprising 309 language editions and with more than 38 million registered users in the English language version alone. This work (and play) allows us to investigate key issues in research methods: identifying gaps in existing knowledge, locating and accessing public records and archival materials, and assessing and attributing sources. Perhaps most important of all, we will write to an authentic audience of readers who, as they say in Wikipedia, will “speak back” to what you write and edit. We also address some perennial themes of rhetoric and composition: genre, audience, style, structure and organization, and more. Alongside this work, we examine the larger question of how knowledge is constructed. Who has access to information? How is access to information controlled or “disciplined”? What perspectives are overrepresented or underrepresented in the texts (written, visual, audible) we encounter and engage with? How does a particular knowledge source shape or influence public knowledge or culture?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 791 NeuroStories: Narratives of the Brain, Mind, and Heart (4 Credits)

What if you lost the ability to read, but could still write? What if your family members suddenly seemed like sinister replicas of their real selves? What if you were fully conscious, but could move and communicate only by blinking one eye? Can a person who can’t experience empathy lead an honorable life? Our brains are infinitely complex, which means they can be infinitely altered or divergent from what we think of as “typical.” In this seminar, we examine neurological conditions and differences as they appear in stories, from case studies and popular nonfiction to theatre, film, and television. We ask what the existence of these conditions teaches us about the link between our neural architecture and what we might otherwise call spirit, essence, heart, mind, or soul, and what people with neurological differences might understand in a way neurotypical people can’t. We also examine how people with neurodivergent profiles are represented in popular media, in part through the lens of the rapidly growing neurodiversity movement. Throughout the semester, we will reflect on the incomprehensible power of this spongy tissue in our skulls, and how everything we learn about it opens up new mysteries.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 792 Streaks and Coincidences (4 Credits)

This seminar will explore the connections between and among events that cannot be explained by probability and causality—hot and cold streaks, coincidences, recurring or repetitive series, and other related phenomena—with the goal of transforming and expanding students' consciousness and sense of wonder at an interconnected universe that exists beyond the strictures of rationalism. Students will record and investigate their own experiences of such connections, vigorously engage with seminal texts in this speculative and under-researched field, and conduct their own individual and group explorations into these phenomena.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 793 New Documentary Cinema in Brazil (4 Credits)

How does documentary film represent reality? Not, certainly, as a transparent window, but as a complex form that may include elements of staging and fiction. In Brazil (as elsewhere), the last thirty years have seen a surge in documentary filmmaking and critical thinking about this kind of film, which have reached a larger and more enthusiastic audience than ever before. This course examines a selection of these Brazilian films from the 1990s to the present (with brief retrospectives to earlier films). Throughout the course, we will address the tension that documentary films invite and foster: the films as aesthetic constructs and as presentations of historical experiences and social issues. We will explore topics such as: the uses of fact and fiction and the multiple ways in which documentary film goes beyond offering realistic versions of preexistent realities; ethical concerns about the respectful use of other people's images and words; the scope of its political impact; the construction of layered and multi-faceted images of Brazil. Readings concern these and other aspects of documentary films.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 794 Science and the Theater (4 Credits)

Arthur Miller, who wrote *The Glass Menagerie*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible* and other renowned plays, asserted the following: "Everything influences playwrights. A playwright who isn't influenced is never of any use." Science is definitely among that 'everything.' Astronomy, medicine, mathematics and biology have influenced the plots and themes of playwrights like Bertolt Brecht, Margaret Edson, Tom Stoppard and Anna Ziegler. But how can complex scientific issues be addressed in a theatrical format without compromising the subject or the dramatic form? When a dramatic plot revolves around a scientific issue, how are the science and the scientists portrayed? What are the consequences of literary license when a playwright elects to take liberties with scientific matters to augment dramatic effect? When do such liberties negate the veracity of the work? This course examines these issues. Relevant plays are read with an eye toward addressing science's influence on theater and the theater's influence on the perception of science as we seek to understand the complementary relationship between the two domains.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 795 Sound: History, Culture, Politics (4 Credits)

An interdisciplinary exploration of the history, culture, and politics of our audible—and sub-audible—worlds, from musicology and history to anthropology, film and media studies, and beyond. We begin with a historical survey, grappling with problems of technological, political, and even epistemological change, and critically examine prevailing notions about the increasing "noisiness" of our modern world. We then shift to case studies that illuminate how attitudes about voice and audibility—particularly the problematic distinction between "sound" and "noise"—figure into constructions of religion, race, ethnicity, and other cultural categories and identities. By thinking critically about the sound/noise distinction we begin to wonder about "sound" as a category at all, and arrive at the possibilities of pure "vibration," a turn that raises potentials for both political liberation (as in its inclusivity toward deaf populations) and authoritarian domination through sonic booms, the Long Range Acoustic Device, and other forms of "acoustic violence."

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 796 Clothes and the City: Urban Fashion in Literature and the Visual Arts (4 Credits)

Whether we "dress for success" or wear our pajamas to the grocery store, the clothes we put on our body all have a meaning. Though clothes are an essential part of our everyday life, do we ever stop and think about what they signify, and how they are perceived by people who look at them? We explore the representation of urban fashion in cities across the globe—Paris, London, New York, Hong Kong, Constantinople, Kinshasa, and Brazzaville—from the nineteenth century to the present, in a range of texts, films, paintings, and graphic novels that enable us to grasp the importance of clothing to issues of gender, social class, sexuality, and (post-) colonialism. Students engage in observing the clothes of New York City, take on a set of clothes-hunting journeys, and look carefully at the ways people dress in various neighborhoods.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 797 Erotic Empires (4 Credits)

We interrogate canonical texts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European literature and travel writing by formulating questions about the erotic dimension of Orientalism. How is sexuality configured in colonial writing? What does this configuration tell us about the ideological map superimposed over the colony and the metropole? How is the historical practice of literary criticism informed by this sexual hierarchy, as in the psychoanalytic tradition of literary interpretation? Why do popular media feature the white colonizer striking up a romance with the brown colonized before "switching sides," as in *Pocahontas* or *Avatar*? Students are introduced to literary criticism by closely reading a diverse collection of theoretical and primary texts that offer a global perspective on the history of European colonization. In so doing, they not only learn how to recognize Orientalist stereotypes but fashion a critical toolkit to unpack the effects of these colonial racisms on some of the most important discursive formations of the twentieth century.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 798 Slavery in Ancient Greece and Rome (4 Credits)

Varieties of unfree labor have existed from ancient Mesopotamia to the present. Across the Western hemisphere, slavery's legacy has been crucial in the formation of national histories, particularly in the United States, the Caribbean, and Brazil. Nevertheless, the persistence of slavery through history—even to the present day—remains poorly understood. Why do societies accept the practice of enslavement and the use of unfree labor? What roles do different societies reserve for free or unfree labor? And why do some societies ostensibly reject slavery while others continue to embrace it? Beginning with the rise and expansion of slavery in the Mediterranean world, we focus on early Greece and Rome, with attention to ecological, political, and economic history, and why slavery has continuously flourished in the region from antiquity to the present day. We attempt to look at Greek and Roman history through the eyes of slaves themselves, and the extent to which they were able to maintain their personhood despite enslavement. Finally, we examine the legacy of Greek and Roman slavery in the eyes of Thomas Jefferson, Kara Walker, and others, allowing students to situate the growth of the "peculiar institution" in Greece and Rome in the broader context of Western history.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 799 Mapping the Literary Mind of New York City (4 Credits)

New York City has inspired many great writers, past and present. In this course, we'll explore some of their works, as well as the actual locations they map, to find our own inspiration as readers, writers, and inhabitants of the city. We'll think about the layers of history and imagination that overlay the streets, parks, and neighborhoods around NYU and across Manhattan. How has the city's contours and currents, diversity and density, shaped the way authors have experienced and imagined life? Engaged discussion, frequent writing, and field excursions will focus our critical appraisal of the city and its texts. The culminating project of the semester will ask you to plot your most meaningful engagements on a digital map, as part of a collaborative class essay. We'll be reading a selection of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, from the 19th century to the present day.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 800 I, the Author (4 Credits)

This course will focus on identity and the autobiographical experience as narrated by a selection of contemporary American and European authors, with a particular attention to Italian examples. Through the analysis of their work, it will focus on how authorship and the identity/presence of the author have evolved in contemporary times, and how this evolution reverberates beyond national borders. We will investigate what moves these authors, what aspects of their experience they choose to narrate and how they relate to their own subjectivity and the world. We will explore thematic differences and convergences, social and historical influences, the relationship between the self and society, the evolution of narrative languages and purposes. The selection of readings is representative of the emergence of a new literary genre that blends memoir, autofiction and fiction, and describes the changing intellectual, cultural and social landscape of a literature that can no longer be contained within its national boundaries, but is inspired by a quest for a new identity or new identities, ignited by and reflected in today's globalized world.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 801 History of Italian Opera (4 Credits)

The course covers the evolution of opera from Monteverdi to the early 20th century. The genres analyzed in this course are *favola in musica*, *intermezzo*, *opera seria*, *opera buffa*, *grand opera*, *dramma lirico*. Operatic production styles are considered with regard to the recordings used in the course; class discussion is meant to help students develop a critical approach to opera appreciation. No specific musical training is required.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 802 Metaphysics of Race, Gender, and Sex (4 Credits)

What is it to be a female or male animal? Or to be a female or male human being? What is it to be a woman? To be a man? Or to have some other gender? And how are all these questions connected? This course will explore answers to these and other questions about sex and gender from a philosophical perspective, drawing along the way on relevant research in biology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. We begin by considering how the sexes evolved across the living world, i.e., in both animals and plants. With this history in hand, we ask, given persisting disagreement about their nature, how the categories 'male' and 'female' should be understood and evaluated, both in humans and other living things. Next we explore the gender categories such as woman, man, boy and girl. How are American gender categories similar to or different from those found in other cultures? And how are gender categories generally related to, or distinct from, the sex categories previously investigated? Having considered a variety of philosophical approaches to gender—some tying gender directly to sex, others to social characteristics like oppression—we conclude by evaluating these options for ourselves.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 803 Ways of Thinking and Knowing (4 Credits)

This seminar introduces students to fundamental epistemological questions and concepts, both historical and new: what do we know and how do we know it? The academy has long divided knowledge and its pursuit into the Arts and the Sciences. Likewise, popular notions of the human brain suggest that those fissures run through individual minds: the analytical, science-minded "left brained" and the artistic, philosophical-minded "right brained." It is thought that the so-called left brains—analytical, logical, objective—become engineers, biologists, and bankers while right brains—intuitive, thoughtful, subjective—are the painters, philosophers, and social workers of the world. In practice, both in the science lab or in the artist's studio, these distinctions are more porous than we popularly believe. This seminar explores the interplay between reasoning, knowledge, belief, discovery, and creativity, the various acts of mind common to all fields in the academy and, essentially, all human endeavors. As we wrestle with conundrums which resist easy solution, whether presented to us in the "real world," the sciences, the arts, or philosophy, we will simultaneously be thinking about thinking. What "habits of mind" promote problem solving? Which of these habits limit innovation and novel insight? We'll traverse many fields—logic, physics, neurology, psychology, artificial intelligence, literature, film, visual and performance art—as we hunt for approaches to understanding that we then put into practice. We will work towards the goal of "understanding our understanding," as the artist and essayist Matthew Goulish phrases it, in order to exploit the twinned powers of rationality and creativity. Trips to MoMath (Museum of Mathematics), MoMA, and other outings are planned. Readings to include Martin Heidegger, David Hume, Thomas Kuhn, Lynda Barry, Oliver Sacks, Nassim Taleb, Daniel Dennett, and others.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 804 Climate Change and Cities (4 Credits)

After years of denial in the US, today conversations about the impact of climate change are a regular feature of mass media reporting. From fires in the west, to flooding in the south and east, everyone seems ready to discuss climate disasters, but we hear fewer discussions of how to understand—and help others understand—the many sides of this complex issue and, in particular, its effect on cities. That's the work we will do together in this course. We'll begin with a general introduction to climate change science gathered through accessible articles, films, a tour of the American Museum of Natural History's climate exhibit, local events and activities, and discussions with guest speakers. We'll consider US and global political and societal responses to current climate science to better understand the debates in the media and popular culture. Our approach will be both analytical and personal: Your first project for the class will focus on the impact of climate change on a location of your choice, one that matters to your life and to the lives of those who matter to you. Then, we will turn our attention to the impact of climate change on cities and city dwellers, starting with representations of these impacts in fiction, film, art, and in the media. We will also look at efforts being made by cities—New York City in particular—to mitigate the impacts of climate change. We will tour Brooklyn's 110-million-dollar recycling facility, learn more about street trees, subway protection, and assess the city's BIG U proposal to protect lower Manhattan against rising sea levels. For your final project for the course, you will examine the impact of climate change on a city of your choice, focusing on how politicians, environmental groups, and community members are responding. Throughout the course, our work will be grounded in our own responses to climate change and our evolving knowledge of what is to come. We will explore the ways that our expectations for comfort and choice are challenged by scientists' prognoses, as we consider issues of responsibility, ethics, and justice. Major assignments include a personal essay, a multisource essay, and a multimodal project.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 805 College Students Studying College (4 Credits)

This seminar will examine student experiences in and outcomes of college; because college is such a multi-faceted area of study, and because the field of Higher Education is an interdisciplinary field, our work will draw not only on education research but also on such disparate traditions as psychology, writing studies, statistics, and documentary filmmaking. Reading and employing both quantitative methods (including survey design and statistical analysis) and qualitative methods (including focus groups, interviews, and document analysis), we will aim to describe true college experiences, while staying deeply attuned to the reality that collegians may have different experiences depending on what identities they hold.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 806 State of a Country: Writing about Photography Made in the U.S. (4 Credits)

This course offers students an opportunity to look, think, read and write critically and creatively about photography made throughout the US in the last few decades. In the photographs, photo essays and photobooks we'll explore, the photographers expose the state of a country, making visible what they've chosen to see. While their subjects, conceptual inquiries, approaches and technical practices vary, each photographer responds uniquely to the people, places and ideas that have captured their attention and shaped their intentions. A deep examination of these works will set in motion a larger conversation about writing on photography. Throughout the semester we'll look and read closely, and practice different modes of writing, from short exercises to an extended research paper. A guest photographer and a writer whose work focuses on photography will join us in two class meetings, and students will see photography work on display at museums and/or galleries in New York City. Students will come away from the course with a new appreciation for the practice of making photographs, photo essays and photobooks and for the craft of writing meaningful texts that respond to them.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 808 Ancient Constructions of the World and its People (4 Credits)

How did ancient societies envision the wider known world? In this seminar, we will examine how ancient cultures throughout the Afro-Eurasian world, including ancient Egypt, the Greco-Roman Mediterranean, India, and Han China envisioned the world in which they lived and the diverse peoples that inhabited it. Through lecture and discussion, we will explore a variety of visual representations and textual sources—from ancient works of medicine and science to canonical texts of scripture—which all participated in ancient intellectual exercises of geography, ethnography, and cosmography. We will investigate not only how different ancient cultures understood the mechanics of the universe, but how they envisioned and represented "the Other," those who dwelled beyond the rim of the recognizable world. We will also consider how these intellectual constructions became fossilized, just who learned and benefited from them, and how they could be used to legitimize systems of oppression from antiquity to today.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 810 Mechanical Minds in History and Philosophy (4 Credits)

The idea that mental processes are mechanical is pervasive in contemporary thinking about what minds are and how they work, serving as a guiding principle behind artificial intelligence research. How did this notion arise and what assumptions underlie it? What past debates are embedded in present conceptions of the mechanical mind? This course tracks the emergence of analogies between minds and machines in early modern philosophy and science, and explores artificial intelligence's philosophical lineage. To this end, we will examine the work of Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, Blaise Pascal, G. W. Leibniz, Charles Babbage, Ada Lovelace, and Alan Turing, among others, together with historical investigations of the machines that inspired their thinking.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 811 The Self and What to Do About It (4 Credits)

This seminar examines a variety of views about “the self.” Each of us, it seems, is or has a self. Just what is this self—how can we identify it? And when we see what it is, what lessons should we draw—what should we do about it? We study an eclectic range of writings on these questions, mostly philosophical works, but also some fiction and poetry. Central attention will be paid to existentialist treatments of the self by Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre, for whom the topic is crucial. We compare their answers with those given by Emerson, Whitman, and William James—a second focus of the seminar. But we also broaden the discussion well beyond these thinkers, drawing into the conversation other writers from different ages and cultures, including the Indian and Chinese traditions. By the end of the course, students may or may not be able to say just what their self is, but they will have a better understanding of the complexity and interest of the question.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 812 Native American Women Writers: Storytelling and Survivance (4 Credits)

How do twentieth-century and contemporary Native American women writers pursue questions of historical memory in literature? What role do stories play in the transmission of history? How do they reflect the phenomenological and collective processes of memory? How do Native oral traditions challenge conventional definitions of authorship and text? We consider the ways these works draw on Native storytelling traditions with deep histories, enacting the form of cultural resistance that Gerald Vizenor calls “survivance,” and yielding novel experimentations with literary form. Many of the authors we read work to record or recreate history (Zitkala-Sa, Mourning Dove, and Diane Glancy), others offer new modes of historiography (Linda Hogan, Deborah Miranda), while others give old stories new meaning through contemporary literary forms (Joy Harjo, Leslie Marmon Silko). Many of these works depict spiritual or ancestral relationships to the land, and thus offer environmental critiques of American imperialism. They also explore stages and cycles of womanhood, including girlhood, coming-of-age, and motherhood. Memory, trauma, and poverty constitute another type of cycle these works engage. Together, these texts challenge hegemonic forms of history-making by drawing on indigenous epistemologies and feminist positionalities.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 813 Music and the Coronavirus (4 Credits)

Rolling Stone publishes an article titled “How Coronavirus is Wreaking Havoc on Music,” while the World Economic Forum asks, “Why Do We Turn to Music in Times of Crisis?” Science notes that “Scientists Have Turned the Structure of the Coronavirus into Music,” and the New Yorker offers a story on “Music to Endure the Coronavirus Quarantine.” This seminar investigates the way music has been used as inspiration, solace, resistance, drug, distraction, and source of energy from the beginning of the current crisis, as well as the mostly devastating way the coronavirus has impacted the music industry, from classical orchestras to street musicians. In addition to looking at music and the virus in the broader historical context of artistic responses to calamity, the course tracks the evolution of the coronavirus and its impact on music.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 814 Democracy and Science in the Year of the Pandemic (4 Credits)

This seminar explores the complex interactions between science, politics, and our quality of life. Many examinations of these interactions highlight the positive and skip the political by looking at examples where a new scientific insight seems to improve the quality of life, but without any intervention by policymakers or the voters they represent. The events we lived through during 2020 give us a unique opportunity to step back and ask the hard but essential question: How can a society take advantage of scientific expertise without ceding the control that voters have to exert, through the politicians they elect, over the course that the nation will follow?

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 815 American Epidemics (4 Credits)

From colonial ailments to global pandemics, disease has shaped the United States. This seminar places the coronavirus outbreak of 2019-2020 in historical perspective, examining the wide-ranging effects of contagious disease in American life, literature, and culture. Together we seek to understand epidemics as both biological forces and social events. Beginning with the metaphor of “invisible bullets” that the Algonquin peoples of the Chesapeake Bay used to describe colonial settler diseases, the course traces the history of the nation through epidemics, addressing the social and political impact of a different disease each week. We read historical accounts, critical texts, and literary works; listen to podcasts; watch films; view works of art; and explore online archives. Students learn to approach disease as an object of humanistic inquiry, and examine intersectional questions of race, gender, colonial power, economic privilege, and national belonging through medical history. We find strategies for critiquing and comprehending the inequities and anxieties of the present through moments of biological crisis in America.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 817 Reading the Plague (4 Credits)

Giovanni Boccaccio’s Decameron, a story about a group of young 14th-century Florentines who flee their plague-devastated city for the countryside, begins with a simple claim: “It is a matter of humanity to show compassion for those who suffer.” The plague tested the power of Boccaccio’s pen: “What I have to tell is incredible, and if I and many others had not seen these things with our own eyes, I would scarcely dare to believe them, let alone write them down.” In this seminar we read, discuss, and analyze historical and literary works about the plague and other contagious illnesses, real and fictional. In the account of Thucydides, the plague threw funeral customs into confusion as desperate Athenians sought to dispose of the dead in any way possible. In a haunting story by Dino Buzzati, an infectious disease that afflicts automobiles also debases social relations as friends turn on friends and neighbors on neighbors to report those suspected of harboring infected vehicles. By reading these and other seminal accounts of plague and disease through the centuries by survivors, historians, storytellers, and philosophers, we gain perspective on our own tragic and unsettling times, finding compassion in—that is, “suffering with”—the past.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 818 What is Real? (4 Credits)

Is there something you believe that helps you to act effectively, relieves stress, makes you a better person—but that you sometimes think may just be an illusion? Recent work in many disciplines indicates that the things we take for granted—what we see, hear, feel, etc.—are arguably illusions. Visual illusions are well-documented and frequently amusing but there are “cognitive illusions” as well: we frequently find consistent patterns in human decision making that are frankly erroneous. We are confident—and we are wrong. The claims that we have an accurate picture of the world and that we make decisions that lead us to the goals we intend are under attack. This seminar covers the main issues, theories, and experimental results in perceptual organization, decision making, and related work in cognitive neuroscience. Readings come from such fields as psychology, economics, biology, neuroscience, and even physics, but the course requires no specific background in any of these disciplines.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 819 Written and Sung Poetry in the Americas under Neoliberalism (1973-2020) (4 Credits)

This seminar—which spans from 1973 to the present, from the Southern Cone to New York to Mexico—aims to expand the contemporary notion of the lyric under neoliberal rule in the Americas by studying written poetry alongside song lyrics. Today, contrary to the common idea that poetry is an endangered species in the aesthetic realm, poetry is deeply rooted in people’s imagination and memories through songs. While it may be true that nobody reads poetry, it certainly seems like everyone listens to it. At the same time, written poetry, which had been steadily and vocally detaching from its musical origins, has recently started to make amends—to the point of reverting to traditional rhythmic techniques and borrowing some of their forms of circulation and socialization. As we learn about the history of neoliberalism—which we will frame not only as an economic ideology, but more specifically as a device for the production of subjectivity—we will study lyric forms (written, sung, and/or performed) that challenge the neoliberal status quo, focusing on both radical anachronisms and conceptual experimentation.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 820 Antisemitism: History and Contemporary Reality (4 Credits)

History is replete with examples of minority groups being subjected to persecution, stereotyped, and treated as undesirable others by the majority culture. While by no means the only group that has experienced discrimination and suffered violence, Jews have repeatedly been made into objects of hate and targets of brutality. We explore the development of antisemitism from antiquity through modernity, looking in depth at texts, ideas, and historical conditions that fostered unflattering and derogatory stereotypes and motifs about Jews. We try to understand how expressions of antisemitism have evolved or persisted. Through studying antisemitism, we aim for a greater appreciation and understanding of how derogatory rhetoric and stereotypes about any group can inflict lasting damage.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 821 Beyond Eurocentrism: Race Theory from the German Enlightenment to Postcoloniality (4 Credits)

Scientifically defining “race” is impossible, the African American scholar W. E. B. Du Bois once wrote, yet since the Enlightenment attempts to do so have continually been made. The philosopher Immanuel Kant first introduced the concept into scientific language in the late eighteenth century, and it quickly became a vibrant point of contention among European scholars. By the twentieth century, intellectuals of color from around the world took the lead in critically reconfiguring the hitherto Eurocentric conversation around race to reflect the realities of identity, culture, and politics in the colonial and postcolonial eras; meanwhile, older patterns of thought established by thinkers such as Kant, Herder, and Hegel still persist in the ways we think about the topic. To critically engage with such an ingrained idea requires exploring the complexities and ambiguities of its history, and in this seminar, we will read a rich range of texts from Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, and North America in order to sound out some of the contending iterations of this concept that so profoundly shapes our world and the way we live in it.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 822 Bioethics: Life and Death (4 Credits)

This course applies the ethical insights of philosophy to issues about life, death, bioethics, and medicine in an introductory way. Technological advances in health care made it possible to sustain biological life beyond the moment when the patient would have died without such intervention. As patients, their families, physicians and clergy were drawn into the end of life decision-making process, it became clear that more philosophical work needed to be done to provide guidance in these situations. The objective of this course is to expand students’ knowledge of issues related to death, dying and life in applied ethics. It examines various questions regarding the ethical, legal, and social implications of advances in biotechnology and biomedicine, and aims at providing a foundation in historical, philosophical, and socio-scientific approaches and frameworks to address bioethical challenges. Students will learn to read philosophy articles critically, as well as discovering how different philosophers have approached ethical issues and applied them to prominent debates in bioethics. The course will examine the major ethical theories on what is morally right and wrong, and the meaning of fundamental moral concepts. Focus, however, is upon ethical problems associated with the practice of medicine and biomedical research. Topics will include topics like abortion, issues about the rights of the unborn, euthanasia and Physician-assisted Suicide, Genetic Testing, Genetic Therapy and Discrimination, Infertility and In Vitro Fertilization, Surrogate Parenting, and Cloning.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 824 Epics, Sagas and Cycles of the Medieval North Sea (4 Credits)

Northern Europe produced a number of long-form literary pieces during the Middle Ages, such as the Old English *Beowulf*, the early Irish *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and its associated tales, the Middle Welsh *Mabinogion* and the Old Norse sagas. This course will explore these tales and others and question the definition of this genre (or genres) of literature, examining connections between the different types of tales and what we can know about their composition. Students will investigate the connections between these tales and earlier examples of epic literature, such as Virgil's *The Aeneid*, and examine what we know regarding the transmission of earlier forms of heroic tales from Late Antiquity and the ancient world to medieval Western Europe. Major themes such as violence, heroism and the role of women in these stories will be discussed throughout the course and students will be expected to engage with both questions presented by the individual examples of these forms of literature as well as to compare across cultural and literary boundaries. The reception of these tales in both the medieval and modern worlds will be discussed in the conclusion to the course. This class will give students a grounding in critical thinking and an appreciation of different approaches to literary texts and the environments in which they were created. By engaging with some of the foremost medieval literary productions of the European Middle Ages, this course will chart a journey through some of the greatest written achievements of the cultures of the Celts, Vikings and early English and question students' understanding of literature as well as the cultural construction and portrayal of the heroic past.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 825 Incarceration Nation (4 Credits)

In the world today there are ten countries that have the highest numbers of imprisoned populations. The US is first on that list, with almost 2.3 million people incarcerated. One in thirty-one people in the US is under some form of correctional supervision—from prisons, jails, and immigration detention centers to forensic hospitals and juvenile detention treatment facilities. By the early 2000's, over 2,500 children in the US had been sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. Almost half of Americans have family members who have been incarcerated. The magnitude of these and other similarly staggering statistics reveals what many today see as an American crisis.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 826 Democracy in the Digital Age (4 Credits)

How will the use of digital technology by citizens, politicians, and governments affect core aspects of democracy and democratic representation? Will new technologies empower social movements, enabling them to demand human rights protections and even topple repressive regimes? Or will digital technologies bring newfound power to the state, facilitating mass surveillance and control? This seminar focuses on how the Internet and digital technologies shape political processes in democratic and non-democratic countries. The course will investigate how digital technologies affect political participation, electoral accountability, and political equality in established democracies. We will also explore how digital technologies impact the prospect of democratization and the future of human rights in non-democratic societies.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 827 Busting 14 Myths about the Archaeology of Human Evolution (4 Credits)

In several archaeological arenas, legitimate controversies among scientists about what is known and knowable grade into speculations about the past that go beyond any possibility of documentation. Sometimes these frontiers between the legitimate and the mythical are the most dynamic and interesting of all. This seminar takes a critical look at some of the most intriguing—yet widely misunderstood—topics in the archaeology of human evolution that make popular subjects for television shows, magazine articles, books, and the web—interpretations typically described as "pseudoscience." Specifically, we consider how and why archaeologists use scientific methods to evaluate evidence put forth to explain historical events and cultural achievements around the world. To this end, we bust a series of 14 "myths" that often attract pseudoscientific claims such as: The Nazca Lines in southern Peru were made by aliens; the first Americans came from Europe; the people of Atlantis were the source of civilizations around the world; and Ancient astronauts help the Egyptians and Mayans build their pyramids. Students leave this seminar armed with the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate these and other claims—that is, the archaeological myth buster's toolkit. They will learn about world cultures of the past and participate in interactive exercises aimed at enhancing understanding of some of their greatest accomplishments. In dissecting academic debates alongside mythical claims, students will gain appreciation for the scientific process, and the difference between intriguing mysteries of the past and falsehoods and myths spread to advance agendas.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 828 A Short Introduction to Psychoanalysis (4 Credits)

Psychoanalysis is hard to classify: as a body of knowledge it does not fit smoothly into the criteria of science, social science, philosophy, literature, or art. Freud, who was trained as a doctor, first used the term in 1896, to mean the scientific study of the mind and soul rather than of the brain. Freud was one of the great experimental thinkers: during a career that spanned 60 years he constantly evolved his thought and challenged his own conclusions. But he never departed from the proposition that thoughts can exist in our minds, and guide our actions, of which we are unconscious. As you can see by the quote from Plato, he was by no means the first to entertain this thought, or to speculate on the self-destructive tendencies that haunt us. But he was the architect of a field, psychoanalysis, that now works to understand the procedures by which we distort or shut out intolerable thoughts, only to have them return to trouble us in new guises. He showed how much communication passes below our conscious radar, or entirely outside language, and suggested ways of intercepting and hearing it. In showing that we are always psychically divided, fractured within, and to some extent strangers to ourselves, he also demonstrated how interdependent people are: "In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent."

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 829 Erotics of Representation: Embodied Memory, Censorship, and the "Obscene"* (4 Credits)

This seminar analyzes the erotics of representation through overlapping historical, cultural, and technological constructions of those bodies and desires that have come to be labeled (and both desired and loathed) as "erotic" or "obscene" in diverse temporal and geopolitical contexts. We will explore the many motives and impulses behind particular acts of censorship, thinking about how and why some textual, visual, and filmic "pornographic" representations are restricted, occluded, and even destroyed. Throughout the course, we will engage key theorists from the fields of critical race theory, queer studies, trans studies, gender & sexuality studies, archival theory, history, and cultural studies (among others) to explore—from the 1500s to the present—how the production of the erotic and the obscene are inherently linked to complex processes of colonization and racialization, while also locating sites and acts of resistance to such narratives. Pending availability, we engage with archivists, librarians, artists, and activists through institutions such as the NYU Fales Library & Special Collections; the New York Public Library; the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; the Center for Puerto Rican Studies; the Lesbian Herstory Archives; and the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, among others.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

FYSEM-UA 830 Hysteria: Stories About Women, Medicine, and the Law (4 Credits)

Originating from the Greek word for uterus (hystera), hysteria as a specific emotional-physiological disorder was for centuries credited to a woman's "wandering womb." Between 1700 and 1900, while the British Empire expanded across the globe, the disease was attached specifically to the bodies, minds, and experiences of elite white women. This diagnosis defined them as both fragile and precious—in need of medical care and legal protections that removed them from positions of authority. At the same time, it helped to code women of color—especially black women—as both strong and expendable (a coding whose implications continue to shape disparities today). In this seminar, we'll investigate how hysteria was defined by medicine, psychology, and psychoanalysis starting in the eighteenth century as well as the legal implications of those definitions. We'll juxtapose those medical and legal documents with fictional narratives that turn on questions of hysteria and female insanity, likely including Henry James' "The Turn of the Screw," Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*, Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No