

USIE Seminars — Spring 2006

Art History 88S. Outsider Art

Student Facilitator: Whiney Mercer – Faculty Mentor: Steven Nelson

Outsider art is name given to a genre that incorporates a large spectrum of picture/object/environment makers that are largely untrained. This seminar is a discussion of the history of outsider art, paying close attention to issues of gender, class, and ethnicity to examine how these issues function in relation to the art world.

English 88SA. American Short Story Today

Student Facilitator: Aaron Fai – Faculty Mentor: Stephen Dickey

What is the state of the form today and what value does contemporary fiction hold for readers, if any? Discussion of a myriad of fiction writers working today who may be passing under the reading radar of the general public to make some sense of what is happening in short fiction in the 21st century.

English 88SB. Comic Books as Literature

Student Facilitator: Holly Schwarz – Faculty Mentor: Katherine Hayles

Comics are more than just pictures with words; they employ the same literary and artistic techniques as novels and great works of art to create captivating and enriching stories. Seminar examines a limited number of comics, breaking down stereotypes of comic books to see them as an art form worthy of critical analysis.

English 88SC. Resurrecting Philosophers and Victorians from the Dead with “The Matrix”

Student Facilitator: Cindy Tran – Faculty Mentor: Mark McGurl

Making canonical works easier to understand with the context of contemporary culture. Use of "The Matrix" movie (and other media) to gain a unique introduction to antiquated texts, namely those written by philosophers and Victorians. Asking and analyzing what it takes to provide a framework for all of our knowledge and beliefs.

Environment 88S. Peak Oil: Understanding the Problem, Creating Solutions

Student Facilitator: Christopher Crump – Faculty Mentor: Stephanie Pincetl

Peak oil is point in time when extraction of oil from the Earth reaches its highest point and then begins to decline. Most experts believe the event will happen within next few years and is to be unprecedented, because society and our very way of life are dependent on this constantly increasing source of abundant and inexpensive energy. Focus on understanding the issue fully, and using this new information to address potential solutions.

History 88SA. Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah from Moses De Leon to Madonna

Student Facilitator: Max Spielberg – Faculty Mentor: David Meyers

Discussion of various topics within Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah, with focus on Kabbalistic and Hasidic mysticism. Certain key concepts and themes to be addressed, such as: What is nature of G-d in Kabbalah? Does the Divine live within each person? What is Shevirah (breaking of vessels) and Sefirot (divine emanations through which world was and is perpetually re-created)?

History 88SB. U.S.-Iran Relations: Politics, Rhetoric, and History of Conflict

Student Facilitator: Combiz Abdolrahimi – Faculty Mentor: Michael Morony

Will the U.S. and Iran ever be able to establish formal relations with one another? Examination of origins of conflict between the U.S. and Iran from time of the Pahlavi Monarchy under Reza Shah during World War II to present-day nuclear ambitions of the conservative Ahmadinejad administration.

History 88SC. 1980's Pop Culture

Student Facilitator: Melvin Jimenez – Faculty Mentor: Téofilo Ruiz

An examination of musical and cultural expression thorough analysis of popular trends in the 1980's such as music, film, fashion, political and social movements, and other emblematic features that characterize the 80's. Consideration of social, political, and historical factors that influenced these popular cultural trends, as well as

their lasting impressions on current society.

History 88SD. History of Science Fiction

Student Facilitator: Jeffrey David – Faculty Mentor: Damon Woods

Science fiction is one of the most popular genres in media today, and also one of the most scoffed at. It is also arguably the most creative genre, spawning an unparalleled array of vast and varied ideas and visions. Topical review of science fiction as it has evolved over time, its main themes, and its role in society in past and now.

Pathology 88S. Genomic Medicine: Current Progress and Future Implications

Student Facilitator: Henry Lin – Faculty Mentor: William Grody

Though completely restorative gene-therapies have yet to be developed, it is clear that with advent of new sequencing technology and the completion of Human Genome Project comes new era in medicine. Overview of both the progress and goals of genomic medicine. Technological, ethical, and logistical considerations involved in its practice, as well as basic concepts behind widely used techniques.

Political Science 88SA. Internal Conflicts in Developing States: Closer Look at Rwandan Genocide

Student Facilitator: Manal Quota – Faculty Mentor: Edmond Keller

Focus on Rwanda and events that led to 1994 genocide. To understand the origins of genocide, it is first important to look at the history of Rwanda. Examination of origins of ethnicity, identity, and relationship between Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda. Evaluation of events that led up to genocide. Study of peace and reconciliation that is taking place today in hopes of healing old wounds.

Political Science 88SB. Globalization and Inequality: Why Are Some Countries Poorer than Others?

Student Facilitator: Patrick Lam – Faculty Mentor: Ron Rogowski

What accounts for the enormous difference in wealth across countries? Introduction to topic of globalization and inequality for both political science and nonpolitical science majors alike. Focus on inequality between-countries and of political science and economics literature that attempt to answer this question.

Political Science 88SC. U.S. Education Policy from Capital to Classroom

Student Facilitator: Lindsey Hilde – Faculty Mentor: Michael Chwe

Beginning with the history of U.S. education policy through the current No Child Left Behind Act, an examination of different issues in current U.S. education policy from federal, state, and local perspectives to understand more specific issues that exist in how education policy today is built.

Political Science 88SD. Conservative Political Movements among Youth in the U.S.

Student Facilitators: Faith Christiansen & Alexander Gruenberg

Faculty Mentor: Timothy Groseclose

Examination of conservative political movements of youth in America from 1960s to present day, with a focus on the evolution of the term and how it has been used by young people in second half of 20th century. Analysis of presence and impact of young conservatives in the Republican Party, political think tanks, and media.

Political Science 88SE. Explaining Ethnic Violence

Student Facilitator: Camilla Liou – Faculty Mentor: Daniel Posner

Violence is often described as "ethnic" and participants of violence as "ethnic groups." But what do those terms mean? Examination of the meaning of ethnic violence and related terms such as ethnic group and of the historical origins of the concept of ethnic nationalism. Use of case studies of recent incidents of large-scale ethnic violence to provide foundation for discussion on theoretical causes of such conflicts.