

## USIE Seminar – Spring 2012

### **Anthropology 88S: Multiple Perspectives on the Experience of Living with an Irreversible, Lengthy, and Impactful Medical Condition**

*Student Facilitator: Leenoy Hendizadeh – Faculty Mentor: Marjorie Goodwin*

An objective of anthropology is to understand another's point of view of the world. This course's purpose is to understand a different perspective each week, one that belongs to a patient with an impacting, chronic condition. These conditions include those that are psychological (i.e. dementia) or physiological (i.e. an inoperable spinal cord tumor that leads to paralysis from the neck down). We will explore how a condition might influence a patient's ideas about himself, the medical establishments, social and political forces, and the people he interacts with. The readings will be from different disciplines including psychology, anthropology, biomedical ethics, and clinical medicine. As the class progresses, we will discuss patient autonomy in various clinical ethical dilemmas.

### **Art History 88S: Mmmuseums: The Savory Side of Angeleno Arts Institutions**

*Student Facilitator: Kelly Tang – Faculty Mentor: Meredith Cohen*

Why is it necessary to have a restaurant at a museum? Does the kind of food served in a museum's café correspond to the museum's mission, exhibitions, and reputation and if so, how? This course is interested using the museum's restaurant/café as a point of entry to discuss the museum and its roles as a prominent cultural institution, as a recreational space for gathering people near and far, and as an agent for social change. Through the application of methodologies borrowed from art history and museum studies, students will undertake focused examinations of select arts institutions near UCLA through personal visitations, selected readings, tastings of food, and class discussion. Scholarly articles, local newspapers, websites, menus, Yelp! reviews, and blogs will all be analyzed critically as components of how a museum's identity and purpose are constructed within contemporary Los Angeles.

### **Communication Studies 88S: Read, Post, Tweet, VOTE: The Evolution of New Media #PoliticalCampaignStrategies**

*Student Facilitator: Sarah Michelle French – Faculty Mentor: Tim Groeling*

This course will provide students with a unique opportunity to learn about the theories of political campaign strategies and apply them as we analyze the 2012 presidential campaigns as they unfold! Students will study the history and evolution of the American campaign and voting process, with particular emphasis on the role of technology on grassroots mobilization. Each student will examine the 2012 presidential election process from both the consumer and producer viewpoint in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the campaign process in light of the new media age.

### **English 88SA: Allure of the Medieval: The Middle Ages in Popular Culture**

*Student Facilitator: Daryl Chan – Faculty Mentor: Chris Chism*

King Arthur, Robin Hood and Merlin are among many medieval characters still prevalent in popular culture. Even Beowulf gets his fair share in the cinematic world. Why do we keep returning to the Middle Ages? What is it we find fascinating about the medieval period and its literature? How does the ancient period speak to a modern audience when our concerns seem so distant from theirs? And what is so unique about the Middle Ages? We seem to romanticize the past at times, yet distance ourselves away from the same fantastical past. In the process of portraying the Middle Ages, we form a sense of our own identity – a zeitgeist for the modern age, if you will. We have progressed technologically, but we share many ideals that can be traced back to the Middle Ages. We might be very different from them, but our fascination with the past suggests otherwise.

This seminar explores the reasons for revisiting the medieval with excerpts from literature, movies, TV series, novels etc. Each week, we will delve into one particular characteristic of the medieval, dissecting each topic as we find out what titillates us, in attempt to reach a broader conclusion for our fascination with the Middle Ages. The

topics will progress from the fantastical Middle Ages, transition to the ubiquitous Arthurian legends, and finally visit themes more pertinent to our culture today such as heroism. We will read Umberto Eco's essays on the revisitation of the Middle Ages. Then, we will examine contemporary portrayals of the Middle Ages in the form of "Merlin," "Camelot," "Game of Thrones," "Lord of the Rings," and other popular works, identifying medieval traits that perhaps still ring true today. We will also compare and contrast some of the popular works with medieval literature to explore the uniqueness of the Middle ages and what makes the medieval so attractive that we keep on returning to them.

### **English 88SB: One Course To Rule Them All: Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings**

*Student Facilitator: Cody Geib – Faculty Mentor: Jonathan Grossman*

J. R. R. Tolkien's three-volume novel *The Lord of the Rings* is perhaps one of the most well-known and beloved books produced in the last century. It has consistently been ranked first in "Books of the Twentieth Century" polls and has been adapted into a blockbuster film trilogy. However, after its publication in the mid-1950s, most scholars dismissed *LOTR* as fanciful escapism. Even many of Tolkien's colleagues at the University of Oxford found it disappointing that Tolkien spent so much time on his stories rather than contributing to his own academic field. But as time passed and the novel's popularity soared, scholars began to consider Tolkien's fictional work to be worthy of study. And that is where our journey begins.

### **English 88SC: The Aesthetics of Violence from Shakespeare to Tarantino**

*Student Facilitator: Srbui Karapetian – Faculty Mentor: Mitchum Huehls*

For centuries violence and art have struck a telling relationship in the work of the author-artist; while the author explores violence thematically in a text, so too does he utilize violence to draw attention to the form of his art. Our class situates violence within the context of the "aesthetic experience" that an author-artist creates for a viewer-reader, exploring the cultural, political, historical, and formal issues that might inform various treatments of violence in a text. Our seminar does not follow historical chronology; instead it seeks to find overlap across historical periods and art forms (i.e. drama, cinema, poetry, and fiction) in the treatment of violence by grounding discussion around one or more "aesthetic modes" with which the text(s) seem preoccupied. For the purposes of our class, these modes will be as follows: *The Beautiful*, *The Racial*, *The Absurd*, *The Quiet/The Hidden*, and *The Self-Reflexive*. In drawing connections between texts through these aesthetic modes, we will generate discussion around some fascinating questions:

- Why does the author-artist turn to violence at all?
- What role does violence play in the relationship between form and content?
- How do words on text, images on screen, or staging in theatre "do violence" onto an audience?
- What possibilities does one medium lend to the representation of violence that another does not?
- How does the mediated experience we have with texts—and in turn, our mediated experience with violence—complicate our relationship with these texts?
- How does a text represent or re-interpret a historical act or period of violence?
- How have the discourses on violence and the way art represents violence shifted? Remained the same?

### **History 88S: Rituals, Resistance, and Rebellion: Religious Conversions in Colonial Latin America**

*Student Facilitator: Erik Pena – Faculty Mentor: Teofilo Ruiz*

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce students to the non-traditional views of conversion practices in Colonial Latin America and the recent scholarship. The traditional views of conversion are monks preaching directly to the targeted population. Students will explore the different methods the Catholic Church employed to convert the Indigenous, African, and Jewish population into Christianity and measure the effectiveness. The main methods that will be covered in the course are the *Requerimiento*, the Spanish Inquisition in Latin America, the *Auto de Fé* ceremonies, Theaters of Conversion, and the Idolatry Court System.

### **MCD Biology 88S: Dissection of Cancer: The Uniqueness of this Disease and its Impact on Human Condition**

*Student Facilitator: Aswin Srinivasan – Faculty Mentor: Rafael Romero*

About a third of humans develop cancer in lifetime. Cancer replaced cardiovascular disease as the leading cause of deaths in the US in 2005. This course covers current concepts and knowledge of this unique disease, including research and treatment. First, we'll be exploring the cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying cancer development with the aim of understanding how changes in the normal growth and division processes lead to the formation of tumors. We'll also be exploring various aspects of cancer with interesting real life analogies. Second, we'll explore topics such as the natural history of the disease, oncogenes, tumor suppressors, cancer-causing viruses, epidemiology, clinical trials and current therapeutic approaches to the treatment. Third, we'll also explore the treatment, healing and how patients deal with cancer. Besides the current drugs and potential of future drugs, early diagnosis plays a huge role in cure for cancer. Students will be made aware of how treatments are effective if diagnosed early and the methods of early diagnosis of cancer. This course isn't a regular science course that's offered in UCLA and there are no pre-requisites.

### **Medicine 88S: Dissecting the Big "It" – Perspectives on Human Sexuality**

*Student Facilitator: Nishad Sathe – Faculty Mentor: Thomas Coates*

This seminar will look at sex from many perspectives. We will look at it historically, biologically, socially, and in general, analytically. We will analyze the underlying root of the cultural shame within this topic, followed by our discussion of its relevance in virtually every field.

Along the way, we will constantly develop our opinions and knowledge by asking questions such as:

- How does sex function historically and biologically?
- In what ways is sex involved in our society as it pertains to media, politics, personal beliefs, technology, social justice, culture, etc.?
- Why are some sexual practices *normal*, while others are *abnormal*?
- What is the importance of sexual health, both mentally and physically, especially as college students?
- How has our society given importance to sexual health, if at all? What resources has UCLA created to promote sexual awareness?

### **Physics 88S: The Physics of Superheroes and Science Fiction**

*Student Facilitator: Sundipta Rao – Faculty Mentor: Robijn Bruinsma*

This is a class designed just for students without a previous background in physics. We'll be learning basic topics in physics while analyzing examples from comic books and science fiction. And don't worry; you won't be needing much math, just a background in algebra!

### **Political Science 88SA: Madison vs. Modernity: Is the Constitution Relevant to Democracy in 2012?**

*Student Facilitator: Nirali Beri – Faculty Mentor: Scott James*

This seminar interrogates the American Constitution—both its institutions and values—in light of modern democratic (i.e., majoritarian) aspirations. In the year 2012, why aren't "We the People" simply allowed to rule? What are the justifications for placing limits on the ability of a simple majority to govern itself? Do we even need a Constitution? We will explore how democratic the Constitution is and debate, formally and informally, how democratic it ought to be. Students will investigate these questions over ten weeks, framing their arguments at the intersection of contemporary constitutional and policy questions, including immigration, healthcare and the environment.

James Madison's Constitution versus Democracy—we know what won in 1787, but what should win today?

### **Political Science 88SB: Controversies in College Athletics: Race, Politics, Gender, and Beyond**

*Student Facilitator: Princeton Ly – Faculty Mentor: Michael Lofchie*

College athletics is a multi-billion dollar venture that involves hundreds of institutions and thousands of athletes, coaches, and support staff, not to mention millions of loyal fans. Major events, from basketball's March Madness to football's Bowl Championship Series, have become part of America's cultural psyche. But most student-athletes participate in non-revenue sports and seek careers that reward them for something other than their physical prowess. This seminar will explore UCLA's athletic history as a starting point to examine various cultural, economic, and sociopolitical issues in college sports past, present, and future.

### **Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences 88S: Creativity: Its Biological Basis and Therapeutic Applications**

*Student Facilitator: Kendra Knudsen – Faculty Mentor: Robert Bilder*

This course aims to reveal the deep inventiveness of the mind and its essential role in improving and adding meaning to our lives. Creativity encompasses a complex set of discrete behavioral traits that involve generating, manipulating and extending ideas to produce something that is new and useful. By investigating molecular, cellular and cognitive mechanisms, we will discover the discrete dimensions of creativity. We will discuss a range of topics, including what bird songs, smart mice and addiction can reveal about creative thinking; the relationship between mirror neurons and dance; and the neural mechanisms underlying the chills we get from our favorite songs. Throughout the course, we will explore how therapists interface clinical neuropsychology with the mind-body approaches of creative art therapy to facilitate self-expression and self-discovery.

### **Society and Genetics 88SA: Genetics Just Got Personal: Analyzing the Direct-to-Consumer Genetics Company 23andMe**

*Student Facilitator: Rasha Ahmed – Faculty Mentor: Christopher Kelty*

In this course, students will learn to analyze complex socio-genetic issues from a multidisciplinary framework. Using 23andMe as a model, the course will investigate the social, scientific, and legal controversies surrounding so called Direct-to-Consumer genetic companies and explore the impact new genetic technologies have on healthcare, research, self-identification, and our society. With the cost of whole genome sequencing decreasing rapidly in the wake of the Human Genome Project and with internet usage on the rise, Direct-to-Consumer companies, of which 23andMe is the most prominent, have sprung up promising information on health, disease, and ancestry from a simple spit test uniquely marketed at the average consumer rather than towards health professionals.

### **Society and Genetics 88SB: Of God and Monkey-Men: Why Are We Still Fighting About Evolution?**

*Student Facilitator: Jennifer Luh – Faculty Mentor: Christopher Kelty*

Evolution is arguably the most powerful idea to have arisen in the last two centuries, extending its influence into biology, philosophy, religion, politics, and modern discourse. Since its conception in the 1800s, the theory has been surrounded by fervent controversy proportional to its impact. The controversy has persisted to this day in the United States, where the majority of Americans do not believe in the legitimacy of evolution. **How has evolution become such a polarizing topic in the United States today?** In this seminar, we will answer this question by exploring the historical basis behind the opinions that have dominated the American discussion of evolution. From the beginnings of the theory to the rise of fundamentalism, we will investigate the scientific, philosophical, and religious influences that have shaped the opinions of Americans today. We will then examine modern day examples of these opinions and brainstorm possible solutions for the problems that this controversy poses for educational policies across the United States.