HMAN Courses Fall 2015

HMAN1971E-S01  Cross-Cultural Approaches to Death and Dying
Willoughby B. Britton and Jared Lindahl
W 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm

Despite the universality of death, human responses are incredibly varied. This course situates biological, medical, and psychological conceptions of death and dying in conversation with the religious and ethical perspectives that have also informed human responses to death and dying in cultural contexts. This course—team-taught by a psychologist, a scholar of religion, and two end-of-life care physicians—facilitates a more informed understanding of death-related cultural practices and a more skilled response to death-related decisions arising in the practice of medicine and in life. Limited to 20 students in Medical Humanities and graduate Humanities fields. Honors undergraduates and PLMEs may enroll with permission. Medical Humanities and graduate Humanities fields: honors undergraduate and PLMEs with instructor permission.

HMAN1971M-S01  African American Religion and Politics
Andre Willis, Faculty Fellow
Th 04:00 pm - 06:30 pm

This seminar places a theological lens on Black life in North America. Its general premise is that implicit spiritual strivings for political equality can be found in everyday black life, that they suffuse black cultural expression, and that they have been seminal for conceptions of black self-assertion in the US. We shall raise questions regarding the black “religion”, the role of the “black church”, Black Religious Studies versus Africana Religious Studies, and the variety of ways that African Americans have used ‘religion’ (broadly speaking) to support their quest for citizenship (recognition, inclusion and membership in the American family).

Work in African American Studies, Africana Studies or Religious Studies.

Christopher J. Tucker, Faculty Fellow
Th 04:00 pm - 06:30 pm

This course explores how music mediates human relations to the natural world. Via case studies drawn from Western music history and from non-Western societies, we will examine how theorists use sound to think through the difference between humans and non-humans, particularly birds and whales; how composers like Grieg, Ives, and John Luther Adams seek to shape listeners’ perceptions of natural worlds and ecological systems; how people in Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, and the Peruvian Andes use sound to communicate ecological knowledge and to coordinate environmental relationships; and how instrument making forces practitioners to contend with resource extraction and climatological concerns.

Some music literacy highly recommended.

HMAN1971P-S01  Advanced Topics in Landscape History
Jo Guldi, Faculty Fellow
M 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm

This seminar invites students of history, other social sciences, and the digital humanities with an interest in property ownership to participate in an experimental, research-based colloquium profiling new methods in the digital history of property, landownership, occupancy, and displacement. Students will participate in regular presentations of their own work and the review of their work and others’. Readings will include archival material on property law and international land governance. Exercises may include work transforming archival sources into visualization through the tools of digital history. Prerequisite: advanced work in related topics. advanced work in related topics is required.
Killing Times: The Temporal Technology of the Death Penalty
David R. Wills, Faculty Fellow
M 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm

The death penalty continues to be a question in the US, as well as on the international scene, many years after the 20th century trend toward abolition that saw a majority of nations outlaw it by the turn of the millennium. This seminar will examine a series of contemporary questions relating to the death penalty: the instant of death, execution by drone, self-execution (suicide bombing), technics and blood, confessional machines. By means of those examples we will concentrate on the set of peculiar temporalities that the death penalty introduces as a result of its manufacturing a precise moment of death.

The First Scientific Americans: Exploring Nature in Latin America, 1500-1800 (SCSO 1701C)
Iris Montero- Sobrevilla, Teaching Associate in the Humanities
M 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm

Who were the “first scientists” in the Americas?, what exactly do we mean by “science” in this context?, and what has amounted to “America” in the past? Focusing on present-day Latin America, this seminar analyses the links between the exploration of the New World and scientific discovery in the early modern period. We will explore issues of primacy (why have both empires and scientists cared about “arriving first”); the nature of science (what kind of knowledge has been considered “scientific” in different periods); and locality in knowledge production (was there something special about the New World in fostering scientific thinking).

Law, Nationalism, and Colonialism
Nathaniel A. Berman, Cogut Center for the Humanities
W 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm

This seminar explores the internationalism of the past century in terms of its relationship to separatist nationalism, anti-colonialism, and religious radicalism. It takes as its point of departure the dramatic political, cultural, and intellectual transformations that followed in the wake of World War I. A guiding hypothesis of the seminar is that internationalism cannot be understood apart from its complex relationship to "identity" broadly conceived – identity of local/transnational groups as well as the identity of internationalists themselves. Readings will be drawn from law/cultural studies/politics/postcolonial theory. Enrollment limited to 20 graduate students. Advanced juniors/seniors by permission only.

Art and Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century
Paul D. Guyer, Philosophy
W 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm

An excessively cognitivist approach to aesthetics in German Idealism led to Hegel's thesis of the "end of art" (who had himself redefined aesthetics as philosophy of art). During the remainder of the century, philosophers searched for more complex approaches to the experience of art that would not have this consequence. We will explore this narrative. Authors to be studied include Hegel, Schopenhauer, Emerson, Nietzsche, Ruskin, Dilthey, and Santayana.

Latin in America (LATN 2080F)
Andrew Laird, Classics
M 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm

Exploration of some of the rich and extensive ‘neo-Latin’ writing from colonial Spanish America, with particular emphasis on poetry and literary prose from sixteenth-century Mexico, much of which has never been studied or translated. Latin satires, epigrams, bucolic poems, literary epistles and dialogues will be examined in relation to their classical models and influences – and in the context of the multicultural environment in which they were produced. As well as opening a new world of Latin, this course will familiarize you with the format of some early modern books and manuscripts, and offer a unique perspective on traditional classical literature.
Related Courses taught by Cogut Center Postdoctoral Fellows

AFRI1010C-S01  Race, Gender, Ethics and Environmental Justice
Vanessa Fabien, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow
T 04:00 pm - 06:30 pm

African Americans, Gender, Ethics and Environmental Justice examines the role of African Americans in the larger environmental history conversation. It utilizes a gendered lens to investigate how African American interpreted their natural surroundings and contributed to the development of 20th century American environmental consciousness. This course is reading and writing intensive.

AFRI1050T-S01  Slave Resistance and Moral Order in Environmental History
Vanessa Fabien, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow
M W F 12:00 pm - 12:50 pm

This course is designed to examine the avenues by which enslaved persons redefined and re-appropriated the natural landscapes that kept them in bondage into direct forms of cultural and political resistance during the antebellum period. We will investigate rice production in South Carolina, the Dismal Swamp, maroon societies, Negro Spirituals, and the Black Judeo-Christian ethic to understand how the natural environment and the institution of slavery shaped slave resistance in the United States. This course is reading and writing intensive.

MES1999B-S01  Colonialism and Human Rights
Nicola Perugini, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow
T/Th 02:30 pm - 03:50 pm

Are anti-colonial struggles human rights struggles? Is emancipation the objective of these struggles? Where and when do anti-colonial and human rights discourses converge and diverge? What is the role of violence in the moral, political and discursive trajectories of anti-colonialism and human rights? This course takes up these questions, starting with the reconstruction of the historical relationship between colonialism, anti-colonial struggles and the post-World War II formation of the international human rights regime. We then turn to discuss different authors who developed their anti-colonial thought and dealt with, appropriated or ignored human rights in their different.

ANTH0066W-S01  What Does It Mean To Be Green?
Dana J. Graef, Postdoctoral Fellow in International Humanities
Th 04:00 pm - 06:30 pm

What does it mean to be green? From saving energy to recycling to eating organic food, in recent years the idea of going green has gained increasing attention. But green is not solely a proxy for environmentalism: it encompasses competing, and at times contradictory meanings. This seminar places contemporary green debates in historical and cross-cultural contexts. We will examine multiple paradigms of greenness in the Global South as well as the Global North. Topics range from imperial visions of tropical landscapes to the green revolution emphasis on agrochemicals, from conservation to climate change. Enrollment limited to 20 first year students.

COLT0711E-S01  Reading and Writing African Gender
Cullen Goldblatt, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow
M W F 09:00 am - 09:50 am

In this course, we will examine ways that gender and literary genre figure in postcolonial African writing, and in its reception. We will closely read novels by four significant women authors: Mariama Bâ (Senegal), Zoe Wicomb (South Africa), Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria). We will also read short, lesser-known texts, such as Richard Rive's “Riva” and Binyavanga Wainaina's “The Missing Chapter,” that question boundaries of gender, genre, and sexuality.
National systems of formal education, over the past two centuries, have proliferated massively. International organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, have long promoted the universal provision of mass education as central goals in the modern way of life. At the same time, the way children are raised, and the kinds of adults they become, varies considerably. Comparative education seeks to explore this interplay of variety and uniformity. Enrollment limited to 40. This course examines the social, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions of internet life in China, Japan, and South Korea. Our focus will be on the formal diversity of internet use (including websites, social media, mobile phones, blogs, gaming, and streaming video); the relationship between the internet and other media (literature, film, animation, documentary); and interdisciplinary methods for studying online life. By considering how the internet has developed in each country and how it has reshaped identity, sociality, politics, public space, and aesthetic form, we will work towards building a conceptual and critical vocabulary for the comparative study of internet cultures.