

## **Spring 2012 USIE Seminars**

### *Anthropology*

#### **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*

#### **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*

### **Read, Post, Tweet, OTTE: 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*

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

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

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.

## **The 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.

## **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.

## *History*

### **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

## *Molecular, Cell, & Developmental Biology*

### **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

### **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.

## Physics

### **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

### **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?

## **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*

### **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*

### **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.

### **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.

## **Spring 2013 USIE Seminars**

### *Communication Studies*

#### **Trial by Media: A Close Look at Criminal Proceedings and its Relationship with the Media**

*Student Facilitator: Hasti Ahangi | Faculty Mentor: Tim Groeling*

How did the "Dream Team" win the O.J. Simpson trial? Did the media have any influence on the Michael Jackson or Trayvon Martin cases? These are all examples of trials in which the attorneys allegedly used news coverage to influence the direction of their trials. Is this type of strategic behavior fair and just? This class seeks to discuss the publicity surrounding major criminal trials in order to discuss topics such as: the right of a citizen to a fair trial, journalistic responsibilities when covering trials, the ethical duty of an attorney not to prejudice a jury, and using the media to strategically influence a trial. Students will investigate these topics through classroom discussions, guest speakers, short written assignments, and one group project during the course of ten weeks.

### *English*

#### **Red State Realism: White American Poverty in Contemporary American Literature, Film, and Song**

*Student Facilitator: Kevin Mosby | Faculty Mentor: Reed Wilson*

Call them "crackers," "rednecks," or "white trash." They're the butt of jokes and the target of slurs, parodies, and social satires. But from the grotesque stories of Flannery O'Connor to the grisly novels of Harry Crews, contemporary tales from the South have sought to provide dirt-poor white Americans an unrestrained and genuine voice. This course will examine the portrayal of poor white Southerners in contemporary literature, film, and song. Topics will include the deterioration of high culture in the modern South, "the grotesque" in Southern Gothic literature, and the problematization of "white trash" stereotypes. The course will pay particular attention to themes of violence and sexuality within the assigned texts, which may include works by William Faulkner, Barry Hannah, Dorothy Allison, Tracy Letts, and Townes Van Zandt. Students considering this course are strongly encouraged to possess an interest in white studies, in the culture of the American South, and in literature that depicts stark accounts of lascivious sex and physical brutality.



## **Growing Up in the South: 20th-Century Bildungsromans**

*Student Facilitator: Katherine Neipris | Faculty Mentor: Joseph Dimuro*

This course examines Bildungsromans – coming-of-age tales – set against the backdrop of the microcosmic twentieth-century American South. As the protagonists of our texts struggle to acclimate to the adult world, the south tries to adjust to new social changes, standards, and stigmas. The individual is plunged into a tug-of-war between nature and nurture, torn between various forces that vie for control: familial expectations, environmental pressures, self-determination. The separate yet interconnected patterns of development experienced by each protagonist echo the region's own struggle to redefine its identity. By examining the multifaceted south through the lens of coming-of-age tales, we will isolate and analyze the variables that influence both the development of the south and of the characters: family structure, racial relations, and the definition of what it means to be "southern" play a unique role in each text.

## **Fantasy Geography: The Physical Space of Fictional Worlds**

*Student Facilitator: Amy Sherrard | Faculty Mentor: Matthew Fisher*

Have you ever dreamed about a wizard knocking on your door, showing you a map, and inviting you on a dragon-hunting journey to a looming mountain range in the North? You're not the only one—fantasy geography has become a major part of the genre and even bleeds into other areas of literature and culture. This seminar covers well-known fantasy maps in the context of cartographic principles, basic geography, and literary value. We will spend time with textual work by J.R.R. Tolkien and George R.R. Martin, and transition into other spatial manifestations of fantasy, like video games, open-source maps, fan-fiction, and role-playing. After a quarter of learning, you get the chance to apply your knowledge to a fictional mapping project that lets you discover more about the world of your choice.

## *Film and Television*

### **Mad about Mad Men: A Multi-Perspective Critical Analysis of the Acclaimed Series**

*Student Facilitator: Nicole Malek | Faculty Mentor: Jonathan Kuntz*

Do you love bow ties and perfectly coiffed hair? Do you like thinking about the role of the male gaze, the rise of duplicitous advertising, and the cycle of sex and alcohol addiction that is Don Draper? Though the common perception of Mad Men is that it is just about sexism in the sixties, it is about all of these things and so much more. This course gives students the opportunity to explore the show through a variety of critical perspectives including the traditional (historical, sexual, psychological) and also the untraditional (production value, analysis of the contemporary TV landscape). Each week we will employ basic strategies of the analysis of film and TV to tackle a different critical perspective, using each as an equal lens to analyze the auteur's intent and the medium's capacity for social criticism.

## *History*

### **A History of Mystery: Minority Magicians, their Portrayal, Struggle, and Success**

*Student Facilitator: Angela Sanchez | Faculty Mentor: Eric Avila*

When most audiences hear MAGIC the first image conjured is a man in coattails who is usually white. This seminar on magic history will focus on American magicians who are normally not acknowledged or whose histories have been overlooked by laymen audiences, such as women and ethnic minorities. The course will review magicians from the years of 1840 to the present day, featuring magicians across cultures and time. Seminar will include guest speakers, documentary features, and magic shows.

## *Philosophy*

### **Paradoxes and Philosophical Riddles**

*Student Facilitator: Seul Kee Baek | Faculty Mentor: Katrina Elliott*

In daily life we believe in a host of things that we simply take as common sense. The sun will rise tomorrow; I think, but a piece of wood does not; two is more than one. But what if we could show that it is impossible for all of these beliefs to be true—as impossible as circular triangles? Paradoxes create situations in which we are forced to give up some of our most cherished beliefs, often leading to vigorous disagreements regarding which beliefs are acceptable to reject. In this class, students are invited to interpret various types of paradoxes, formulate their own solutions, and defend it against others in a spontaneous debate. Topics covered include existence of the objective world, validity of scientific knowledge, space and time, infinities, self-contradictory statements, and the meaning of consciousness. All topics are discussed in nontechnical language and no prior knowledge of formal techniques is required.

## *Physiological Science*

### **Time is Brain: A Complete Look into the Epidemic of Strokes from the Patient to the Lab**

*Student Facilitator: Anadjeet Khahera | Faculty Mentor: Patricia Phelps*

Stroke is a disease of lifestyle, meaning anyone is susceptible regardless of family background. This seminar aims to educate students on the topic of cerebral strokes. How do strokes occur? How do we recognize them? What treatments are available for stroke? With recent advances in stroke therapy, there have been more survivors than ever before. However, these survivors tend to live with disabilities due to the stroke. With stroke incidence higher than it has ever been, this has led to stroke being the leading cause of adult disability within the United States. Current stroke research is investigating how to erase these disabilities by repairing the dead brain tissue lost during the stroke event. This requires a great deal of time, effort, and money. First, new neurons must be born at the site of stroke. Second, these neurons must survive. And third, the original connections of lost neurons must be reformed. These challenging tasks lie ahead of stroke researchers. Handouts, primary research articles, newspaper articles, and lectures will be provided to help advance each student's understanding of stroke.

## *Political Science*

### **"Champions Made Here," Athletically Driven, Politically Motivated**

*Student Facilitator: Mariah Williams | Faculty Mentor: Michael Lofchie*

From the sports cynic to avid fan, notions of Collegiate Athletics and the "Student-Athlete," range from vivid dissent to complete admiration. This seminar aims to analyze the common understanding of, and misconceptions associated with, the "Student-Athlete." By exploring facets of Big Business industry, the Darwinian Struggle, and gender norms, as they relate to the lives and experience of college athletes, students will be equipped with baseline knowledge; then given the opportunity to engage in debate, voice personal opinion, and express their innermost convictions.

## *Psychology*

### **The Costs of Gamifying Education**

*Student Facilitator: Peter McPartlan | Faculty Mentor: Jim Stigler*

This seminar addresses the rise of gamification in education, as well as psychology's recent discoveries that have highlighted the need for school reform, exploring how gamification and psychology are both converging on educational practices at the same time. This seminar will introduce the various applications of gamification, look at how it has started to change education, and study psychological research on how educational environments affect children's psychological growth. We will do this by examining current examples of gamification, educational practices, academic literature, TED talks, and our own experiences. Discussion and hands-on work will receive equal attention throughout the course, as the topics covered will aid student teams as they work to prepare their final projects.

## **Fast Cars and Battle Scars: Understanding the Modern Combat Veteran and PTSD**

*Student Facilitator: Andrew Nicholls | Faculty Mentor: Christine Dunkel Schetter*

This course is designed to give students who have never served in the military a sense of what challenges modern combat veterans face: what it is like returning home from combat with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other injuries [e.g., Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)], and the under recognized minority of female combat veterans. These will provoke a discussion of what should be done at different levels of society, ranging from how we can support friends who may have served, community level programs, and national or policy level initiatives. You will be presented with a different range of materials from different perspectives that you will be asked to analyze and discuss through a psychosocial framework as voters and potential future policy makers.

### *Society and Genetics*

## **Beyond CSI: Forensic Applications of DNA Analysis**

*Student Facilitator: Rebecca Wang | Faculty Mentor: Wayne Grody*

We've all seen crime shows like CSI and Law and Order, but what really happens at a crime scene? How do you find evidence after a murder and use it to track down a criminal? In this course, we will learn how real life crime scene investigators solve crimes by using one of the most powerful tools in forensic science: DNA analysis. This course will give an overview of forensic DNA analysis and its applications in the crime scene and beyond. Topics include how DNA evidence is collected and presented in court, as well as other applications of forensic science, such as mass identification and disease testing. Throughout the course, we will examine forensic DNA analysis from biological, technical, anthropological, ethical, and legal perspectives in order to comprehensively understand how forensics is used in the real world.

## *Sociology*

### **La Jouissance Ultime: Representations of Orgasm in Science, Literature and Film**

*Student Facilitator: Jewel Pereyra | Faculty Mentor: Abigail Saguy*

Although the United States is deemed a “sex obsessed” culture, ecstatic sexual expression is oftentimes tabooed, hyperbolized or silenced, providing misunderstood and even biased representations of orgasm in popular culture. This seminar asks: How have representations of orgasm and sexual arousal been depicted in science, literature and films? How have images of orgasm shifted historically and why? What are the politics of a “real” orgasm and how is it studied, mythologized, gendered, visualized, written about and performed? By engaging across the disciplines of the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, students will critically assess epistemological and sociological approaches to orgasm, including feminist and queer interventions on embodiment, knowledge productions and reproductive technologies.

## *Theater*

### **Campus Fashion Fix—Exploring the Fashion Industry in regards to American Culture and Identity**

*Student Facilitator: Jennifer Lee | Faculty Mentor: Deborah Nadoolman Landis*

Dive into the world of fashion in the first-ever UCLA fashion history and design class. Students will gain an insight on the history of fashion in the 20th century by analyzing the methodologies and legacy of distinguished fashion designers: Coco Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Dior, Diane Von Furstenberg and Rodarte. The second half of the course is focused upon learning basic design techniques to develop a student fashion collection portfolio. "Designing the Century" offers fashion fans and student designers an opportunity to explore and be inspired by the greatest couturiers of all time.

## *Urban Planning*

### **The Global Food System—What Happens Between Farm and Plate and Why It Matters**

*Student Facilitators: Niran Somasundaram, Joanna Wheaton | Faculty Mentor: Susanna Hecht*

The purpose of this course is to equip students with the knowledge and tools necessary to be conscious consumers who understand how their food choices play a role in America's greater food system and culture. Course content, which includes scholarly readings, news articles, video clips and guest lectures, will provide students with a holistic understanding of the political and economic factors influencing the current food system in America as well as this system's associated environmental, social and health externalities. To complement the broad scope of these topics, we will also delve further into more specific subjects, such as the food labeling, the "green" biotech revolution, food deserts, livestock practices and certain staple crops, which student groups will select, research and present to their peers. The latter part of the course will discuss alternative food systems and current food movements, in order to place previously discussed course topics in a contemporary context and emphasize creative solutions and consumer empowerment.

## **Spring 2014 USIE Seminars**

### *Architecture and Urban Design*

#### **Musical Urbanism**

*Student Facilitator: Ryan Conroy | Faculty Mentor: Roger Sherman*

Popular music is often analyzed for its cultural implications, but rarely is music thought of spatially. Bob Dylan and Tupac are readily linked with social and historical significance, but how can music speak to the physical environment? This class will analyze case studies of music movements in the spaces that generated them. From Compton to Manchester, urban space is never a passive actor in the production and consumption of music. In this course we'll unpack how music has the capacity to conjure perceptions of space different from that elicited by sight. In analyzing the relationships between a given song or album and its urban environment, we will ultimately address how music can uniquely reflect the spatial conditions of a given city.

### *Comparative Literature*

#### **What is an African story? Exploring the Gendered Literature of Sub-Saharan Africa**

*Student Facilitator: Oluwakanyinsola Ajayi | Faculty Mentor: Françoise Lionnet*

Literature is the only thing that has consistently helped people see past themselves; Experience a world that is ultimately different from theirs. African Literature - in addition to its giving a voice to an otherwise silent continent - is especially apt in its taking human conflict and presenting it in the form of beautiful stories. There are many recurring themes in the literature but in this class, we will be focusing on one of them: the very relevant, gender & society. We will examine some representative African texts within the frames of gender roles & their representation, feminism and humanism. On occasion, we will refer to ideas of pan-Africanism, nationalism, transnationalism and post-colonialism. We will also partake in studies of genre: how are the forms of poetry, prose and drama manipulated to suit their purposes? The texts will flow into one another, thus forming the story of how African Literature has evolved to where it is now: trans-nationalist, and humanist.



## Economics

### **Bitcoin and the Future of Currency**

*Student Facilitator: Alex Rochlin | Faculty Mentor: Aaron Tornell*

Money: some say it's the root of all evil, others argue it makes the world go round, and some think just think that more of it leads to more problems. Whatever its consequences, money has been a cornerstone of human civilization for 5000 years, facilitating transactions, measuring worth and storing value. This course will examine the newest monetary innovation: Bitcoin, a decentralized digital crypto-currency. Founded in 2007, Bitcoin has recently experienced rapid growth, rising from \$20/Bitcoin at the beginning of 2013 to over \$1000 by the end. However, there is growing concern Bitcoin may face increased regulatory pressures from the US government and may simply be a speculative bubble that will soon pop. As a class, we will begin by looking at whether Bitcoin fulfills the requirements to be considered a currency. We will then examine historical speculative bubbles and determine as a class if Bitcoin is currently a bubble or if it is simply experiencing rapid, sustainable growth. Finally, we will examine the challenges and opportunities facing Bitcoin in the future, and debate if Bitcoin will ever achieve its goal of being an accepted mainstream currency. This course will feature guest lecturers who will offer more detailed information on subjects like the operations of Bitcoin and the Foreign exchange market. Students will be expected to participate in this course through class discussions, debates and two short research presentations.

## English

### **Worlds Enough & Time: Time Travel in Fiction**

*Student Facilitator: Anna Galachyan | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Mott*

Time travel narratives have been a mainstay of science fiction since the early 20th century and comprise a sub-genre of their own, with unique tropes, clichés, and mythologies. In this seminar, we will dive headfirst into some of the most iconic time travel stories (and a few that are more obscure) and explore the various ways this motif challenges or reinforces different perceptions of time, order, and personal agency. In addition to our study of time travel narratives as a separate unit, we will discuss how they fit into the larger world of storytelling. Material will include literature, film, and television from the mid-20th century to today.

## **Lewis to Lovecraft: Fantasy Literature and Belief Systems**

*Student Facilitator: Stephen Stewart | Faculty Mentor: Joseph Nagy*

Heroes, wizards and dragons lurk beneath the pages of many fantasy novels. While these works create bold new worlds for a reader to explore, they often simultaneously draw upon concepts and ideas from our world, especially belief systems. Fantasy provides an appropriate location to explore the construction and dissemination of belief systems by juxtaposing familiar institutions or concepts with foreign, far-fetched, and daringly creative ideas. From H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu to C.S. Lewis' Aslan, fantasy explores and critiques the nature of belief and what our understanding of belief systems should be. This discussion will even draw from J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth and J.K. Rowling's Hogwarts, as both authors and readers of these popular works project their own visions onto these fantastic though not explicitly religious worlds. We will explore the texts of several major fantasy authors and analyze religious allusions, allegory, and undertones in their work. Students will demonstrate an in-depth critical understanding of various excerpts from novels and short stories through discussion and will also have a chance to explore and analyze a text of their own choosing for a short paper or create a short story of their own.

## *Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology*

### **Above the Genome: Epigenetics and Uncovering the Secret of Life**

*Student Facilitator: Joshua Weinreb | Faculty Mentor: Rafael Romero*

Through this course, science and non-science majors alike will come to a better understanding of "The Secret of Life" and how it applies to our current lives and the future. Together, we will learn genetics and epigenetics and analyze the associated technologies. We will explore the past and present controversies within these fields, and even extend our discussion to issues that may come up in the future. You will learn why human males are genetically more similar to male chimps compared to human females (that explains a lot!), watch movies portraying the controversial issues we are discussing, and ultimately find out what the "Secret of Life" even is!

## Physics

### **From Mind to Matter – The Quantum Quandaries**

*Student Facilitator: Krish Bhutwala | Faculty Mentor: Eric Hudson*

In high school, we all learned about protons and electrons and how they combine to give the building blocks of matter, life, and basically everything we see. But have we ever stopped to consider how they came up with these radical ideas about things they couldn't even observe? The solution became what we call Quantum Mechanics, and it is the study of reality on its most, well, elementary level! Quantum mechanics is known as this bizarre, other-worldly science wherein it's possible (yet incredibly unlikely) that my clone will appear next to me in the next second or we would be able to walk through walls (neither of those happened). What is possible, what is unlikely, and what is outright impossible? These are some of the questions we wish to answer through quantum mechanics. This class jumps into quantum mechanics from its very inception at the turn of the century. Using our own intuition and reasoning skills, we aim to follow the history and development of the science throughout the 20th century, and debate why experimental and theoretical physicists concluded what they concluded. Why did we need a new science? Who were the major figures developing this science? With texts and media sources entertaining for science and non-science majors alike, we will explore the underlying thoughts that go into building a science like quantum mechanics.

## **A Day in Court – The Precedents, Practices, and Procedures of U.S. Criminal Trial Attorneys**

*Student Facilitator: Timothy Hooyenga | Faculty Mentor: Karen Orren*

Once in your lifetime, you will be a part of the criminal justice system, either as a member of a jury, maybe as a witness, or unfortunately as a victim of a crime. Ever wondered what goes into the trial process? Ever wanted to know how attorneys prepare for their cases, present their arguments, and propel their side of the facts into the minds of jury members? Combining a step-by-step evaluation of the various components of a courtroom trial with a rudimentary understanding of basic legal issues, this seminar intends to appeal to both those who have serious thoughts about law school and legal processes and to those who simply want to better understand their favorite legal-based drama. This course will address the fundamental building blocks that attorneys rely upon to construct and conduct their arguments in court. With different topics designated for each session, students will learn some basic techniques and “tricks of the trade” that attorneys employ in trial. As the title suggests, the seminar addresses three areas of legal principles that attorneys must consider before and during their trials. The first weeks concentrate on the pre-trial issues that can affect the entirety of a trial. We will be primarily focusing on Supreme Court precedents that address such issues as police investigations, the right to an attorney, and jury selection. The second portion of the seminar will dive into the trial process itself, examining the practices of attorneys and the methods through which they develop their arguments. These methods will include theme and case development involving the calling of witnesses, delivery techniques, and direct and cross examination formulation. Lastly, the seminar concludes with a discussion of the common legal procedures that attorneys use to manipulate the trial process and counter their adversaries’ arguments, including the introduction of evidence and the use of objections.

## *Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science*

### **The Neuroscience of Music**

*Student Facilitator: Joan Chou | Faculty Mentor: Ellen Carpenter*

Music is all around us, impacting many aspects of our lives. We consciously listen to music for the pleasure and emotions it evokes, and we are subconsciously influenced by the music we are exposed to in commercials, film soundtracks and our everyday environment. Yet the science of listening to music is poorly understood. Our brain perceives music, which elicits a wide range of emotions to varying degrees. But how? Why do we even need music, if it has no apparent evolutionary advantage? This seminar will shed some light on this mystery from the perspective of scientific research supported by empirical data. We begin by covering some fundamental neurobiology of the auditory system and sound perception. From there, we will explore several aspects of music, such as its emotional impact, its connection to speech and language, the famous “Mozart effect”, and current therapeutic uses for music. The best part of learning is being able to apply that knowledge to everyday life. The last two weeks will be “lab sessions” where we listen to music in various contexts and observe the effects studied throughout the quarter. Students will develop a genuine interest in music outside of this course and listen to music outside of the classroom with a well-informed scientific ear.

## **Biomedical Ethics of Advanced Clinical Technologies**

*Student Facilitator: Maxwell Roth | Faculty Mentor: Thomas Strouse*

Biotechnology is ushering in an era of groundbreaking medical advancements in genetics, neuroscience, and molecular biology promising better treatments and new cures. But are these biomedical technologies being employed in ways that extend beyond the scope of their approved medical purpose? This course will examine this question by focusing on select biomedical technologies, and analyzing both their capacity to improve health and their potential to be misused. The assigned readings and course material will consist broadly of biomedical ethics texts, biotechnology journal submissions, popular science articles and internet-based social media content and public resources. Through class discussion on how these biomedical technologies are used in the assessment and treatment of patients in a clinical setting, this seminar will explore the intersection of biotechnology and ethics. Students will investigate the ethical boundaries of these biomedical technologies and evaluate a few of the current and theoretical models for technological and ethical oversight in healthcare. Lastly, students will engage each other, each week, in dynamic discussions on the role and application of biomedical ethics and advanced biotechnologies in the future of healthcare.

## *Public Health*

### **Preventive Medicine: Leading Healthy Lifestyles for a Better Future**

*Student Facilitators: Rasika Deshpande, Sajan Shah | Faculty Mentor: William McCarthy*

Regular milk or soy milk? 20 minute jog or a 20 minute nap? Every day we are forced to make important decisions about the foods we eat and the lifestyle that we live; but what exactly are the repercussions for our good and bad decisions? In this seminar we will explore good nutrition, exercise, and healthy life choices. Specifically, we will discuss obesity, tobacco, mental and physical health, and sex. Other aspects of preventive medicine that we will investigate are the implications of socio-economic and cultural barriers that affect the lifestyle choices that exist around the world. After this course, students will have learned and developed the tools necessary to be able to form a lifestyle plan that will help them pursue a healthier future.

## *Society and Genetics*

### **Wrench in the Works: Human Genetic Disorders and How We Live with Our Genes**

*Student Facilitator: Elizabeth Earley | Faculty Mentors: Sally Gibbons, Christina Palmer*

Being diagnosed with an illness can elicit a spectrum of emotional responses, from indifference to confusion, shame, and fear. Learning of a genetic predisposition to illness, on the other hand, can introduce an entirely new subset of concerns – newfound confusion over the subtleties and ambiguities of genetic testing results, shame over decisions and treatment sought, and fear of one's future and for the future of family members who may also be affected. In this seminar, we will look closely at the sorts of struggles faced by people at risk for disorders with a genetic basis, with a focus on the forces in society that shape the attitudes, decisions, and treatment options that exist today. Our discussion will draw heavily from media and personal narratives to examine how genetic disorders are understood and incorporated as part of one's identity. We will mainly examine BRCA-1 and 2 gynecological cancers as a case study, and will compare experiences of BRCA to those of Huntington's chorea and Alzheimer's disease.

## *Sociology*

### **Scientific Differences in Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation, and do they make a Difference?**

*Student Facilitator: Arash Ghaffari-Rafi | Faculty Mentor: Jerome Rabow*

Over 2 million scholarly papers published annually, yet few diseases cured and medical innovation lagging, we question "is the scientific paper a fraud?" We will examine whether most "discoveries" warrant attention or simply emphasize and maintain societal arrangements to entrench inequalities. Students will study the fluidity of race by partaking in a genetic test to trace their own lineage. Topics will include: genetics and race (racism), physiological gender differences and healthcare policy (sexism), neurobiology and sexual orientation (homophobia). Subtopic will include the societal and biological factors behind discrimination. Case studies will review the use of science in determining discriminatory policies (Holocaust in Nazi Germany, South African apartheid, American immigration policy).

## **Leaning In: Can We Really Break the Glass Ceiling?**

*Student Facilitator: Radha Kumar | Faculty Mentor: Abigail Saguy*

Despite the tremendous progress women have made in the past century, they only hold 4.2 percent of Fortune 500 CEO positions. In her recent book "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead," Sheryl Sandberg addresses some of the reasons why there are few women leaders in the workplace. Sandberg's book suggests that women can break the glass ceiling if they "lean in" the workplace. Sandberg advises women to sit at the table, find a partner that supports one's career goals, and to not leave the workplace before they actually start a family. We will critique these claims using sociological and anecdotal evidence. This seminar will examine how race, socio-economic status, and family life affect women's career mobility. We will also explore men's increasing contributions to housework and childcare.



## **Spring 2015 USIE Seminars**

### *Anthropology*

#### **The Anthropology of Gender and International Development**

*Student Facilitator: Megan Moran | Faculty Mentor: Akhil Gupta*

Broad historical and theoretical introduction to gender, as cultural change, and inter- and intra- national economic and political development. Overview of anthropology of development focusing on gender through application of feminist Marxist, Hegelian dialectical theory, and political economy approach. Balance of theoretical reading and case studies highlighting global uneven development.

### *Biomedical Research*

#### **Picking Your Brains: Neuroanatomy through Mysterious Clinical Cases**

*Student Facilitator: Shaina Sedighim | Faculty Mentor: Rafael Romero*

Introduction to basic neuroanatomy as presented through a series of mysterious medical cases; basics of medical diagnosis, neurological exam, brain mechanisms of memory, movement, perception, and language. Students will have a chance to step into a physician's shoes, make assessments, analyses, and attempt to elucidate where in the brain a lesion may be present.

### *English*

#### **American Bards—Who Are Our Voices? (And What Do They Say?)**

*Student Facilitator: Samantha Allan | Faculty Mentor: Michael Cohen*

American songwriters, poets, throughout twentieth century who we consider cultural and subcultural icons, how we remember them, why—includes Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, Maya Angelou, Joni Mitchell, Tupac, others.

#### **Economic Influences in “Game of Thrones”**

*Student Facilitator: Mary Haithcoat | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Mott*

Examination of George R.R. Martin’s “A Game of Thrones” through the lens of economic theory.

## **Looking Forward, Thinking Ahead—Futurisms in Literature, Film, and Other Media**

*Student Facilitator: Shawn Zhang | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Mott*

The simultaneous desirability and temporal unavailability of the future has made it one of the most sought after objects in the human pursuit. We have tried time and again to imagine, predict, and actively create futures of our own choosing. What do these attempts say about ourselves, our values, and our obsessions? Examining a variety of sources taken from a broad spectrum of times and places, this class seeks to understand the whats, whys, and hows of our eternal fascination with the future.

### *Epidemiology*

## **You Only Live Once—How Public Health Maximizes Life Expectancy**

*Student Facilitator: Maria Nataly Diaz | Faculty Mentor: Paul Hsu*

Overview of the top public health accomplishments in the 20th century that led to a 27.62-year increase in life expectancy in the United States. It is based on an interdisciplinary approach that will use a combination of discussions, lectures, movie clips, and interactive activities to engage students in the material and establish a collaborative learning environment. Students will focus on public health achievements ranging from decreases in incidence of infectious diseases, heart disease, stroke, and tobacco use to increases in food and water safety, nutrition, and exercise.

### *Film and Television*

## **Sinking Your Blade into Anime—Introduction to Japanese Animation**

*Student Facilitator: Kevin Nguyen | Faculty Mentor: Charles Sheetz*

Like a samurai's katana slashing its enemy, the pirate kings and giant robots of Japanese Animation have left their mark on the Western pop culture scene, emerging from a niche market in Japan to a globalized phenomenon. Exploration of Japanese Animation, or "anime," as a uniquely stylized medium of entertainment, cultural movement, and gold mine for thematic analysis. Introduction to anime for interested newcomers, but also opportunity for deeper interaction among existing fans. Viewings consist of entire Fate/Zero (2011) series and samples from other representative works.

## *History*

### **Keepin' It Real: The History of the Hip Hop Generation**

*Student Facilitator: Rafael Silva | Faculty Mentor: Mary Corey*

Designed for both majors and non-majors. Exploration of Hip Hop's meteoric rise as an American cultural phenomenon, with special consideration of landmark artists, songs, and genres. Historical survey of late twentieth century America will ground the story of Hip Hop in contemporary political, economic, social, and cultural circumstances.

## *Physiological Science*

### **Emergency Code Stroke: Stroke Education in Los Angeles**

*Student Facilitator: Elias Saba | Faculty Mentor: Patricia Phelps*

As students living in Los Angeles, it is incredibly important to understand the steps we can take to smooth the health disparities found in our communities and take an active role in improving the lives of those who live around us. In this course, we dissect the public health landscape of Los Angeles by focusing on strokes and the way socioeconomic, genetic, and cultural differences play a role in both the risk of stroke, the access to stroke prevention and awareness initiatives, as well as medical response and recovery afterwards. Beyond basic stroke morphology, students can expect to learn about local stroke awareness initiatives, the evolving status of emergency response in Los Angeles, factors resulting in increased disease risk, local health policy, and the role UCLA will play in addressing the health disparities the city of Los Angeles faces.

## *Political Science*

### **The United Nations Millennium Development Goals— Multinational Cooperation, Human Rights, and International Order**

*Student Facilitator: Jasleen Bains | Faculty Mentor: Deborah Larson*

We will observe how states in the 21st century have cooperated with one another to combat disease, terrorism, and economic disaster. Students will gain an understanding of the role human rights play in vaguely defined principles, such as peacekeeping and security. This course examines negotiations from the UN Security Council to the UN Human Rights Council to understand international efforts in transnational issues. The course is divided into three themes: (1) security (2) development and assistance (3) human rights and international law. These frameworks will be used to evaluate the UN Development Millennium Goal of the week. This course is an introduction to contemporary human rights problems and the global response to these issues.

## *Psychiatry*

### **Mindful Movement—Growing Interest for Mindfulness Meditation**

*Student Facilitator: Kush Bhatt | Faculty Mentor: Marvin Belzer*

This course will explore the practice of mindfulness meditation and the increasing importance of mindfulness in the western world. We will begin by discussing the origins of mindfulness in the East and the introduction of mindfulness in the West. We will then go on to examine promising contemporary research regarding mindfulness in medicine and psychology. In addition to this, we will also be looking at the application of mindfulness practice in various settings such as schools, hospitals, and businesses. Lastly, students will be encouraged to develop their own practice of mindfulness through exposure to mindfulness events on the UCLA campus.

## *Psychology*

### **The Enigma of Subjective Experience**

*Student Facilitator: Cody Kommers | Faculty Mentor: Martin Monti*

Designed for students of any major. Examination of current theories of consciousness from both philosophy and neuroscience. Survey big questions of consciousness: How does the objective world give rise to subjective experience? Is consciousness a fundamental element of our universe? Can computers become conscious? Focus on group discussion with interactive demonstrations and guest lectures. Culmination in a deeper ability to question personal beliefs about consciousness and to incorporate an explanation of consciousness into scientific worldview.

## *Sociology*

### **Social Identities and Interaction**

*Student Facilitator: Lital Slobodsky | Faculty Mentor: Jerome Rabow*

People, especially students at liberal colleges and universities, pride themselves on not being racist, not being sexist, and not being homophobic. But in reality, when we look at the general population, most people are not even aware of how they each partake in our prejudiced society. This course is intended to raise awareness about people's identities in order to help them understand the privileges and difficulties that others outside of their identity have to face. Topics include positive social identity, racism, sexism, homophobia, and division of society into dominants and subordinates. Subtopics include experience and perception of social identities, privilege, and development of identities throughout history. Readings will focus on personal experiences relating to race, gender, and sexual orientation.

## *Surgery*

### **Trauma—A Matter of Life or Death**

*Student Facilitator: Beatrice Sun | Faculty Mentor: Eric Ley*

A devastating motor vehicle accident, a fall from a ladder, a gunshot wound to the chest. Trauma is all around us, but when accidents occur, who is responsible for taking care of the victims? What life-saving measures can be taken immediately after? How is a hospital emergency room structured for efficiency? How is a homeless man treated, and where does he go after leaving the hospital? Exploration of different topics in trauma such as human factors, patient transport, emergency procedures, and policies. Examination of case studies, and discussion of the intersection between trauma and non-medical aspects of society. Introduction to approaching papers and current events from a multidisciplinary perspective.

## *World Arts and Cultures*

### **Social Media for Social Action**

*Student Facilitator: Amanda Hoskinson | Faculty Mentor: David Gere*

Can changing your profile picture change the world? Do online petitions actually accomplish anything? Why does Facebook want me to donate to Ebola efforts? This seminar will not only allow you to explore these problems; it will provide a sandbox for you to try to fix some of them yourself. Social Media for Social Action is a project-based seminar intended to provide students with theory based social media skills for any industry. This seminar will focus on one sector of social media in particular, social action. Throughout the course students will engage in critical discussion about social media, social action, and where these issues connect. Students will also learn basic non-profit marketing skills on three primary platforms (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook). The seminar will culminate in students running a campaign of their own design for the Art and Global Health center, a campus non-profit.

## **Spring 2016 USIE Seminars**

### *Asian American Studies*

#### **Francophone Vietnam: Literature and Film**

*Student Facilitator: Jason Hong | Faculty Mentor: Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo*

Although Vietnam was once a French-speaking country because of its history under French colonial rule, its francophone past has mostly been overshadowed by the American involvement in the Vietnam War. The goal of this course is to thus paint students another portrait of Vietnam by way of literature and film. The first half of the course will interrogate embodiments of Vietnam's colonial history, beginning with French intrusions into the country and ending with its independence from France. The second half will then take a look at its more recent, postcolonial history, mainly by studying diaspora and immigration through the works of exilic writers residing in France and Quebec. Major questions include: How does one negotiate identity between two languages and histories, Vietnamese and French? What transnational spaces have developed between Vietnam and France? All readings and films will be in English (translation and subtitles). No knowledge of French is required.

### *Chemistry*

#### **From Smartphones to Diamonds, the Versatility of Inorganic Carbon**

*Student Facilitator: Winn Huynh | Faculty Mentor: Richard Kaner*

This course will provide an introduction to compounds containing only carbon, particularly diamond, graphite, graphene, carbon nanotubes and carbon fibers. There will be many opportunities participate in hands-on demos, interact with science literature and give a presentation on an inorganic carbon topic. Opportunities to learn from each other and by pursuing independent or group projects will also be provided. Come to class prepared each week, actively participate in class discussions, and strengthen your presentation skills—all while building knowledge in the practical applications of carbon technologies.

## *Communication Studies*

### **Survey of Political Repression: How the State Conveys its Message**

*Student Facilitator: Albert Sarian | Faculty Mentor: Paul Von Blum*

This course will use a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding the various examples throughout US history. It will examine the social, political and economic implications of these repressive episodes and how the state conveyed its message. This course will provide a historical overview and an in-depth examination of selected major highlights of domestic political repression. This class will use an array of primary and secondary sources, in addition to documentaries to give students a holistic understanding of the events.

## *Education*

### **Access, Agitation, and Litigation: The State of Affirmative Action in United States Colleges**

*Student Facilitator: Arthur Wang | Faculty Mentor: Robert Teranishi*

Affirmative action as it pertains to university campuses has become a discussion defined by partisan entrenchment and a bitter, decades-long, debate. Incorporating sociology, educational studies, legal theory, and more, this course is a thorough and multidisciplinary exploration of affirmative action's history, rationale, and implementation in the United States, with particular foci on current events, where Asian Americans fit into the debate, and the uncertain future of the policy. Seeks to facilitate the development of informed, critical, and complex opinions of a controversial social policy through weekly discussions prefaced by brief backgrounder explanations. Students will evaluate fundamental questions pertinent to the policy, such as "does race matter in colleges?" and "is affirmative action discriminatory?," while also conducting critical investigations of why these questions are being asked in the first place.



## **The Rise of the Anti-Hero**

*Student Facilitator: Sarah Abolail | Faculty Mentor: Mitchum Huehls*

From Walter White to Tony Soprano, the Golden Age of television is built around a rise in the narratives of anti-heroes. Why is this rise of the anti-hero significant to our contemporary moment? What do anti-heroes tell us about the contemporary anxiety with time, history, capitalism, and violence? How does identifying or connecting to immoral characters complicate our sense of responsibility? This course uses anti-heroes as the lens for investigating and complicating all of these questions. We will focus on developing analytical and close reading skills using a variety of mediums, including visual texts. We will begin by looking at historical anti-hero figures such as Shakespeare's Macbeth, and move to contemporary television and film antiheroes such as Taylor Derden from "Fight Club," Anthony Soprano from "Sopranos" and Walter White from "Breaking Bad."

## **Don't Panic!: A Student's Guide to Humor in Science Fiction**

*Student Facilitator: Ariel Reider | Faculty Mentor: Ursula Heise*

Science fiction has vastly expanded in scope and variety since the 1960s—and until recently, it's rarely been funny. Over the last few decades, humor has increasingly come to form part of science fiction. What makes adding humor to science fiction such a prominent phenomenon? What purpose do creators have behind mixing the comic and the scientifically imaginative? In other words, why is funny sci-fi so darn popular? This course will consider these questions by looking at works that unite humor and science fiction. We will examine works from a variety of media, not only text but film, cartoon, and music, and from authors and creators such as Douglas Adams, Rebecca Sugar, David Willis, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and more. Students will discuss how, where, and why these works included humor, as well as whether that humor worked. Students should leave this course with an understanding of humor, science fiction, and the ways in which these two elements interact with each other, as well as with other genres, such as fantasy or magical realism.

## **Young, Wild, and Free: Themes and Topics in Young Adult Literature**

*Student Facilitator: Dorothy Yim | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Mott*

This course is an exploration in the themes of young adult literature and how it relates to the everyday lives of adolescents. Through class discussion and weekly writing assignments, we will discuss how the characters in the model novel, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth, respond to topics such as categorization, identity, and sacrifice.

### *Environment*

## **Wet and Wild World of Water: How Water in Los Angeles Circulates Through the Human Experience**

*Student Facilitator: Denita Toneva | Faculty Mentor: Cully Nordby*

Most people don't think twice about where their water comes from or where it ends up once it falls into the drain or outside. This course will be an interactive exploration of water in Los Angeles and how it is intertwined into our lives. Through in-class activities and outdoor field trips to various waterways in LA, students will learn about the holistic cycle of water movement from the source to homes to the ocean where everything eventually ends up. This will be an opportunity to delve into the anthropogenic effects of urbanization and pollution on our waterways and how that comes back to us, as well as possible solutions and mitigation efforts. Although we may not always see the effects we have on the environment, everything we do in LA can impact important natural resources that we need for our own survival. By examining the issues and providing strategies to help mitigate problems, this course will empower students to make a difference in the city we call home in ways that benefit both people and the environment.

## History

### **"To Pimp a Butterfly": Cultural Evolution of Black Los Angeles**

*Student Facilitator: Rakeidra Davis-Hudson | Faculty Mentor: Mary Corey*

This course divulges a critical examination of community issues socially, culturally, economically, and politically, through artistic liberation: Hip-Hop. We will examine the Black Musical up rise through the exploration of Kendrick Lamar's latest album, "To Pimp a Butterfly." We will trace the history of Black Los Angeles, as it becomes the cultural and intellectual climate, of which the revolution emerges. In this course we will study both the rise of hip-hop in Southern California and the historical context in which that significant cultural movement developed. This course is a creative analysis of dichotomy of black culture in America.

### **Chocolate: A Cultural Commodity**

*Student Facilitator: Madeleine Gregory | Faculty Mentor: Robin Derby*

Exploration of cacao and chocolate in an international context from Mesoamerican origins to the present, with special consideration of surrounding social, cultural, political, and economic circumstances. The first half of the course will focus on the historical transformation of cacao into chocolate and its parallels to larger trends, focusing on the cultural exchange between Europeans and Americans. The second half of the course will examine its recent history, analyzing the influence of past events on current concerns in the industry, such as fair trade, labor, and the imminent chocolate shortage. Designed for majors and non-majors.

## *Information Studies*

### **Digital Narratives: How to Counter the Mainstream Narrative Online**

*Student Facilitator: Hannah Diaz | Faculty Mentor: Safiya Noble*

This seminar will provoke discussion on the intersection of technology, power, and identity. While it is very easy to assume that the Internet is a democratizing tool, there is evidence that suggests that this is not the case. Instead, money, access, skills, isolation, identity, and stereotypes play a significant role in who creates information and whom information is created for online. We will look at different studies about the digital divide and its continued existence around the world, but especially in America. Moreover, we will talk about what “digital cosmopolitans” are and the problems that arise when we tend to seek out communities of like-minded people, seeking only to re-affirm our already biased opinions. We will explore who is “digitally exiled,” whether or not “digital ghettos” exist, and how this manifests as power in society through readings, videos, and worksheets. We will talk about how to decipher, describe, and deconstruct the mainstream narrative online. By the end of the class, each individual should be able to express their knowledge of how technology has or hasn’t changed power and privilege in America. Lastly, my seminar will discuss counter-narratives and public programs as a possible solution to these problems.

## *Mathematics*

### **Mathematics & Movies**

*Student Facilitator: Ruth Dolly Johnson | Faculty Mentor: Spencer Unger*

Mathematics can often be mired in long computations and abstract concepts, but the field of mathematics offers so many areas of exploration that are both understandable and interesting to everyone. Students will use movies as a framework of understanding for various topics in mathematics, such as game theory, topology, cryptography, and more. The goal is to demonstrate how the abstract concepts can indeed be described in all situations, as demonstrated in the chosen movies. Designed for both majors and non-majors; course only requires basic understanding of high school mathematics.

## *Music History*

### **Understanding Franz Liszt, the First Rock Star**

*Student Facilitator: Beniko Hirosawa-Bates | Faculty Mentor: Raymond Knapp*

This seminar aims to improve students' understanding of music history in relation to today's world. By imagining Franz Liszt as a model for the contemporary iconic figure of a rock star, students are encouraged to diagnose and identify similarities or differences between cultures and the development of societies. By the studying the culture of the Romantic era and comparing it to current experiences, students will be brought closer to the subject matter.

### **There Will Be Light: Musicals and Disabilities**

*Student Facilitator: Richard Tucker | Faculty Mentor: Raymond Knapp*

Musical Theatre aims to solve a problem while bringing the audience along for the journey. Typically, at the closing of the final number in a musical, the problem is either resolved or is left for the audience member to assume the best or worst has happened. Similarly, society views disability as a problem, something that needs to be fixed. Yet, some may argue that disabilities should not be seen as a problem, but as a part of one's identity – not needing to be fixed. When applying these social norms to the art of musical theatre one may ask how disability is represented within musical theatre, a live art form. This course surveys and explores the representation of disability in: Sweeney Todd, Rent, and Next to Normal. The course will question how representing disability in a musical, whether positive or negative, can deepen the plot of the musical. This seminar is designed for both majors and non-majors and previous knowledge in music history, theatre, or disability studies is not required.

## Neuroscience

### **This Is Your Brain on Music**

*Student Facilitator: Tyler Toueg | Faculty Mentor: Ellen Carpenter*

Music has existed since the beginning of recorded history and plays a critical role all of our lives in some way. Whether it's listening to music when we are relaxing, studying or exercising, we have all had the experience of music influencing our emotions and behavior in some way. In this class, we will be looking at the science behind the relationship between music and the brain and why music makes us feel and act the way that we do. We will start from the basics of describing what music. We will go on to explain the scientific basis behind how both playing and listening to music physically and emotionally impacts us. Then we will look at how people with certain mental conditions process music differently. Finally, we will also look at the applications for music as a therapeutic tool for treating mental disorders in cases where pharmaceutical drugs fall short.

## Philosophy

### **Thinking on Your Feet: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sport**

*Student Facilitator: Benjamin Genta | Faculty Mentor: Calvin Normore*

Whether it be watching a Friday night football game, passing by an advertisement with a professional golf player, or overhearing a group of people talking about a recent soccer game, sports continuously surround our everyday lives. This class will explore questions that make up the essence of sport: what is it, and how is it different from a game? Why do humans engage in this activity? Is there a moral code within sports? By exploring these questions, among many others, through a philosophical lens, students will gain a new out-look on what seems like such a familiar activity.

## **The Philosophy and Neuroscience of Free Will**

*Student Facilitator: Eden Sayed | Faculty Mentor: Calvin Normore*

Do we have free will? What does it mean to have free will and how could it be realized in the nervous system? In this course we will utilize tools from analytic philosophy, computational neuroscience, and experimental neuroscience and psychology to investigate the problem of free will. We will examine the conceptual relationship of indeterminacy, determinacy, and randomness to our freedom of the will. We will also study the computational and neurophysiological work on decision making, as well as the behavioral work on the sense of agency (e.g the Libet Experiment), and evaluate their relevance to the free will debate.

### *Psychology*

## **Mind Over Health Matter: The Social Psychology Behind Modern Health Controversies**

*Student Facilitator: Jasmine Jafari Faculty Mentor: Carlos Grijalva*

This seminar is intended to help students recognize the psychological phenomena behind common western health culture, concepts, practices, and beliefs in order to understand and discuss these topics constructively and mindfully. Students are constantly exposed to a barrage of health-related topics and debates through the news, our families, and social networks; however, we often encounter limited perspectives such that we either nod in full agreement or dismiss contrary opinions as invalid. Sensationalized or not, debates over popular health topics have massive repercussions at both the immediate (family and friends) and global level (lobbying and law). This seminar aims to address and depolarize these various health controversies and tackle them head on through education and friendly discussion. Our discussion will address the psychology behind people's health beliefs and values, by deconstructing multiple perspectives into the core motivational factors contributing to them, and focusing on one health-related phenomenon, controversy, or topic each week.

## **Mind Games: Psychology behind Controls**

*Student Facilitator: Becky Li | Faculty Mentor: Jesse Rissman*

Since the days of Tennis for Two, video games have evolved to become a beloved part of our lives. They have infiltrated our peace with common household names from Mario and Luigi to Grand Theft Auto. Despite being constrained to a digital screen, video games have real life consequences. Do video games increase violent tendencies, as suggested by countless newspaper articles? Does gender and/or sex have an effect on video game performance? Do video games have a promising future in classrooms? With video games becoming an integral part of our lives and with their influence continuing to grow, it is important to assess their effect on different areas of our psychology. This course hopes to address the aforementioned topics from a psychological perspective with support from scholarly journal articles and news stories. This ten-week seminar welcomes both avid video game fans and simply curious minds. No prior knowledge necessary. Press START to continue.

## **The Big Happy Picture: Exploring Perspectives of Happiness**

*Student Facilitator: Luis Mendez | Faculty Mentor: Gerardo Ramirez*

Happiness is a current phenomenon that is yet to be fully understood. Our lives are filled with moments of sadness and those of happiness. Researchers have been interested in the differences between those two, from how the feeling was derived to the current state of emotion. The U.S. being one of the countries known to be better off in this world, suffers with millions of Americans having difficulty to find happiness in their lives. This often brings a lot of curiosity to psychologists, researchers, and others like myself. This course will not be a "How to be Happy in 3 easy steps" therapeutic session. However, the goal of this course is for students to leave class everyday knowing a little more about happiness from a different perspective. This can be from a sociological perspective on how people from a certain social group find happiness in their life compared to a different social group. Giving a kid from a low resource tribe something to eat will make the kid happy as opposed to a privileged kid who will throw a tantrum for having to eat their vegetables. Happiness will be seen over a chronological perspective in which we go over how the way people acquire the state of happiness has changed over time, with an emphasis on technology and goods. Who will be more satisfied with their jeans, someone in the 1980s who bought their average blue jeans or someone today who bought theirs at a Levis store?



## *Society and Genetics*

### **Inconsistent Dichotomies: Examining the Sex/Gender Binary**

*Student Facilitator: Mariah Kolbe | Faculty Mentor: Patrick Allard*

Interdisciplinary look into the strengths and weaknesses of the sex/gender binary. The biology of sexual development will be examined concurrently with the sociological effects of using a binary system to categorize humans. Specific topics will include hormone levels, sexual variation in non-human species, sex biases within scientific research, and the existence of transgender individuals.

### **A Short History & Critical Examination of Bioethics**

*Student Facilitator: Elizabeth Seger | Faculty Mentor: Soraya de Chadarevian*

For centuries the Hippocratic Oath has upheld a tradition of medical ethics centered on the roles and obligation of the physician. However, in a globalizing world characterized by rapid development in biotechnology and medicine, the emphasis of medical ethics has shifted from doctors' obligations, to individual patients' rights and the promotion of biomedical research. It is the goal of the newly emerging professional bioethicist to objectively define moral right and wrong in the context of modern society, science and medicine. But is it possible to come to objective moral conclusion? What gives the bioethicist the authority to fill such an impactful role? Are there external factors that might motivate or alter the seemingly objective goals of bioethics? This class will explore the rich history of medical ethics and the factors that influenced and necessitated the emergence of bioethics. Students will critically examine the role bioethics in modern medicine and research. What works? Can the bioethics system be improved to better serve science and medicine?