

Spring 2017 USIE Seminars

Biomedical Research

Limitations of Science: Pseudoscience, Research Misconduct, and Fraudulent Discoveries

Student Facilitator: Arielle Tripp | Faculty Mentor: Rafael Romero

Do cellphones cause cancer? Does marijuana eat your brain? Are BPA free plastic bottles really safe? Daily we are bombarded with scientific studies in the media, but rarely is sufficient evidence provided to corroborate these claims. What is an individual to believe? How can we separate genuine breakthroughs from absurdities? Through deconstructing scientific research and examining provocative real-world examples, this course will examine a variety of issues influencing the nature of scientific inquiry and the culture of science, such as: demarcation of science from non-science, Hippocratic oath of science, abstract and practical limitations of human knowledge, science in the media, and the borderlines of science. Science enthusiasts and interested layman will come away with a holistic appreciation for the subjectivity of scientific inquiry, develop scientific literacy, and learn how to interpret science at its fringes.

Civic Engagement

Power, Privilege, and Perspectives: Examining Dynamics of Community Service in Los Angeles

Student Facilitator: Celeste Romano | Faculty Mentor: Kathy O'Byrne

Service is often presented as an eternally good activity, one that connects students to their communities, instills values of social responsibility, and produces individuals who are more tolerant and culturally aware. However, service can also reinforce systems of oppression and exploit marginalized groups for social benefit. Discussion with students involved with service work, with focus on social justice. Reflection on roles as volunteers and advocates and the privilege and power we are accorded as members of higher education. Underlying structure of community service, systematized inequities service work attempts to address, and how service work can perpetuate those inequities. Ways we can change current systems, including altering perspectives, challenging top down approaches, and redefining what it means to be an ally.

Communication Studies

Celebrity and Fan Culture

Student Facilitator: Elisa Cottarelli | Faculty Mentor: Michael Suman

Why did a lock of Justin Bieber's hair sell for \$40,668 on eBay? What effect did Oprah have on boosting votes for Obama in 2007? Why are the young so engaged in pop culture? Did Liam Payne of One Direction's tweet really inspire Burger King to bring back "chicken fries" to their menu? This seminar will explore these, and many other, questions surrounding celebrity and fan culture. In the first half of the seminar, you will learn about the role of celebrities in our society, and in the second, you will learn about the role and characteristics of fan culture. This seminar will explore topics such as celebrity endorsements, reality television, politics, celebrity worship syndrome, fan creation, and the power and effect of the Internet on fan-celebrity relationships. This seminar will be divided into one-part lecture, one-part discussion per class. You should be able to reflect on the importance of celebrity and fan culture in your own lives and in today's media. Throughout the quarter, we will look at relevant theories and current events in the entertainment industry that pertain to celebrity and fan culture.

Computer Science

Safety in the Cloud: Introduction to Cybersecurity

Student Facilitator: Frank Chen | Faculty Mentor: Peter L. Reiher

Privacy has always been an important aspect of our lives, but fewer people understand how online privacy works. Our emails, electronic purchases, files, and sensitive information can be easily taken away from us if we are not educated in protecting ourselves online. Preliminary introduction to field of cybersecurity. Study of variety of topics important for regular consumers of technology. Background knowledge in programming or computer science not required.

Education

Embracing Identity: Learn About Your Ancestry

Student Facilitator: Amy Aldana | Faculty Mentor: Sandra H. Graham

Have you ever wondered who you are or how you got here? Exploration of these universal questions through learning about one's ancestral roots and family's heritage. Heritage, be it national, cultural, or family, is an endowment of unique sets of historical knowledge; but foremost, heritage is one's history. Learning about our family's history is essential to understanding ourselves, basic humanity, and diversity. Students construct their family tree using resources such as Ancestry.com and an oral history approach. Oral history workshop to provide students opportunity to obtain information through interviewing family members. Students gain better understanding of their identity through learning about their ancestral roots, and their family's heritage.

English

Speak Write Now: Performance as Literary Analysis

Student Facilitator: Ashley Hope | Faculty Mentor: Eric Jager

Roles of actor, director, author, reader, and spectator, using performance as critical lens for understanding literature. Return to the stage and revisiting of critical role of performance in understanding literature. Examination of how writers and performers stage meaning for different audiences and mediums. Consideration of questions, such as how performance is act of literary analysis and how performance creates meaning text alone cannot convey.

The Three Amigos: Introduction to Contemporary Mexican Cinema

Student Facilitator: Tyra Kristiansen | Faculty Mentor: Mitchum A. Huehls

Mexican directors have received the Academy Award for Best Directing for the past three years, Alfonso Cuarón in 2013 and Alejandro G. Iñárritu in 2014 and 2015. Three Mexican directors in particular have garnered transnational success: Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro G. Iñárritu, and Guillermo Del Toro. Study of prominent Spanish language films that have transformed Mexican cinema, Cuarón's *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001), Iñárritu's *Amores Perros* (2000), and Del Toro's *El Laberinto del Fauno* (2006). Exploration of common themes across these films, such as transnationalism, machismo, Chicana archetypes, and racial identity formation in relation to contemporary Mexico, while distinguishing differences of narrative form and style.

Black Pleasure / Black Pain

Student Facilitator: Amara Lawson-Chavanu | Faculty Mentor: Uri McMillan

Debates within black feminist scholarship have been dedicated to issues of objectification, body commodification, and sexual agency. This discourse has largely centered on whether or not embodiments of perceived sexual excess contest or remain complicit in histories of rendering black women's bodies as deviant. Complexities of black women's intimate, erotic, and sexual lives, by looking beyond binary discourses of agency/oppression and pleasure/pain. How have black women historically negotiated sexual and non-sexual forms of pleasure under conditions or spaces of objectification, exploitation, or trauma? What are the politics of black women's production and consumption of sexual labor? Selections from fields of black feminist pleasure politics, queer of color critique, black cultural studies, and black performance theory.

Complicity/Possibility: Recent Shifts in U.S. Fiction

Student Facilitator: Rachael Lee | Faculty Mentor: Mitchum A. Huehls

American culture is frequently imagined as doomed to a wasteland of meaningless consumption. This crisis has led recent U.S. fiction writers to explore alternative modes of meaning and value that might point us to better possibilities. Study of Tao Lin's *Taipei* (2013) with topical articles to explore ambiguous relationship between complicity and possibility in current literary modes. Topics include reconceptualizations of space and time, complications of human memory in digital era, consumerism and Millennial generation, cultures of depression, and value of experimental literature.

Through the Eyes of the Bystander: Breaking Perceptions of Oppression

Student Facilitator: Melanie Taing | Faculty Mentor: Christopher M. Mott

Should there be limits to scientific inquiry? What is the relationship between human rationality and human emotion? Examination of how Mary Shelley attempts to answer these questions in *Frankenstein*, how Hollywood does so, and how these questions relate to our world today.

Frankenstein, Monster or Maker: Unlocking the Inner Romantic

Student Facilitator: Tyra Kristiansen | Faculty Mentor: Mitchum A. Huehls

Mexican directors have received the Academy Award for Best Directing for the past three years, Alfonso Cuarón in 2013 and Alejandro G. Iñárritu in 2014 and 2015. Three Mexican directors in particular have garnered transnational success: Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro G. Iñárritu, and Guillermo Del Toro. Study of prominent Spanish language films that have transformed Mexican cinema, Cuarón's *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001), Iñárritu's *Amores Perros* (2000), and Del Toro's *El Laberinto del Fauno* (2006). Exploration of common themes across these films, such as transnationalism, machismo, Chicana archetypes, and racial identity formation in relation to contemporary Mexico, while distinguishing differences of narrative form and style.

There's a Catch: An Exploration of Satire Through Catch 22

Student Facilitator: David Veta | Faculty Mentor: Christopher M. Mott

Exploration of satire in contemporary English literature through lens of Joseph Heller's World War II novel, *Catch 22*. Students read and comment on absurd and satirical elements and discuss elements found particularly funny and interesting. Discussion of contemporary relevance of themes explored by Heller (e.g., insanity, bureaucracy, capitalism, morbidity).

Gender Studies

Playing God: American Transgender Healthcare Experiences from 1950 to Present

Student Facilitator: Elias Lawliet | Faculty Mentor: Michelle F. Erai

Exploration of often tumultuous relationships between transgender Americans and their healthcare providers over past sixty years. Nuanced understanding of transgender medical experience, from gender clinics that proliferated at universities nationwide (including UCLA) to current discussions about medical autonomy and insurance coverage. Recent research into experiences transgender Angelenos are having with their healthcare providers to see how far we've come--and how far we have yet to go.

Management

Mad Over Marketing: Why We Buy What We Buy

Student Facilitator: Shashvat Somany | Faculty Mentor: Dominique M. Hanssens

Study of world of marketing with holistic approach, combining creative, strategic, and psychological elements of marketing. Examination of different marketing campaigns across variety of brands and media channels such as TV, social media, print, out-of-home, Guerilla, etc.

Mathematics

Math in Everyday Language: A Hands-On Exploration

Student Facilitators: Anahita Sarvi | Faculty Mentor: Michael A. Hill

Have you ever felt intimidated by what seems to be an impenetrable jumble of mathematical symbols? In contrast, have you ever found mathematics to be much more palpable and vibrant than a quick glance at a typical textbook may suggest? Exploration of fundamental concepts

from mathematics in tangible, interactive manner. Use of variety of activities and media (games, clay, music, etc.) to study topics in linear algebra, differential equations, single and multi-variable calculus, and Fourier analysis. Students with any level of familiarity with the field may gain new insight and develop intuitive understanding of mathematics. No previous knowledge of mathematics is required.

Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics

Viruses: Harmful Agents with Medicinal Applications

Student Facilitators: Louis Massoud, Zaid Hikmat | Faculty Mentor: Asim Dasgupta

Exploration of use of viruses as tools in medical research, including discussion of their adoption as therapeutic agents. Introduction to basic processes exhibited by selected viruses, to understand therapeutic potentials of viruses as delivery systems in gene therapy. Interaction with distinguished virologist, who is an active researcher and professor at UCLA.

Music

From Fingerpickers to Metalheads: How Guitar Took Over World

Student Facilitator: Juan Rivera | Faculty Mentor: Peter F. Yates

How guitar has become most popular instrument in world, with focus on examining characteristics of selected popular guitar styles. What makes guitar appealing and versatile, similarities between styles, and how to distinguish them. Development of guitar within styles such as flamenco, reggae, rock, blues, and heavy metal. Social, economic, and political role guitar plays in style's culture. Guitar construction. Role of gender in guitar playing, including important contributions by women guitarists. Live demonstrations. No previous guitar or musical experience is required.

Music History

Modern Conversations in Hip-Hop: Important Motifs and Relevant Cities

Student Facilitator: Amir Adam Dailamy | Faculty Mentor: Robert R. Fink

Opinions and sounds of hip-hop can arguably serve as metaphorical pulse-check of current state of America. Structured discussion of some pertinent conversations in hip-hop in order to define current zeitgeist of hip-hop in America, and what it implies for trends in future generations of music.

Philosophy

Terrorism, State, and Justification

Student Facilitator: Chad Serrao | Faculty Mentor: Alexander J. Julius

The subject of terrorism is highly prevalent in contemporary American discourse. Politicians and news pundits discuss acts of terrorism, its origins, and its consequences. However, it is rare to ask what terrorism is. How does terrorism differ from warfare? How does terrorism differ from homicide? Use of philosophical and historical material on terrorism to attempt to answer these two questions.

Political Science

We, the Corporations

Student Facilitator: Austin Barraza | Faculty Mentor: Steven P. Bilakovics

Corporations today are able to exercise unmatched influence over government. Debate on corporate power over politics by examining how corporations influence government in order to produce policies that protect their economic interests. Comparisons drawn between different eras of American history to understand the relationship between big business and government. Overview of constitutional provisions and lobbying and possible approaches to reigning in corporate power.

Psychology

Criminal Justice: History, Neuroscience, and Psychology behind Major Controversies

Student Facilitator: Anna Zervos | Faculty Mentor: Theodore F. Robles

The U.S. criminal justice system has been and continues to be a source of major debate: from use of death penalty, to solitary confinement, to bail system. Deconstruction of these debates using historical, neuroscience, and psychological lens. Critical analysis of cyclic criminal justice system, starting with arrest of individual and ending with release.

Society and Genetics

Dolphins: People of the Sea

Student Facilitator: Kayla Arjasbi | Faculty Mentor: Jessica W. Lynch Alfaro

Dolphins are known to be smiley and playful animals, capable of responding to human commands and performing complex acrobatics. They are also one of the most intelligent nonhuman species to ever exist. Some may even argue that they are smarter than humans. Why is this? What makes them so smart? How do they communicate? Do they have culture? What makes them like us? Investigation of rich, complex lives of dolphins and discovery of meaningful, putatively human aspects we both share: social-emotional relationships, elaborate language and dialects, and remarkable problem-solving behavior. Discussion of issues in captivity and conservation, and exploration of ways to create positive change for our sea-people counterparts, through habitat restoration, sustainable fishing, and environment sustainability.

Statistics

Shaping the Future: Machine Learning and Data Science

Student Facilitator: Connor Hennen | Faculty Mentor: Vivian Lew

Exploration of how rapidly emerging field of data science will fundamentally revolutionize mechanisms and strategies through which wide array of industries operate. Examination of how big data can impact campaign strategies of politicians, diagnose and treat disease, determine tactics of sports franchises, drive business strategy, and help develop automated technologies and machines. Introduction to means by which data science is conducted, such as Python programming language, statistical techniques, and algorithms. Consideration of compelling prospect of data science field, machine learning, which enables computers to learn and develop independent of human input.

Spring 2018 USIE Seminars

Bioengineering

The Biology and Engineering of Superheroes

Student Facilitator: Francis Lin | Faculty Mentor: Jacob Schmidt

This course analyzes several unique superheroes and superpowers using relevant biology, physics, and engineering concepts. Students learn to use these concepts to evaluate if certain superpowers and superhero origin stories are scientifically sound. Innovative research is explored to assess whether technology can endow ordinary humans with superhuman abilities. Students leave the course with an understanding of the scientific gap between normal human beings and superheroes, and how that gap can be narrowed by new technology.

Chicano/a Studies

Immigrants in Mass Media Discourse

Student Facilitator: Oscar Gayton | Faculty Mentor: Reynaldo Macias

"Illegal aliens", "anchor babies", or "Dreamers"? The purpose of this seminar is to enlighten students and inform them about how undocumented immigrants are portrayed by the mass media. Through the application of Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT), students will examine how the mass media has and continues to influence the way in which we view society. The course intends to expand one's understanding of the conflicting ideographs and frames being used by mass media outlets in the portrayal of the undocumented immigrant population.

Communication Studies

American Women and Comedy

Student Facilitator: Claire Marchon | Faculty Mentor: Steven Peterson

This seminar examines American women comics from the mid-twentieth century through the present. The various ways in which women have been historically marginalized manifests in their comedy in numerous and complex ways. Highlighting the innovative works of Jackie 'Moms' Mabley, Carol Burnett, Tina Fey, and Ellen DeGeneres, this seminar intends to view comedy as a subversive tool used for women to define and redefine their roles in society.

Education

Understanding the Achievement Gap

Student Facilitator: Victoria Vezaldenos | Faculty Mentor: Kimberley Gomez

Policy makers and educators frequently frame the US education system as an equal playing field for all hardworking students. However, additional factors can cause many students to fall behind. This course explores how influential factors limit the educational achievement of our peers, community, and family members, including negative stereotypes, cultural knowledge, socioeconomic status, and social connections. Through careful analysis, interactive learning, hands-on activities, and thoughtful discussions regarding the intersections of race, class, gender, students examine their positionality, learn to acknowledge educational privileges, understand obstacles students overcome, and build skills to create change.

Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

The Most Extreme: Exploring Extremophiles, the Origin of Life, and Search for Life in the Universe

Student Facilitator: Elizabeth Vanderwall | Faculty Mentor: Clifford Brunk

From hot springs and hydrothermal vents to acidic caves and polar ice, extremophiles are organisms that thrive under our planet's most extreme environments. These organisms not only have incredible biological properties that have been used in biotechnological inventions, industrial purposes, and bioremediation efforts, but they also expand our definition of how life can exist and are an active area of research for scientists interested in modeling life on the early earth and life on other planets. This course provides an appreciation for the astonishing diversity of life that exists on our planet.

English

Animation and Environmentalism

Student Facilitator: Kathleen Knight | Faculty Mentor: Joseph Nagy

This seminar focuses on the evolution of human attitudes toward the environment as portrayed in 20th and 21st century animated shorts and feature films. Focuses on history and artistic developments in animation, the cultural attitudes films reflect, and representations of environmental issues in US and foreign animated films through screenings, readings, and discussions. Emphasis on how animated works have influenced modern concepts of the natural world, and the implications of future environmental challenges.

From Grandmaster Flash to Bad and Boujee: The Rise and Evolution of Mainstream Hip-Hop

Student Facilitator: Andrew Hean | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Mott

Looking at the current songs in the Billboard Hot 100, the most streamed songs on music streaming services, or just listening to popular radio, one thing is clear—hip-hop has a dominant place in popular music and popular culture, becoming the new “Rock and Roll” of this day and age of style, technology and social media. This course will dive deeper into what makes hip-hop what it is today: a movement, a music genre, a culture, and much more. Seminar will look at the complex history behind today's catchy beats, controversial subject matter, and struggles of many hip-hop artists and figures.

Environment

Environmental Stewardship through Sustainable Actions

Student Facilitator: Mark Biedlingmaier | Faculty Mentor: Carl Maida

With the recent U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, the onus of the individual to create a more sustainable future has now become more important than ever before. Each class we will explore the issues and solutions related to that week's topic and how your daily actions can have significant local, regional, and global impacts. Throughout the seminar, students will learn how they can reduce their negative impact in these aspects of the environmental through behavioral assessments, DIY projects, collaborative activities, discussions, and more.

History

Mexican Civilization Art and the History it Reflects

Student Facilitator: Korina Pilkington | Faculty Mentor: Teofilo Ruiz

This course focuses on various pieces of Mexican art and evaluate the historical contexts of its creation throughout certain eras. In this course, students have the opportunity to study art and connect such pieces to social, political, and economic influences of Mexican culture. Mexican art has had great influence on the world today as it is reciprocally enhanced by the perspectives of those who created it. In Mexican Civilization Art students develop a greater appreciation of art and Mexican culture.

History of the Domestic Cat

Student Facilitator: Ani Alaberkyan | Faculty Mentor: Muriel McClendon

From being worshiped as gods to hunted as demons to ruling the Internet, the human relationship with domestic cats has existed for millennia. This seminar builds a framework of understanding the interaction of humans with domestic cats throughout different periods in history. Almost every human civilization in history developed a relationship with their feline pets; this course explores how different cultures defined their relationships with domestic cats. Each week the class will draw connections between the significances of cats in a particular time period as well as political, social, and economic influences surrounding that era.

Putin's Russia

Student Facilitator: Joshua Mejia | Faculty Mentor: Jared McBride

In recent years, Russia has been increasingly involved in contentious behavior. From military action in its near abroad, to its potential involvement in the US elections, the country is no stranger to the world's attention. Russia's actions – good and bad – have global impact, and its key player is the country's president, Vladimir Putin. In order to reach a fuller understanding of recent events, this course explores Russia's cultural and social history. Students complete the course with a larger, and more complex, Russian story. We not only understand the history of one man, but rather the larger story of "Putin's Russia."

Management

Starting a Startup: Lessons from the Grapevine

Student Facilitator: Eric Pan | Faculty Mentor: Terry Kramer

Many students dream of becoming successful entrepreneurs, but where does one start? When looking back at these experiences, experienced entrepreneurs often enjoy sharing advice and lessons learned to fuel the next generation of doers. Pieces of advice like “follow your passion” and “learn by doing” are great, but what does that mean? This course looks deeper into what it actually means to start a company through case studies, storytelling, and informal advice sourced from personal experience as a student entrepreneur. We will explore some common themes of entrepreneurs, and students gain a foundational framework to start their own entrepreneurial journey.

Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them: An Analysis

Student Facilitators: Cole Oost | Faculty Mentor: Oliver Fregoso

Science fiction and fantasy often explore remarkable beasts such as fire-breathing dragons or shape-shifting werewolves, but how many of these fantastic abilities already exist in the animals with which we share our world? This class investigates a sample of eight different groups of fascinating characteristics and some of the peculiar animals that possess them, including ourselves. Through these analyses, the class hopes to impart the wider importance of protecting the incredible diversity of life on our planet.

Music History

Creating Music in a Mobile Environment

Student Facilitator: Jake Richardson | Faculty Mentor: Gigi Johnson

This course is focused on creating music with mobile devices (e.g. iPhones and Androids) through a collaborative learning environment, featuring lecture, demonstrations, student presentations and group projects. This course provides students the knowledge of how to work digital audio workstations (DAW) on their mobile devices, and the tools to write music and explore sound through a more personalized and detailed process.

Musicology

Zinesters Unite! Living Literacy Legacy

Student Facilitator: Nina Crosby | Faculty Mentor: Jessica Schwartz

The radical riffs of punk transcend the world of music, history, and culture, and even subvert the traditional rules of English literature. Punk zines surfaced adjacent to the antagonistic nature of punk music, beginning in the 1970s, and have become increasingly privileged as socially relevant media. This class examines the sociocultural and academic aesthetics of perzines and fanzines as both performative and archival material and analyzes the temporalities of zines through lenses of gender, race, sexuality, politics, and accessibility to discover why and how zines contribute to larger cultural dialogues.

Neurology

Varying perspectives on disease: from molecules to populations

Student Facilitators: Eliza Fazzari, Leane Nasrallah | Faculty Mentor: Leif Havton

This interdisciplinary course provides a comprehensive study of one disease from a multitude of perspectives. Undergraduate students are rarely exposed to the wide breadth of approaches from which we may analyze the effects of a particular disease. Focusing on one field, such as molecular biology, prompts appreciation for that facet of the condition but excludes the others. In order to realize the most favorable course of dealing with an illness, we should have an understanding of more of the factors involved. In class, we study one disease from a variety of lenses by using Huntington's disease, delving into neurobiology, ethics, doctor experience, patient experience, and public health implications. By realizing that human disease is not contained to one field but that it spreads across multiple, we provide a greater appreciation for the factors that must be considered when viewing a particular illness.

Philosophy

What is the Meaning of Life?: Interdisciplinary Popular Approaches

Student Facilitator: Helen Lee | Faculty Mentor: Andrew Hsu

The meaning of life has inspired some of the greatest literature and pop culture cartoons, divided schools of thought such as atheism and religious spiritualism, and fueled countless existential crises in every human life. Why does thinking about this matter in the present-day? Prominent figures have dared to tackle life's biggest questions, such as Aristotle on the human function, Rick from "Rick and Morty" on nihilism, Kanye West on living materialistically, and the Dalai Lama on simplicity and kindness. Students will use philosophical, theological, and social inquiry to derive and develop their own answer to the meaning of life and learn how to make philosophy applicable to their daily life.

Public Health

Plant-Based Diet: Best Diet for Disease Prevention and Longevity

Student Facilitator: Raheem Louis | Faculty Mentor: William McCarthy

The United States is currently experiencing an increase in chronic conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease, fatty liver disease, and asthma. This seminar will investigate, with the aid of primary literature sources, why an adoption of a whole-foods, plant-based diet could prevent and even reverse these major conditions. Scientific evidence suggests that a plant-based eating pattern may be just as effective as common pharmaceuticals. This course explores these issues and result with a better understanding and awareness of the role of plant-based nutrition in the U.S. health landscape.

World Arts and Cultures

From Identity to Narrative: Exploring Your Voice Through the Arts

Student Facilitator: Maya Ram | Faculty Mentor: David Gere

This seminar bridges the connection between storytelling, self-empowerment, and social transformation. Throughout the quarter, students explore using their voices in new ways, engaging with their personal narratives, and practicing group sharing in order to embrace the stories of others. This experience is a personal journey, but the resulting storytelling belongs in a broader context within arts activism. This course provides students the opportunity to reflect on their own roles in creating social change, and envision their identities as arts-activists to use their narratives.

How to Fight Social Stigma with Art

Student Facilitator: Kelly Gluckman | Faculty Mentor: David Gere

Can art inspire real social change? How can we make a positive impact on the world in this social and political climate? This seminar digs into these questions through productive dialogue and creative, artistic action. The journey begins with a foundation of understanding stigma and its effects on intersectional human experiences and identities. Students gather inspiration by experiencing artistic and activist responses to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States as well as other stigmatized circumstances. Finally, we take concrete action by applying our course work through the creation of our own artistic response to stigma in our lives and the world.

Spring 2019 USIE Seminars

African American Studies

Depictions, Ideals, and Perspectives of the African-American Family as Told by Television

Student Facilitator: Chinyere Nwonye | Faculty Mentor: Pat Turner

Explore the history of Black representation in American television from the 1950s to the present. Assess the relationship between televisual representations and reality to consider how TV reflects and creates ideals of the African-American family. Contemplate the impact of media depictions on our own perceptions of people and culture.

Chicano/a Studies

#CentralAmericanTwitter: U.S Central Americans & Hashtag Activism

Student Facilitator: Leslie Aguilar | Faculty Mentor: Leisy Abrego

Central American communities have been present in the United States as early as the 1940's; however, these longstanding communities have often been overshadowed by dominant monolithic Latinx discourses. As a result of an increasing use of social media, Central American visibility has increased tremendously over the last year. One of the biggest platforms, known as the #CentralAmericanTwitter hashtag on Twitter has played an important role in centering Central American experiences, narratives, histories, and contemporary news. The course can be a tool for students to conceptualize, analyze and discuss on ways to tackle such inequalities that impact Central Americans today. This class will also allow non-Central American students to also engage with the complexities and heterogeneity of Latinx communities in the U.S. Students will explore the various topics that have been taking place in #CentralAmericanTwitter, that include, but are not limited to, the Central American exodus/refugee crisis, Black/Indigenous Central American communities, Central American cultural production, Central American Studies, etc.

Communication Studies

The Smartphone: The Frenemy in Your Pocket

Student Facilitator: Michael Gannon | Faculty Mentor: Michael Suman

The smartphone can be our friend and our enemy, for it is both a blessing and a curse. We will study reasons for why this is, looking at negative communicative effects such as anxiety, cognitive deficit, decreased attention span, mobile dependency, and addiction, just to name a few. On the flip-side, we will look at positive effects such as increased communication, quicker information access, stronger connections to the outside world, new communication styles, multifunctionality, and others. Ultimately, we will discuss the history of the smartphone and its impact on individuals and society. Students will leave this class knowing more about the frenemy in their pocket.

The History of Sexology

Student Facilitator: Gillian Parker | Faculty Mentor: Michael Suman

Introduction to the history of sex research from the 19th century to the present. Topics include German origins of sex research, eugenics, homosexuality, female sexuality, sexual behavior, Kinsey reports, sex therapy, gender identity, feminism, the AIDs crisis and the current state of the discipline.

Introduction to Human-Centered Design in iOS Applications

Student Facilitator: Kevin Tan | Faculty Mentor: Paul Eggert

Good design is arguably as important for a product as the engineering underlying it. Cutting-edge technologies and mechanisms become meaningless if the consumers who they are intended for cannot intuitively utilize them; it's one thing to have a revolutionary creation, but it's another for it to be aesthetically pleasing and easy to use. In a world increasingly reliant on digital devices, what role has design played in setting Apple apart as the most successful tech company in the world? In this seminar, we will explore the enormous world of design through the lens of Apple's characteristic "human-centered design", and will discuss how it greatly influenced the success of both the iPhone and iOS. Students will learn basic principles of design before examining in depth how iOS applications have evolved over time. Finally, the seminar will culminate in a study of design in popular mobile applications such as Instagram and Youtube, a brief look into Google's "Material Design", and a project in which students design an app of their own.

Education

Netflix n' Instill: Education through the Screen

Student Facilitator: Nosayaba Omorogieva | Faculty Mentor: Kim Gomez

What happens when fiction reflects reality? If we took an in-depth look at popular TV shows and movies, what would we find? Do our identities shape how we consume and interpret screen media? Through exploration, analysis, and diligent Netflix n' Chill, this course aims to answer these questions. This seminar is an introduction to the commercialization of historical events, relatable circumstances, and social issues through Netflix and other popularized streaming services. Throughout this course, we will be analyzing and discussing popularized screen media as educational entertainment or 'edutainment'. Using a curated selection of streamable shows and movies with historical or relatable subplots, we will attempt to identify and understand the intersection between media and holistic education.

English

The Devil's in the Details: A Survey of Literary Depictions of Satan

Student Facilitator: Collin Wolters | Faculty Mentor: Mitchum Huehls

Satan has been a popular cultural figure for hundreds of years. And, through this duration, depictions of Satan have been as varied as the media in which they've been found. Books, poems, paintings, movies, television shows, and music all feature their own canonical depictions of Satan, with all iterations representing different moments in history. However, despite the diversity of these depictions, Satan consistently personifies evil. This seminar will focus, then, on the details of these literary and cultural depictions and how such details suggest different ideas of what is evil or bad. The course will explore questions such as "How does this depiction respond to those before it?" and "How does this depiction use certain details to represent immorality or evil?"

Ethnomusicology

Fusion Music: The Effects of Colonization, Nationalism, and Globalization

Student Facilitator: Huirong Laura Jane Yee | Faculty Mentor: Helen Rees

Musicians and composers take inspiration for their music and compositions from their surroundings, and with increased globalization and cultural contact, explorations into new musical languages have led to the creation of genres now labelled “fusion” or “world” music. These typically refer to fusions of traditional (non-Western) and popular (Western) music; however, musical borrowing has been occurring since long before the term “fusion” was coined. This course will explore how ubiquitous the practice of musical borrowing is and has always been through several case studies of both historical and contemporary music fusion. Key points will address how colonialism, nationalism, and globalization – amongst other phenomena – have permeated local expressions of identity through music. Listening exercises will equip students with an expanded musical vocabulary to describe what they can hear in the music, as well as discuss the reasons for and origins of what they can hear.

Linguistics

Fusion Music: We Speak your Language: Collaborative Art as a Means of Community Inclusion

Student Facilitator: Danielle Potheau | Faculty Mentor: Mary Elizabeth Glavin

Analysis of the role language, art, and creativity plays in personal identity, community, society, and environment. Explore art as a vehicle for generating an inclusive and engaging community. Seminar allows students to discover personal creativity and talents, and culminates in the creation of a collaboratively constructed artwork to be installed on the UCLA campus. Networking, conflict resolution, community organization, dissolving language and cultural barriers. Examination of relationships between language, culture, art, self, and community.

Fusion Music: Shining Light on Invisible Disabilities

Student Facilitator: Nathan Mallipeddi | Faculty Mentor: Jesse Aron Harris

Individuals with invisible disabilities represent a large group of disabled persons who are often overlooked due to the secretive nature of their disability. Even though people with these types of disabilities suffer mental, physical, and social impairment, they are often forgotten in the services provided by government and society due to preconceived notions of disability rankings. This discussion based seminar will shine light on the concept of invisible disabilities and guide student discussion on the challenges and solutions in achieving disability parity. Students will also connect the topic of invisible disabilities to other powerful social movements in society, like gender, race, and sexual orientation.

Management

Social Entrepreneurship: Innovations in Social Impact

Student Facilitator: Anna Nordstrom | Faculty Mentor: Paul S. Park

How can businesses, nonprofits, and governments come together to instigate social change? This class will utilize discussion and hands on learning to dive into topics of social impact, specifically related to challenges on college campuses. Through guest speakers, interviews, and group discussion, students will learn about unique approaches to impact. Students will have the opportunity to consult on challenges at UCLA by researching the current landscape of the challenge, brainstorming solutions, and presenting in groups their proposed solutions.

Musicology

Wot Do You Call It? : The Evolution of Grime Music

Student Facilitator: Bethanie Sonola | Faculty Mentor: Robert Fink

Designed for non-majors. Examination of grime genre within the social, cultural and political context of the UK from early 2000s to present. Emphasis on using musical output as lens into issues such of post-colonialism, racialized poverty and government accountability. Use of scholarly readings, news articles, musical examples and documentaries that connect students to relatable case studies.

Philosophy

Patriarchy and Prisons

Student Facilitator: Hannah Hsieh | Faculty Mentor: Alexander Jacob Julius

Introduction of the phenomenon of mass incarceration in contemporary American discourse. Interrogation of mass incarceration in relation to class, race, gender, and sexuality; essential role of patriarchal structures and institutions in the development of the traditional legal system and the practice of incarceration; what various disciplinary lenses and epistemologies (history, legal theory, philosophy, political theory, etc.) reveal about mass incarceration. Key thinkers and ideas from across humanities and social sciences are highlighted.

The Ethical Considerations of the Use of Slang/Swear Words

Student Facilitator: Pallavi Adapa | Faculty Mentor: Andrew Hsu

This course will offer an overview of ethics and philosophy of language in order to allow students to grapple with the difference between formal and informal language (slang), and the social implications of the use of one over the other. There will also be discussion regarding the use of swear words, and the ethics of such use.

Philosophy of Modern Information: Community and Isolation

Student Facilitator: Joshua Khorsandi | Faculty Mentor: Andrew Hsu

Preparation: None, but having taken a philosophy course is always helpful. Modern readings of subjects concerning: Escapism, Epistemology, and Morality. Exploration into our relation towards information and technology within both offline and online communities. Considerations of how our immense increase in access to information impacts our daily lives. Questions concerning the way information interacts with social media, e.g. how have new forms of expertise affected our understanding of social media? Lecture and discussion-based class time.

The Mechanical Mind and Mindlike Machinery: An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and Consciousness

Student Facilitator: Zoe Lee / Jone Bacinskaite | Faculty Mentor: Sam Cumming

In this course, we will be analyzing and evaluating the actuality of artificial intelligence technology from a holistic overview of philosophical and cognitive theories as well as neurobiological and technical bases. Specifically, we will be investigating what it means to be conscious or intelligent and examining the structural and functional similarities and differences between the human mind and artificial intelligence. We will then critically and effectively analyze, evaluate, and philosophize about various past, current, and future AI technologies. This will include discussions of the ethical issues and societal impacts to consider in the use of intelligent machines, the representation of artificial intelligence in media and art, and the potential for artificial intelligence to achieve conscious behavior. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we will build a comprehensive and integrated understanding of philosophy, neuroscience, and computer science to fully grasp the nature and state of the human mind and mind-like machinery.

Physics

God Does Not Play Dice: Why Einstein Hated Quantum Mechanics

Student Facilitator: Bozco Vareskic | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Regan

A study of the fundamental scientific principles of quantum mechanics: wave particle duality, wavefunctions, and the uncertainty principle; An investigation of the philosophical aspects of the theory that made it controversial even among the world's best physicists: determinism, entanglement, locality, many worlds, and free will.

Lifelong Kindergarten: Reimagining STEM Higher Education Pedagogy

Student Facilitator: Alejandra Cervantes | Faculty Mentor: Shanna Shaked

Analysis of teaching methods and their efficacy in achieving student learning outcomes and retention in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) higher education. Guided STEM lesson plan design, with focus on UCLA STEM as the case.

Physiology

Musicophilia: Your Brain in Today's World of Music

Student Facilitator: Abraham Sumpad Chorbajian | Faculty Mentor: Alan Grinnell

Whether we listen to music to relax, exercise, or study or while playing an instrument, we all have had experiences with music at some capacity, be it a social, personal, or professional level. Investigation of the science behind relationship between the brain and music and how this relationship affects the way we feel or act when listening to music. Examination of the science behind how the brain interprets and responds to music in music composition, music therapy, and the music industry through discussion and experts in these fields coming in to guest speak. Reflection of how this relationship affects the way students (among others) perceive music in today's music scene, which includes music on the radio and film. Analysis of the genres of hip-hop, jazz, pop, and classical in context with how our brains process these genres. Application for music as a therapeutic tool in treating neurogenerative diseases when drugs fall short.

Psychiatry

The Empirical Lotus: Intersection of Buddhism and Science

Student Facilitator: Ray Vaca | Faculty Mentor: Marvin Belzer

Brief introduction to the recent dialogue that has taken place between Buddhism and science. Topics include Buddhist history and philosophy, meditation, neuroscience, physics, and cosmology. Emphasis on areas of convergence and divergence between the two traditions. Experience with Buddhism or science is not necessary.

Psychology

Positive Psychology: Living a Happier Life

Student Facilitator: Joseph Nguyen | Faculty Mentor: Philip Sayegh

Analyze scientifically-verified strategies and psychological studies to show what we should truly strive for in order to live a happier life. Understand ways of increasing happiness by learning about the common misconceptions and psychological biases, review several psychological studies in several different aspects on our lives, and learn how to apply those studies to our daily lives. Students will also have the opportunity to explore different cultural and national perceptions of happiness and compare it with their own society's views. The outcome of this course is to ultimately give you an awareness of the many factors surrounding our well-being that you can use to be a 'happier' and more successful student at UCLA.

Sociology

Gendered Society: Examining Societal Influences on Sexual Identities through Biology and Sociology

Student Facilitator: Cory Drew Epstein | Faculty Mentor: Abigail Cope Saguy

Examination of processes by which gender is socially constructed. Topics include distinction between biological sex, sociological gender, sexual orientation, masculinity and femininity, gender inequality, and recent changes in gender relations in modern industrial societies.

You, Me and Our Mental Health

Student Facilitator: Zarina Jaffer Wong | Faculty Mentor: Michael Gaddis

Interactions with mental health involving the personal and societal stigma surrounding mental illness. An in depth analysis of the history of mental illness and how this history has affected contemporary stigma. Movement from historical ideas of mental illness to modern ideas and treatments of mental illness specifically regarding college campuses. Introduction to CAPS programs across a range of college campuses. Methods range from data analysis to personal anecdotes. These experiences will then be compiled so students may form comprehensive educated opinions about the mental health treatment in America with a focus on colleges.

Spring 2020 USIE Seminars

Anthropology

Anthropology of Beauty

Student Facilitator: Doris Vidas | Faculty Mentor: Alan Page Fisk

What is beauty? Who decides? Exploration of human experience of aesthetic appreciation. Analysis of different facets of beauty through biological and cultural lens as means of examining universality and variability in its perceptions. Focus on holistic discussion of beauty. Discussion of human beauty. Focus on its more abstract forms such as art, performance, and nature. Draws from different disciplines such as history, biology, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology for multifaceted approach to subject. Case studies from diverse range of cultures to demonstrate variability that exists within cultural framework of beauty.

Architecture and Urban Design

Introduction to Citizen Architecture: Exploring Architectural Methods for Social and Spatial Justice

Student Facilitator: Derek Luu | Faculty Mentor: Dana Cuff

Hands-on architectural education while engaging with social issues. Introduction to fundamental procedures of architectural design, and also demonstration of how processes of designing, planning, and constructing has social implications for engaging with major contemporary urban issues. Exposure to positive design practices including group collaboration, creative problem solving, and reflection-based improvement. Exposure of danger and myth of architect as individual agent of ingenuity and expertise, and inherent conflict between individual and collective interests.

Art History

Post-War Art in Los Angeles, 1957-1966

Student Facilitator: Robert Hayden | Faculty Mentor: Miwon Kwon

Consideration of diverse network of artists and artistic practices in post-war Los Angeles. By focusing on art exhibitions that marked significant moments in city's history, examination of role that galleries, museums, curators, scholars, publications, and collectors play in establishing art historical canon. No prior knowledge of art history is necessary.

Biomedical Research

Molecular Biology in the 21st Century: Concepts & Techniques

Student Facilitator: Carla Pantoja | Faculty Mentor: Ira Clark

"YOU ARE NOT THE FATHER!" The audience goes quiet and the cameraman chases the supposed father down the hall. You've probably chuckled at this all too familiar situation from the Maury Povich show, but how exactly do scientists determine paternity? What is DNA fingerprinting? Why are there blots named after cardinal directions and why do we care about stem cells being the future of regenerative medicine? In this seminar, we will utilize the central dogma as a framework to understand central molecular biology processes like DNA replication, transcription, and translation. Along the way, students will not only be introduced to cutting-edge molecular biology techniques researchers utilize on a daily basis, but also learn to critically interpret data. There will be an emphasis on understanding the logic and approach researchers use in answering life's fundamental questions. To contextualize the topics of study, we will have the opportunity to discuss contested topics like CRISPR gene-editing and its implication for the future of regenerative medicine.

Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

Diamonds in the Rough: Genome Mining for New Therapeutics

Student Facilitator: Alexander Soohoo | Faculty Mentor: Yi Tang

Overview of natural product discovery and development into medicines. Exposure to sequencing, genetic editing, and recombinant biology, and associated ethical implications. Discussion of current state of biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. Designed to provide an overview on the field of genome mining, insight into laboratory research and pharmaceutical development, and a perspective on the process of discovering and developing natural product medicines.

Chicano/a Studies

20th Century El Salvador: the Lucha for an Egalitarian Society

Student Facilitator: Saraí Victoria Kashani | Faculty Mentor: Leisy J. Abrego

Focusing on the 1930s through the 1970s, this course surveys the historical, social, political, and economic conditions that stimulated the Salvadoran Civil War in 1980. Paying special attention to the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and gender, this class also examines how Salvadorans have countered erroneous depictions of themselves as "passive agents"

through various forms of activism, such as through peasant mobilizations and political education. As active agents of change, Salvadorans have actively and continuously battled colonial legacies, U.S. intervention and imperialism, and the consequences of neo-liberal policies. These transnational efforts encompass a strong legacy of egalitarian efforts that can be historically traced.

Computer Science

Understanding Technology in Modern Society

Student Facilitator: Yvonne Chen | Faculty Mentor: Ryan Rosario

In today's technology-dominated society, it is more important than ever for anyone, regardless of their chosen career, to understand the mechanisms behind how many common technologies function. As society continues to make advances in artificial intelligence, biomedical engineering, or hardware and virtual reality, the gap between what the average person knows about their day-to-day technology-based services and what there is to know only continues to widen. This seminar aims to give nontechnical students a holistic overview of technology's core concepts: to think through the basics of how it works, why it was made the way it was, how it generates money, and what kind of social consequences it produces.

Introduction to AI Ethics - An Interdisciplinary Approach

Student Facilitator: Aaron Hui | Faculty Mentor: Ryan Rosario

As technology advances at an exponential rate, it is imperative that students begin thinking about how Artificial Intelligence (AI) will interact with and impact society at different facets of daily life, with the focus on ethical implication and its implementation within AI systems. The foresight of how important it is to regulate AI through the lens of ethical discussion and implementation is of paramount significance within the setting of the rapid development of AI and how it has already permeated our daily lives.

This course will allow students to gain an interdisciplinary introduction to classical and modern ethical theory and their implications on emerging autonomous technologies. The course will focus on the six ethical principles of AI identified by Microsoft: Fairness, Inclusiveness, Reliability, Transparency, Privacy, and Accountability.

This course will include introductions to the AI Robotics Ethics Society (AIRES), the UCLA Law AI Pulse program, the AI Ethics Lab, the USC Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society (CAIS), and more.

Economics

Deviations from Rationality: An Introduction to Behavioral Economics

Student Facilitator: Isabella (Izzy) Sumner | Faculty Mentor: Pierre-Olivier Weill

Have you ever made a decision on a gut feeling? Should you trust your gut?

When most students hear the term 'economics,' they envision complicated formulas that model rational thought. Yet, there is an entire field of economics that is dedicated to studying irrational behavior. Behavioral economics uses methodologies to analyze how psychology affects people's economic behavior and decision-making processes. This course will examine how cognitive biases can influence--and often inhibit--people's reasoning abilities. It will also introduce basic economic modelling to provide a framework for thinking about rational and irrational thought.

Electrical and Computer Engineering

Black Mirror: Technology and its Role in Dystopian Societies

Student Facilitator: Daniel DongChan Ahn | Faculty Mentor: Vwani Roychowdhury

Technology has become an increasingly integral part of our lives. As we grow more dependent on it, we should consider its negative effects and how those effects may come to have unintended consequences in the future. In particular, we should be familiar with the role technology plays in the formation and perpetuation of dystopian societies. In this course, we will critically examine technologies presented in episodes of Black Mirror and the effects they have on the societies built around them. The course will be organized into units covering aspects of society that are similarly effected by runaway technology. By understanding scenarios in which these technologies are abused or cause unintended consequences for their users, we hope to be able to think about how these situations can be avoided in real life and identify parallels with current issues in technology.

Ethnomusicology

The Artistry of J. Cole

Student Facilitator: Jason Frost | Faculty Mentor: Cheryl Keyes

Jermaine Lamar Cole, known professionally as J. Cole, is an American rapper, singer, songwriter and record producer. This course seeks to analyze J. Cole's personal background, creative process in writing and producing, and messaging to determine the extent to which his artistry is unique from his contemporaries. Discussion will be focused on J. Cole's upbringing and artistic influences, forms of expression, meaning and emotional impact of music, and other aspects of his discography. By the end of the course, students will have a better understanding of the intellectual complexities and nuances of J. Cole's music and hip hop in general.

Film and TV

Teen TV

Student Facilitator: Alexandra Kukoff | Faculty Mentor: Becky Smith

An examination of how teen shows have evolved and what kind of social impact they have on the world at large. Students will watch and discuss clips from Euphoria, Gossip Girl, Skins, the OC, Awkward., My Mad Fat Diary, Elite, and Riverdale among others.

Geography

Evaluating Cosmopolitanism

Student Facilitator: Samantha Wieske | Faculty Mentor: Eric Sheppard

Cosmopolitanism is a political philosophy: the notion that every human is a part of a single community with a shared morality. As the international community has become increasingly globalized, cosmopolitan rhetoric has often been employed as a means to reduce inequalities and maintain peace. In his 1971 song, 'Imagine,' John Lennon implored the world to "Imagine there's no countries... Imagine all the people sharing all the world" — what if we did just that?

Taken to its furthest extent, cosmopolitanism would entail the elimination of national boundaries and complete global governance; however implausible that reality may seem, cosmopolitan ideologies inform modern international policies and underpin globalization. Cosmopolitan ideals are seen in real world applications through treaties like the Declaration of Human Rights, and organizations like the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. Throughout this quarter, students will be examining the topic cosmopolitanism, through various academic lenses.

History

The History of the Modern Romance Novel

Student Facilitator: Lawrence Myung | Faculty Mentor: Debora Silverman

This course will discuss the history of the modern romance novel. Everything from Jane Austen to Fanfiction will be subject to study in this course. It is a history, which will not require students to read entire novels. Instead, we will use romance novels to understand broader historical trends like changes in gender roles. We will first examine the rise of the romance novel from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. From this, we will see the inclusion of other marginalized groups (based on class, sexuality, and race) in the romance novel genre through the late twentieth century, analyzing its shortcomings and future. Finally, we will take a closer look at modern romance novels, which will culminate in collaborative group projects that aim to derive further insight from the romance novel genre. For a long time, the romance genre has been dismissed by academics and society alike, which we aim to explore and rectify.

Institute of the Environment and Sustainability

Collaborative Cooking: Recipes for Social Justice

Student Facilitator: Sienna Rohrer | Faculty Mentor: James Bassett

What becomes possible in the world when we cook and eat together? What power does a cookbook have in making the world a more just place? This hands-on, experiential course explores the role of collaborative cooking and meal sharing in building social connection and activism. The course begins with an exploration of individual identities and an appreciation for the land that sustains us through food. Students choose a recipe in the beginning weeks of the quarter that has particular meaning to them, and we cook, reflect on, analyze, critique, and celebrate this recipe in discussions and reflections throughout the quarter. The sharing and cooking of these recipes is complimented and complicated by class discussions centered on: fostering social connection, resistance, and activism through cooking. The course culminates in a collaborative recipe book that imagines cooking an art as forms of activism and storytelling, composed of the recipes students have shared and cooked together throughout the quarter.

Medicine

The world's worst kept secret - Neglected Tropical Disease

Student Facilitator: Alexis Elliott | Faculty Mentor: Claire Panosian

This course will serve as an introduction to Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), a group of infections that particularly affect low-income countries and impose a major burden on human health and productivity, while at the same time attracting relatively scarce resources and attention from the global community. The material in this course is appropriate for students in ALL majors (not just STEM) and will not only cover factual information about the diseases, but also the psychologic and social consequences of them. Overall this class will allow students to think critically about the complexity of the problem NTDs pose and to analyze why they are 'neglected'. Until the final two weeks of the course, each weekly session will focus on one particular NTD and one common theme among these infections; during the last two sessions, students will present their final (group-assigned) projects covering certain NTDs not previously discussed in class.

Musicology

Psychomusicology: How Music and the Brain Create Our Experienced Reality

Student Facilitator: Laine Gruver | Faculty Mentor: Elizabeth Upton

This course aims to shift the way we often think about music, moving from perceiving music as something that exists within the boundaries of our reality to something that pushes and redefines those boundaries. We will explore the ways in which music augments human reality through neuroscientific, psychological, and aesthetic lenses. Course subject matter is interdisciplinary and includes the intersections of music with neuroanatomical vision and audition, neurological disease, psychology, animation, film, and nature. We will analyze media ranging from modern indie songs, to classic Disney animations, to renowned film scores. In addition to artistic media, we will discuss scientific writings about music and the brain to examine how the junction of art and science creates a unique learning space with clinical implications. Students will walk away from the class with a new holistic appreciation for how the music they have always listened to has in fact subconsciously shaped their lives.

Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Psychedelic Drugs: From Molecular Biology to Society

Student Facilitator: Iris Feng | Faculty Mentor: Christopher J. Evans

Exploration of various hallucinogens, including classical psychedelics such as LSD, Psilocybin, DMT/Ayahuasca, Mescaline/Peyote, 25i-NBOMe; dissociatives such as Ketamine, PCP, Salvia divinorum, DXM; other hallucinogens such as frog skin, Ibogaine, nitrous oxide, MDMA, Cannabis, 2C-B. Discussion of history and origins; mechanism in brain; metabolism; physiological, physical, and sensory effects; risks and tolerance; therapeutic, spiritual, and recreational use; sociocultural impact; laws and regulations; and student opinions on hallucinogens.

Psychology

College Students and Noncommitment: Is Hookup Culture Changing Modern Romance?

Student Facilitator: Gillian Borges | Faculty Mentor: Benjamin Karney

Examination of hookup culture and its effect on college campuses through use of psychological research. Exploration of hookup culture development, participation, effect on different student groups, connection with sexual assault and rape culture, and if/how hookup culture has changed relationships for college students in the present and their futures.

Slavic, East European and Eurasian Languages and Cultures

Environmental Policy of the Soviet Union and Modern-Day Implications

Student Facilitator: Rowan Baker | Faculty Mentor: Daniel Posner

What comes to mind when you think about the Soviet Union? Communism? Maybe Russia? And what about the environment and the Soviet Union? Perhaps something along the lines of HBO's Chernobyl? These, of course, would be reasonable to think about. But what about the far less traversed intersectional concepts and concerns of communism, the Soviet Union, and the environment? Ever heard of Semipalatinsk, the Holodomor, or the Aral Sea? If not, you are in the right place!

In this course, we will explore beyond the borders of Russia to examine the former Republics of the Soviet Union through the lens of Soviet environmental policy. We will focus on some of the greatest environmental disasters that occurred during the Soviet Union and their present-day impacts on the modern countries in which they occurred,

from the Baltic Sea to the Kazakhsteppe, and from the Siberian tundra to the southern deserts of Central Asia. Finally, we will do so through an analysis of some of the most pressing issues concerning the environment, ranging from nuclear fallout to indigenous rights.

Writing Programs

Wibbly Wobbly Timey Wimey- An Analysis of the Role of Science Fiction Within Society

Student Facilitator: Hatim Malek | Faculty Mentor: Tara Prescott Johnson

Despite very rarely being examined within an academic setting, the science fiction genre is extremely important due to its analysis of society and humanity. This class is centered around teaching students how to approach science fiction analytically in order to understand the big themes present within the genre, as well as how works choose to approach those themes.

Students will be exposed to a variety of science fiction works in a multitude of mediums including literature, television, film, anime, podcasts, and video games. The class will be divided into three large sections. The first section will have students learning what it means for a work to be science fiction. When building a fictional world, what are the different ways that science fiction can be used? In the second section, students will be shown how the science fiction genre comments on the broader social issues present within society. Finally, in the last section of the class students will be given the opportunity to explore some of the key themes present within most science fiction works.

Spring 2021 USIE Seminars

Anthropology

Cross-Cultural Analyses of Fertility Policies

Student Facilitator: Yuyin (Gloria) Yang | Faculty Mentor: Carole Browner

This course will start with an overview of fertility policies across countries, as different countries' expectations and approaches to population policy bring our attention to their differences in cultural background, economic structure, and political ideology. Through comparison, we will learn to analyze a policy with respect to the historical period and political atmosphere during which it was created, as well as to evaluate a policy with a holistic and development perspective.

Asian American Studies

SEAing Resistance: Cultural Politics in Southeast Asian Diaspora

Student Facilitator: Jason Tuan Vu | Faculty Mentor: Evyn Le Espiritu Gandhi

This seminar focuses on cultural politics in the Southeast Asian diaspora with a focus on the themes of community and resistance. Broadly speaking, the Southeast Asian diaspora encompasses a number of refugee and immigrant communities, including but not limited to Vietnamese, Hmong, Lao, Khmer, Thai, and Pilipinx peoples. Though diverse in their experiences, these groups share a number of characteristics beyond geographical origin. In particular, Southeast Asian communities have embodied resilience in a number of ways, from surviving the aftermaths of war and genocide to creating new lives across the globe. Recognizing how these stories are often sidelined in popular discourse, this course centers the work of Southeast Asian diasporic artists who have been pivotal in sharing their cultural identities through a variety of artistic mediums.

Bioinformatics

Introduction to Neurotechnology

Student Facilitator: Allison Ung | Faculty Mentor: William Speier

This course is an introduction into the up and coming field of neurotechnology of which will deep dive into the potential applications of neurotechnology, neuroscience background, signal processing, ethics involved, prospective careers, and industry perspectives. The course strives to not only expose the students towards the industry, but to also

culture critical thinking of the challenges facing the field and cultivate the ability to see between the lines to encourage innovation and discussion. These course objectives will be met with a weekly seminar that will bring not only the lecturer's perspective, but also industry and academic professional perspectives through demonstrations and a panel series towards the end of the quarter. The course strives to not provide answers, but to help foster a sense of curiosity and the skill of asking critical questions. As this is a new, growing field, the parameters and questions are limitless, thus, critical thinking and an eye for big encompassing questions are crucial to pushing the frontier.

Ecology and Environmental Biology

Animal Consciousness & Ethics

Student Facilitator: Lynnea Doshi | Faculty Mentor: Leryn Gorlitsky

In this seminar, students will be exploring the emerging science of animal consciousness in order to thoughtfully assess the current treatment of animals across industries and on an individual level. The prevalent ideology of human superiority over non-human animals on the basis of intelligence, consciousness and capacity for emotion will be examined, and students will seek to understand the implications that this ideology has on human behavior and treatment of the world around us. The potential of our growing knowledge of animal consciousness to address major social issues such as racism, sexism and speciesism will further be explored through a biosocial approach that combines understanding with implementation. Throughout the course, students will have the opportunity to meet with several experts in various fields to better understand different perspectives on animal consciousness.

Education

Caring in Our Own Contexts: A Case Study By You

Student Facilitator: Lezel Legados | Faculty Mentor: Federica Raia

This seminar works to engage students in critical examinations, discussions, dialogues, and analysis on what it means to care for the Other in our interactions, regardless of our chosen fields and career plans. Utilizing pedagogy from education to study care as a necessary act within many societal settings, the goal of the course is to work with students to challenge each other to engage in introspection of their own lives, identities, interests, and experiences to share new thoughts and create new definitions of what it means to care. Students will identify and collect their own data on care within their lives and build upon their initial data with assignments of analysis, contextualization, interviews of practitioners

of care, and secondary collection of data. This will develop into a personal case study into care and practice that will empower students to own their understandings of care within their lives and ground the dissection of theories and key terms around care in their own contexts to help them understand why care matters in their future aspirations.

Ethnomusicology

Transcending K-Pop Beyond The Surface

Student Facilitator: Helen Ng | Faculty Mentor: Katherine In-Young Lee

The Korean popular (K-pop) music group BTS is currently one of the strongest forces to be reckoned with in the music industry. Students will examine BTS's musicianship and performative styles to understand the group's evolution of incorporating musical elements from different cultures into their works, and what improvements can be made to promote more respectful, cross-culturally sensitive music in BTS's artistry and the K-Pop industry on the whole. Students will also learn to use concepts from multiple disciplines to explore how BTS's exposure in Western media can encourage more minority representation in typically unconventional fields, such as the arts. Along with learning about BTS, students will analyze how the group and its fandom ARMY collectively create a space for fans to reflect upon certain aspects of their own identities through music and art. In this seminar, students will actively participate in discussions.

Global Health

Access to Medicines

Student Facilitator: Ambika Verma | Faculty Mentor: Maryam Farzanegan

In this seminar, we will be examining the complexity and intersectionality of the access to medicines movement. This course will serve as an introduction to healthcare disparities around the world and the social, economic and political forces that create them. The course begins by discussing social determinants of health and how the global medicines accessibility crisis fits into the larger topic of public health. We will also highlight specific examples such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the COVID-19 global pandemic and discuss how access to medicines shaped these events. Then, we will discuss the current R&D model and how it is geared towards creating profitable drugs, often at the expensive of patients' lives. The final section examines the healthcare system as a whole in the U.S. and European countries and we will end by discussing the power and impact of youth activism in the access to medicines

space. For the final project, students will present a possible solution to tackle a specific systemic issue we have discussed in class.

Global Studies

Political Economy of the American Empire

Student Facilitator: Katia Arami | Faculty Mentor: Shaina Potts

This class will focus on a political, economic, and sociological study of the history of the United States as an empire. Through a political lens, we will study the policies that the United States used to subjugate key groups such as African Americans, Native Peoples, and migrants. From an economic perspective, we will explore how history enabled the economic rise of America alongside domestic and global inequality. Finally, in a sociological approach, we will pay close attention to how this history has shaped the social fabric of America and created tensions and deep national wounds yet to be addressed. The course of study will extend from the original colonization of North America to the modern day legacy of mass incarceration and exploitation of migrant workers.

History

Wuthering Heights: Layered Narratives of Revenge, Passion, and Suffering

Student Facilitator: Madison Elder | Faculty Mentor: Teofilo Ruiz

This course examines, within a detailed historical context, the romanticist masterpiece of *Wuthering Heights*. The class will explore themes of love, passion, masculinity, femininity, revenge, suffering, death, and the supernatural, as well as what each of these suggest about the structure of English society. A study of the five main characters, Catherine, Heathcliff, Edgar Linton, Nelly Dean, and young Catherine will also be conducted as a means of surveying English standards regarding class and gender. In addition, emphasis will be placed on Brontë's unique writing style, romanticist, gothic, and Victorian influences, and the story's point of view from an unreliable narrator.

Honors

Past, Present, and Future of Standardized Testing in UC Admissions

Student Facilitator: Michelle Fausto | Faculty Mentor: Michael Suarez

In the wake of the “Varsity Blues” 2019 college admissions scandal and the COVID-19 pandemic, universities across the country have been increasingly changing the way they consider standardized testing in the admissions review process. Exploration of the issues of equity and access in the use of SAT and ACT college entrance exams. Discussion of the history behind college entrance exams and a review of critical literature about the racial and socioeconomic disparities of standardized tests both at the K-12 and collegiate levels. Application of analysis to University of California’s comprehensive review process for admissions and five-year plan to eliminate standardized testing.

Mindhunter: Profiling and Serial Killers

Student Facilitator: Ana Verghese | Faculty Mentor: Michael Suarez

As crimes have devolved from basic motives such as love and money into sexual gratification and sadism, how do you catch a killer whose actions are the accumulation of personal fantasies? Lying in the realm between law enforcement and psychology, profiling, a complex art used to narrow down a suspect pool, became the answer law enforcement was looking for. This seminar will examine how interviews with serial killers such as Ed Kemper were turned into a tool that has allowed law enforcement to track down some of the most notorious killers. Beginning in the basement of the FBI, profiling began as a way to describe the characteristics of a suspect. Now, profiling has expanded to instruct officials on how to interact with the media, interrogation tactics, and has given society vocabulary such as “serial killer” itself.

Profiling, however, is not comparable to an algorithm on a computer; it is an innately human process. Each killer exhibits important differences despite similarities in upbringings and their crimes. This is why profiling has many critics because even though it is based on scientific research, profiling also relies on one’s opinion. So how do people become serial killers? Are children born evil? What are the different types of serial killers? Is profiling really a “science” or “black magic”? These are all questions that this seminar aims to review in depth.

Neuroscience

Frontiers in Neuroscience: Exploration of Science Fiction and Fact

Student Facilitator: Laila Khorasani | Faculty Mentor: Neil Harris

Seminar, one hour. Cross-examination of neuroscience as a rapidly advancing and innovative field, along with its portrayal in speculative and science fiction. Approach to critical analysis of the strengths and limitations of scientific methodology and reasoning. Analysis of neuroscientific and psychological themes commonly depicted in fiction, such as artificial intelligence and consciousness. Discussion of science fiction through a variety of mediums, spanning from text to the silver screen. Comparison of the state of modern neurotechnology with that seen in science fiction.

Psychology

Procrastination: Why We Do It and What to Do About

Student Facilitator: Jooeun Shin | Faculty Mentor: Hal Hershfield

Exploration of topics regarding procrastination, from proposed causes to evidence-based strategies. Overview of how parenting, mental health, fear of failure, and stress influence the development of chronic procrastination. Examines the role that self-regulation plays in the occurrence of task avoidance and covers techniques, such as self-compassion, mindfulness, and cognitive behavioral therapy that increase goal-directed behavior. Students encouraged to apply strategies from class and to engage in frequent self-reflection.

Public Affairs

Tax Policy Reform

Student Facilitator: Medha Maindwal | Faculty Mentor: Steve Zipperstein

"Why do we pay taxes? Are taxes constitutional? What makes the US tax system different from other countries? Should we tax the wealthy at a higher rate? Should everyone get equal access to tax planning services?"

Since the US economy engages in trade and aid with numerous countries, a change in the way the government generates or spends revenue could create positive/negative ripple effects in the rest of the world. This class examines if tax reform can help create effective social change and examines the way the current American taxation system operates.

This 1-unit P/NP course is structured to include insightful discussions and student presentations. We will delve into concepts of constitutional law, economic theory, political science, and public policy to examine various case studies we may have come across in headlines. Even though this course may sound technical, it is designed for students from all academic

backgrounds and years as an introductory course on how the American taxation system operates and if it can be improved!"

Public Health

Innovations in Public Health: Impact of Technology

Student Facilitator: Noah Danesh | Faculty Mentor: Robert Kim-Farley

This course focuses on how technology has revolutionized public health in underserved communities. It will give students a holistic sense of what public health is, the fundamental insufficiencies of public health in underserved communities, and different technologies that have risen to meet these challenges. A particular focus throughout the course will be on how innovators recognized an issue in the field and sought out to implement new solutions that helped not only individuals, but whole communities. The positive and negative implications of these innovations will also be covered. We will look at barriers of entry and slow adoption of public health technologies in underserved communities, as well as how technology affects the tradeoff of health and personal privacy. The seminar will help students gain an understanding of the Ecological Model of Public Health and gain the ability to look at technological advancements through the lens of this model.

Scandinavian Studies

Game of Thrones in Real Life: Ancient Times to the Modern Day

Student Facilitator: Kavya Juwadi | Faculty Mentor: Arne Lunde

Game of Thrones is arguably the most popular show in the world. For seven seasons, this HBO show captured the attention and hearts of viewers of all different backgrounds. While at face value Game of Thrones might simply be entertaining, the show tackled a wide array of social and political issues. Despite the show being set in a medieval-era fantasy world, the themes that are a part of Game of Thrones are still applicable to the current day.

This course provides a guided discussion about themes and ideas that Game of Thrones touched upon that you may not have even realized. The first part of each class will consist of an overview of historical events that relate to Game of Thrones. The latter half of the class will include connecting the historical events to Game of Thrones and modern day issues. The essence of this course is making a connection from the themes in Game of Thrones to real-life events both in the past and current day.

Society and Genetics

Reproductive Bioethics

Student Facilitator: Atreyi Mitra | Faculty Mentor: Michelle Rensel

This seminar will examine the ethical, philosophical, and legal questions of contemporary and future forms of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) by discussing some of the most controversial applications in the field. Topics of critical inquiry will include: the number of embryos transferred each IVF cycle; the legalization of traditional surrogacy; the creation of a donor sibling; the selection for disability; posthumous reproduction; the preservation of fertility for postmenopausal individuals; fate of frozen embryos; embryonic cloning; and in-vitro gametogenesis (IVG). Through academic inquiries and case studies, students will be challenged to assess the implications of emerging reproductive technologies, to decide to what extent they should be regulated, and to imagine what those regulations would feasibly look like.

Going Viral: HIV/AIDS in Social, Biological, and Political Contexts

Student Facilitator: Sarah Sullivan | Faculty Mentor: Patrick Allard

Exploration of social, political, cultural, and biological underpinnings of HIV and the AIDS epidemic. Incorporates discussions of racial and socioeconomic inequities and stigma surrounding LGBTQ+ identities from medical and public health perspectives.

Ethical Change-Making: Guiding Social Movements on Social Media

Student Facilitator: Nathan Tran | Faculty Mentor: Nicholas Shapiro

Exploration of how change-making frameworks and theories produce varying results in social change. Development of understanding of how to challenge systems of oppression through lenses of social responsibility, counterculture, reform, and contestation. Critical analysis of Arab Spring, Kony 2012, and Black Lives Matter to evaluate the utility of various social media platforms in advocacy and accompliceship. Course content will lay the foundation for an applied final project, where students will apply concepts discussed to make change in a personally meaningful social issue within their own network. *Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*

Writing Programs

Racial Literacy and its Importance in our Increasingly Social Media Dependent World

Student Facilitator: Rose Koochekpour | Faculty Mentor: Nedda Nehdizadeh

The creation of social media has transformed our lives in an unprecedented and unimaginable way, having the ability to not only allow us to consume media, but create, post, and influence those within our new social circles. The sphere of influence of social media has grown to include groups of all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic levels. With such a large community of users, the importance of the conscious consumption of social media has become much more important. Social media literacy – the concept of understanding the potentially harmful and beneficial effects of participation in the media – is becoming an increasingly crucial skill to learn, as a lack thereof can perpetuate harmful concepts. As we continue to produce media online, racial literacy additionally becomes vital. In the end, the goal of the seminar is to introduce you to social media and racial literacy in the online universe, and to begin to educate students on the different depths of importance of how the social justice issues we face in the nondigital world manifest themselves online.