

HONORS

HON 191 Courses: Spring 2009

Title: Landscape Connections
Professor: Robyn Slayton-Martin

Course Description: Course that examines the interconnections between the natural, socio-economic, political, cultural and spiritual landscapes, both globally and locally. Examines the physical form of landscapes and their influences on how we live, thrive, behave and see ourselves both in a historical and contemporary context. We consider a wide variety of "natural" and "cultural" landscapes including nature parks, theme parks, ethnic neighborhoods, cities, suburbs, and shopping malls among others and discuss historical meanings and shifts in a political and socio-economic landscape as well as the impact of interface between rural and urban landscapes. Students will also examine the ways that landscapes, spaces, and places are implicated in the production of ideas about "race", gender, ethnicity and nationality. Possible field trips give students practice analyzing political, social, economic, cultural etc. landscapes relative to the natural landscape. Students will be challenged to think in new ways as well as to develop advanced skills in reading and writing.

Title: Literary Revisions and Recognition
Professor: Petty Petelin

Course Description: In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003, J.M Coetzee remarked, "But now, reflecting further, there begins to creep into his breast a touch of fellow-feeling for his imitators. For it seems to him now that there are but a handful of stories in the world; and if the young are to be forbidden to prey upon the old then they must sit forever in silence." In this class we will not only attempt to test Coetzee's assessment (are there only a handful of stories in the world?), but we will analyze the various means through which a literary narrative is (re)told, (re)imagined, and/or (re)cognized. Additionally, we will focus on the ends to which these stories have been revised, paying particular attention to how the "new" text addresses issues related to gender and the post-colonial condition. Course texts will include: Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, J.M. Coetzee's Foe, Shakespeare's King Lear, Jane Smiley's A Thousand Acres, Cormac McCarthy's The Road, and more.

Title: Fear and Hope
Professor: Kerri Quinn

Course Description: In this class, we will contextualize the themes of fear and hope as we explore, expand, and question the ways in which they intersect with our sense of community, language, social reality and identity. Texts and materials may include Cormac McCarthy's "The Road", "Trashed" a documentary that examines a fundamental element of modern American culture: the disposal of what our society defines as "waste," and selections from James Howard Kunstler's "Home from Nowhere."

Title: Making Choices in Lit and Lives
Professor: Barbara Youngs

Authors define their work through their choices of language, imagery, plot twists, or character development. Outside the pages of their literary work, authors define themselves through their choices in their lives. We will trace the events and personal decisions -- accidents, alcoholism, protesting for peace, going to war -- that frame and influence their writing. Additionally, we will analyze the choices that authors voice through their characters, from courtiers in Denmark to soldiers in Viet Nam, from timid men intent on murder to girls intent on having fun. While studying an assortment of short stories, poems, plays, and novels, you will construct your own methods for measuring choices and results. Authors include James Thurber, Pablo Neruda, Dorothy Parker, Joyce Carol Oates, Tim O'Brien, Tom Stoppard, Dylan Thomas, Saki, Ray Bradbury, Herman Melville, and more.

Title: The American Dream

Professor: Katie Sheridan

Course Description: The term “the American dream” was first used by James Truslow Adams in his book, *Epic of America*, in 1931. He defines the concept as

That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement...It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.

Throughout American history, however, the concept of the American dream has had many meanings and been the topic of much discussion and debate. In this course, we will look at novels, films, and essays that explore the concept of the American dream, paying particular attention to the ways ethnicity, race, gender, and class affect individuals' pursuit or perception of the dream. A few of the questions we will be exploring are: What is the American dream? Is it achievable by everyone? Who is left out? What is the price of this dream? How does the dream today differ from the time Truslow coined the term?

Title: Empire Building

Professor: Kevin Ketchner

Course Description: This section of HON 191 will explore the idea of community and culture of the United Kingdom through literature, film, television and other print media. We will explore some of the U.K.'s most influential films while pairing them with related literature and media to shed light on their cultural importance and influence and impact on community.

Title: King Arthur: Legend, Lit & Film

Professor: John Doherty

Course Description: Explores the historicity, literature, and film of the Arthurian canon, beginning with the early Welsh tales, continuing with Malory, and examining the texts and film of the 20th century.

Title: The Imperial Imagination

Professor: Lisa Eutsey

Course Description: This class introduces students to a wide range of themes crucial to an understanding of colonial and postcolonial thought with a special emphasis on how our 21st century world has been shaped by the continuing legacy of imperialism. Likely texts may include Swift's *Robinson Crusoe*, Coetzee's *Foe*, Mary Kingsley's *Travels Through West Africa*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Forster's *A Passage to India*, and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Films may include *Darwin's Nightmare*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Blood Diamond*, and *Charlie Wilson's War*.

Title: Critical Communities

Professor: Glenn Hansen

Course Description: Between 1980 and 1993 the total number of bowlers in America increased by 10 percent, while league bowling decreased by 40 percent. Also consider these statistics over the last 25 years: attending club meetings saw a 58% drop; having family dinners saw a 43% drop; and having friends over took a 35% drop. What do these numbers say about the communities in which we live? We'll take a look at the term community from a number of different perspectives: political, cultural, geographic, social, commercial, historical, demographic, etc. and critically investigate the nature, purpose and function of “communities” in our past, present and future. What constitutes communities? What influences them? Where and how do you fit in? This class will involve several fieldwork exercises/activities.