

USIE Seminars – Spring 2013

Communication Studies 88S: Trial by Media: A Close Look at Criminal Proceedings and its Relationship with the Media

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

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

English 88SA: Red State Realism: White American Poverty in Contemporary American Literature, Film, and Song

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

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

English 88SB: Growing Up in the South: 20th-Century Bildungsromans

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

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

English 88SC: Fantasy Geography: The Physical Space of Fictional Worlds

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

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

Film & Television 88S: Mad about Mad Men: A Multi-Perspective Critical Analysis of the Acclaimed Series

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

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

History 88S: A History of Mystery: Minority Magicians, their Portrayal, Struggle, and Success

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

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

Philosophy 88S: Paradoxes and Philosophical Riddles

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

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

Physiological Science 88S: Time is Brain: A Complete Look into the Epidemic of Strokes from the Patient to the Lab

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

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

Political Science 88S: “Champions Made Here,” Athletically Driven, Politically Motivated

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

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

Psychology 88SA: The Costs of Gamifying Education

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

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

Psychology 88SB: Fast Cars and Battle Scars: Understanding the Modern Combat Veteran and PTSD

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

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

Society & Genetics 88S: Beyond CSI: Forensic Applications of DNA Analysis

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

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

Sociology 88S: La Jouissance Ultime: Representations of Orgasm in Science, Literature and Film

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

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

Theater 88S: Campus Fashion Fix—Exploring the Fashion Industry in regards to American Culture and Identity

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

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

Urban Planning 88S: The Global Food System—What Happens Between Farm and Plate and Why It Matters

Student Facilitators: Niran Somasundaram, Joanna Wheaton

Faculty Mentor: Susanna Hecht

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