2004 Roundtable Seminar Course Descriptions

Fall 2004

1. SYE 250.01 African American Literature and the 20th Century
Professor Mark Behr
Friday 9:00 to 11:50
In this course we read and discuss five distinguished 20th Century texts by African American Writers in conjunction with a number of inter-disciplinary secondary texts. Secondary materials will include texts from popular culture, psychology, sociology, cultural studies, historiography and journalism. The primary texts are: 1. Zora Neale Hurston: THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD. Ralph Ellison: INVISIBLE MAN. James Baldwin: GIOVANNI'S ROOM. Alice Walker: THE COLOR PURPLE. Toni Morrison: BELOVED. Class format and evaluation will be based on active verbal and written participation by all students.

2. SYE 250.02 Clothing as Metaphor
Professor Cheryl Odom
Friday 9:00 to 11:50
This class will investigate how clothing style is affected by historic events, philosophy, and art. The teacher will choose several examples from history in order to demonstrate this phenomena. Students will then be led in choosing their own different period and making an in class presentation including visual examples. Research techniques and logical thinking will be emphasized as well as methods of presentation style.

3. SYE 250.03 Economic Ideas that Changed the World
Professor Dr. Ali Arshad
Thursday 12:15 to 3:15
In this course we will survey economic ideas that have impacted institutions, history and human relationships. Thinkers such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx et al will be discussed.

4. SYE 250.04 Cabinet of Wonder
Professor Ligia Bouton
Friday 1:00 to 3:50
Throughout history, the human race has aspired to know and possess the unexpected, the abnormal, and the awe-inspiring. Divided into three main sections - The Collection and Desire, The Collection and Destruction, and The Collection and the Body - this class will explore the psychological, historical, and social implications of the act of the collecting and displaying objects and artifacts. Visits to local resources such as the Museum of International Folk Art will be combined with a close examination of the works of artists who have incorporated...
issues of taxonomy into their creative practices. Students will be expected to write extensively on a variety of related subjects and ultimately compile their compositions into a cohesive anthology. In addition, each student will spend the semester creating their own collection and will be required to appropriately display their compilation to be viewed in class.

5. SYE 250.05 The Dailiness of Women: Women and Domesticity in Literature and Film
Professor Marika Brussel
Friday 1:00 to 3:50
He knew . . . that she hated sheets that weren't pressed; that she thought suntans were show-offy unless gotten in the line of work; that she felt letters ought to be written with a fountain pen; that she took a stand against ice in drinks; that she took an equally firm stand against bright colors with the exception of red; and that she would eat oranges but nothing that was orange flavored . . . . Guido believed in the meaning and integrity of gestures. Holly's habits, her rituals, her opinions stood for the way she felt about the world--they expressed some grand conception of life and the placement of things in it. Her perfection and precision were a noble stand against sloppiness.

Traditionally women have been the ones to take on the daily convention of domesticity. The role has changed in the past half century to some extent, but the majority of the work still resides with women. What has changed is the attitude towards that work. The cult of "domestic goddess" Nigella Lawson is one example of the shift. This class will look at works of literature and film and the roles of domesticity that are portrayed. Some examples of the works to be discussed are: "Housekeeping" by Marilynne Robinson (both a novel and a film), "Mrs. Dalloway" by Virginia Woolf (both a novel and a film), "The Hours" by Michael Cunningham (both a novel and a film), various works by Laurie Colwin and Lynn Sharon Schwartz.

Spring 2005

6. SYE 250.06 Guns, Butter and Scripts
Professors Dr. Ali Arshad and Dr. Michael Hymel
Friday 9:00 to 11:50
We shop at Walmart for the low, low prices. But should we as consumers, have the freedom to enjoy low prices if it means, as workers, our jobs are going to China? Donor kidneys and livers are always in short supply. Should we permit transplantable organs to be bought and sold, in essence to let the free market solve the shortage, even if such a scheme brings human beings closer to the status of commodities? The Social Security system is, by all accounts, broken and lacking major changes, the system is headed for bankruptcy. Should we raise taxes on the working young to honor our promises to the nonworking old, or
should we break those promises? Is there no middle ground and, if not, are we sowing the seeds for intergenerational conflict that will weaken the social fabric?

Economics teaches us that in the pursuit of efficiency there are no free lunches, that all choices involve tradeoffs. The goal of this course is to help you think logically and critically about looming economic issues and the plethora of policy prescriptions, to weigh both sides of the argument and, importantly, to show that efficiency must be supplemented with empathy in designing solutions.

7. SYE 250.07 Myth, Symbol and Archetype
Professor Dana Levin
Friday 9:00 to 11:50
Hero. Villain. Femme Fatale. These and may other archetypal figures appear spontaneously in the myths and folktales of all peoples across all time. Pioneering psychologist Carl Jung sees them as interior figures that express aspects of the individual psyche; Joseph Campbell believes studying such figures can lead us not only to a great understanding of the shared aspects of human nature and culture but can also teach us how to handle the complexity of our contemporary lives.

In this course we will use Jung and Campbell as our primary guides in exploring myth, archetypes and the notion of a ‘collective unconscious,’ as well as how those archetypes play themselves out in contemporary literature and film. We will also make some forays into the nature of symbols and symbol making. We will primarily focus on ancient Greek myth and plays, modern poetry, writings in psychology and philosophy, as well as watch two or three films. Assignments will include researched essays and art projects.

8. SYE 250.08 The 1960s: Fact and Fiction
Professor David Myers
Friday 9:00 to 11:50
This course uses history, political science, music and media to develop an in depth understanding of the most important decade in the second half of the twentieth century. The course will analyze and interpret the political, cultural, social and intellectual developments that still shape our world today.

9. SYE 250.09 My Brother’s Blood: The Spanish Civil War
Professor Robert Jessen
Friday 1:00 to 3:50
The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) attracted great attention at that time all over the world. Yet while the government of the United States sat idle and allowed a fascist regime supported by Hitler to defeat an awkward coalition of Republicans, Communists, and Anarchists, private individuals including Ernest Hemingway and George Orwell risked their lives on Spanish soil. In network news we hear the relentless rhetoric of fighting for freedom in Iraq, but perhaps we can learn
something from the international volunteers in Spain, and from the complex history of the conflict.

10. SYE 250.10 Science and Politics of Desserts and Drugs
Professor Dr. Thomas Antonio
Friday 9:00 to 11:50
All life depends on plants, but some plants provide only addictive substances. We will discuss the reproductive biology, biogeography, and environmental politics of some of the world’s most beloved plants. Chocolate, coffee and sugar along with the opium poppy, cannabis and cocaine have had profound historical and environmental effects on the planet. Each of these plants requires significant amounts of hand-labor for harvesting. Sugar subsidies contribute to the damage of Florida’s Everglades and child/slave labor is again associated with the harvesting of chocolate. With so little nutritional value provided, how have these plants come to dominate our social fabric? Grown primarily in underdeveloped countries, the vast markets for the final product are the overdeveloped countries.

11. SYE 250.11 Communicating Across Cultures
Professor Dr. Andrew Lovato
Wednesday 6:00 to 8:50
This course explores the unique relationship between communication and culture. It examines the cultural influences in communication across ethnic and national boundaries. The course also focuses on what happens when people from different cultures come together to share ideas, feelings and information in business, private and political arenas. Ethical and social issues relating to intercultural communication are also examined.