HON 390 Seminars: Spring 2015

HON 391: Aesthetic and Humanistic Inquiry

HON 391: Kings, Crones, Magicians, and Monsters: Middle Ages and Identity
Anne Scott
Who are the most memorable characters depicted in medieval and Renaissance literature? Which kinds of characters hardly appear at all? What is a “good” king or magician; what are the varied roles of “damsels in distress” and wise, old women; and where do monsters, worms, fools, and other miscreants fit into the otherwise highly structured worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance? This class will explore the concepts of “identity” and “self” as they manifest through a wonderful selection of medieval and Renaissance literature: Old English and Old French epics, medieval English and French romances, bawdy tales of sexual adventure, and Shakespearian tragedy and comedy. We will also explore why certain identities could flourish while others could not; what was expected of individuals who embodied certain characteristics; the social and religious pressures that shaped medieval and Renaissance identities; whether there was such a thing as individuality; and how our own concept of selfhood may differ from these earlier depictions. Many of our texts will be paired with film adaptations so as to better understand this concept visually, i.e., on the Silver Screen. Like other HON 390 classes, this course will have a research component.

HON 392: Cultural Understanding

HON 392: …in the Wild West
Season Ellison
Despite commonly presenting itself as objective, the creation of historical narrative is nearly always a subjective process that creates, depends upon, and upholds the values of a given culture at a given time. In 39X we will use historiographical methods to explore “the forces which have shaped the present” myth of the “Wild West,” how the myth is commonly mistaken as historical fact, and that myth’s effect on the actual peoples and communities who populate the land. Using scholarly essays, popular fiction, cowboy and cowgirl poetry, western film, opera, published diaries, newspaper articles, and the special collections Colorado Plateau archive, we will explore the making of the Wild West myth, the creation of history, and the privileged and oppressive forces that the myth both appropriates and conceals. Cultural issues with which we may engage include historiography and the power inherent in the traditional historical canon, the power of myth and the American Dream, oppression of native cultures and peoples, gender representation in cowboy culture, tourism as a component of myth-making, as well as land and species management. In this seminar and research-based course, students will have a primary responsibility to guide and craft their own learning.

HON 392: Once Upon A Time: How Stories Inform, Inspire, and Invent
Robyn Martin and Karen Underhill
This course emphasizes the theories, methods, and debates surrounding oral history, our oldest historical tool. After completing the course, students will be familiar with the theory, methodology, and practical aspects of oral history, develop an appreciation for the power of storytelling and its impact on our lives and society in both a local and global context, complete an oral history project by semester's end, and learn how to craft an engaging, creative non-fiction essay based the subject (narrator) of their oral histories. Students will also have a better understanding of both individual and collective memory. The oral memoirs will focus on life lessons learned by the narrators. How many times do we hear, "I remember," or "Wish I knew then what I know now." Students may just receive the best advice of their educational careers!

HON 393: Applied Science

HON 393: Hot Mess: Ecological Fiction
Ted Martinez
This advanced seminar will analyze science fiction and climate fiction writing as a means to understand public perceptions of science, the science of global climate change, and the limits and opportunities available in science communication. Students will produce fiction writing in the genre of climate fiction using information provided by climate science research. Other means of communication such as poetry or art may also be submitted. Class assignments will center on understanding the science in science fiction, fiction writing, character development and plot development, climate science, global climate change adaption and mitigation strategies

HON 394: Social and Political Worlds

HON 394: Beyond the Burqa
Robyn Martin
Using a variety of material (fiction and non-fiction texts, poetry, art, articles and many films), we'll examine Afghanistan’s women and their issues from a historical, cultural, and socio-political perspective. The course will explore the importance of understanding Afghanistan’s women (but not limited to only Afghanistan in the second half of the semester), their position in their nation, why their need for self-determination matters, and what’s at stake for their country and middle-eastern women in general if they are allowed the ability to shape their own destiny.