

Fall 2016

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HON 291: Living on the Edge

Robyn Martin

This course will examine risks and rewards of pushing our limits through exploration, extreme sports, and adventure, using the genre of adventure literature as a foundation. We'll examine and try to answer the following: why do some of us choose to risk our lives to run a whitewater river, scale a cliff, or hike in the wilderness alone, or climb a mountain? What are the pros and cons of risk-taking in the wild? Where do those desires come from, and why do some of us have stronger risk-taking behavior than others? Is it nature, nurture, or a combination of both? How might those desires both help and harm us? What do these behaviors say about the future of risk-taking, particularly within the context of wilderness and extreme sports?

Topics for examination and discussion include risk-taking behavior in the wilderness, trends of extreme outdoor sports and the impacts of same, as well as examining cultural, ethical, ethnic, gender, age and other categories and how those variables reflect, support or deny risk-taking behaviors. Using the genre of wilderness adventure literature, students in this class will learn to appreciate how this particular form of human creative expression allows for a greater perspective in the authors' and our own experiences and behavior.

HON 291: Facts and Lies: Creative Nonfiction

William Cordeiro

What does it mean to write a true story? How much of nonfiction is made up? Creative nonfiction is far different than the traditional academic essay. Instead, creative nonfiction can adopt the narrative techniques of fiction, the lyric excesses of poetry, the visual collages of photojournalism, or the confessional tidbits of personal memoir—sometimes all in the same piece. Then again, like academic essays, creative nonfiction essays can use research, too, whether that means going to the library or going out to test and experience the world. The essay is a various and capacious form. “Essay” literally means “an attempt,” rather than something that’s finished; essays are open, evolving, and fluid. In this spirit, we’ll attempt reading and writing many types of nonfiction, including memoir, lyric essays, literary journalism, personal narratives, meditations, research-based and investigative pieces, food writing, travel and nature writing, diaries, letters, polemic, aphorisms, manifestoes, and other genres and experimental forms that attempt to deal with facts as the writer sees them. Through individual and collaborative writing assignments, workshops, revisions, and analysis we’ll emphasize techniques to artfully render aspects of the real world and show how truths can be even crazier than fictions.

HON 291: Stand-Up Comedy & Solo Performance

Season Ellison

From ancient and early modern philosophers Aristotle, Plato, Henri Bergson, and Soren Kierkegaard; to mid-twentieth century and contemporary American comics Lenny Bruce, Anthony Jeselnik, Sarah Silverman, and Amy Schumer, the role of solo comedy has always carried a significant, and often contested, weight in Western and American cultures. In this course we explore the various functions of stand-up comedy and solo performance within this Western tradition. After laying a foundation for our study of humor, we primarily focus on contemporary American comics who bring to the fore of their work: social and political critique; gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, and personal identity; the role of obscenity and vulgarity; and more. In addition to close viewing and analysis of various contemporary stand-up performances, listening to and reading historical stand-up routines, and writing a research paper focused on a stand-up comedy topic of your choice, students will also create a stand-up comedy routine or solo performance in a safe and welcoming atmosphere with the Professor’s and peers’ guidance! Bring your life experiences, a great attitude, and your willingness to laugh and learn!

HON 294: Breaking Bad

William Cordeiro

In this course we will examine the popular, award-winning AMC television series *Breaking Bad* from a variety of perspectives. We will closely read each episode as well as interpret and contextualize the series from a cultural studies framework. In addition, we will look at contemporary social and philosophical issues that the show brings up, including debates about drugs, gangs, family structure, disabilities, death, violence, black markets, neoliberalism, borders, morality, egoism, and the nature of good and evil. We will also examine the literary references, geopolitical background, and cinematic influences behind the show.

HON394: Looking Beyond the Wall: Exploring the US/Mexico Border

Robert Neustadt

During this course we will explore the 2000-mile line—the U.S. / Mexico border—from a multitude of different perspectives. We will study art, literature, journalism and performance about the border, and will consider the political, economic, social and environmental consequences of “the wall.” After having read about the border, watched films, discussed and analyzed its purpose, cost and the feasibility of border security, we will take a class field trip to see both sides of the border and witness the conditions in the area first hand.

Class will be conducted in English, seminar style, allowing considerable time for class discussion. Grades will be determined by student participation, class presentations, written essays, a written journal (from the field trip), a group project and a final reflective paper.

HON 392: Race Matters

David Camacho

Honors 392 is an interdisciplinary course that examines the experiences of people of color in the United States. Historical, economic, sociological, psychological, and anthropological evidence complement the political analysis at the center of our examination. At the most basic level, an understanding of the experiences of people of color must account for political, economic, and social factors influencing their experiences. No disadvantages of people of color are likely to be relieved without economic advancement; no strong likelihood of economic advancement can be realized without enlarged political participation; no social equality can be realized without a strong political-economic base.