

# Feit Seminars Archive 1997-Present

## Feit Interdisciplinary Seminars in the Humanities

### FEIT INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINAR PROGRAM

#### SPRING 2020

#### **The Italian American Narrative in History and Literature**

FTRH

Tuesday/Thursday 4:10-5:25

Frank Cioffi, English

Vincent DiGirolamo, History

This course examines the history and literature of Italian Americans, focusing on the 20th and 21st centuries. We will read history, memoir, fiction, and drama. Course readings will include classic works by John Fante, Mario Puzo, and Pietro di Donato, and more contemporary writings by Gay Talese, Don DeLillo, Lisa Taddeo, Gilbert Sorrentino, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Class session will consist primarily of discussion, but there will also be guest lectures, field trips, and good food. Requirements include a presentation, response papers, and a research essay. We will examine what it means to be an Italian American writer and the changing role of ethnic identity in the United States.

#### **Black Archeologies: Archiving Black Environments**

UWH

Wednesday 6:05-9

Erica Richardson, English

Marisa Solomon, Anthropology

Gwendolyn Brooks in her prolific corpus of poetry chronicling black social life in 1940s and 1950s honors the objects that surround black people from cans of beans to “receipts and dolls and cloths.” In *TopDog/Underdog* (2001), playwright Suzan-Lori Parks offers a nuanced depiction of fraternal intimacy and competition between two brothers as they strive to fashion a home out of abandoned and stolen items. These are but two examples of writers who have resisted the ways in which trash and discarded items have often been used to criminalize and stereotype black people and their communities.

In this course, we will consider a number of inquiries about trash and blackness as represented in literature and culture. Questions that will drive the seminar include but are not limited to the following: What ideas about the discarded do we take for granted? What ideologies structure our concerns about trash and what tools do we need to make these structures salient? What kinds of landscapes do we consider “the environment”? How can we re-read material objects and people? And with these tools, what narratives of conflict, struggle, survival, even thriving may we recognize and imagine?

Co-taught by an anthropologist and a literary scholar, this course will explore a range of literary and cultural genres including nonfiction essays, ethnography, plays, poetry, music videos and film, bringing issues of style and aesthetics to bear upon our inquiries as well. Texts we may consider will include: short stories and poetry from Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1928), Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), the 2012 film *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, and Sidney Mintz's ethnography *Sweetness and Power* (1985). Specific themes will include soil, blood, food and nurturance, squatting, salvaging, repurposing, recycling, and resistance.

## **Fall 2019**

### **Art of Words**

MWH

Wednesdays 11:10-2:05

Zoe Sheehan-Saldana, Fine and Performing Arts

Cheryl Smith, English

When we want to demonstrate our knowledge, tell someone how we feel, or make a point, we usually speak, write, or type. In one way or another, we use our words. But what other ways can we communicate? This course will push the boundaries of what we commonly think of as “language” as we explore how both text and image can work to shape meaning and tell stories.

Most of us have been exposed to the interplay of word and image from an early age; we may have read graphic novels or richly illustrated books, for example. Yet, we don't give much thought to how different symbolic systems can be used and combined to shift a message or tell a very different story. Students will study examples of the art of words—instances where the textual and visual come together—and will also experiment with crafting meaning across different forms, including graphic representations and artwork, computer code, and various modes of storytelling. Along the way, students will consider how writing and image making are symbolic forms; how the creative acts of writing and image making intersect and play off each other; how meaning is translated in the acts of creating and consuming art and writing; and how memory, metaphor, text, image, object, and voice work, both independently and together, to tell a story. No previous artistic experience is necessary, just a willingness to explore, innovate, take risks, ask questions, and create.

### **Spike Lee vs. Alfred Hitchcock**

URH

Thursdays 6:05-9:05

Arthur Lewin, Black and Latino Studies

Stephen Whitty, Film Critic

While many compare Spike Lee to Woody Allen, a more accurate comparison is perhaps to Alfred Hitchcock. These two original and prolific filmmakers are rooted in different genres – Hitchcock in suspense and Lee in social commentary – but they are in many ways similar.

Though each received studio funding, neither was ever tied down to one particular studio. They were Hollywood “outsiders,” Hitchcock British and Lee African American. Spike Lee’s penchant for playing parts in many of his films echoes Hitchcock’s obligatory cameos. Both began directing in their twenties and both made a film a year for many years. And while they have each been revered as cinema icons, neither won the Academy Award. Both heavily sprinkled subliminal cues throughout their films. And each man's body of work can actually serve as an extended historical document. The course will be co-taught by an expert on the representation of Black Americans in the mass media and by a renowned film critic who has twice served as chair of the New York Circle of Film Critics.

### **The Nature of Science and Religion**

ETRH

Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:45

Carla Bellamy, Anthropology

Rebecca Spokony, Natural Sciences (Biology)

In this course we will investigate a series of guiding questions that are all implicit in the course title. We will consider the ways in which nature is conceptualized in several religious traditions and we will contrast these conceptualizations with the ways in which modern science conceptualizes and relates to the natural world. We will then use our findings about nature in religious and scientific discourses to ask a series of related questions about the natures of religion and science as forms of discovery and knowledge creation and the potential flaws and limits

### **Spring 2019**

#### **Jazz: Cultural Touchstone of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

PMWH

Monday/Wednesday 5:50-7:05

Gene Marlow, Journalism

Jazz, “America’s classical music,” has been called the only indigenous contribution made by the United States to world culture.

In the first third of the semester, we will explore various jazz styles and the relationship between jazz and other fine and performing arts. In the balance of the semester, we will examine jazz in relation to society at large. For example, it is almost impossible to talk about jazz without reference to racism and as a metaphor for democracy. Almost every week, the course coordinator will host guest experts from many corners of the jazz world, including performers, club owners, photographers, journalists, label executives, public relations practitioners, and historians, among others. Early in the semester each student will identify an area of interest and develop a research project for presentation at the end of the semester. Among various resources, students will be provided with a reference reading list, including such works as Jazzocracy by Kabir Sehgal, Jazz: The First Century by John Edward Hasse, and Jazz Planet, edited by E. Taylor Atkins.

## **Literature and the Brain**

DMWH

Monday/Wednesday 12:50-2:05

Tatiana Emmanouil, Psychology

Stephanie Hershnow, English

This course is structured around two questions at the intersection of literary studies and psychology: First, how does literature capture the semblance of thought in its depiction of fictional characters? And second, how does literature affect readers' brains?

The first question focuses on the narrative and representational strategies that literary texts use to present sophisticated problems of consciousness and perception on the page. How do great pieces of literature represent the inner working of the characters' mind in a way that their thoughts become our own? Think, for example, of Jane Austen, who famously compresses complex social arrangements into individual thought processes (along the lines of, "I know that he knows that I know that she loves him, but does he know that I know that he knows that she loves him?"). In quite another vein, consider Laurence Sterne's comic novel *Tristram Shandy*, which struggles to map the difference between the mind and the brain by attending to the material, physical foundations—the blood and nerves and grey matter—that underlie our desires and preoccupations: sex, war, identity, death.

The second question will lead us to explore exciting new work in the emerging field of cognitive literary studies that attempts to map how the brain encounters literature. How do our brains, which are evolved to promote survival in a real world environment, understand the difference between fiction and fact? Why do we care about people that don't exist? How are we able to process figurative language? Our readings will both introduce us to this new field at the border of the humanities and hard science while also helping us think about the methodological challenges we face when asking these kinds of questions.

Literary texts will range across periods and genres but may include works by Shakespeare, Jane Austen, and Ian McEwan. Critical and scientific texts may include those by Lisa Zunshine, Blakey Vermeule, and Alan Richardson.

## **Humor Matters**

NTH

Tuesdays 2:30-5:25

Don Waisanen, School of Public Affairs (Communications)

This course takes a deep and broad exploration of humor as a pervasive feature of human existence. The class covers types of humor and comedy, including wit, wordplay, satire, parody, irony, and more—and theories of why we laugh, why humor is a learnable skill, and how the art and science of humor benefits the body and soul. The course will use New York City as a vibrant laboratory for exploring the comic side of life, including outings to watch stand-up comedy

performances and shows like The Book of Mormon. The class will also cover how humor has been applied across many areas of human endeavor, for example, the therapeutic uses of humor in healthcare and social service settings. Additionally, the course will focus on the use of humor in cross-cultural communication, especially in breaking down taboos, and issues related to race, ethnicity, and religion. Course materials will include academic and professional works on humor, clips from a variety of media, and collaborative, practical assignments. In examining what makes people laugh and why, the course attempts to connect participants with many of the things that make us most fully human.

## **Fall 2018**

### **Language, Identity, and Social Media**

NRH

Thursday 2:30-5:25

Brooke Schreiber, English

Allison Hahn, Communication Studies

How do the language and images that we use online shape the way others see us - and the way we see ourselves?

This Feit seminar will examine the intersections between language, identity, and social media in both online and face to face interactions. The class will first explore the role of language in online identity construction. We will ask how countries construct official language policies, how multilingual speakers select social media platforms, and how Global English is connecting diverse communities. Then, students will then examine case studies regarding personal social media use, corporate use of online identities, the emergence of online public spaces, and the use of different social media platforms around the world. These case studies will be supplemented by an introduction to online research skills and tools. Students will learn how to ethically collect social media data and will explore qualitative research programs designed for social media research. For the final course project, each student will produce a case study examining how language is used to create community within a particular forum or genre (such as Reddit, Facebook, or online advertising). Evaluation will be based on leading and participating in class discussions, creation of the case study, and final presentation.

### **“New” Energy and Journalism**

MTH

Tuesdays, 11:10-2:05

Christopher Hallowell Journalism

David Gruber, Dept. of Natural Sciences (Environmental Science)

Led by a biologist and a journalist, this Feit seminar delves into new energy development, public perception, special political interests and the compromised role that journalists have assumed in explaining this pivotal resource of the future.

Microscopic algae cells genetically engineered to create petrol; solar voltaics of photosynthesis-mimicking nanoparticles for power production; reactors that efficiently transform household trash into energy--these are just a few of the budding technologies in development that hold the potential to transform our lives and leave a secure legacy for future generations. As fossil fuel extraction becomes more difficult, more expensive and more controversial, energy issues are increasingly central in massive corruption scandals, diplomatic power plays and political upheavals. Coal, oil, natural gas—these are the energy areas that the media typically focuses on, grounded in history, traditional economic viewpoints, and audience expectations. A question that this seminar will consider: is journalism adequately covering the future of energy or is it too reliant on old stories of old energy production.

This seminar will have a two-fold focus: the “clean-tech” energy platforms that are budding from fields such as biotechnology and nanotechnology, and the state of journalism whose reporting on the complexities of energy may be increasingly influenced, rightfully or wrongly, by specialized research groups not connected to any particular news entity. And more questions remain: how interested is the public in absorbing the complexities of new energy developments, and how can the media make such information accessible?

## **Spring 2018**

### **From Page to Stage**

DMWH

Monday/Wednesday 12:50-2:05

Susan Tenneriello, Fine and Performing Arts

Michael Staub, English

This seminar looks at plays in successive phases, from their gestation, before they are set down on the page, to their realization by actors, directors, and designers in actual production, and their afterlife, as new generations restage and reinterpret dramatic texts. Concentrating on classical and contemporary plays scheduled for performance in New York City during the spring semester (e.g. a new production of Ibsen’s *Enemy of the People*), we will ask why some creative artists choose to treat their particular subjects as dramatic vehicles in the first place and examine how scripts are inevitably and constantly transformed through physical and visual embodiment. Students will function as audiences, critics, directors, and actors as we see what happens to words on the page when we speak them ourselves and visit local theaters. Students will be responsible for a series of short writing assignments, leading to an independent final project.

### **Multilingual Literary Translation Workshop**

ETRH

Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:45

Professor Esther Allen, Modern Languages

Professor Debra Caplan, Performing Arts

Have you ever heard or read beautiful words that moved you and wished you could share them with friends who don't know that language? Translation is a performative art that brings songs, poems, plays, and stories to new audiences across linguistic and cultural differences, and, in that act of re-creation, creates something new. In this course, bilingual students of diverse linguistic backgrounds will study the history, theory and practice of literary translation, and will choose and complete their own translation projects from other languages into English. Taught by faculty from Modern Languages and Theater, this course will place special attention on theories of translation as performance. Fluency in any language other than English, as well as in English, are the two prerequisites.

## **Fall 2017**

### **War and the Arc of Human Experience**

Tuesday 6:05-9:05

UTH

Glenn Petersen, Anthropology

Glenn Albright, Psychology

In this seminar we aim to examine some of the social, psychological, and cultural forces that predispose young men and woman to join the military and seek out combat and other forms of military service; the nature of war and its effects on those caught up in it (including both warriors, noncombatants and their families); and the impacts war has on the later lives of those who survive it. Much of Glenn Albright's current work as a psychologist is on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and war trauma and he is deeply involved in developing support services for veterans at Baruch. Glenn Petersen is a Vietnam vet, has recently been writing on war-related issues, and teaches on the anthropology of peace and war. We will draw on materials from our respective fields as well as on literature and the other humanities and social sciences. We are eager to have some of Baruch's veterans participate in this seminar.

### **Money: The Culture, History, and Philosophy of Currency**

Tuesday/Thursday 4:10-5:25 PM

FTRH

Laura Kolb, English

Matt Eatough, English / Global Studies

For something that we use every day, money can be notoriously tricky to define. What is money made of? Where does its value come from? When did human beings invent it? And how have different cultures, in different eras, understood it?

Over the course of the semester, we will examine some of the most important writings on money. We will read selections from seminal works in economic theory (Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Karl Marx's *Capital*, and J. M. Keynes's *General Theory*), as well as philosophical texts that discuss the nature of money and exchange (Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*; Ian Baucom,

*Specters of the Atlantic*). We will also study literary and historical texts to see what insight they can give into the cultural practices that support money, credit, and other forms of investment. Such texts will include Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Martin Amis's *Money*. Assignments will consist of a midterm, leading class discussion, and a final research project.

### **American Politics and the Broadway Musical, from *Little Johnny Jones* to *Hamilton***

Monday/ Wednesday 12:50-2:05

DMWH

Liz Wollman, Fine and Performing Arts

Vince Digirolamo, History

Like all mass entertainments, Broadway musicals reflect their time, place, and the ethos of the people who consume them. In this course, we will examine Broadway musicals that comment on important developments in American social and political history, moving as we do from the mid- to late-19th century when the commercial theater industry was first established, to Broadway in the present day. Assigned readings, which will include scripts or librettos when possible, will touch on the relationship between individual shows' production and reception histories and the sociopolitical mood of the nation. Students will be expected to visit the Theater on Film and Tape Archive at Lincoln Center on occasion; if funds permit, trips to see contemporary Broadway musicals will also be required.

### **Spring 2017**

#### **Migration, Media, and Identity**

Wednesday, 11:10-2:05

MWH

Amina El-Annan, English

Sarah Bishop, Communication Studies

The history of the world is a history of migration. This course tackles the multiple facets of migration, considering it on both a global and a local scale, as a historical as well as contemporary phenomenon. We will examine migration--its perils and its promise--through a set of fictional depictions, academic treatises, films and art exhibits.

As people move around the globe more than at any time in human history, identities intersect and intertwine. We will ask: What moves people to migrate? How is their migration tied to a reconstitution of identity? How does media depict migration as a political, social, and cultural experience? The course materials will guide students in analyses of the ways short- and long-term voluntary and forced migrants (1) are portrayed in news, entertainment, and popular discourse, (2) employ various media practices and processes as means for enculturation, community building, and activism, and (3) understand and interpret their experiences. Our texts may include: Dave Eggers' *Zeitoun*, Radha Hegde's *Mediating Migration*, and Hamid Naficy's "Journeying, Border Crossing, and Identity Crossing." The workload for the course will include



weekly critical reading reflections, active participation in and leadership of class discussions, and a final project.

### **The People and Cultures of the Himalaya**

Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:45

ETRH

Professor Carla Bellamy, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Professor David Hoffman, School of Public Affairs

For more than two thousand years the Himalayan region has been a cultural crossroads from which innovation and wisdom have sprung. Connected to both the East and the West by the Silk Road, its high mountain passes have offered places of refuge and reflection down through the centuries, where the South Asian and East Asian cultural spheres have overlapped, and the Bön, Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim religions have all had an influence. Today, the longstanding patterns of cultural cooperation continue to exist alongside political strife and Indian, Chinese, and Pakistani interest in the region. This discussion-based seminar will explore the complex cultural and political geographies of the Himalayan region. Students will have free access to the extensive collection of Himalayan art at the Rubin Museum of Art, and learn about cultural preservation, governance, and political activism in the Himalayan context.

### **Literature and the Brain**

Mondays, 2:30-5:25

NMH

Stephanie Hershnow, English

Tatiana Emmanouil, Psychology

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between fiction and fact? Why do we care about people that don't exist? How are we able to process figurative language? Our readings will both introduce us to this new field at the border of the humanities and hard science while also helping us think about the methodological challenges we face when asking these kinds of questions.

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## **Fall 2016**

### **Spike Lee vs. Alfred Hitchcock**

Thursday 6:05-9:05pm

Arthur Lewin, Black and Latino Studies

Stephen Whitty, Film Critic

While many compare Spike Lee to Woody Allen, a more accurate comparison is perhaps to Alfred Hitchcock. These two original and prolific filmmakers are rooted in different genres – Hitchcock in suspense and Lee in social commentary – but they are in many ways similar. Though each received studio funding, neither was ever tied down to one particular studio. They were Hollywood “outsiders,” Hitchcock British and Lee African American. Spike Lee’s penchant for playing parts in many of his films echoes Hitchcock’s obligatory cameos. Both began directing in their twenties and both made a film a year for many years. And while they have each been revered as cinema icons, neither won the Academy Award. Both heavily sprinkled subliminal cues throughout their films. And each man's body of work can actually serve as an extended historical document. The course will be co-taught by an expert on the representation of Black Americans in the mass media and by a renowned film critic who has twice served as chair of the New York Circle of Film Critics.

### **Home in Exile: Creative Expression and the Diasporic Experience**

Tuesdays 11:10-2:05pm

Debra Caplan, Fine and Performing Arts

Tshombe Miles in Black and Latino Studies

How do people cope with leaving their homelands? How do cultures survive and change under the pressures of migration, dispersal, and exile? This seminar examines the experience of diaspora as expressed culturally through music, food, clothing, theater, film, literature, and internet culture. We will begin by defining the meaning of ‘diaspora’ and its relationship to other concepts such as race, nation, cultural identity, and migration. The term ‘diaspora’ suggests the dispersal of people from their homeland, which often has multiple meanings. For some people, this homeland might be a place they have never visited or have no real physical connection to. For others, the homeland could be a place that they have constant contact with through travel, communication, and family members. The second half of the course will consider different forms

of cultural expression of the diasporic experience through a comparative lens. Though the seminar will consider a wide range of diasporic experiences, we will primarily focus on two paradigmatic case studies: the Jewish diaspora and the African diaspora. Readings in diaspora studies across the disciplines (including anthropology, sociology, history, political science, comparative literature, geography, theater history, performance studies, and musicology) are paired with examples of food, music, clothing, literature, performances, and other cultural artifacts that exemplify particular diasporic traits, themes, or ideas.

## **Spring 2016**

### **Outlaw Nation: Pirates, Slaves, Witches and Others in the Revolutionary Atlantic M/W 4:10-5:25**

Rick Rodriguez, English

Elizabeth Heath, History

What did it mean to be free in the Atlantic world during the age of revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Prevailing narratives tend to associate freedom with Enlightenment philosophy and elites' property rights. This focus, however, turns freedom into an abstraction unsullied by the raucous practices of outlaws and other marginal figures likewise engaged in the pursuit of happiness but who had little chance of being counted as citizens. Our course invites you to reconsider freedom from the bottom up as the improvised practices of politically marginal subjects. Writers, artists, and politicians variously celebrated, decried, and sought to contain the threat that these figures posed to the early—and still fragile—American Republic. We will read court cases, slave narratives, poetry, political pamphlets, studies of prisons, and novels, along with recent work on cultural theory and history. Authors include: Phillis Wheatley, Thomas Jefferson, Olaudah Equiano, Edmund Burke, Alexis de Tocqueville, David Walker, Washington Irving, Harriet Jacobs, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, John Rollin Ridge, and Herman Melville.

### **Jazz: Cultural Touchstone of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**T/TH 5:50-7:05 PM**

Gene Marlow, Journalism

Jazz, “America’s classical music,” has been called the only indigenous contribution made by the United States to world culture. In the first third of the semester, we will explore various jazz styles and the relationship between jazz and other fine and performing arts. In the balance of the semester, we will examine jazz in relation to society at large. For example, it is almost impossible to talk about jazz without reference to racism and as a metaphor for democracy. Almost every week, the course coordinator will host guest experts from many corners of the jazz world, including performers, club owners, photographers, journalists, label executives, public relations practitioners, and historians, among others. Early in the semester each student will identify an area of interest and develop a research project for presentation at the end of the semester. Among various resources, students will be provided with a reference reading list, including such works as Jazzocracy by Kabir Sehgal, Jazz: The First Century by John Edward

Hasse, and Jazz Planet, edited by E. Taylor Atkins. This Feit Seminar is being offered as part of the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Baruch's Milt Hinton Jazz Perspectives Series.

### **Media and Democracy**

**T 2:30-5:25**

Don Waisanen, School of Public Affairs (Communications)

Sonia Jarvis, School of Public Affairs (Law)

How do the media either promote or limit the potential for democratic values to take hold in society? How do elites work with media systems to manufacture consent and ideology among citizens? This cutting edge seminar will examine such issues as: the effects of violent entertainment; the impact of food and drug advertising on children and adults; the corporate and governmental surveillance of citizens; and how images of minorities in the news and movies influence citizens' beliefs and behaviors – and ultimately public policy. We will investigate the domestic and global possibilities for media diversity, the use of social media in the political process, and other new trends. Students will work to form and articulate a vision for how we might best move forward based on course readings, film viewings, and lively, interactive discussions.

**Fall 2015**

**Wednesdays 6:05-9:05**

### **To the Letter: Conceptual Art and Writing**

Katherine Behar, Department of Fine and Performing Arts (New Media)

Ely Shipley, Department of English

Theodor Adorno stated that “...even the abolition of art is respectful of art because it takes the truth claim of art seriously.” The roots of contemporary art and literature lie in the diverse activities of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century vanguards who prioritized concept, process, and procedure over creativity, originality, and expressivity. Far from abolishing art, or rendering it impersonal or meaningless, these movements expanded the category of art so that today art proliferates: mere concepts can create. Avant gardes and their legacies challenge conventional ideas about creative process and redefine the role of artists and writers. Situating these radical ideas in history, students will explore techniques from the automatic practices of Surrealism and chance operations of Dada, to composer John Cage and the Black Mountain School, and on to proto-digital works by Fluxus and Oulipo. These lineages exert influence today on artists and writers as varied as John Baldessari, Tacita Dean, Paul Chan, Christian Marclay, Ann Hamilton, Charles Bernstein, Jen Bervin, Christian Bök, and Harryette Mullen. This course will guide students through hands-on exercises to move from concept to creation in their own art and writing. Students will participate in experimental modes to gain tools and methods for shaping and understanding their work.

**Tuesdays 2:30-5:25**

## **The Digital Humanities and the Modern City**

John Maciuika, Fine and Performing Arts

Alice Lynn McMichael, Art History, Graduate Center CUNY

Digital humanists are exploring how emerging technologies are opening up new avenues for studying and communicating scholarly questions. In this Feit Seminar we will examine how the digital humanities have impacted the ways that academics analyze, research, represent, and teach about modern urban social and cultural life, architecture, planning, and history. Students will be exposed to the latest trends in the digital humanities, and be introduced to tools and methods that are applicable across the disciplines. We will visit some of the city's cultural institutions, both physically and virtually, and assess how they are adapting to emerging ways of seeing, thinking, and knowing about urban life. Students will read articles and books, examine websites, and explore digital archives, but they will also get hands-on experience working with select digital technologies and methodologies. By the end of the semester the class will design and launch digital projects on one aspect of the modern urban experience.

### **Spring 2015**

**Tuesdays, 11:10-2:05**

#### **Darwin**

Thomas Teufel, Philosophy

Rebecca Spokony, Natural Sciences

Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species* (1859) was a turning point in the way we see the world and our place in it. In this seminar we will develop an understanding of what Darwin did (and did not) propose, as well as an appreciation for what was (and continues to be) revolutionary about his ideas. We will discuss Darwin's significance for 19th century biology and philosophy, consider his contribution to the "modern synthesis" of evolution, genetics, and paleontology in the 20th century, and detect how Darwin's ideas influence contemporary science, policy, and the business of living.

**Thursdays 2:30-5:25**

#### **Nuestra America: Identities, Languages, Literature, and Society**

David Cruz de Jesus, Comparative Literature and Modern Languages

Hedwig Feit, Black and Latino Studies

Lourdes Gil, Black and Latino Studies

This seminar examines the Latin American identity from a Latin American perspective. Through the writings of scholars, writers and political thinkers, starting with the post-independence period of nation formation in the nineteenth century up to the present day, we will focus on the relations between language and identity, as well as the interrelation between identity and cultural, historical and political events. Although the amalgamation of languages, cultures and ethnicities

precedes the arrival of the Europeans, only now is there a recognition of indigenous and regional languages as marks of ethnic and cultural identities. The seminar will address the current trend toward interregional integration happening south of the border, accelerated by globalization. It will also acknowledge the inclusion and participation in public debate of previously silent voices of women and indigenous communities.

**Mondays/Wednesdays 9:30-10:45**

**Workers of the World, Unite! Histories of the Global Left**

Martina Nguyen, History

Andrew Sloin, History

This course explores the global history of communism and the political left. It begins by considering the rise of competing theories of socialism and communism as a response to the crises of early capitalism and excesses of the Industrial Revolution. We then follow major developments in the ideas and ideologies of Communism globally, focusing on four specific case studies: the Paris Commune, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Chinese Revolution, and the August Revolution in Vietnam. Through these cases, we will investigate how ideas and practices of Communism changed as they traveled through time and across cultures. In addition to reading foundational writings by (among others) Karl Marx, Mikhail Bakunin, Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh, we will also explore the relationship between politics and culture under various Communist regimes. Through avant-garde film, revolutionary poetry and prose, Constructivist and Socialist Realist art, music, clothing, propaganda ephemera and other forms of cultural production, we will seek to understand how Communist regimes sought to realize their revolutionary dreams in everyday practice. Finally, we conclude by considering the failure of actually existing socialisms, as well as the question of the enduring relevance of Marxian critiques of global capitalism in the 21st century.

**Fall 2014**

**Mondays/Wednesdays 11:10-12:25**

**Soundtracks: History and its Music in Modern America**

Carol Berkin, Department of History

Liz Wollman, Department of Fine and Performing Arts (Music)

This course examines the development of American popular music through the prism of history. It focuses on both stylistic developments and the historical context in which music such as the blues, folk, soul, rock, disco, punk, alternative rock and rap evolved in the second half of the 20th century. The connection between popular styles and the changing notions of race, gender and social class as well as the impact music has had on American social and political history will be explored.

**Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:10-12:25**

**Remembering the Great War, 1914-2014**

Vince Digirolamo, Department of History

Katherine Pence, Department of History

This class takes the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I as an opportunity to explore the geopolitical forces that pitched dozens of nations across the globe into a four-year maelstrom of death and destruction, shaking the very foundations of western civilization. It will explore the causes, conduct, and consequences of the war, including its social and psychological impact on ordinary citizens, both soldiers and civilians, and its cultural influence on artists, writers, poets, composers, and filmmakers. The course will pay close attention to commemorative events and works newly produced by publishers, orchestras, and museums, and periodicals. Our aim is to gain a deeper understanding of war, peace, imperialism, propaganda, modernity, and memory.

**Thursdays, 2:30-5:25**

**Utopias/Dystopias**

David Hoffman, School of Public Affairs (Communications)

Douglas Muzzio, School of Public Affairs (Political Science)

As H.G. Wells said in a 1939 radio address, “Throughout the ages...Utopias reflect the anxieties and discontents amidst which they are produced.” To study the history of utopian and dystopian thought is to study the hopes and fears that have driven revolution, reform, and social and political innovation for millennia. Through the study of utopian literature and practice, this course will explore issues in governance, economics, human rights, and sustainability, as well as examine fundamental questions about human nature and happiness. We will explore these issues in utopian and dystopian literary works, such as Plato’s *Republic*, Gilman’s *Herland*, Zamyatin’s *We*, Callenbach’s *Ecotopia*, and LeGuin’s *The Dispossessed*. We will also study utopian and dystopian themes in film and music, as well as actual attempts to create utopian societies, especially on the small scale. Students will be encouraged to see works of literature and experiments in the utopian tradition as taking part in an ongoing conversation about how to organize a fulfilling and sustainable life.

**Spring 2014**

**MW 11:10-12:25**

**Political Literature from the Athenian Republic to the Global State**

Christina Christoforatos, Department of English

Allison Deutermann, Department of English

This course explores how pre-modern conceptions of sovereignty, agency, and freedom, inform our present-day negotiations—civic, personal, economic, and political—and condition our views of political agency and civic legitimacy. Our texts may include Aristotle, *Politics* (excerpts); Plato, *The Apology of Socrates*; Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*; St. Augustine, *Confessions* (excerpts); Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* and the *Discourses* (excerpts); Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (excerpts); Thomas More, *Utopia*; Francis Bacon, “The New Atlantis;” and Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine* I and II. Each class session will be dually focused on the past and present, commencing with a discussion of a contemporary political document that

engages the subject of sovereignty in today's global age: the UN charter, the EU constitution, the Geneva Convention, the mission and bylaws of the American Red Cross, corporate white papers (for example, GE's on best recycling practices or JP Morgan's on Health Savings Accounts), vacillating between the present day and the social and intellectual histories that have given it shape. Students are expected to lead their peers in discussion through formal and informal presentations, and through their researched writing, which will be analytical and investigative in nature.

**TR 11:10-12:25**

**Translating Between Worlds: Anthropology and Literature**

Professor Esther Allen, Modern Languages

Professor Carla Bellamy, Sociology

Whenever something moves from one cultural context into another -- a person, a religion, a literary text, an idea -- it is profoundly altered by that shift. Both anthropology and literature scrutinize such transitions, studying the way meanings change as contexts do. In this class, anthropological texts and literary works will be read together for what they tell us about how we change when we move from one world to another. Readings will include Katherine Russell's memoir *Dreaming in Hindi*, Vassilis Alexakis' Greek-French memoir-novel *Foreign Words*, Jorge Luis Borges's seminal essay *The Translators of the Thousand and One Nights* and anthropologist James Clifford's analyses of literary texts in *Writing Culture*. We will trace the translation history of texts such as the ancient Sanskrit Upanishads, translated into Persian in the 17th century, then into Latin, and from there coming to influence 19th-century American Transcendentalism which, in turn, plays a role in the popularity of yoga as a sort of latter-day transcendentalism in contemporary America. Guest lecturers will contribute perspectives from the related fields of folklore studies and history. For their coursework, students will have the opportunity to conduct research at the Rubin Museum, and those who are polylingual will be encouraged to pursue a translation project of their own.

**Fall 2013**

**IDC 4050H / PTRH**

**War and the Arc of Human Experience**

Glenn Petersen, Anthropology

Glenn Albright, Psychology

In this seminar we aim to examine some of the social, psychological, and cultural forces that predispose young men and woman to join the military and seek out combat and other forms of military service; the nature of war and its effects on those caught up in it (including both warriors, noncombatants and their families); and the impacts war has on the later lives of those who survive it. Much of Glenn Albright's current work as a psychologist is on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and war trauma and he is deeply involved in developing support services for veterans at Baruch. Glenn Petersen is a Vietnam vet, has recently been writing on war-related issues, and teaches on the anthropology of peace and war. We will draw on materials from our



respective fields as well as on literature and the other humanities and social sciences. We are eager to have some of Baruch's veterans participate in this seminar.

### **IDC 4050H / ETRH**

#### **Animal Communication/Human Conversation**

Ellen Block, English

Valerie Schawaroch, Natural Science/Biology

“Birds do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it” as songwriter Cole Porter wrote. He wasn't referring to language and communication – but he could have been. Is language unique to humans or do other organisms have their own languages? How do animals communicate without speech? Is intelligence a prerequisite for language? Can language be acquired at any age? Does written language change the way people think? Explore these questions with an evolutionary biologist and a linguist and determine for yourself what constitutes language. Topics we plan to examine include: bacterial quorum sensing, bee dances, bird songs, primate communication, feral children, and human language development, oral and written. We will screen relevant videos including [Project NIM](#), [Animal Einsteins](#) and [Animal Minds](#) and read a variety of articles drawn from the scientific literature and relevant books, including Steven Pinker, [The Language Instinct](#) and Susan Curtiss, [Genie: A Psycholinguistic Study of a Modern Day “Wild Child”](#). Students will be expected to participate actively and to produce independent research

### **IDC 4050H / CMWH**

#### **Humor Matters**

Don Waisanen, School of Public Affairs (Communications)

Linda Weiser-Friedman, Zicklin School of Business

This course takes a deep and broad exploration of humor as a pervasive feature of human existence. The class covers types of humor and comedy, including wit, wordplay, satire, parody, irony, and more—and theories of why we laugh, why humor is a learnable skill, and how the art and science of humor benefits the body and soul. The course will use New York City as a vibrant laboratory for exploring the comic side of life, including outings to watch stand-up comedy performances and shows like [The Book of Mormon](#). The class will also cover how humor has been applied across many areas of human endeavor, for example, the therapeutic uses of humor in healthcare and social service settings. Additionally, the course will focus on the use of humor in cross-cultural communication, especially in breaking down taboos, and issues related to race, ethnicity, and religion. Course materials will include academic and professional works on humor, clips from a variety of media, and collaborative, practical assignments. In examining what makes people laugh and why, the course attempts to connect participants with many of the things that make us most fully human.

**Spring 2013**

### **IDC 4050H / NTH**

#### **Global Brazil: Critical Perspectives on Brazilian Culture and Society**

Michele Nascimento-Kettner, Modern Languages and Comparative Literature  
Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, Black and Latino Studies/Anthropology

This course is designed as an interdisciplinary and critical introduction to the history, society, literature, and culture of Brazil, the largest nation of Latin America. Students will learn about Brazil's colonial experience as the only Portuguese colony in the Americas, its unique experiment with monarchical institutions in the nineteenth century, and the trajectory of its uneven modernization in the twentieth century. The course will examine diverse topics including contemporary race relations, gender, sexuality, religion and spirituality, class conflict, and migration, as well as various aspects of Brazilian cultural production and performance, as reflected in film, music, literature, and other forms of popular culture. Students will engage in the critical analysis of a variety of texts, including films, fictional work, ethnography, and historical accounts, as they also pursue their own areas of intellectual and research interests. Situating Brazil in a global context, the course could be of particular interest to students who intend to pursue study abroad programs in Brazil, who might go into international professional fields (business, journalism, education, etc.), or who are considering graduate school in various disciplines in the humanities or social sciences.

#### **IDC 4050H / MTH**

##### **From Civil Rights to Black Power**

Professor Johanna Fernandez, History

Professor Clarence Taylor, Black and Latino Studies

The modern civil rights movement, perhaps the most important social protest movement of the twentieth century, eradicated the American Apartheid system known as Jim Crow and catalyzed the passage of some of the most important laws in twentieth-century America. While prominent figures were important in shaping the civil rights struggles, the movement was also influenced by countless numbers of ordinary men and women whose names shall never be recorded in history books. This course examines the social roots and origins of the civil rights and black power movements and their relationship with broader and concurrent political and social developments in American society as a whole.

#### **Fall 2012**

#### **IDC 4050H / CTRH**

##### **Cancer Science, Cancer Culture**

Carl Rollyson, Department of Journalism

Edward Tucker, Department of Natural Sciences (Biology)

Co-taught by a biologist and a journalist, this seminar will introduce students to the most recent research and literature on the devastating disease of cancer. How is cancer currently treated and

what cures are now being pursued? How have attitudes towards the disease changed throughout history? How have individuals and their families coped with diagnosis? Students in this course will be expected to be active participants in our seminar discussions and they will be asked to conduct guided research into a topic of their own choosing. We will read a range of texts; these will include: science journals, historical documents, memoirs, drama, fiction, and autobiographical accounts. For instance, we will read cultural critic Susan Sontag's Illness as Metaphor and medical doctor Siddhartha Mukherjee's The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer. (Note: No previous science or biology background is required.)

### **From Concept to Creation: Avant Garde Art and Writing**

IDC 4050H / UWH

Katherine Behar, Department of Fine and Performing Arts (New Media)

Ely Shipley, Department of English

The roots of contemporary art and literature lie in the diverse activities of 20th and 21st century vanguards. Challenging conventional ideas about art and how art is made, these avant garde movements prioritized concept, process, and procedure over creativity, originality, and expressivity. Today, the legacies of these movements continue to redefine the roles of artists and writers. Situating these radical ideas in their historical contexts, this course will introduce students to a variety of experiments in artistic creation, from the automatic practices of Surrealism and chance operations of Dada, to the revolutionary compositions of John Cage, from the Black Mountain School, to the Beats, to the New York School of poetry, to proto-digital works by Fluxus and Oulipo. Students will engage in hands-on experimental exercises in their own art and writing to gain tools for shaping and understanding their work.

### **War Art**

IDC 4050H / DMWH

Corey Mead, Department of English

Karen Shelby, Department of Fine and Performing Arts (Art History)

What is war art? Is it a specific genre? Is it cathartic for the creator? Is it propaganda? How does art influence war and how does war influence art? Does war art serve as a warning? As remembrance? This seminar will explore the responses of writers and visual artists to war. The majority of the course will be dedicated to the major American conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries: World Wars I and II, Vietnam, and the so-called "War on Terror." We will examine a diverse selection of written material including, but not limited to, poems, fiction, journalism, and graphic novels. We will also examine various aspects of visual culture including, but not limited to, print cycles, paintings, sketches, the creation of and the destruction of memorials, posters, sculptures and depictions of war narratives. Authors we will read include: Guillaume Apollinaire, Georg Trakl, Ernest Hemingway, Rebecca West, Joseph Heller, Tim O'Brien, Susan Sontag, Dexter Filkins, and Jane Mayer. Visual artists we will cover include: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Otto Dix, Kathe Kollwitz, Nancy Spero, Christian Boltanski, Art Spiegelman, Duane Hanson, George Segal, gran fury, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Alfredo Jaar, and Jenny Holzer.

## Spring 2012

IDC 4050H / EMWH

### **From Page to Stage**

Professor Paula Berggren, English

Professor Susan Tenneriello, Theater

This seminar looks at plays in successive phases, from their gestation, before they are set down on the page, to their realization by actors, directors, and designers in actual production, and their afterlife, as new generations restage and reinterpret dramatic texts. Concentrating on a group of plays and other theatrical events scheduled for performance in New York City during the semester, including Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Brecht's *Galileo*, and Tennessee Williams's *Streetcar Named Desire*, we will ask why some creative artists choose to treat their particular subjects as dramatic vehicles in the first place and examine how scripts are inevitably and constantly transformed through physical and visual embodiment. Students will function as audiences, critics, directors, and actors as we see what happens to words on the page when we speak them ourselves and visit local theaters, among them Baruch's own performance facilities. The class offers students the opportunity to engage in theater practice and collaborate using digital media, storytelling, and performance, leading to independent final projects.

IDC 4050H / CMWH

### **Representing the Holocaust**

Professor Jessica Lang, English

Professor Michael Staub, English

The Holocaust occupies a uniquely painful place in the history of the twentieth century, and its impact on the visual arts, literature, music, philosophical inquiry, and religious thought has been profound. This course will place the history of the Holocaust – the murder of European Jews – at the center of a broader discussion of anti-Semitism, the rise of Nazism, and the persecution of other groups designated as outsiders and/or enemies of the Nazi regime. It will examine a wide range of cultural documents – fiction and memoirs, films and photographs, testimonies and essays – that focus on historical circumstances and events often understood as indescribable. Students will be responsible for reading, discussing, and analyzing these diverse and often difficult materials – both in class and in written assignments.

IDC 4050H / ETRH

### **Women at Work**

Professor Mary McGlynn, English

Professor Katherine Pence, History

This course examines the experience of women in a variety of urban workplaces in the 19th and 20th centuries. Beginning with an exploration of what constitutes work, students will read historical documents, works of literature, and historical accounts relating to women as household servants, nurses, industrial workers, service and sales clerks, clerical workers, and professionals

during and after industrialization. Issues addressed will include the balance of work and family, participation in labor unions, discrimination in terms of skill levels, wages, sexual harassment, and hiring and firing practices. Students will also investigate how changing worlds of women's work affected their everyday experiences, identities, leisure and consumerism, and political engagement. Written assignments will include short response papers, an annotated bibliography, and an academic essay.

## **Fall 2011**

IDC 4050H MNH

### **Jazz: Cultural Touchstone of the Twentieth Century**

Professor Eugene Marlow, Journalism--coordinator

Jazz, "America's classical music," has been called the only indigenous contribution made by the United States to world culture. In the first half of the semester, we will explore various jazz styles and the relationship between jazz and other fine and performing arts. In the second half, we will examine jazz in relation to society at large. For example, it is almost impossible today to talk about jazz without also talking about racism and democracy. Almost every week, the course coordinator will host guest experts from many corners of the jazz world, including performers, club owners, photographers, journalists, label executives, public relations practitioners, and historians, among others. Early in the semester each student will identify an area of interest and develop a research project for presentation at the end of the semester. Students will work with a number of different kinds of resources, including books like *Jazzocracy* by Kabir Sehgal, *Jazz: The First Century* by John Edward Hasse, and *Jazz Planet*, edited by E. Taylor Atkins. This Feit Seminar is being offered as part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Baruch's Milt Hinton Jazz Perspectives Series.

IDC 4050H TRCH

### **Translating Between Worlds: Anthropology and Literature**

Professor Esther Allen, Modern Languages

Professor Carla Bellamy, Sociology

Whenever something moves from one cultural context into another -- a person, a religion, a literary text, an idea -- it is profoundly altered by that shift. Both anthropology and literature scrutinize such transitions, studying the way meanings change as contexts do. In this class, anthropological texts and literary works will be read together for what they tell us about how we change when we move from one world to another. Readings will include Katherine Russell's memoir *Dreaming in Hindi*, Vassilis Alexakis' Greek-French memoir-novel *Foreign Words*, Jorge Luis Borges's seminal essay *The Translators of the Thousand and One Nights* and anthropologist James Clifford's analyses of literary texts in *Writing Culture*. We will trace the translation history of texts such as the ancient Sanskrit Upanishads, translated into Persian in the 17th century, then into Latin, and from there coming to influence 19th-century American Transcendentalism which, in turn, plays a role in the popularity of yoga as a sort of latter-day transcendentalism in contemporary America. Guest lecturers will contribute perspectives from the related fields of folklore studies and history. For their coursework, students

will have the opportunity to conduct research at the Rubin Museum, and those who are polylingual will be encouraged to pursue a translation project of their own.

## **Spring 2011**

### **IDC 4050H KM13H**

#### **New York Stories**

Professor Shelly Eversley, English

Professor Vera Haller, Journalism and the Writing Professions

New York: what is it about the city that attracts and inspires so many? There are millions and millions of stories. In this seminar, we will analyze some of the poems, essays, fiction, and journalistic writings that attempt to define the identity of the city. When does a person become a New Yorker? What makes New York unique? In class discussions, in posts to a class blog and in focused excursions around the city, we will discover our own “New York Stories.” We will add to the city’s seemingly endless tales in formal writing assignments and in final multimedia projects.

### **IDC 4050H KM24H**

#### **Utopias and Dystopias: Searching for the Perfect World**

Professor Frank Cioffi, English

Professor David Hoffman, Public Affairs

Like an “archeology of the future,” this class will explore artifacts of alternate worlds—perfect worlds and nightmares of perfection gone awry. We will examine utopian and dystopian works, such as Plato’s *Republic*, Gilman’s *Herland*, Zamyatin’s *We*, Callenbach’s *Ecotopia*, and LeGuin’s *The Dispossessed*. We will also study actual attempts to create utopian societies, especially on the small scale, from early Shaker, Fourierist, and Owenite communities, to the Israeli kibbutz and the Biosphere II experiment. Through such studies of literature and practice, this course will explore issues in governance, economics, human rights, and sustainability, and examine even more fundamental questions about human nature and happiness, as we experiment in world building and possibly the creation of our own narratives, dystopian and utopian.

### **IDC 4050H XZ24H**

#### **Decolonization and Postcolonialism**

Professor Glenn Peterson, Anthropology

Professor Kevin Frank, English

Colonialism did not begin with Columbus’s voyages to the Americas. The rise and fall of empires is as old as recorded history. Likewise, decolonization is an old process that often leads newly created nation-states to fragment in the wake of the long-term aftershocks of the collapse of empires. So post-colonialism is neither something short-term nor limited to Africa, Asia, the

Caribbean, and the Pacific. Decolonization and post-colonialism are facts of sociopolitical existence and the study of them can tell us a good deal about what lies ahead of us, as well as how things unfolded in past.

## **Fall 2010**

### **The Centrality of Margins: The African Diaspora in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean**

IDC 4050H JL24H Code 1003

T/TH 10:45-12:00

Professor Tuzyline Allan, English

Professor Elena Martinez, Modern Languages

With the movement of masses of people from Africa to the New World from the 15th century to the present as background, this seminar will examine the character of the African Diaspora from a variety of perspectives. We will begin by defining the term “African Diaspora” and then focus our discussion on the following themes: comparative histories of the various cultures; slavery, domination, and resistance; issues of identity, language, gender, culture, and religion; memory, the Atlantic world and its significance to modern history. We will read a number of historical, literary and theoretical texts. In addition we will examine significant cultural productions like music, dance and cinema. Among the writers to be studied are Franz Fanon, Gabriel García Márquez, Edward Glissant, Maryse Condé, Nicolás Guillén, Toni Morrison, and Nancy Morejón.

### **Watching Water**

IDC 4050H TZ4H Code 1005

TH 2:30-5:25

Professor David Gruber, Natural Sciences

Professor Christopher Hallowell, Journalism

Water, like oil, is a natural resource, yet its far greater value and importance is seldom acknowledged. What is this “molecule” that most people take for granted? Why doesn’t there seem to be enough of it? This class engages students in scientific research about this simple compound, considering its absolute necessity for life as well as its growing scarcity. Through analysis of media coverage of global water issues, students also examine how cities, regions, and countries are dealing with conflict around water, weighing the consequences of the changing oceans’ effect on every inhabitant of the earth, from the depreciation of real estate values to the devastation of marine life.

### **Word and Image: Crafting a Dialogue between Photography and Prose**

IDC 4050H QW2H Code 1004  
Tuesdays, 1:15-4:10  
Professor Leonard Sussman, Fine and Performing Arts  
Professor Cheryl C. Smith, English

This course investigates how the merging of two expressive media, photography and writing, enables the telling of stories more powerful than either medium can tell on its own. Students explore the encounters, dialogues, and collaboration (or antagonism) between written and photographic languages. Photography inspires and challenges their writing and their writing motivates and shapes their photographs. By completing a series of creative assignments, students improve their technical skills, grapple with their preconceptions about both visual and written imagery, develop their individual voices, and acquire new tools of artistic expression and persuasion. Work in progress is shared and discussed in a supportive workshop atmosphere, culminating in two major presentations: an individual final, cohesive essay combining photography and prose and a final collective exhibition.

Prerequisites: Some experience with digital photography would be helpful. Students with no prior experience in photography should contact Professor Sussman, [Leonard.Sussman@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Leonard.Sussman@baruch.cuny.edu), immediately after enrolling in the course.

## **Spring 2010**

### **New World Triad: History, Culture, and Race in New York, New Orleans, and Havana**

IDC 4050H TV24H  
T/Th 2:30-3:45  
Professor Ted Henken, Sociology/Anthropology  
Professor Ned Sublette, Ethnomusicologist/Guest

This class undertakes a comparative cultural and sociological history of three great cities, each founded (or taken over) by one of the three major European colonial powers: England, France, and Spain. We approach them as both parallel and intersecting histories, emphasizing the contributions of Africans and Creoles to each unique urban environment. Focusing on the individual cities, we highlight their different slave regimes and the influence of Africans and other ethnic groups on the development of the particular cultures by examining the musical and dance styles (son, jazz, blues, rumba, mambo, Broadway, salsa, hip-hop, reggaeton) characteristic of each of the individual cities. Broadening our perspective, we also examine the lives of cultural entrepreneurs who have acted as ambassadors among the three cities.

### **Cuba: From Castro to Cohibas (Cuban Cigars)**

IDC 4050H MW6H  
M/W 6:00-7:15  
Professor Wayne Finke, Modern Languages  
Professor Alfonso Guerriero, Historian/Guest



American interest in Cuba dates from the mid-nineteenth century, as an examination of pre-Castro Cuba shows. Beginning with the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, the Spanish-American War, the Platt Amendment, and American business interests in the 1930s – 1950s, the class will then explore the emergence of Fidel Castro, his alliance with the Soviet Union, and the tumultuous relations with the United States from 1961 to the present. As a mirror of this historical process, the arts in Cuba have reflected the daily reality of the Cuban people. The course concludes with close study of films and literature that will allow us to interpret the past and consider possibilities for the future.

## **Fall 2009**

### **From Civil Rights to Black Power**

IDC 4050H KM13H

M/W 11:10-12:25

KM13H

Code 1279

Professor Johanna Fernandez, History

Professor Clarence Taylor, BHS

The modern civil rights movement, perhaps the most important social protest movement of the twentieth century, eradicated the American Apartheid system known as Jim Crow and catalyzed the passage of some of the most important laws in twentieth-century America. While prominent figures were important in shaping the civil rights struggles, the movement was also influenced by countless numbers of ordinary men and women whose names shall never be recorded in history books. This course examines the social roots and origins of the civil rights and black power movements and their relationship with broader and concurrent political and social developments in American society as a whole.

### **Soundtracks: History and its Music in Modern America**

IDC 4050H

T/TH 2:30-3:45

TV24H

Code 1280

Professor Carol Berkin, History

Professor Elizabeth Wollman, Music

This course examines the development of American popular music through the prism of history. It focuses on both stylistic developments and the historical context in which music such as the blues, folk, soul, rock, disco, punk, alternative rock and rap evolved in the second half of the 20th century. The connection between popular styles and the changing notions of race, gender and social class as well as the impact music has had on American social and political history will be explored.

### **Women on the Move: Global Gendered Migration**

IDC 4050H // T/TH 4:10-5:25 // XZ24H //Code 1281  
Professor Isolina Ballesteros, Modern Languages  
Professor Vilna Treitler, BHS

Controversies about international migration dominate the headlines every day: securing borders and protecting citizens from threats of terror and unemployment come into conflict with making jobs available to anyone willing to do them, even if the pay and working conditions are poor. Although women are often marginalized in discussions about migration, women's labor—often dangerous and demeaning—keeps their families afloat. Drawing on a variety of texts, including films, literature, cultural studies, and social science, we will study the issues that surround women's global migration.

## **Spring 2009**

### **Eros and Politics**

IDC 4050H MW6H Code 1884  
M/W 6:00-7:15 pm  
Ben Fontana, Political Science  
Ali Nematollahy, Modern Languages

“Love of *one* is a barbarism; for it is exercised at the expense of all others.” In this maxim, Nietzsche suggests that desire, at least a certain form of it, is antithetical to social and political life. In the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, however, Plato considered Eros as the true foundation of all communal existence. This course will study the role played by Eros in politics from Antiquity to the twentieth century. We will pay particular attention to the connections of Eros with democratic, totalitarian and other mass political movements of the twentieth century. We will examine such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Sade, Freud, Marcuse and Foucault, among others.

### **Sports in Society**

IDC 4050H SY1H Code 1851  
M 2:05-5:00 pm  
Shaun Assael, ESPN  
Josh Mills, Journalism

Sport is part of the glue that binds people together, reaching across generations, neighborhoods, cities, nations, linking peoples of different races and ethnic groups with a common interest. Sport also constitutes an enormous international business, generating tens of billions of dollars in revenue—a process quickened by globalization—and sometimes drawing heavily on the public purse. This is true not just at the professional level, but in amateur sports as well; in the United States, for instance, one or two teams may be the engine of wealth creation for an entire university's physical activities program. Through reading, research, and discussion, members of this seminar will explore sports of all kinds, monitoring their social contributions, environmental impact, labor relations, economic consequences, political influence, and integrity.

Fall 2008

### **America and Its Visions of the World**

IDC 4050H KM24H Code 1229

T/Th 11:10-12:25

Professor [John Brenkman](#), English

Professor [Dov Waxman](#), Political Science

America's vision of the world shapes all its decisions and actions in foreign affairs. Is the world today a "clash of civilizations," in which essentially different religious worldviews compete for supremacy? Has globalization rendered the world "flat"? Is the world caught in the conflict of "Jihad vs McWorld"? Or are we at an "end of history" where liberal capitalism is the triumphant ideology? Is Anglo-American Protestantism, with its synthesis of "God and gold," the only true global superpower? Or is a new contest of American, European, and Chinese empires emerging? We will examine these various visions of the world through a reading of major foreign policy thinkers and case studies involving developments in the Muslim world. Readings will include Samuel P. Huntington, Thomas Friedman, Benjamin Barber, Francis Fukuyama, Walter Russell Mead, and Parag Khanna.

Cross-listed as AMS 4900 and REL 4900.

### **Capturing Communities in Words and Images: From Hassids to Hip Hop, from Bedouins to the Brooklyn Boardwalk**

IDC 4050H PV2H Code 1230

T 12:50-3:45

Professor [Roslyn Bernstein](#), English

Professor [Fran Antmann](#), FPA

The class will explore the ways that writers and photographers have imagined, encountered, and documented diverse communities. We will look at traditionally defined communities such as the Dominicans in Washington Heights, African Americans in Harlem, Orthodox Jews in Borough Park, and Southeast Asians in Flushing as well as non-traditional communities drawn together by shared passions, predilections, and predicaments—rappers, graffiti artists, gypsies, bikers, and runaways. We will examine the work of photographers including Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, Walker Evans, Diane Arbus, and Joseph Koudelka and writers including James Agee, Adrian Nicole Le Blanc, William Faulkner and Sandra Cisneros. Seminar participants will produce their own Capturing Communities project.

### **Literature, Language, and Lies**

IDC 4050H SY3H Code 1231

W 2:05-5:00

Section SY3H will be taught by Francine Prose, the Fall 2008 Sidney Harman Writer-in-Residence at Baruch and the author of eleven novels, including Blue Angel, which was nominated for a 2000 National Book Award. Her most recent non-fiction works include Reading Like a Writer (literary criticism), Sicilian Odyssey (a travel book), and The Lives of the Muses: Nine Women & the Artists They Inspired (biography).

Throughout history, written language has been used to create masterpieces and to pump out propaganda, to delight and delude, to reveal and obscure the truth. But unless we read closely--word by word, line by line, sentences by sentence--it can sometimes be hard to tell the difference. In this interdisciplinary class, we will close-read the stories of great writers as well as this week's issue of *The New Yorker* and today's copy of *The New York Times* as we look at the ways in which words are used to convey information and insight, to transmit truth and beauty, and to form and transform our vision of the world.

Spring 2008

### **From Corn to Caviar: The History, Business, Science, and Art of Food**

IDC 4050H OU2H (code 1617)

T 12:25-3:20

Professor [Andrea Gabor](#), English

Professor [Mary Jean Holland](#), Natural Sciences

Food is much more than the nutrition that sustains our bodies. It has defined cultures, provoked ethical debates, and sparked wars. It has inspired love and art. It is also very big business. Today, food is at the center of the major questions facing our society. This course will explore current issues concerning food and its production (including health and safety, the environment, and industrial agriculture versus local farming), as well as the role that food plays in modern cultural life (from gourmet restaurants and specialty foods to literature and film). Assignments will include exams, oral presentations, and a research paper.

### **Biopics: The Art and Psychology of the Cinematic Biography**

IDC 4050H FJ13H (code 1609)

M/W 9:30-10:45

Professor [Susan Locke](#), Psychology

Professor [Carl Rollyson](#), English

What happens when Hollywood films the life stories of famous people? What has modern psychology contributed to the way public figures are portrayed on film? Must film as a popular medium distort the truth, turning human beings into icons with whom audiences can readily identify? This seminar will explore such questions in depth as students examine print biographies and psychological studies of major figures like Vincent Van Gogh, Marie Curie, and Abraham Lincoln, comparing documentary and foreign film treatments of notable lives with the Hollywood brand. Assignments will include oral reports, a term paper, and a final exam.

Fall 2007

**Representing the Holocaust // IDC 4050H KM13H**

Code 1198

M/W 11:10-12:25

Professor [Jessica Lang](#), English  
Professor [Michael Staub](#), English

The Holocaust occupies a uniquely painful place in the history of the twentieth century, and its impact on the visual arts, literature, music, philosophical inquiry, and religious thought has been profound. This course will place the history of the Holocaust – the murder of European Jews – at the center of a broader discussion of anti-Semitism, the rise of Nazism, and the persecution of other groups designated as outsiders and/or enemies of the Nazi regime. It will examine a wide range of cultural documents – novels and memoirs, films and paintings, essays and plays – that focus on historical circumstances and events often understood as indescribable.

**Stalin, Hitler, Mao**

IDC 4050H JL24H

Code 1197

T/TH 10:45-12:00

Professor [Thomas Heinrich](#), History  
Professor [Tansen Sen](#), History  
Professor [Cynthia Whittaker](#), History

This seminar compares and contrasts the personalities, domestic policies, systems of oppression, and foreign policies of Stalin, Hitler, and Mao. Special emphasis will be placed on the political and ideological contexts in which the three dictatorships evolved. Through intensive discussions examining scholarly writings, historical documents, and documentary films, students will explore some of the most haunting episodes in the history of the twentieth century. Assignments include an oral presentation, three response papers, and a research paper.

Spring 2007

**Origins: Images and Stories from Home**

IDC 4050H FM2H // Tuesdays, 9:30-12:25 // Professor Debbie Saivetz, Theatre; Professor Leonard Sussman, Art

This workshop provides hands-on opportunities to explore the immigrant experience in New York. Students will interview and photograph family, friends, and other members of their local communities. The interviews will be adapted into a script that students will perform within a photographic environment of their own creation. This end-of-semester event may include video, installation art, original music and dance as well. In preparation for their performance, students will read selected texts on the history and practice of devised theatre and documentary and fine-

art photography, considering aesthetic issues such as the veracity of artistic work with a documentary basis. The class will attend live professional theatre productions and photography exhibits, keep written and photographic journals, write a number of short “probes,” and complete a final written and photographic essay.

### **Shaping Culture: The Visible and Invisible Forces of Media and Technology**

IDC 4050H FM4H

Thursdays, 9:30-12:25

Professor Barry Dumas, Computer Information Systems; Professor Eugene Marlow, English

Global economics, global communications, interdependent socio-political systems — characteristics of the world today. Violent religious clashes, geopolitical disputes, resource wars, ecological disasters, quasi-and pseudo-science — also characteristics of the world today. How did we get to this state of affairs? Is it the case that the more we progress the more we regress? To what extent do ever-more powerful media and technology influence these developments? By examining the evolution of media – through oral, writing/printing, electronic, and photonic stages – and the progression of technology, this course will investigate the ways in which media and technology shape cultures, thereby building a foundation for answering these questions. Students will engage in debates, write short opinion papers, and develop a term research paper based on approved self-selected topics.

Fall 2006

### **Mambo Goes to the Movies: Cuban Music, Cinema, and Society**

IDC 4050H TV13H

M/W 2:30-3:45

Professor Wayne Finke, Modern Languages

Professor Ted Henken, Black and Hispanic Studies & Sociology/Anthropology

Famed Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz once called Cuban popular music "a love affair between the African drum and the Spanish guitar." This course will trace the origins and development of Cuban popular music and film during the 20th century, setting them in their social, cultural, political, and historical context. Sampling a wide variety of musical styles and cinematic landmarks, we will study the creative tension between authenticity of expression and the lure of commercialization and examine the influence of these art forms in the Cuban diaspora.

### **Journalism, the Public, and Democracy**

IDC 4050H XZ24H

T/Th 4:10-5:25

Professor Glenn Petersen, Sociology and Anthropology  
Professor Andrea Gabor, Journalism

From colonial times in North America, the press has played a significant and, at times, decisive role in American society: a platform for the candidates, a watchdog of the government, a commentator on social issues. Ownership changes, audiences change, new technologies emerge and have a transformational effect, but American journalism continues to help shape political history. This course will examine the changing role of journalism in society, with a focus on how people use journalism, and can use it differently.

Spring 2006

### **Words and Music**

IDC 4050H JL13H  
Monday/Wednesday 10:45-12:00

Professor Paula Berggren, English  
Professor Gary Hentzi, English  
Professor Dennis Slavin, FPA/Music

What comes first, the music or the words? Different collaborations between writers and composers yield different answers. We will explore this question of primacy, which has often been the subject of formal debates, as we consider the relationship between the constituent elements of songs, operas, musical theatre, and a variety of popular genres (including film scores), spanning some four hundred years of vocal music and instrumental works that arise in response to narrative and verbal cues. Students can expect to attend live performances and to make presentations to the class. Although formal musical training is not required, we will take time to develop an analytic vocabulary.

**From the Battlefield**  
IDC 4050H OQ13H  
Monday/Wednesday 12:25-1:40

Professor Dave King, English  
Professor Carl Skutsch, History

Ben Franklin said, "There never was a good war or a bad peace." On the other hand, the German historian Treitschke called war "elevating," adding, "what a perversion of morality to wish to abolish heroism among men!" Warwhether good or evil, whether of necessity or choice remains a subject of eternal debate and the source of art from Homer to Steven Spielberg. In this course we'll study the violent twentieth century through the lens of its wars and the art war has engendered, including novels, poetry, memoirs, and films. From World War I to Iraq, we'll learn how war has evolved and how writers and other artists have shaped and addressed the moral and political questions that organized combat raises.

**America Through European Eyes**  
IDC 4050H XZ24A  
Tuesday/Thursday 4:10-5:25

Professor John Brenkman, English

How have European thinkers and writers understood America? How does Americas understanding of itself coincide or clash with the understanding of sympathetic and critical European minds? How did the European experience of revolution, imperialism, and war affect these thinkers views of America? These questions and others will be pursued through a reading of such classic texts as Alexis de Tocquevilles Democracy in America, Max Webers The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, works by the philosopher Hannah Arendt, the sociologist Raymond Aron, and writers like Henry James, James Baldwin, and W.E.B. DuBois. This course fulfills the capstone requirement for the major in American Studies.

Fall 2005

**The Workplace in History, Literature, and Journalism**

IDC 4050H SY1H Code 0812  
Monday, 2:05-5:00

Professor Vince DiGirolamo, History  
Professor Geanne Rosenberg, English

This course will focus on the workplace as a center for human experience. From farms, to factories, to mines, to markets, to multi-national corporations, the workplace is the setting for day-to-day struggles for dignity, self-esteem, survival, power and prosperity. We will examine the impact of catastrophic events such as strikes, physical disasters, corporate takeovers, and financial collapses. We will consider the perspectives of employees and management, as revealed in a selection of readings and broadcasts, including historical documents and depictions of the workplace in journalism, literature, poetry, and film. In addition to immersing ourselves in the stimulating literature of work, our goal is to contribute to it through our own research, writing, and documentary projects. During the semester, each student will research and complete an in-depth profile of a workplace of his or her choosing.

**Paris and New York: Capitals of Modernity**// IDC 4050H KM24H Code 0811

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:10-12:25 p.m.

Professor James DeFilippis, Black and Hispanic Studies  
Professor Aly Nematollahy, Modern Languages

Perhaps more than any other cities in the modern world, Paris and New York have attained the status of myths: as capitals of modernity, of culture, of money, of intense sensations, of rarefied pleasures, of advanced art and literature. This course studies the two cities on two simultaneous planes: on the one hand, their respective and comparative histories, that is, the history of the concrete and stone, of the development of urbanism and the physical space of each city; and on



the other, the city as lived space, as the history of men and women who lived and died there, and the ways in which each city determined (or was determined by) these lives. The sources of our study will accordingly be interdisciplinary: history, literature, urbanism and architecture, cinema as well as visits to specific sites. Readings and themes include, among others: the city and revolution; literature and the city; the history of bohemia; immigration and social change; power and urban morphology.

Spring 2005

### **Reading Colonialism**

IDC 4050H TV24H Code: 1047

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-3:45 p.m.

Monday/Wednesday 10:45-12:00 JL13H

Professor Tuzyline Allan, English

Professor Veena Oldenburg, History

Members of this seminar will explore a range of critical perspectives on and approaches to the study of cultural, legal, economic, and social practices in relation to British expansionism, particularly in India and Africa. While the primary historical emphasis will be on 19th-century British colonialism, the broader object of the course is to illuminate, among other things, the relationship of literary form and the colonial experience, the impact of British administrative and cultural experiments in the colonies on the basic structures of everyday life, and the far-reaching effects of colonial power. Course assignments will include works by writers such as Frantz Fanon, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, and Nayantara Sahgal, and pertinent films when available.

### **Poverty, Inequality and Social Welfare Institutions in the United States**

IDC 4050H T5H Code: 1539

3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR

Tuesday, 5:30-8:25 p.m.

Professor Susan M. Chambré, Sociology/Anthropology

Professor Sanders Korenman, School of Public Affairs

Why do poverty and social inequality persist in the richest country on earth? Did the United States fight the War on Poverty and lose? Will the poor always be with us? This course explores the evolution of contemporary debates surrounding social policy and inequality. Through readings, class discussion, and papers examining sociological, ethnographic, and economic analyses, students will gain a greater understanding of how cultural, political and demographic factors shape social policy, and how the social construction of "need" influences policy. Students will consider strengths and weaknesses of alternative approaches to poverty relief and will learn to formulate evidence-based recommendations that are sensitive to multiple and potentially conflicting goals. Particular attention will be paid to the controversy about the passage of the 1996 welfare reform act, its social and economic effects, and the recent debate over its reauthorization.

**Picture-Story: Comic Strips as Art and Literature**

IDC 4050H SY3H Code: 1714

3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR

Wednesday, 2:05-5:00 p.m.

Ben Katchor, Harman Writer-in-Residence

All over the world, children and adults are fascinated with comic books. The striking images, in black and white and in color, and the compelling stories capture their imaginations. Whether their subjects are humorous or serious, social, political or economic, passions for comics run high -- in the United States and in Japan, where the manga style has captured the national fancy. Members of this seminar will study the European precursors of the American comic strip and the work of contemporary alternative comic strip artists. The class, in the form of a workshop, will examine the conventions of the comic strip with the goal of having each student uncover his or her ability to tell a story-in words and pictures. In addition to class discussion of readings, assignments will include writing critiques and other analyses as well as creating a comic story of one's own over the course of the semester. The ability to draw well is not a requirement.

Fall 2004

**Law and Order: Judicial Decisions that Shaped American History**

IDC 4050H 3 CR 3 HR 3 EQ CR

Monday/Wednesday 10:45-12:00 JL13H

Professor Carol Berkin, History  
Professor Carrol Seron, School of Public Affairs

In an important political year, this course examines path breaking court cases that both reflected and changed American social and political institutions. Through such cases as the Salem Witch Trials, Plessey versus Ferguson, and the Scopes trial, we will explore the historical context, the trial itself, and larger themes of American politics, such as federal versus state sovereignty, law and order, and protection of individual rights and the maintenance of social order, that are embedded in these events. To develop a rich understanding of the role and impact of political trials, we will examine important studies that frame the historical periods in which they took place, excerpts of the trial transcripts, and studies by scholars that seek to explain the meaning of the trial in the context of the period. We will also use films to understand better the ways in which political trials provide a lens for understanding American political and social institutions.

**Religious Worlds of New York City**

IDC 4050H 3 CR 3 HR 3 EQ CR

Friday, 9:30-12:25 FM5H

Dr. Charlene Floyd, Visiting Political Scientist  
Professor Kenneth J. Guest, Anthropology/Sociology

This course will explore the complex religious communities of New York City, both their ritual and practice, as well as their role in the larger society. We will examine New York's religious diversity within the growing religious pluralism of United States society and within the changing global dynamics of economic transformation, labor flows, and transnational migration. What role do religious communities play in the life of New York City? How do they assist new immigrants in incorporating into New York, building networks for mutual support, or resisting dominant notions of gender, race and ethnicity? Students will conduct supervised field research in a religious community. Class visits to religious communities will complement readings, films, lectures and discussion.

Spring 2004

**Art and Power** // IDC 4050H 3 CR 3 HR 3 EQ CR  
Monday/Wednesday 10:45-12:00 JL13H

Professor Barbara Savedoff, Philosophy  
Professor Susan Tenenbaum, Political Science

This course examines the complex relations between art and the state. Through a study of selected artwork, films, and architectural styles, we will investigate the ways in which the arts have served to legitimate, glorify, or undermine political authority, and the ways in which government can hinder or foster the development of art. Among the topics to be considered: Louis XIV and state patronage of the arts; the role of art in the French and Russian revolutions; the use and abuse of art in Nazi Germany; the American state as arts patron; the NEH/Mapplethorpe controversy; and the debate surrounding the development of the World Trade Center site.

**Media and Technology and the State of the World**  
IDC 4050H TZ3: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR  
Tuesday 9:30-12:25 FM2H

Professor Barry Dumas, CIS & Professor Eugene Marlow, English

Global economics, global communications, interdependent sociopolitical systems -- characteristics of the world today. Violent religious clashes, geopolitical disputes, weapons of mass destruction -- also characteristics of the world today. How did we get to this state of affairs? What might the future hold? Through debate and discussion, members of this seminar will examine the development of media and technology from the dawn of humanity to the latest headlines. What roles do they play in supporting both the positive and negative aspects of our world? Do they abet power struggles? Do they force cooperation? Can they exert decisive influence? Do the most advanced forms of media and technology offer the greatest advantage? Does control over media and technology translate into control over destiny?

Fall 2003

**Slavery** // IDC 4050H TV24: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR  
T/TH 2:30-3:45

Professor Shelly Eversley, English  
Professor T. Desch-Obi, History

Slavery is as old as humankind, a moral vice that was paradoxically a central component in some of the most “progressive” societies in world history. In the United States, slavery and race seem inextricably connected, but this course will examine in all parts of the globe the subjugation of one set of human beings by another in terms as well of power, gender, and class. Members of this seminar explore the incidence of slavery in Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia by studying a wide range of texts. Materials will include a major slave narrative, several works of history, imaginative fiction like Mark Twain’s Pudd’nhead Wilson and Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha: A Novel*, and a variety of films and cultural performances. The class will also visit relevant sites like the African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan.

**Language, Calligraphy, and East Asian Societies**

IDC 4050H TZ3: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR  
W 2:30-5:25

Professor Ping Xu, Modern Languages and Comparative Literature  
Professor Theresa Jen, The College Board

Language as visual as well as verbal art permeates China, Japan, and Korea. This seminar provides an overview of their closely related yet distinctive languages from cultural, social, psychological, and linguistic perspectives. Topics covered include spoken vs. written language; gender- and status-based differences in language use; and the role played by language in interpersonal communication, the formation of cultural identity, and literary creativity. Students will acquire hands-on experience with the origins, histories, and techniques of East Asian calligraphy in relation to painting and poetry and as a unique performance art. No knowledge of Chinese, Japanese, or Korean language is necessary.

**Changing the World: Two Decades of Revolutionary Arts, Ideas, and Practices**

IDC 4050H FM4: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR // TH 9:30-12:25

Professor Alisa Solomon, English, Faculty Coordinator

In the 20 years since Baruch alumnus Charles Feit created our interdisciplinary seminar program, every field of inquiry has undergone profound change. In this special celebration of the Feit Seminar Program, students and faculty will consider some of the seismic shifts in how we understand everything from contemporary literature to corporate liability, race to religion, sexuality to social movements. Different instructors from a variety of disciplines join the group from week to week to introduce and trace the impacts and influences of key texts and art works over the last two decades.

Spring 2003

**Corporate Power:  
The Evolution and Culture of American Capitalism**

IDC 4050H QW2: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR// Tuesday, 1:15-4:10 pm

Professors Gabor (English) and Neimark (Accounting)

Out of the harsh battles of the industrial revolution, the American corporation emerged, in the words of Peter Drucker, as “the representative institution” of American democracy. This course will debate Drucker’s thesis, as well as the power and contradictions of American capitalism and its unique role in American (and global) culture. Members of the seminar will investigate why—and at what cost—corporate capitalism cushioned the worst excesses of capitalism. We will examine how big companies and large-scale manufacturing created an unprecedented engine of economic growth. Through the study of fiction and film, we will also consider the depiction and role of American capitalism in popular culture.

Fall 2002

**The Stem Cell Controversy:  
Opportunity or Dilemma?**

IDC 4050 M5: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR // Mondays, 5:00-8:00 pm

Professors Hallowell (English) and Schulman (Natural Sciences)

The use of stem cells for medical research and as a potential cure for numerous diseases—Alzheimer's and Parkinson's among them—has embroiled government, politics, business, and religion in heated debates. This seminar will address both the science of stem cell research and society's reaction to the issues it raises: the use of embryonic tissue, the patenting of living things, the ethical implications of cloning. Visiting scientists, religious leaders, bioethicists, journalists, and corporate representatives will assist the members of the seminar to distinguish fact from fiction. The class will study timely reflections on the subject, in newspapers, periodicals, scientific journals, television, and film, as well as the timeless insights of ethical philosophy. Through investigating the moral and medical dimensions of stem cell research, students will develop their own areas of expertise and work with each other to become responsible and informed evaluators of scientific information.

**Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad**

IDC 4050 KM13: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR // Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:10-12:25

Professors Abrahamian, Sen, and Trumbach (History)

Today's headlines offer daily witness to the impact of religious systems and ideologies on our world. Members of this seminar will study the historical origins of three of the most powerful and innovative religious thinkers of all time, investigating the life, times, and teachings of Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammad. Working with primary source materials as much as possible, the

class will analyze the means by which our knowledge of the acts and messages of Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammad have been transmitted across time and then go on to examine and discuss the changing image of each one across the centuries in different parts of the world.

Spring 2002

**From Eros to Agape: Counting the Ways We Love**

IDC 4050 KM13A M/W 11:10AM - 12:25PM// Professors **Berggren** (English) and **Locke** (Psychology)

Love may seem the most natural and spontaneous of emotions, but styles of loving change with the times, influencing the way human beings understand, experience, and express their feelings. In exploring a variety of literary and psychological texts, members of the seminar will look at both the “invention” of romantic, erotic love, and the often self-involved and sado-masochistic behaviors it encourages, and the development of the altruistic love known to the Greeks as *Agape*, the often self-denying love of parent for child and for a greater good. Readings include a number of classic texts such as Plato’s *Symposium* and Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* as well as a range of more contemporary selections of poetry, short stories, and psychoanalytic articles. Films and music (like the Liebestod from Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*) will illustrate the ways in which all the senses contribute to the heightened emotional state that we call love.

**Speaking Truth to Power:**

**Women's Voices from Latin America and the Caribbean**

IDC 4050 TV24

T/TH 2:30PM - 3:45PM

Professors **Golob** (Political Science) and **Martinez** (Modern Languages and Comparative Literature)

This course examines the positioning of women in Latin America and Caribbean societies from colonial times to the present. It focuses on the various ways in which these women—as writers and poets, chroniclers, mothers, scholars, activists, etc.—shaped a discourse that was often at odds with the traditional social and political power structure. In addition, this course investigates the formation and expression of identity as an artistic and political act; individual vs. collective means of defying imposed boundaries of thought and action; and unity and diversity of “women’s voices,” both theoretically and culturally across nations in the region and in the diaspora (i.e., Latina/Chicana voices). Special attention is given to the textual strategies and narrative techniques used by women writers. The course integrates literary texts, memoirs, and testimony with historical and social and scientific analyses and film to give a diverse and rich perspective on women’s voices from these regions.

Fall 2001

## **African-American Religions: Historical and Literary Perspectives**

IDC 4050 OQ13 (co-listed as AMS 3000) // M/W 12:25-1:40

Professor Tuzyline Allan, English

Professor Clarence Taylor, History

This seminar focuses on the evolution of African-American religions from their origins in West Africa to the present day. Using critical categories like race, gender, class, and sexuality and proceeding chronologically, the examination of poetry, fiction, sermons, essays and music will provide insights into the role of religion within black social and political structures as well into its psychological impact on individual human consciousness. Starting with the West African sacred cosmos and its use among an enslaved population in America, the class will investigate the first Great Awakening and the making of Afro-Christianity, the impact of literacy and Reconstruction on Afro-Christianity, the rise of Pentecostal culture, and the challenge to and embrace of modernity.

### **From X-Rated to G-Rated:**

#### **The Gentrification of 42nd Street**

IDC 4050 TZ3

Wednesday, 2:30 to 5:25 PM

Professor Roslyn Bernstein, English

Tony Bianco, senior writer at Business Week

This seminar trains a microscopic lens on 42nd Street, one of the central arteries of Times Square, with an emphasis on its history and architecture. To understand the area's cultural contribution to New York City and the world, students will examine its entertainment venues, its almost-vanished porn industry, and its involvement in organized crime activities. Texts include materials from Mr. Bianco's forthcoming book on 42nd Street, fiction and reportage by authors like Damon Runyon and Geoffrey O'Brien, and films set on and around 42nd Street, including "42nd Street," "Midnight Cowboy," "Taxi Driver," and the original "Shaft." There also will be field trips to the district and guest lectures by architects and planners active in the neighborhood's transformation.

### **Technology and Culture**

IDC 4050 FH24

T/TH 9:30-10:45

Professor Barry Dumas, CIS & Professor Eugene Marlow, English

Marshall McLuhan, an expert in English literature, as well as technology and culture, wrote: "Once a new technology comes into a social milieu, it cannot cease to permeate that milieu until every institution is saturated." In this seminar, the relationships between technology and culture are probed and analyzed. What is technology? What is culture? How do they operate on each other? As a foundation, students will explore the history of technology and gain an understanding of the cultural evolutions that have taken place as a result of so-called

technological "revolutions." Joined on occasion by visiting experts, the class will explore current issues and events, focusing especially on those that involve information and communication. Course materials range from classics like McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* and films like Stanley Kubrick's *2001* to the morning's newspaper account of the latest merger of communication giants. Working individually and in groups, students will prepare and deliver oral and written presentations.

Spring 2001

**Between Good and Evil:  
Politics, Literature and Culture in the 1920s and '30s**

IDC 4050 EH14

Monday/Thursday 9:30-10:45 am

Professors Schneider (Modern Languages and Comparative Literature) and Skutsch (History)

This course explores the ideological, social, and artistic ferment that pervaded America and Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. Political texts, literature, art, architecture, film and fashion will be examined closely in order to trace and appreciate the evolution of an experimental, elitist culture that dominated society in the 1920s, to a more "humanized" one in the 1930s that focused on and targeted the collectivity. Considering writing by authors like Kafka, Orwell, Garcia Lorca, Brecht, and Malraux, and other varieties of social production, members of this seminar will discover how popular culture was instrumental in constructing Socialism and its nemesis Fascism.

**From Slavery to Reconstruction:  
Literature, History, and Culture of the Civil War Era**

IDC 4050 FM3A

Wednesday 9:30 am -12:25 pm

Professors Clinton (History) and Reynolds (English)

This course focuses on the prelude to the Civil War and its aftermath, with particular emphasis on the intersection of race and gender in the formulation of arguments about slavery. By reading novels, slave narratives, and other personal expressions produced in the United States between 1845 and 1890, members of this seminar will gain an understanding of how individuals experienced the turmoil of these years, which transformed American society. By studying some of the great orations of the era, including speeches by Abraham Lincoln, and the critical essays of writers like Walt Whitman, the class will gain a broader view of the issues and their impact on public policy. The course concludes with an assessment of the Reconstruction Era and its complex legacy.

**Family Stories: Oral History, Folklore, and the Art of Storytelling**

IDC 4050 M53

Monday, 5:30-8:25



Professors Schenkel (English) and Lipkin (guest, Professional Storyteller)

This course explores the ancient art of storytelling in the light of recent scholarship in the fields of cultural anthropology, psychology, and narrative theory. Combining the experiential with the theoretical, the course will also focus on storytelling as a healing art and as a vehicle for intergenerational understanding. At the same time as they explore the nature of orality and the roles of mythologizing and improvisation in folklore and in oral and written stories, students will learn imaginative techniques for discovering and articulating their own family stories. By interviewing relatives and developing insight into family rituals and stories, members of the seminar will create personal oral narratives to be shared in the classroom. A storytelling "Festival" may be held at the end of the semester to share these narratives with the larger Baruch community.

Fall 2000

**Work in American Society**

IDC 4050 EL3AH: 3 CR, 3 HR, 3 EQ CR

Wednesday, 9:05am-12:00 noon

Professor Pritchett (History), course director, with the participation of Professors Berkin and Heinrich (History); Neimark and Tinker (Accounting); Solomon (English)

This course will examine the role of work in shaping American society from many different perspectives. Through the disciplines of history, sociology, art, literature and management, we will explore how the nature and definitions of work have changed over time, and how changes in technology have affected the development of work. We will also study the ways in which work shapes our perceptions of ourselves and others and how differences in race, gender and ethnicity affect the work experiences of Americans.

Spring 2000

**The Making of Modern Japan**

IDC 4050 PR13

MW 12:50-2:05

Professor Eva Chou, English & Professor Howard Lentner, Political Science & Professor Tansen Sen, History

From Zen to video games, from samurai to automobiles, Japan has left an indelible mark on international culture. Japan's status as the world's second largest economy and its role in stabilizing East Asia and the Pacific have made it a significant partner in contemporary global affairs. This course examines the way in which the Japanese built their influential nation, how they see and express themselves, and what they have contributed to the world. It focuses on the major economic, political, social, and intellectual trends that created modern Japan. We will

consider the films of Akira Kurosawa, the works of D. T. Suzuki and the Noble Laureate Kenzaburo Oe, and the studies of modern Japan written by Western scholars.

**Ghosts, Dreams, and Visions:**

**Literary and Psychological Representations of the Unconscious Mind**

IDC 4050 TV24

TTh 2:30-3:45

Professor Paula Berggren, English & Professor Susan Locke, Psychology

From the earliest times, ghosts, dreams, and visions, manifestations of the unconscious mind, have been vehicles for revealing truths that human beings find difficult to face directly. To discover what our minds want to bury and why, we will examine diverse literary works such as Virgil's *Aeneid*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the eighteenth-century Japanese collection called *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*, Part Barker's contemporary prize-winning novel *The Ghost Road*, and a recent memoir, *The Accidental Asian*, reading them in the light of master texts of twentieth-century psychology, notably by Freud and Jung. Students will make oral presentations and produce portfolios as well as write essays and one formal examination.

Fall 1999

**Gods and Goddesses, Heroes and Heroines:**

**A Cross-Cultural Study in Art, Literature, and Mythology**

IDC 4050 TV 13

TTH 2:30PM-3:45PM

Professor Virgil Bird, Art

Visiting Professor Charles Grippi, English

Images of the divine and the human, myths of creation and of the life and death of heroes and heroines raise timeless questions of human existence. In our study of the visual and verbal cultures of East and West, including ancient masterworks such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Four Noble Truths of Buddha*, and *Oedipus the King*, and contemporary fiction by writers like Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Naguib Mahfouz, and Flannery O'Connor, we will inquire into the power of great myths and their persistence from antiquity to modern times. This seminar is taught by Professors Bird (Art) and Grippi (Literature).

**The New Ireland: A Culture Resurgent**

IDC 4050 KM14 // MW 11:10AM-12:25PM

Professor Myrna Chase, History & Professor Barbara Gluck, English & Visiting Professor Thomas Taaffe, visitor

War-torn and impoverished for much of the twentieth century, Ireland recently has been transformed. Reflecting profound political, social, and economic changes, a remarkable cultural resurgence has put Irish fiction, poetry, drama, film, and music at the very front of the English-

speaking world. This seminar explores the creativity of Roddy Doyle, Seamus Heaney, Brian Friel, Neil Jordan, U-2, the Chieftains, the Commitments, Riverdance, and many others who speak for a new Ireland, victim no longer but rather a vital member of the European and the world community. This seminar will be taught by Professors Chase (History), Gluck (English), and Taaffe (visitor).

Fall 1998

### **Versions of the Self**

IDC 4050

Mondays 6:00-9:30 PM

Our culture commands that we know our self, be true to our self, and yet our sense of our self is constantly changing, expanding, and contracting. This study of various presentations, representations, mis-representations, and constructions of the self will focus on classic and contemporary autobiographies, as well as diaries and thinly-disguised autobiographical fiction, confessions, film and self-portraits, by Rousseau, St. Augustine, Jung, Foucault, Gandhi, Woolf, among others. This seminar will be led by Professor Chase (History) and Earle (Philosophy). Once every five years this theme has been the subject of a seminar it was the first FEIT seminar-- and it is the first evening seminar in several years.

### **Order in the Court**

IDC 4050 KM14

Mondays and Thursdays 11:10-12:25 PM

This seminar will be led by Professor Berkin (American historian) and Pritchett, Americanist and a JD from Yale as well. The course will examine judicial decisions and courtroom trials that provide a window on, or were the agent of, changes in American political, social, and intellectual life. The course will cover from the Dredd Scott decision to Roe v. Wade, from the Salem Witch trials to the "witch hunt" of the 1950s, from the convictions of the Scottsboro Boys to the acquittal of O.J. Simpson. It will consider the changing nature of the key legal and judicial institutions involved, including the Supreme Court and the legal profession.

Spring 1998

### **Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed**

IDC 4050 JL14 // MTh 10:45-12:00 // Professor Ervand Abrahamian, History & Professor Tansen Sen, History & Professor Randolph Trumbach, History

The seminar will study the life, times, and teachings of these three religious leaders. It will analyze the sources of our knowledge of their acts and their messages. The seminar will examine and discuss the changing image of each one across the centuries in different parts of the world.

### **Culture and Poverty**

IDC 4050 WY 13

MW 3:45-5:00 // Professor John Brenkman, English & Professor Janet Gornick, Political

Science// The longstanding controversy over the impact of poverty on people's ways of life and values has flared up again in the debate over welfare reform and urban poverty. This course will examine the "culture of poverty thesis"; current social policy debates (welfare, the "underclass," etc.) ethnographies of the inner city; the creation of urban culture through literature and other art forms.

Fall 1997

### **Exploring the Holocaust: The Question of Human Failure**

IDC 4050, Section FM3, Wednesdays: 9:30-12:25

Professor Henry Feingold, Department of History & Professor Elaine M. Kauvar, Department of English

This seminar considers why historians and artists of all sorts have been driven to immerse themselves in the genocide committed during World War II. We will examine several processes, character types, and historical figures involved in this disaster: the demonic/charismatic leader commanding a mesmerized subject people, the hapless refugee, the witness as altruistic rescuer or indifferent bystander, mass killers as ordinary men, and the victim and victimization process. Poets and novelists are irresistibly drawn to this catastrophe, the worst that human beings have been capable of and have endured. Books, testimonies of survivors, and films will broaden the experience of the course. Join Professors Henry Feingold (History) and Elaine M. Kauvar (English) in exploring the bloodiest crime yet.

### **Holy Books and Human Visions: Scriptural Traditions in Comparative Perspective**

IDC 4050, Section TV13, Monday & Wednesday: 2:30-3:45 // Professor Paula Berggren, Department of English // Professor Pamela Sheingorn, Department of History

Where do we come from? What is our destiny? Can we separate our spiritual essences from our bodies? The holy books of the world's great cultures have addressed these perplexing questions and the answers they propose have profoundly influenced the way we think about ourselves. By comparing scriptural traditions that have drawn from the same roots (like Hindu and Buddhist, and Judaic, Christian, and Islamic), we will explore different creation stories, notions of heaven and hell, and the complex and often contradictory ideas about the roles women and men play in the different universes that they themselves have imagined. Our primary texts include selections from the visual and verbal arts, including architecture, films, novels, paintings, and poems, and our discussions will examine the interpretations and controversies they have provoked. Students will make oral presentations and produce portfolios as well as write essays and one formal examination.