FEIT INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINAR PROGRAM
Courses for Spring 2023

News Media, Toxic Sludge, and the Future of Democracy
MWH
Wednesday 11:10-2:05
Andrea Gabor, Journalism
Don Waisanen, Marxe School of Public Affairs

How do the media—from traditional news organizations to social networking platforms—influence the functioning of democracy? How do political and business elites work with media systems to manufacture consent and ideology among citizens? Does technology threaten to make the “fake news” problem worse? This provocative seminar will explore the historic connection between a free press and democracy; the role of media ownership, including the power that corporations and Big Philanthropy wield over news organizations and social networks; the shift from “objective” news to opinion; and the impact of different forms of media on issues such as the climate crisis, gun violence, elections, and more. We will investigate the policy implications of a 24-hour global news cycle, the proliferation of misinformation, and the future of the internet and the news media via readings, analyses of films, invited class speakers from media companies and news organizations, news discussions of timely topics, mini presentations, lively, interactive discussions, and a final project (podcast, opinion piece, essays are some of the options).

From Page to Stage
NMH
Monday 2:30-5:25
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, 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 perform them ourselves and visit local theaters. Students will be responsible for a series of short writing assignments in response to the readings, as well as independent creative projects. Students will also attend dramatic productions in New York City during the spring semester.
Making Music in the U.S: Race, Power, and the American Songbook
MTH
Tuesday 11:10-2:05
Andrew Sloin, History
Abby Atherton, Fine and Performing Arts (Music)

This class explores the development of American popular music from the Civil War to the present, with a focus upon the relationship between music, performance, race, and politics. We will begin by exploring lineages of popular music in America, tracing pathways of musical migration through the Atlantic World. We then will examine popular music as a site of racial construction and imagining, as well as a space of boundary-crossing creativity. Along the way, we will explore the emergence of new genres of American music, from ethnic folk music, blues, country and jazz, to rock, punk, and hip hop. All students will be required to participate in a weekly piano or guitar practicum (to be held during each class session). Experience playing music is a plus, but not a requirement. However, you must be willing to learn and practice; music-making will be a critical component of this course.