

# FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

## SPRING 2016 – COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

1/7/16

**HSS4 The Modern Context: Figures and Topics (3 credits).** This course is offered in multiple sections with different topics.

**HSS4 A: Gertrude Stein.** The iconoclast poet Gertrude Stein is often credited with the birth of modern literature. Stein's position at the center of early modernist movements, from “the Lost Generation” to the Cubists, engages the question of what it means to be avant-garde. Yet because Stein was born just after the Civil War and died just after WWII, her life and career are also framed by the question of what kind of “making” is possible in the age of technological warfare. This HSS4 will consider Stein's experimental poetry and prose, focusing on her 1914 *\*Tender Buttons\** and 1932 *\*Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas\**, as well as other texts by those she influenced in her own time and beyond. We will discuss Stein's creative process –automatic writing, collage, genre mixing, radical attention, and language play --and explore how Stein's seemingly nonsensical writing complicates our definitions of abstraction and realism. Our class discussions will engage such themes as ethnocentrism, social marginalization, expatriotism, and privilege. For the course project, students will choose from a broad range of literary and socio-historical topics relating to Stein's corpus and legacy. *3 credits. Karen Lepri*

**HSS4 B: The Global Worker.** What is work? Why do we do it? How does it change depending on our geographic and social context? How has it evolved over time? This class will introduce students to international labor issues, focused on the (Western) Industrial Revolution to the present. Concepts include subcontracting, offshoring, unions and organizing, protest, globalization/migration, manufacturing, service work, technological change and legal regulation. Students will engage with diverse genres: reportage, popular and academic non-fiction, interviews and ethnography, UN and ILO reports and conventions, union and civil society reports, case law and statutes, memoirs, fiction, visual art and poetry. Guest speakers and field trips will animate in-class conversations. This content will ground students in the practice of outlining, researching, writing and revising 20 pages over the course of the semester. The instructor is a full-time journalist and former social-justice lawyer. *3 credits. Tammy Kim*

**HSS4 C & H: Berlin.** Our topic is urban culture (including art, architecture, design, cinema, and city planning), political crisis, and everyday life in a city that has continually reinvented, critiqued, celebrated, and memorialized itself over the course of its turbulent modern history. Our “figure” is Berlin as a site of both radical innovation and catastrophe, now a dynamic European capital city. We will investigate a variety of written, visual, and oral primary and secondary sources to develop our research projects, paying particular attention to experiences of defeat, reconstruction, and commemoration in the Weimar, Nazi, and contemporary eras. *3 credits. Atina Grossmann*

**HSS4 D: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Drama.** Close readings and discussions of plays by such writers as Chekhov, Ibsen, Strindberg, Ionesco, Synge, Jarry, Beckett, O'Neill, and Pinter.  
*3 credits. Brian Swann*

**HSS4 E: Robert Baden-Powell: Scouting.** In the wake of what historians have titled the "Crisis of Masculinity", the turn of the 20th century marked a shift in the construction of boyhood and gendered youth organizations beginning in Britain and then spreading throughout the world. This course will explore this shift using Robert Baden-Powell and the origins of the Scouting Movement. Through Baden-Powell and the Boy Scouts, we will be able to examine: homosocial youth organizations; childhood, charity, and class; Muscular Christianity; masculinity and the outdoors; public school education; and the impact of militarism in the build up to World War I. Students will engage in both primary and secondary source research connecting the establishment of gendered youth organizations with any lens of their choosing. *3 credits. Sophie Muller*

**HSS4 F & J: George Orwell's Spanish Civil War.** Through a close reading of George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, this course explores the myriad representations and consequences of the Spanish Civil War. Orwell, who volunteered to join and fight with an international brigade on the part of the leftwing POUM, recounts the thrill of socialist revolution in Barcelona, the boredom and discomfort of the front lines, and the fear of Communist secret police. This course highlights the fissures in culture, politics, and European society opened up by the conflict, and noticed by Orwell. Students will learn about the economic challenges of interwar Europe, the effects of modernization on European cities, and the varieties of leftwing and rightwing political activism. Topics covered include: the writings of Hemingway, Orwell, and Koestler; the architecture of Gaudi; the paintings of Picasso; Catalanian Separatism; Stalin's Terror; The Abraham Lincoln Brigade. *3 credits. Thomas Fleischman*

**HSS4 G & M: Literatures of the Caribbean: V. S. Naipaul.** This course focuses on three major modern novels from the English speaking Caribbean by V. S. Naipaul: *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *The Mystic Masseur*, and *Half A Life*. Student's will explore in their papers an interest or issue of concern arising from their close engagement with these texts. Brief selected readings in history, theory and criticism will further enrich students' reading and writing processes. Among the myriad questions open to debate in these novels are the ways notions of home, colony, third world, underdeveloped, developed, history, race and gender often complicate how Caribbean subjects formulate, perceive and express their identities. How do these identities change as characters try to inhabit alternative spaces within the Caribbean, other colonies, or the metropole? What are the opportunities and challenges that movements such as emancipation, decolonization, independence, and an expanding US/receding English presence create within our texts?  
*3 credits. Harold Ramdass*

**HSS4 I: Urban Anthropology: Perspectives on New York.** This class is focused on New York City. Our theoretical approach will draw on the anthropological concept of perspectivism – originally developed by Nietzsche and recently adapted by anthropologists such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and others. Through perspectivism,

we will be able to think about the relationship between forms of embodiment, practice, and ways of knowing as they pertain to urban life. Students will be asked to choose a practice or “perspective,” and to write about its role in constructing the city. How do thinking through exterminators and pest control, farmers' markets and food accessibility, finance, green architecture, or infrastructural networks and disaster preparedness help us rethink New York? *3 credits. Nicholas D’Avella*

**HSS4 K: Jorge Luis Borges.** Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) once said that “maybe everything I have written is a mere metaphor, a mere variation on that central theme of being puzzled by things.” The things that puzzled him included some of the central problems of modernity—how time moves, how to cope with an infinite expanse of information, how and why to read, what constitutes identity—as well as timeless questions like how to navigate a maze, what mirrors actually reflect, and how language works. Borges’ stories read like essays and his essays read like stories: they investigate paradoxes and philosophical problems and the interplay of literature with literature rather than character or psychology, but they are nonetheless suspenseful, funny, and moving. In this exploration of his fiction and nonfiction, we will consider all that has come to be called *Borgesian*, along with issues of intertextuality, genre, and authorship. Students will write one short and one long source-based paper, using close reading and literary-critical, theoretical, and historical sources to analyze Borges’ work. *3 credits. Martha Schulman*

**HSS4 N: Apocalypse.** The word apocalypse comes from the Greek for revelation or uncovering. Traditionally, it also refers to a literary genre in which hidden meaning is revealed, as in the New Testament book of Revelation. Today, however, apocalypse is more likely to conjure up images of the end of the world and to signify disaster and devastation. Contemporary American culture is saturated with apocalyptic visions, from evangelical Christian notions about the imminent Rapture and other eschatological beliefs to depictions of the implications of climate change to images of the end times in modern art, literature, theater, and film. In this interdisciplinary course, we will study these apocalyptic visions and examine the ways in which apocalypse has become a powerful trope around which to organize a host of social anxieties about the present and future. *3 credits. Jeffrey Morris*

**HSS4 O: Michel Foucault.** French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) worked across disciplines to investigate power, knowledge and agency. His work on the organization of practices that regulate behavior in society is one of the most significant contributions to critical thought in the second half of the 20th century and raises questions about the human sciences, social institutions and subjectivity. In this section of HSS4, we will focus on Foucault’s work on discipline, power and knowledge. We will read from his lectures including the “Discourse on Language” and *Lectures on the Will to Know* as well as selections from his critical works *The Order of Things* and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* and his essay “Preface to Transgression.” Students will be encouraged to pursue research projects that examine a contemporary issue through the lens of Foucault’s work; critically engage one of his arguments; explore his influence on contemporary thinkers; or investigate how he situates himself within the

philosophic tradition. *3 credits. Avra Spector*

## **HUMANITIES (3 credits)**

**HUM 105: Fundamentals of Music.** A study of the elements and forms of music and a consideration of how they define the stylistic characteristics of the music from the late Renaissance to the present. There will be extensive use of recordings, as well as attendance at concerts and recitals. *3 credits. Jason Oakes*

**HUM 107: Introduction to Creative Writing.** Starting with exercises and word games, then moving to, e.g., the objective poem, collage and concrete poetry, metrics, translations. As well as writing, students are expected to read widely in poetry and fiction. Attendance at a poetry or prose reading is obligatory. Grade based on class performance and portfolio of work. *3 credits. Brian Swann*

**HUM 329: The History of Cinema: 1945 – Present.** A history of the cinema from World War II through the present day, with particular attention to the development of neo-realist, new wave and third-world movements. Topics include the impact of television, the influence of Pop Art and the development of digital technology. Alfred Hitchcock, Jean-Luc Godard, and Andrei Tarkovsky are among the major figures treated. *3 credits. Sueyoung Park-Primiano*

**HUM 331: Eros in Antiquity.** On love in the ancient world, theory and practice, and its legacy in the modern, as viewed through primary textual sources. Roughly three-quarters of the course will be devoted to Plato's erotic dialogues, *Lysis*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Alcibiades*, followed by selections from Neo-platonic authors such as Plotinus, Augustine, Abbot Suger, Ficino, St. Theresa of Avila, and Shelley. The last part of the course will feature Ovid's *Art of Love*. These major works will be supplemented with a sampling of erotic literature from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Archaic and Classical Greece, and Rome. *3 credits. Mary Stieber*

**HUM 352: The Personal Essay.** In this course we will study and discuss essays in Phillip Lopate, ed., *The Art of the Personal Essay*, and we will also write our own, on any topics we choose, on all manner of subjects--the daily round, pleasures and pains, taking a walk, solitude, friendship, in short, our personal responses to any number of objects and situations, multiplying ourselves in the process. *3 credits. Brian Swann*

**HUM 369: History of the Book.** An introduction to the creation, use and meaning of "the book" over its long history from the clay tablet to the digital download. Readings and discussions will bring together literary and cultural history, as well as aspects of politics, art history and the history of technology. Topics will include the moves from oral to written cultures, from the scroll to the codex, and from public reading to reading as a private experience; the emergence of printers and publishers; the invention of the library; censorship and the spread of reading publics; the rise of the novel and "popular reading"; the comic book; the paperback; and the movement through digital technologies to non-print books. *3 credits. William Germano*

**HUM 375: Critical Theory.** This course begins with the post World War II generation of social thinkers and critics, such as Barthes, de Beauvoir, Foucault, Adorno, Horkheimer, Lacan, in the development of what later became known of as the critical theory of culture. We then proceed to more recent critics, each time taking our clues from real life examples. This course emphasizing learning how to "see" and think in "cultural practices." It offers a chance to have our understanding extended into everyday life and its ways of making us cultural beings. *3 credits. Sohnya Sayres*

**HUM394: World Religions.** An introduction to the five major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The course considers ancient and contemporary religious practices as it examines faith and belief, ritual, scripture and scriptural interpretation, religious art, orthodoxy and heresy, mysticism, and pilgrimage through a comparative lens. Focus is on origins, textual traditions and central doctrines with further attention to religion "on the ground" as a living and evolving phenomenon. *3 credits. Jeffrey Morris*

## **SOCIAL SCIENCES (3 credits)**

**SS 345: Raymond G. Brown Seminar: Gifts, Money, Debt: The Anthropology of Value.** This course examines questions of exchange and value through an anthropological lens. For many, we live in a world saturated by commodities, market value, and the increasing incursion of a global economy and the set of norms, values, and power relations it brings with it. During much of its history, Anthropology has been concerned with understanding the particularity of this social and cultural system by studying the way that people in other times and places compose relationships between persons and things. Looking to other cultures is one way to provincialize Western notions of the economy, and foster the ability to think otherwise about contemporary capitalism. More recently, anthropologists have turned these analytic tools to consider the social and cultural ramifications of emergent economic objects and practices, like the rise of digital currency and other alternative monetary forms. By working through contemporary and classic ethnographic work on gifts, money, and debt, this course will ask fundamental questions about people and the things that bind them together in the interest of thinking differently about the world we live in. *3 credits. Nicholas D'Avella*

**SS 346: Urban Sociology: Reading the City.** Focuses on the relationship between the built environment and human behavior, the design of public, urban spaces as a reflection of and impetus for certain types of human interactions and reactions. Another interest of the course will be to consider the notion of community as it plays out in the disciplines of sociology and architecture—how they intersect, and how they are changing in our postmodern, post-industrial terrain. Some of the broad areas of interest of urban sociologists will also be considered. *3 credits. Gail Satler*

**SS 347A & B: Macroeconomics.** The development of modern macroeconomic theory as it evolves in response to a succession of economic problems and crises. Emphasis on the recent Keynesian/monetarist debates and the role of the Federal Reserve Bank.

*3 credits. John Sarich*

**SS 354: New York, 1820-1920: An Urban and Cultural History.** A presentation of two "maps" to the city. The first is a history of the built environment, focusing on the changing systems of transportation, the development of building forms and the way the city's population and functions have been distributed in that space. The second historical map is made up from people's imaginative responses to those changes, especially as seen in literature and visual iconography. Among the areas singled out for special examination are the Bowery and the Lower East Side, Central Park and the "downtown" of amusement and vice, wherever it happened to be at the time. *3 credits. Peter Buckley*

**SS 371: Women and Men: Power and Politics. "AM I THAT NAME?" Topics in Gender and Sexuality.** This course offers an introduction to the fields of inquiry that have come to be known as women's, gender, and/or queer studies, and to the feminist theory that informs those studies. Students will engage in an interdisciplinary examination of the ways in which gender (that is, femininity and masculinity) has been constructed by visual media, literature, political theory, and social, political, and economic institutions; the historical bases for these constructions; and the activism that challenges some of these gender constructs. We will pay particular attention to the interlocking of gender with other forms of hierarchy, including race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. We will read current scholarship in works of literature, film, history, social science, and theory, but above all, we will work our way through some of the "canonical" texts which inform that current scholarship, theory, and indeed popular culture (and our own ideas about women and men, gender and sexuality)  
*3 credits. Atina Grossmann*

**SS 378: Time, Travel, Communication in Early Modern Europe.** This course is a history of early modern European technology with a strong focus on design technologies and material culture. It will cover the time period extending approximately from The Age of Exploration through the French Revolution (about 1500-1800). We will examine early modern ideas about three critical aspects of modern life: time, communication and travel. (Interpretation of these themes will be broad and may include not only carriages and bridges but also carriage upholstery and passports; not only letters, newspapers and books but also songs and emblems; not only the shift from public to personal time but also calendar reform. In addition to readings (both primary and secondary) and discussions (in-class and online), students will choose to study three artifacts that are relevant to the themes of time, communication and travel, research them, and present their findings to the class. Working together, the class will create 1) a timeline of technology and design in the early modern period, and 2) a webpage, on the class website, describing an (imaginary) journey between two Western cities during the early modern period. Course readings will include both primary and secondary sources, and field trips (as a class or independently) may be required. *3 credits. Sarah Lowengard*

## **ART HISTORY (2 credits)**

### **HTA 102 A-D: Modern to Contemporary: An Introduction to Art History**

This is the second of a two-semester sequence intended to introduce students to the history and development of modern art. As students progress through HTA101 and 102 they will be able to identify and critically evaluate significant works, figures and movements in the history of art in the modern period; describe the main social and political contexts for the changes in art over the last two hundred years; and engage with relevant theoretical issues in the history of art and visual culture. HTA102, the second half of the sequence, offers a thematic overview of various figures and movements within 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Art. It explores topics related to Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Fluxus, Minimalism, Conceptual Art, Institutional Critique, Post-Modernism, and associated theoretical ideas. The course will involve museum visits. Grading will be based on classroom discussion and participation, museum reports, essays, and exams. *2 credits. Raffaele Bedarida, Allison Leigh, Natasha Marie Llorens*

**HTA 209: Medieval Art and Architecture.** Investigates the art, architecture and archaeology of medieval Europe from Constantine (fourth century) to approximately 1450, a period when different cultures clashed and mixed together to shape the eclectic Western medieval world that rose from Roman imperial ruins and ideals. This course will follow a chronological sequence, but use recent data from medieval excavations to challenge traditional art historical statements. Early Christian, Byzantine, Barbarian, Islamic, Romanesque and Gothic periods are examined. *2 credits. Elizabeth Monti*

**HTA 210: The Art and Culture of Fifteenth-Century Florence.** This course examines the unique historical circumstances and artistic personalities that brought about a new kind of art. Special focus will be placed on the role of the Medici family as patrons. Painters, sculptors and architects to be considered include Masaccio, Fra Angelico, Ghirlandaio, Botticelli, Ghiberti, Donatello, the Pollaiuolo brothers, Brunelleschi and Alberti. Monuments such as Orsanmichele, the Baptistery, the Cathedral and the Medici Palace will be placed in their social context and discussed in detail. *2 credits. Benjamin Binstock*

**HTA 222: Asian Painting.** A chronological survey of Chinese and Japanese painting and an exploration of the aesthetic and spiritual values that shaped the arts of the brush in the Far East. *2 credits. Kyunghee Pyun*

**HTA 263: African Art.** An introduction to the stylistic, conceptual, functional and historical aspects of sub-Saharan African sculpture and architecture, the place of these arts in the traditional context of black African life and their relationship to the worldview of the African. *2 credits. James Wylie*

**HTA 274: History of Photography (1835-1965.)** This course is a survey of the history of photography, with special emphasis on 19th and early 20th century photographers, processes, movements. How photography began, how it became a popular past time, a provocative art, and a powerful means of communication will be explored. Class

attendance and weekly reading assignments are mandatory. Two class trips to view vintage photographs are planned. One short paper, one mid-term paper and a final project are class requisites (and a pop-up quiz is always a possibility.)

*2 credits. Gail Buckland*

**HTA 276: Twentieth-Century Art History.** Considers the flourishing "isms" of the 20th century, as well as historical events, intellectual currents and conflicting aesthetic views, explored in relation to such enduring artists as Picasso, Matisse, Malevich, Kandinsky, Miro, Klee, Dubuffet, Giacometti, Pollock, Smith, Calder and others.

*2 credits. Mari Dumett*

**HTA277: Contemporary Art.** What do we mean by "contemporary art"? Is contemporary art actually post-contemporary? The course will consider topics and developments such as: the evolution of Internet-based art practices and the notion of post-Internet art within the context of social media; recent debates around the role of art in relation to race, class, activism, and social-economic justice; interplays of art and popular culture; and the globalization of art through biennials and markets. *2 credits. Joshua Decter*

**HTA 300: Single-Artist Seminar: Édouard Manet.** A course devoted entirely to the life and work of one important artist, this seminar is designed to allow for an in-depth experience in the discipline of art history that extends beyond what is possible in survey courses. This semester's artist, Édouard Manet (1832-1883), is a pivotal figure in the history of modern art. A contentious figure even in his own lifetime, Manet served as a bridge between the mid-century Realism movement and the development of Impressionism. Works like his 'Olympia' and 'Le déjeuner sur l'herbe' have long been the subject of invective debates in art history, and this course will allow students to delve deeply into his works to determine the influence they had on modernism in the century to come. We will analyze Manet's works in relation not only to his tumultuous personal biography, the artistic politics of the time, and the changing gender ideologies of the second half of the 19th century, but also in terms of what scholarship on his work can tell us about the nature of art historical inquiry itself. *2 credits. Allison Leigh*

**HTA 328: Dada and Surrealism.** Since their appearance early in the 20th century, Dada and Surrealism have had a profound and lasting influence on the arts. This course explores the art and ideas of these two movements within the social, political, intellectual and art historical context of the years 1914–1947. *2 credits. Andrew Weinstein*

**HTA 335: Art and Architecture of the Ancient Near East.** From the temples of the land of Sumer to the tower of Babylon, this course provides an overview of the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) and Iran, as well as surrounding regions, from the Neolithic period to the 1st millennium B.C.E. --- some 10,000 years. We will study the architecture and artifacts excavated at major sites in the fertile crescent including Jericho, Uruk, Ur, Nineveh and many others. In addition, we will discuss major landmarks in the history of civilization such as the development of agriculture, the



beginning of urban settlement, the invention of writing, and the discovery of metallurgy, and their impact on the manufacture of art and artifacts and their iconography.  
*2 credits. Celia Bergoffen*