HSS2 (A-N) Texts and Contexts: Old Worlds and New (Core course, 3 credits).

This course is offered in multiple Sections. A study of texts and topics from 1500 to 1800, with emphasis on literary expression and cultural context. Contextual topics include the formation of modern states, exploration, encounter with the new world, the crisis in religious orthodoxy, the origins of modern science and the beginnings of political and economic individualism. This semester develops both cultural and political understanding through close reading, class discussion, and careful writing.

HSS4 The Modern Context: Figures and Topics (Core course, 3 credits). A study of important figures or topics from the modern period whose influence extends into contemporary culture. Requirements include individual research and writing projects, offered in multiple sections:

HSS4 A & D Global Politics since 1989. 1989 is typically considered the end date for several major narratives of the 20th century - a point of rupture marking the end of the Cold War era and the beginning of a new age of global democracy. Yet, from our current vantage point in history, the myth of a democratic ‘happy ending’ to an era of totalitarianism and conflict appears false. This course will explore the major global events, political developments, and cultural shifts of the post-1989 period by beginning with the question: What is the historical, ideological, and existential position of being ‘post-’? That is, we will consider the events of the last 30 years not simply as following on chronologically from 1989, but as being a response to what came before. We will read a selection of primary documents, historical works, and theoretical texts which variously examine such events and topics as: The collapse of the Soviet Union (and post-Soviet society); conflict in the Middle East; genocide in Rwanda and the Balkans; the global impact of 9/11; Big Tech and the birth of social media; multiculturalism and global migrations; LGBTQ rights and gender identity; the Eurozone crisis; disinformation campaigns and the rise of a new far-right. Students will complete assignments based around a writing and research project on a relevant topic of their choosing. 3 credits. Esther Adaire

HSS4 C The Refugee: Transnational History, Global Present. Our topic is the historical experience of flight, displacement, and forced migration in the twentieth and twenty first century. Starting with the global population “transfers” and refugee crises produced by the first World War and its aftermath, we trace the development of a “refugee problem“ and refugee nation” during World War II, the Holocaust and the postwar “DP” (displaced persons) era in Europe. We will then focus on the continuing refugee crises resulting from partition decisions in South Asia and the Middle East and the genocides of the post-1945 period, and finally paying particular attention to the present mass displacements, often described as “the greatest refugee crisis since World War II” which now so powerfully affect local, national, and global politics. Our “figure” is the “Refugee,” women, men, and children, embedded in a web of transnational family, ethnic and religious, and institutional contexts whom we seek to
understand via multiple sources. Your task is gain perspective on the general topic in historical terms in and to delve deeply into the particular case you choose to examine in a research project.

3 credits. Atina Grossmann

**HSS4 E Frantz Fanon.** This section of HSS4 focuses on one of the most significant philosophers of revolution of the 20th century, Frantz Fanon. Born in the Caribbean, educated in France, and a freedom fighter in Algeria, he became a seminal theorist of revolution for people across the world. Fanon brought his medical training as a psychiatrist to his descriptions of colonialism’s effects on individuals and on societies. As he decried the violence and destruction of colonialism, he saw the challenge of both fighting it and building new societies of the future. This semester we will situate our readings of Fanon’s revolutionary visions in the histories of decolonization, the Cold War, and think about the legacies of his work and his moment for the possibilities of revolution today.

3 credits. Elisabeth Fink

**HSS4 F Derrida.** Born to a Jewish family in Algeria, Jacques Derrida’s (1930-2004) work is credited with having impacted disciplines ranging from humanities, linguistics, and anthropology to political theory, gender studies, and architecture, among others. Derrida’s concepts of *différance* and deconstruction, and his critiques of metaphysics, language, and law are largely informed by his readings of Husserl, Heidegger, and Benveniste. His more than 40 published books, hundreds of printed essays and numerous lectures greatly impacted thinkers including Lyotard, Nancy, and Kristeva. In this section of HSS4, our focus will be on Derrida’s method—he once said *il n’y a pas de hors-texte*—as well as his work on language, politics, and ethics. Our readings may include *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin, Given Time/Give Time: 1. Counterfeit Money, Politics of Friendship, and The Truth in Painting*. We will contextualize these readings both through putting his ideas in motion as well as reading his iterations on concepts next to his contemporaries’ respective positions. In addition, we will look at thinkers who have built on his ideas, including his translators, Gayatri Spivak, Barbara Johnson and Peggy Kamuf. Students will have the opportunity to develop and research a range of topics concerning Derrida’s work, his collaboration/intellectual battles with other thinkers, as well as concepts central to his philosophy including sexuality, life/death, law, economy, and literature, among others.

3 credits. Avra Spector

**HSS4 G Translation.** The introduction of Translation Studies as a discipline in the 1960s led to a proliferation of thinking about the impact, role and methodologies of translation. In this HSS4 section, we will think about translation as an act and, building on Arno Renken’s work, as a “philosophical problem” that invites an exploration of “an experience of strangeness and the uncanny.” Our investigation will draw from Roman Jakobson’s tripartite definition as we think about translation as intralingual (rewording in the same language), interlingual (working across languages), and intersemiotic or transmutation (across verbal and nonverbal sign systems). Playing on the saying *traduttore, traditore* (translator, traitor), we will consider the politics of translation: what gets translated and when; what gets erased and what escapes in translation; what role(s) does translation have in projects of cultural dominance; how might translation reinscribe and/or deterritorialize power structures. Our investigations will take the form of experiments in translation, study of translations, interpretation of the histories of translators as
well as the critical questions--about language, identity, power, form, and communication--that may arise through a study of translation. **No knowledge of a second language is required.** Students will have the opportunity to develop and research a range of topics concerning translation, untranslatables, language, education, and borders, among others.

3 credits. Avra Spector

**HSS4 H Climate, Culture, and Society.** Climate change is a physical process--one that can and should be studied via the sciences. But it is also political, social, economic, and cultural, and thus demands study from a humanistic and social scientific perspective. What are the historical origins of the ideological structures that underpin sustained carbon emissions? How do those structures work now, and how do predominant discourses of the environment, human progress, and disciplinarity participate in them? In this course, we’ll work collaboratively to build frameworks for thinking about the crisis, with a series of invited speakers, group projects, and space for experimentation.

3 credits. Kit Nicholls

**HSS4 I Toni Morrison.** Toni Morrison (1931-2019) is one of the most important American writers of our time. In her 11 novels, written between 1970 and 2015, she wrote from deep inside the black experience, at the same time drawing on universal themes of pain and joy, love and hate, loss and longing, and filling her fictional worlds with unforgettable characters. In her artful scholarly essays, Morrison offered razor-sharp cultural and literary criticism. In 1993 she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, becoming the first black woman of any nationality to receive the award. Since her death in August of 2019, many have mourned the loss of her singular voice and her powers as both a storyteller and truth-teller. In this course, we will engage in close reading of Morrison’s work, including two novels and a handful of essays, and we will read journalistic and scholarly writing about her and her work. Some specific explorations spurred by our study of Morrison may include race in America; African and African-American history; women’s roles; the power of language; and the intersection between religion, folklore, and magic. The two major writing assignments will ask you to develop your own interpretations of her texts, as well as to do research on literary criticism and/or political and social issues related to Morrison’s work.

3 credits. Pamela Newton

**HSS4 J Modern Drama.** This section of HSS4 aims to show the vitality and types of modern drama, chronologically, from its roots in Ibsen, “the father of modern drama”, who expanded its possibilities (“Ghosts”), to Chekhov, whose Moscow Arts Theater created a new “realism” (“The Cherry Orchard”), onto Strindberg’s expressionist chamber plays (“The Ghost Sonata”), Jarry’s dadaist “Ubu Roi”, Beckett’s Theater of the Absurd “Waiting for Godot” and Synge’s miniature “Riders to the Sea”. If time permits we could include other important playwrights such as Pirandello, Brecht, Tennessee Williams and Eugene O’Neill. While the emphasis will be on a careful study of the play itself, which we will read at home and in class before oral reports and discussion, we will also address such topics as the meaning of Modernism, and deal with e.g. Symbolism, Realism, Expressionism and Surrealism. Attempting to see the plays in their time, we will also look at e.g the Moscow Arts Theater and Dublin’s Abbey Theater.

3 credits. Brian Swann
HSS4 K Ang Lee. In this course we will explore how recurring themes, such as family, marriage, love, and identity, in Ang Lee’s films reflect his East-meets-West aesthetics and his approach to cultural convergence. *Wedding Banquet* (1993) that unfurls like a screwball comedy features a Taiwanese gay man in New York who marries a Chinese woman out of family obligation. Transcultural musings on marriage, family, and love are manifest in his Austen adaptation *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and martial art film *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* (2000)—both exemplify his hybrid aesthetics. *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), based on Annie Proulx’s 1997 short story of the same title, presents homosexual lovers’ struggle against the homophobic climate in Midwest America and further glorifies the lasting love. In *Life of Pi* (2012) the quest for identity epitomizes in the protagonist’s religious view and floating journey. We will also read primary texts that are adapted into films, including Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, Proulx’s “Brokeback Mountain,” and Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*. 3 credits. Yu-Yun Hsieh

HSS4 L The Elegy. How have creative writers, thinkers, and artists responded imaginatively to the experience of loss? How have their responses varied by historical moment, culture, political outlook, gender, genre, or individual sensibility? This course will consider such questions through the lens of texts from across the globe and more than two thousand years. Pursuing the question of loss through love, war, politics, the mind, time, and everything in between, we will find ourselves continually coming back to the same vexed question: What is it about loss that makes it so paradoxically rich in imaginative gains? Texts to be considered may include: fiction by James Baldwin and Heinrich von Kleist; memoir by Yiyun Li; theory by Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein; and poetry by John Milton, Denise Riley, and others. 3 credits. Paul Franz

HSS4 M Borges and After. In this course we will critically examine the work of the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, as well as this work’s aftermath, in light of contentions (as in John Barth’s “The Literature of Exhaustion”) that Borgesian fiction is the kind of text that emerges when literature has exhausted all other possibilities. What, then, comes after? We will read the “greatest hits” from collections like *The Universal History of Iniquity*, *Ficciones* and *The Aleph*, attending to the characteristically Borgesian themes of thugs, traitors, labyrinths, libraries, heresies, mirrors, time, and infinity, but this will not be the “usual” Borges course. Reading Borges alongside his contemporaries and collaborators Adolfo Bioy Casares and Silvina Ocampo, as well as selected successors like Roberto Bolaño, César Aira, and Mario Bellatín, we will think about Borges’s body of work less as the contribution to the modern canon of a sui generis genius than as a problem posed to twentieth and twenty-first century literature. This means thinking, among other things, about the presence or absence of politics in Borges and about the relationship of literature to philosophy. But above all, with the help of Bolaño, Aira, and Bellatín, we’ll think about the novel Borges never wrote--about the possibilities (and impossibilities) of narrative after Borges. 3 credits. Alexander Verdolini

HSS4 N Contemporary Sociology of War - The World Wars and Post. This course is designed as an interactive lecture and discussion of the sociology subfield, the sociology of war. The sociology of war primarily focuses on how societies engage in war and what war means to societies. This subfield is distinct from military sociology, which is primarily concerned with the function and organization of the military. In this seminar we will examine contemporary
sociology of war issues (World Wars and post), with particular focus on literature that reflects
the international climate during the Cold War era. During the Cold War the United States and
the former Soviet Union were opposing superpowers that defined the international political
landscape. Throughout this course we will look at the overall climate of hostility created by
these superpowers, as well as the small-scale hot wars they supported by various means.

3 credits. Demond Mullins

HUMANITIES (3 credits)

HUM 308 Creative Writing. Starting with exercises and word games, e.g. “Exquisite Corpse”,
then moving to e.g. “Exphrasis” (writing about art), Collage, Metrics, Sudden/Flash Fiction,
short plays, and so on. Students develop their own interests, talents and voice. As well as
writing, students are expected to read widely and attend a reading. Grade is based on class
performance and portfolio of work.

3 credits. Brian Swann

HUM 323 The Poem Itself. The emphasis will be on close reading. From this detailed reading,
questions will naturally arise about the nature of poetry itself: What distinguishes it from other
verbal forms, how does it “work”, what and how does a poem “mean” (“ a poem should not
mean but be”), what is “difficulty,” what is “ambiguity”, what is structure, and, vitally, what is
metaphor? And what do we think of Philip Larkin’s famous phrase, “One doesn’t study poets!
You read them, and think: ‘That’s marvelous, how is it done, could I do it? And that’s how you
learn’.” The common text is THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY
POETRY, ed. Ramazani, Ellmann, O’Clair, Volume 2, CONTEMPORARY POETRY.

3 credits. Brian Swann

HUM 325 Puppet, Automaton, Robot. They are us, and not us: puppets, automata, and robots
are toys or machines that look like us (or parts of us). From antiquity to the present, we have
imagined, and then invented, inorganic versions of ourselves, sometimes for entertainment,
sometimes to perform essential tasks. This course will draw upon an interdisciplinary range of
materials—from philosophy, the history of science, and psychoanalysis to drama, popular
culture, art and modern medical prosthetics. Instead of separating the “scientific” from the
“poetic,” this course will introduce and explore ways in which we can think about what we want
from our “artificial life,” and how the boundaries between living/non-living require constant
rethinking.

3 credits. William Germano

book, The Swerve: How the World Became Modern, has inspired a resurgence of interest in the
Roman philosopher, Lucretius, and his magnum opus, De Rerum Natura (“On the Nature of
Things”). On the Nature of Things is the most ambitious philosophical poem ever written (what
a delightful way to get your philosophy!) and the single best source for our knowledge of
ancient Epicurean philosophy and the theory of atomism which was its most essential feature.
But De Rerum is also an exquisitely beautiful work of poetic art and a gold mine of information
and ideas on subjects as wide-ranging as mythology, religion, morality, science, sex, cosmology,
geology, history, horticulture, agriculture, meteorology, astronomy, humanism, sociology, the senses, pleasure, and life in the late Roman Republic (1st century BCE).

Join me in a close-reading and exploration of one of the most sublime works of philosophy ever penned. There is really nothing like it in the centuries-long global history of thinking about the origins of the universe, its nature, and the reasons for its existence. Engineers, artists, and architects will all find something of interest. For engineers, there is plenty of science, a surprising amount of which still has currency. For artists, there is an endless wealth of memorable images which have inspired creative minds for centuries. For architects, there is cosmic theory and reflections on space and time. And for everyone, there is Lucretius' incomparable poetry. As an added bonus, by chance, this very old text also happens to offer singular relevance for the present world moment: De Rerum ends with a dramatic extended description of a plague and its societal repercussions.

The course lends itself particularly well to remote learning. It will be conducted seminar-style, featuring in-class readings and discussions of the six books of De Rerum Natura (in translation) along with selected excerpts from additional primary texts which either influenced or were influenced by Lucretius’ work. Students will be expected (1) to participate fully in, and on two occasions to lead class discussions, (2) to keep a running journal, and (3) to produce one short response paper and a final 8-10 page term paper on a question that emerges from their journal.

3 credits. Mary Stieber

HUM 338 Philosophies of Liberation. The philosophy of liberation originates as a critique of the Eurocentric concept of modernity, considered not so much as a cultural heritage of the Enlightenment, but rather in the broader sense of domination. Such an ideology would be at the root of European colonialism and North American neo-imperialism, and at the same time of the concealing of the distinct and peculiar identity of the cultures of the Global South. According to this critical view, then, an authentic critique of modernity can only come from the liberation movements of the periphery. From there an awakening of a true ethical consciousness can come, thus reconstructing modernity’s project of human emancipation as a liberation from exploitation. Not in vain, in the cultural debate from which the philosophy of liberation originated there were a series of social and political movements focused on the liberation from the historical, political, and cultural domination that derived from Western modernity and neoliberal rationalism.

3 credits. Julian Gonzalez de Leon Heiblum

HUM 374 Contemporary Culture and Criticism. A survey of the cultural climate since the 1950s, including the influence of works by such writers as Benjamin and Bakhtin and the concern with contemporary life in terms of fundamental shifts in community, representation, identity and power.

3 credits Sohnya Sayres

HUM 393 Environmental Ethics: Green Growth vs. Degrowth. The call from the IPCC for “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” comes at a time when cultural production of utopias and visions of how to remake fossil fuel economies compete with dystopias, denialism, and appeals to realism that insist such change is impracticable. Countering
these tendencies with imaginative possibilities requires not only literacy in climate science, but an ability to draw new constellations of ethical, political-economic, and cultural meanings from across divergent mitigation and adaptation pathways. This course asks how to collectively imagine alternative climate futures by bringing together multidisciplinary perspectives on economic growth and its dominant historical and temporal meanings. We will look critically to various philosophical debates, ethical theories, and cultural materials that shed light on the present climate crisis and place it within interrelated contexts of ecology and the biosphere, global capitalism and colonialism, sustainability and “just” transitions, contested narratives of the Anthropocene, eco-apartheid and forced human migration, geoengineering and technology, and social and environmental justice.

3 credits. Matthew Bower

SOCIAL SCIENCES (3 credits)

SS 306 Spacing Out-Zooming In: Implications on Social Interaction and Design. The idea of social distancing (spatial arrangements) is not new. We enlist it in our everyday lives in considering how we orient ourselves with others and how we arrange structures or features of our environment. In essence spacing helps define who we are individually and collectively. These seem second nature to us while in actuality being learned through the frames of culture and socialization. Recent events, most prominently, the Corona Virus Pandemic and Black Lives Matter has shined a light on this hidden dimension of social and structural life and made us reconsider how it has been engaged, and going forward how we need to refashion it so as to sustain things we want—keeping and making social connections-- and also reduce or avoid things and people we don’t- isolation and exclusion. More fundamentally, social distancing heightens awareness of things previously considered inconsequential or perhaps ‘natural’. The current crisis helps/makes us see/makes visible what and who was not viewed as essential or important and recasts them as such. We will look at how various parts of society are already developing policies that refashion design and behavior using social behavior and technology. The fundamental concern or interest of sociology is community. How do we balance individual and group forces and desires within community. The course will utilize a sociological frame while enlisting readings from a variety of disciplines and perspectives e.g. notions of space and place from Eastern and Western traditions and cultures, from architecture, the digital world, landscaping. We will evaluate these and students will have the opportunity to offer suggestions for a specific area or venue of interest to them. Since this course is enlisting scenarios that are occurring in real time, the relevance seems apparent but the goal will be to offer a frame that persists beyond the immediate concern that perhaps precipitated renewed interest and importance in persistent questions.

3 credits. Gail Satler

SS 308 Public Policy in Contemporary America. Issues such as conservation, environmental law and policy, mass transportation, transfer of development rights, incentive zoning and historic preservation, beginning with an introduction to and general analysis of the policy process.

3 credits. Anne Griffin

SS 345 The Raymond Brown Seminar: Social Inequality. This course is an introduction to the study of social stratification and inequality, a subfield of sociology. In this course we will explore
how social theory, sociological theory, and empirical research have helped to conceptualize stratification and inequality amongst various groups (including socio-economic, gendered, queer, and racial groups). Ultimately, students will develop an understanding of how theory and empirical research have informed our understandings of unequal relationships between people in the modern, and late-modern, world.

3 credits. Demond Mullins

SS 347 A Macroeconomics. For the past decade, the US (and the global) economy has been expanding. We have experienced rising income, employment, and living standards. But ten years ago, particularly in 2008 - 2009, the situation was MUCH worse. The world economy was hit by the Great Recession, where income declined and unemployment increased sharply. Why do we experience these ups and downs in the economy? What happened in 2006 - 2008 that led to such a crisis in the world economy? How did the government respond to the crisis and was this response effective? We currently hear in the news about the very long recovery of the US economy. We hear news about the Fed manipulating interest rates and Trump calling on the Fed to reduce interest rates to zero. Why is the Fed changing interest rates? Why might the Fed bring interest rates down to zero, and what are the risks associated with this? In Macroeconomics, we explore answers to these questions and much more. We will study why the economy experiences good and bad days and what the government can do to minimize the negative effects of the bad days. We will study how interest rates are determined and how the Fed’s interest rate decisions can affect the rest of the economy. We also address other interesting questions like why do we have inflation and unemployment, and whether they are actually bad things.

3 credits. Loujaina Abdelwahed

SS 347 B Macroeconomics. Macroeconomics is the study of fluctuations in aggregate output, employment and inflation. We begin by examining the nature and meaning of economic development, the theory of national income accounting and measures of human development. We then proceed to study the history of U.S. macroeconomic performance, with emphasis on the current crisis and its international dimensions. We then turn to competing theories on what drives macroeconomic activity in a capitalist economy. Topics covered include: Theories of economic growth, business cycle models, labor market dynamics, financial markets, foreign exchange rates and the impacts of monetary and fiscal policy on the trajectory of the system.

3 credits. John Sarich

SS 348 Intermediate Macroeconomics. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the core theories of macroeconomics for both closed and open economies. We will study the determinants of aggregate economic activity, inflation, and unemployment by developing a framework that addresses these issues and assesses the impact of government policies on aggregate economic outcomes. You can think about the course as composed of three main building blocks: (i) understanding business cycle fluctuations and the design of fiscal and monetary policies; (ii) understanding the determinants of long-run economic growth; and (iii) understanding the interaction between the domestic and world economies. Theoretical analysis depends on mathematical and diagrammatic tools with applications to contemporary macroeconomic policy issues and actions. Successful completion of SS 347 is a key prerequisite for this class.

3 credits. Loujaina Abdelwahed
SS 350 Colonial Cities. Colonial cities were major centers of trade, commerce and manufacturing, attracting money and immigrants from across the world. By focusing on the ways in which they shaped industrialization, urbanization and culture production, we will learn about technology and modern work practices, developments in housing, infrastructure and urban planning, new ideas of political resistance and artistic expressions of discontent that originated in these cities. In doing so, we will highlight the prominent role of colonial cities in shaping modern cosmopolitan life as well as the lasting legacies of colonial rule.

SS 351 20th Century History: “What we are talking about when we talk about Fascism”. This is a transnational history course that seeks to sharpen our thinking about definitions and resonances of fascism; it examines the past and asks, how such investigation might help us to act in the present when we confront situations that seem to be, or are quickly termed, “fascist.” Using theoretical and historical sources, we will study the European origins of fascism beginning with the dramatic upheavals of World War 1 and the interwar years through World War II, the Holocaust, and its aftermath, and then turn our attention to the development of a new global authoritarian populism and right-wing nationalist xenophobic leaders and regimes in the 21rst century. We will examine historical roots and current appeal as well as efforts at resistance, in a variety of contexts from Britain, Western and Eastern Europe to Russia, India, the Middle East, and East Asia. All of our work will require close analysis of entangled categories and experiences of race, class, nation, and gender and reference to “current events’ in the United States as well as globally.

SS 358 Social History of Food. A study of the transformations in food production and consumption, 1492 to the present. The course examines the passage of "new world" foods to the rest of the world, the rise of commercial agriculture in the colonial context, especially sugar, the rise of national cuisines, the advent of restaurant culture and the perils of fast and industrial food. There will be additional attention to both contemporary environmental issues and to identifying food trends in the last decade.

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 20th and 21st 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, Colby Chamberlain, Stephanie Jeanjean

HTA 231 History of Industrial Design. In tracing the history of industrial design from its emergence at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to the present, this course will examine not only aesthetics (of furniture and the decorative arts, typography, advertising, machinery, toys, etc.) but also the social and political forces that have shaped the many styles. Throughout, we will also demonstrate how movements in industrial design relate to parallel developments in the history of painting, sculpture, and architecture.  

2 credits. Andrew Weinstein

HTA 273 History of Photography: Histories of Photography in Africa, from the Colonial to the Contemporary. This course examines the historical role that photography has played in the assertion of contemporary African identities from the colonial era to the present day. Although the primary focus of this course is on the photographic work of African photographers, the work of non-African colonialists and explorers of the continent will be looked at as well. Areas of focus include but are not limited to Commercial Studio Portraiture in Colonial West Africa, Apartheid Era Photojournalism in South Africa, Independence Era Photography in Mali, as well as Fashion and Art photography in the African metropolis. Additional themes include the role of Globalization, Afro-pessimism, Futurity and Transnationalism in the photographic practices of contemporary African artists.  

2 credits. Rose Ojo-Ajayi

HTA 306 Ephemeral Art. This course will examine the notion of the ephemeral, in other words, objects and materials of short duration, and how they raise questions of time, materiality, and matter that relate to changing political, social, and cultural contexts. Art historians have long focused their attention on the singular masterpiece and their attendant notions of enduring value, aesthetic perfection, and the ideal. Yet recent scholarship in fields such as media studies have demonstrated that the ephemeral and obsolescence or the outdated have played an equal role in our understanding of the work of art and its materials. What if a work of art was meant to last for just 15 minutes? What would it mean to make a work of art that lasted the span of a snapchat? We will explore the notion of the ephemeral through a series of readings organized around conceptual terms such as dust, the archive, the monumental, celebrity, and happenings. Theoretical readings and class discussions will be anchored in the study of works of art ranging from paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, film, and performance art, from antiquity to the present. These discussions will be supplemented by visits to museum collections and conservation labs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Morgan Library and Museum, and other institutions in the New York area. The aim of the course is to demonstrate that artworks are not only the object of an artist’s intentionality, but subject to changing cultural perceptions of time.  

2 credits. Iris Moon
HTA 307 Love and Loss: Framing Memory in American Portraiture, 1680—1919. Art’s power to address the fragility of life and resilience of the human spirit is a pressing topic in this time of national grief. The “sentimental” and memorial function of American portraiture, from the colonial era through World War I, is the primary concern of this course. Historically, portraiture served as a way to document the lives of Americans—fleeting before the advent of modern medicine. The dominant form of painting, portraits were commissioned to express not only the sitters’ social position, but also the yearning to capture likenesses of loved ones who might die young—and to keep those who did imaginatively among the circle of the living. To grieve deeply, you need to have loved deeply, and tokens of romantic and familial love reveal that sometimes the boundaries of conduct were not as narrow as we might believe! We will explore courtship, marriage, gender roles, sexual orientation, childrearing, class, race, religion, ethnicity, and especially grief and mourning. Our interdisciplinary class discussions will be organized chrono-thematically, as the values and beliefs portraits express illuminate and are illuminated by social and historical context. Together the works will create a vivid portrait of a country bound by kinship and community ties, yet torn by conflicts that still fray the fabric of society today. “Love & Loss” will expand our understanding of the richness and complexity of art’s role in American private life and will consider the artistry of well-known and under-appreciated artists. The artworks will include a wide range of mediums, mix “folk” art with the more realistic “correct” kind that has dominated museums for much of their history, and integrate into the “canon” works by women and minorities, and deaf itinerant portraitists who made their voices heard through art. We will end the term with a discussion about how earlier expressions of remembrance resonate with current forms of visual culture that frame memory. 2 credits. Robin Jaffe Frank

HTA 313 E1 Seminar: 20th Century Asian American Art. This course examines the work of Asian American artists from 1900 through the present. It proceeds with curiosity and skepticism about the term “Asian American,” coined in 1968, which has anchored the academic discipline of Asian American studies but remains problematically reductive. Thus, alongside works of art and significant art exhibitions, the course tracks the terminology, conceptual frameworks, and curatorial approaches that have accompanied and interpreted the visual cultural production of Asian and Asian-descended people living in the United States. In particular, we will focus on the notion of the “modern” in the visual arts field, a construction established in opposition to the non-modern Other, and the figure of the “foreigner,” perpetually ascribed to Asian-descended people by Western culture. Given that Asian American contributions to the art field have often gone underrecognized, the course will highlight relevant archives and initiatives, such as the Asian American Arts Centre digital archive and the Asian American Arts Initiative at the Cantor Museum of Stanford University. In addition to object-focused visual analysis and research skills, students will gain skills in analyzing exhibitions and institutional histories. 2 credits. Mia Kang

HTA 313 L Seminar: Women’s Art and Feminisms. Overall organized chronologically, this course focuses on women and art, and contributes to reconstruct Herstory (the feminine version of History). It starts with deconstructing historical representations of women in visual arts and discusses them alongside the visibility of art by women artists or lack thereof historically. The recent efforts by the art market and the art institutions, lately, to massively
include women’s art in their exhibitions and collections is as well closely scrutinized. While learning about women in visual arts, we also discuss how their practice engage or not with identified trends part of the development of a Women’s Liberation Movement and of Feminist theories. The evolution of feminist’s theories is analyzed in its various stages and evaluated against a vision of Feminism as a succession of waves. Concepts such as “Radical Feminism,” “Anti-Feminism,” White Feminism,” “Black Feminism,” “Womanism,” and “Post-Feminism” are also studied and allow to approach the intersectionality of Feminism with race and BIPOC, as well as gender and LGBTQ communities. Then the more recent discussions regarding non-binary gender identities is evaluated as a challenge as well as an opportunity for Feminism. Because the artworks of individuals who self-identify as women are often found in non-traditional media for the fine arts, our case studies bring us to consider works in the form of: public speeches, pamphlets, books, flyers, journals, magazines, posters, and other agit-prop such as: tee-shirts, buttons, stickers, etc., as well as performance art, public action, and video art. Also, because women artists often worked collectively and collaboratively, a special attention is given to works by New York collectives such as: Heterodoxy Club in Greenwich Village, New York Radical Women, Redstockings, Red Women’s Detachment, Salsa Soul Sisters, Women of the Black Panthers, Women in the Young Lords, Guerrilla Girls, Grand Fury, fierce pussy, WAC, Dyke Action Machine, and more recently: Black Lives Matter, #MeToo movement, and more. This course is a modified version of HTA 313 L Seminar: Design and the Women’s Movement.

HTA 313 P Seminar: Globalization and Contemporary Art. Over the last three decades, contemporary art has been transformed by the conflicting logics of globalization. This course will ask how the global turn at the end of the twentieth century opens new spaces to reconsider the encounter of Western and non-Western cultures. Drawing from postcolonial theory, we will follow the relays between politics, economics, and art that generate complex representations of culture, ethnicity, and race. The course will be organized around five often overlapping nodes: discourses, institutions, technologies, histories, and subjects. The first will introduce students to foundational ideas on the contemporary and the global. The second will consider the impact of globalization on art’s institutions—specifically, with the rise of international biennials. The third will examine the consequences of technology for art—for instance, new media hybrids and exhibition formats. The fourth will question the model of continuity and rupture that narrates much of Western modernism and the avant-garde. Finally, the fifth will articulate the other faces of globalization: how are their subjects constituted by the precarious conditions of statelessness, migrancy and labor? This course is a modified version of HTA 313 P Seminar: Off-Center-Constellations of Contemporary Art. 2 credits. Melanie Marino

HTA 315 Renaissance Art in Northern Europe: 1350-1550. This course will provide a detailed introduction to sculpture, painting, and architecture in Bohemia, France, Germany, and the Low Countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) between 1350 and 1550. Art and architecture will be analyzed in relation to devotional practices, political policies, and social life. Students will be able to relate the individual works to patronage conditions and to pertinent social, religious, political, and philosophical movements through major artists, such as the Limbourg Brothers, Claus Sluter, Jan van Eyck, Roger van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans
Baldung the Grien. The cross-cultural exchange that occurred between Italy and lands north of the Alps during the Renaissance will be examined. Artworks reflecting globalization introduced via the commencement of the Portuguese slave trade in the 1480s, as well as trade between northern Europe and the Far East will also be analyzed in this course. 2 credits. Trinity Martinez

HTA 335 Art and Architecture of the Ancient Near East: Persia from Prehistory to the Sasanian Empire. This class is an introduction to the art and archaeology of ancient Persia. The Iranian plateau produced a series of powerful kingdoms and empires that dominated the Near East and surrounding areas and created a cultural legacy that persists to the present day. Yet it is best known from accounts and texts written by its enemies, including the Assyrians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs. In this class we shall explore ancient Persia on its own terms through direct engagement with the material culture produced by the people living there over a period of several millennia, from prehistory to the fall of the Sasanian Empire. In doing so we shall address such topics as identity, migration and imperialism through the study of reliefs, seals, coins, architecture, pottery and statuary. We shall also consider how ancient Greek and modern European views of Persia have affected our understanding of its art and history. This course is designed for students without prior experience in ancient art or archaeology.

2 credits. Henry Colburn

HTA 342 Exhibition as Medium. This course explores key moments in the history and theory of art exhibitions, from the experimental shows organized by Futurist and Dada artists in the early twentieth century to the present. Rather than focusing on the objects on display, as in an art history survey, we will discuss how the mode of display, the venue, the language, and other curatorial choices help shape the experience of an art exhibition. We will also explore the economy, politics, geography, and institutional framework of art shows as an integral part in the construction of meaning. Special emphasis will be placed on artists who, starting in the 1960s, have used exhibitions as their medium.

2 credits. Raffaele Bedarida