

# HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES THE COOPER UNION

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS SPRING 2025

### ***HSS-2 – Texts and Contexts: Old Worlds and New***

A study of texts and topics from 1500 to 1800. Sections read common texts and some selections by individual instructors, with emphasis on literary expression and cultural context. Requirements include written analysis and class discussion.

*3 credits. Instructor Varies.*

### ***HSS-4 – Section A – Moby Dick***

HSS-4 is the HSS capstone course, focusing on developing research and writing skills in relation to section-specific material. This section will meet in two parts, an hour on Mondays and two hours on Thursdays. We will work on, study, and discuss big ideas, among them humans and nonhumans in the natural world; obsessive, life-threatening behavior; and language's capacity to represent the world. We will also look at the extraordinary reach of Moby Dick into the other arts and into popular culture. There is a possibility that we will get to attend a performance in March of Jake Heggie's opera Moby Dick at Lincoln Center.

Attendance at every class session is required. In place of a midterm, you will turn in at week 8 a first draft of your 15-page research paper for the course. Final essays are due in week 12. Presentations based on your research will be the core of our last class meetings.

*3 credits. William Germano.*

### ***HSS-4 – Section B – The Refugee***

Our topic is the historical experience of flight, displacement, and forced migration in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. 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 we will pay 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.

*3 credits. Atina Grossmann.*

### ***HSS-4 – Section C & D – Mexican Modernity: Revolution and State-Building***

This section studies the history of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the cultural, institutional, and political consolidation of a postrevolutionary state in Mexico (1920-1940.) We begin by discussing the social and political conditions of Mexico in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and how they were radically changed during the revolutionary process. We will comment on the different political and cultural agendas that emerged during the revolution and the ways they were implemented in the following decades. Particular

attention will be paid to the ideologies of race and racial mixing, the role of intellectuals in the state, education and institutional reforms, and new technologies that circulated in postrevolutionary Mexico (including typewriters, radio, and cameras.) We will study an array of primary texts (proclaims, speeches, laws, and letters) and selected historiographical pieces.

*3 credits. Emmanuel Velayos Larrabure.*

#### ***HSS-4 – Section E – American Noir: The Mid-Century Crime Novel and Film***

The course examines midcentury American noir fiction—the crime novel and film noir— produced between the 1920s and 1950s. Rife with plots of lust, deceit, murder, greed, and corruption, these works reflected and reacted to a postwar climate marred by economic uncertainty and the changing landscape of politics and morality in urban and suburban America. Focusing on novels by James M. Cain, Dorothy B. Hughes, and Patricia Highsmith, the course attends to the emergence and evolution of figures such as the private detective, the drifter, and the femme fatale, as well as issues like evidence, justice, and chance. Noir will be considered not just as a genre with aesthetic conventions—suspense, gritty realism, twists and reveals, etc.—but also as social commentary on sexual desires and mores, racism, and the policed city. After devoting several weeks to reading and discussing novels and relevant secondary literature, the course will then turn to films by Samuel Fuller, Nicholas Ray, and Fritz Lang to explore how the photographic image becomes both a privileged medium for noir fiction and the object it studies and critiques.

*3 credits. Hicham Awad.*

#### ***HSS-4 – Section F & G – Poverty and Inequality in the U.S.***

The aim of this course is to examine the nature, causes, and consequences of poverty and economic inequality in the U.S. We will start by understanding how poverty and inequality are defined and measured, and what the problems are associated with these measures. Next, we will try to understand the causes of poverty and inequality (demographic factors, education attainment, discrimination, technology). We will also study mechanisms in place to address the problems of poverty and inequality. The course does not have strict prerequisites, but familiarity with statistics and/or econometrics will be extremely helpful in understanding the readings.

*3 credits. Loujaina Abdelwahed.*

#### ***HSS-4 – Section H – “Speech to text”? Orality, Literacy, and the Making of Modern Knowledge***

Most of us experience moments of tension between spoken and written language. In the age of short-form video, podcasts, audiobooks, and speech-to-text/text-to-speech software, an increasing number of us are more comfortable communicating out loud. A number of critiques of writing, particularly in institutional contexts, represent it as a medium that reinforces privilege and elevates a particular form of English over all others. At the same time, the written word has often been the medium of revolutionary ideas, emancipation, and open-ended inquiry. In this course we will study the modern history of written and spoken language—literature and orature—through changing technological, economic, and scholastic norms. When do we choose to communicate in speech, and when do we do so in writing? Why, in a moment where so many of us rely on YouTube videos to learn skills, do we disparage the old-fashioned lecture? Through readings in theory and literature as well as acts of listening and speaking, we will develop research projects on language use and how it conditions the way we make and acquire knowledge.

*3 credits. Christopher Nicholls.*

### ***HSS-4 – Section I – Korea's Partition***

This history course examines the moment of the Korean Peninsula's partition in 1945 as a local event with global impact. We begin the semester by investigating Korea's division following the end of Japanese colonial rule. We then review the establishment of separate states on the Korean Peninsula in 1948, followed by an exploration of factors that led to the outbreak of war in 1950. Grounded in these historical contexts, we will examine shifting representations of Korea alongside the global movement of peoples and ideas precipitated by its division. How do museum exhibitions, film, music, photography, and poetry of and about Korea's past help us better understand the social, political, economic, or cultural history conveyed in texts? Throughout the semester, we will develop and hone longform independent research projects seeking to answer a version of this question. Through writing assignments and oral presentations, we will sharpen our research methods, consolidate findings, and practice communicating those findings to different audiences.

*3 credits. Eilin Pérez.*

### ***HSS-4 – Section J – Political Economy: What is a Radical? What is a Liberal? What is a Conservative?***

In this course we will explore some of the roots of radical and liberal traditions in the original writings of Karl Marx and John Maynard Keynes. For most of the semester we will discuss the origins and development of Marx's analysis of the capitalist economy in sustained comparison with Keynes's theories. Our goal is, however, not merely to build Marxian and Keynesian economic models, nor simply to recover the original ideas of Marx and Keynes, but to explore their political content. Marx and Keynes were both intimately involved in, and profoundly influenced by, the events of their time. Many of their ideas underlie current debates on strategies to initiate change and on the likely outcomes of various actions. We will explore this interaction between theory and political action and try to shed some light on contemporary debates on the political economy of capitalism. Students may explore the application of Marx and Keynes's ideas to issues of interest.

*3 credits. John Sarich.*

### ***HSS-4 – Section K & L – Rock'n'Roll: Counterculture, Music, and the Global Sixties***

Rock'n'Roll is a contested terrain. At face value, it is a genre of music with influences on fashion, visual culture, lifestyles, and attitudes of youth since the 1950s. As a pop-cultural phenomenon with unprecedented global reach, however, Rock'n'Roll prompted controversial responses, hailed for its potential to foster dissidence while also critiqued as the epitome of mass consumerism and standardized "formula" cultural production. Using Rock'n'Roll as our conceptual locus, in this course, we will explore interconnected concepts that continue to influence our world today: popular culture, mass media, consumption, consumerism, "youth dissent," counterculture, transnationalism, and globalization. We will read into the multilayered history of Rock'n'Roll and its capacity to influence cultural, social and political attitudes and ways of being in the world. Beyond Western metropolises, we will explore the global aspects of this phenomenon. How did Rock'n'Roll figure in different spaces, places, and times? How do we read diverse aesthetics as part of a common historical moment away from the binaries of local/global, imported/domestic, modern/traditional cultures? Negotiating the liminal spaces between reality and representation, we examine artistic products in their capacity as archival sources, the necessary implement for historical writing, and their potential to inform alternative modes of reading into the past.

*3 credits. Mohamad Hodeib.*

### ***HSS-4 – Section M – Imagining the Body***

This course explores how cultural practices conceptually construct the body in order to perform and sustain

their specific functions. Rather than treating the body as a static entity, we will investigate how it is imagined within different frameworks, for example as an object of control, a site of power, or a vessel of meaning. How do these cultural practices shape our understanding of the body's capabilities, limitations, and roles in society? What does it mean for the body to be disciplined, aestheticized, or mobilized for certain tasks? Through these questions, we will uncover how "imagining the body" reveals underlying cultural ideologies and assumptions, and how these constructions affect both individual identities and collective experiences. Dance Studies and Performance Studies will serve as our main lenses for examining how the body moves in relation to both personal agency and cultural forces. Drawing on a range of theorists and looking at a variety of physical practices — from dance to basketball to martial arts to medicine to bodybuilding — we will look at where the body becomes a vehicle for dominant ideologies, where it might hold the potential for resistance and transformation, and where it offers opportunities beyond our expectations. Through the course, students will develop a critical understanding of the body as a conceptual space where culture is enacted, contested, and redefined.

*3 credits. Buck Wanner.*

#### ***HSS-4 – Section N – Queer Theory and Politics***

In this course, we will examine the crucial role that gender and sexuality have played in producing something we call modernity. We will think about the role that identity and categorization have played in producing modern subjects who experience genders and sexualities as either “natural” or “deviant” and how sexuality and gender function to index race and class to biological determinants. But the question “what is political about queerness?” will ultimately lead us to questions about how the governance of desire and relationality has determined our orientations toward space, time, and embodiment in ways that use queer theory to dismantle not only naturalized conceptions of the body and how and who it desires, but also the supposed boundedness of that body by which race acquires its sensibility, its narration as an individual in the linear time of “development” and “progress,” and its orientation within a binary of private and public that determines imaginaries and uses of space.

*3 credits. E Barnick.*

## **Humanities**

#### ***HUM-231 – Dance in Epidemics and Pandemics: Experimental Dance from AIDS to COVID-19***

This course invites students to explore how experimental dance responded to the AIDS epidemic as a site for rethinking the body, identity, and community. How did dance help shape and reflect American society's confrontation with the AIDS crisis, especially in relation to sexuality and public discourse? What role did experimental movement play in addressing the stigma, fear, and loss surrounding the epidemic? Rather than focusing on definitive answers, this course will examine how dance offers a space for grappling with the shifting understandings of the body in times of crisis.

While centering on the AIDS epidemic, we will also consider how COVID further highlighted the body's vulnerability and exposed deep societal inequalities. How can the lessons learned from the intersection of dance and AIDS help us think about ongoing health crises? By engaging with these questions through reading dance theory and examining dance practice, students will develop tools to interrogate the intersections of body, illness, and culture.

*3 credits. Buck Wanner.*

### ***HUM-250 – Shakespeare: Hamlet***

This elective will have a particular focus: Hamlet, the most famous play in the English language. We meet for three hours once a week. Among the questions we will explore: how do we read a late Elizabethan tragedy? What makes Hamlet worth our special attention? How did the play exert its extraordinary influence on the other arts? On popular culture? Attendance at every class session is required. In place of a midterm, you will turn in at week 8 a first draft of your 15-page research paper for the course. Final essays are due in week 12. Presentations based on your research will be the core of our last class meetings.

*3 credits. William Germano.*

### ***HUM-308 – Creative Writing***

Students will read a variety of experimental fiction and nonfiction in order to draw stylistic elements that they will include in their own writing. Additionally, students will complete a diverse range of creative writing exercises, which may lead to longer works that they have workshopped by the class. Students will leave the course with a portfolio of their own experimental writing and a deeper understanding of the relationship between form and function in literature.

*3 credits. Theresa Lin.*

### ***HUM-330 – Post-Modernism and Technology***

Technological innovation is seen as a cornerstone of modernity but what happens when these advancements destabilize conventions of human subjectivity, rational knowledge, and historical progress? In this course, we will critically examine modernity's unravelling. To do so, we will draw on postmodern theories and practices to explore technology's impact on contemporary life, paying attention to its bodily, cultural, economic, political, and environmental effects.

*3 credits. Robin Simpson.*

### ***HUM-348 – Greek Tragedy***

This course is an in-depth introduction to Greek tragedy, both as literature and performance. The methodology throughout will be close-reading, using comparative translations, with portions of the texts performed in class. The genre of tragedy will be presented against the background of its historical and cultural context, Athens of the fifth century, BCE. The most significant surviving ancient critical treatise on Greek tragedy, Aristotle's Poetics, will be measured against the authority of surviving works. Some important secondary readings will be assigned, but the emphasis throughout will be on primary source materials.

*3 credits. Mary Stieber.*

### ***HUM-356 – Issues in Contemporary Fiction: The Novella***

The course looks at creative writing from around the world, post-1950, of a certain length—longer than the short story and shorter than the novel. For some time, these works have been called “novellas.” They are usually described as having between 40,000-70,000 words, or, as one critic wrote, reading one takes about the same time as watching a three-to-five act play. A few of the selections for this semester might be a little longer; we begin with Feneon's “Novels in Three Lines,” to push the formal questions. Basically, in speaking of the formal questions, a short story should have a cut-glass focus; a novel can draw on the heterogeneity of many years, many characters, many themes. A novella can pull its character(s) through dramatically shifting moments while still maintaining a strong philosophical coherence.

Critics have no problem in listing over a hundred novellas that have become almost essential reading. Our course begins in the mid-20th century and will include works from this century. Likely writers: McCullers, Camus, Ginsberg, J.D. Salinger, Baldwin, Achebe; Dick, Lispector, Morrison, Garcia-Marquez; we will also broach the question of novelizing autobiography, and graphic novels, with Mukasonga and Satrapi.

*3 credits. Sohnya Sayres.*

### ***HUM-358 – Studies in Cinema: The Couple Form***

What does it mean to inhabit the world as two? The couple—as a form, aspiration, mandate, and obstacle—has occupied writers, artists, filmmakers, and social scientists for centuries. Shaping discursive and institutional frameworks at the level of the body, the household, and the state, the couple continues to be one of the most tenacious, if contested and ever-changing, forms of loving and living. In cinema, the couple has been a central figure for narrative experiments in companionship, complicity, and enmity: the forbidden love in Douglas Sirk's *All that Heaven Allows* (1955); the partners-in-crime in Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967); the neighbor-lovers of a waterlogged Taiwan in Tsai Ming-liang's *The Hole* (1998); the paranoid, self-isolating lovers in William Friedkin's *Bug* (2006) etc. The course combines weekly film screenings with readings in literature, gender studies, film theory, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and philosophy. We will identify and analyze the potentialities and limits of the couple form, as well as develop analytical tools needed to understand and elucidate film form.

*3 credits. Hicham Awad.*

### ***HUM-391 – Philosophy of Ecology***

This course explores the development of ecology and its entanglement with philosophical questions about nature and society. How does this “subversive science,” as it is sometimes called, challenge human-centered traditions of knowledge and dominant views of nature? In our time of planetary crisis, ecology asks us to think about the world in complex and relational ways, pointing to the radical possibilities of kinship with other species and care for the web of life that sustains us. Our course will begin by tracing ecological thinking from Linnaeus and Darwin to the foundational 20th century research that helped define ecology as a science, with the rise of plant succession studies, systems ecology, and energetics. We then turn to a multidisciplinary range of texts to consider how key ecological concepts and debates can inform various critical perspectives on built and cultivated environments; class, race, and gender; and capitalist production, land use, and colonialism. Looking at ecological relationships that span from our surroundings in New York City to other complex systems around the world, we will discuss questions drawn from eco-philosophical movements and fields such as environmental justice, deep ecology, ecofeminism, anthropology of science, and political ecology. We will ask: How does foregrounding the interconnections between things modify our understanding of social and natural categories? What role does imagination play in scientific methods and cultural representations of science? How might ecology help us rethink economy, design, and infrastructure? How does it shape our commitments to human and non-human others in the face of climate change, habitat loss, and mass extinction? What would it mean to live within the regenerative capacity of our ecosphere?

*3 credits. Matthew Bower.*

## Social Sciences

### ***SS-366 – Migration and Empire***

The last two centuries saw human migration at an unprecedented rate. Whether voluntary or forced, this migration changed not just the demographics of places around the world, but also profoundly transformed culture and the economics of labor. This migration took on many forms—from people seeking new work opportunities to those forced to move because of indenture, and from people fleeing wars and persecution to those seeking to reunite with separated families—and remains a contested topic in today’s world. This course will focus on the stories of migration within the British Empire, and the ways in which colonial subjects moved, or were forced to move, to make new lives in places that were completely unfamiliar, except for the overarching context of Empire. We will read about South Asian merchants who moved to East Africa to become critical economic entrepreneurs, about formerly enslaved Africans who were sent to the Caribbean to perform indentured labor, and the migration of the Chinese to Singapore as a replacement for “lazy natives,” among other examples. And we will also focus on the ways in which the British Empire developed new tools and technologies of surveillance and permits—including the visa and the passport as we know it today—to control the movement of colonial subjects.

*3 credits. Ninad Pandit.*

### ***SS-338 – What is Property? Black, Indigenous, and Feminist Theories of Property***

Assessments of personhood that depend on property ownership—of a plot of land, of earthly or artificial material, of self, of another person—can be found throughout political and economic thought. In this course, we will explore the conceptual and historical development of property in its racial, colonial, and sexual representations. What is the relationship between property and personhood? What political and economic ideas have informed subject positions of owner, owned, and dispossessed? How has the concept of the “possessive individual” affected the lives of Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, women, and workers? How have modern property relations and material possession been challenged by these groups, and what kinds of “re-possession” are possible in the face of dispossession? We begin with texts in Western political thought to identify historical patterns of ownership and dispossession and their specific relationship to class, race, empire, and gender. We then turn to Black, Indigenous, and socialist challenges to exploitation and dispossession. Seeking to understand ownership’s expression in sexual relations, we conclude with Black and Indigenous feminist theorists that interrogate the role of possession in gender, the family, and social reproduction.

*3 credits. Leila Ben Abdallah.*

### ***SS-318-D – Anthropology of Conspiracy***

This course explores the relationship between conspiracy theory and contemporary life through the discipline of anthropology. We learn how to read, discuss, and write about anthropological texts using conspiracy as a starting point. We trace the history of conspiracy theory, read ethnographies of conspiracy, and extend the concept of what counts as conspiracy to anthropological topics such as culture, class, ideology, myth, virtuality, race, affect, gender, and sexuality. We ask what the utility of conspiracy is in world-building, ritual, and belief structure inherent in both cultural cohesion and conflict.

*3 credits. Joey Russo.*

### ***SS-320 – Immigrants in Place***

In this course, students will critically interrogate majority aesthetic norms by studying a multiplicity of spaces occupied by immigrants in New York City. Students will be invited to critique the colonial heritage of spatial aesthetics in the West, placed in opposition to various immigrant experiences, considering immigration and immigrant groups in their varied historical, socio-economic, and political contexts. Students will take on individual research projects around specific New York City immigrant groups, beginning with the group's context and ultimately observing the group's aesthetics as projected internally and externally. Through readings, discussions, and workshops, students will become immersed in a chosen immigrant group's spaces in New York City and will use this knowledge to challenge majority spatial aesthetic norms. We are living and studying in this city of immigrants, including Cooper students, many of whom are themselves first- or second-generation. The work raises personal cultural questions such as how one's own immigrant group perhaps influenced her/his/their path of study; how different groups value art, architecture, and engineering; if critical perspectives on imperialism can alter the perception of one's own work – all this leading to a richer debate over cultural norms in the West.

*3 credits. Neena Verma.*

### ***SS-322 – History and Visuality in the 20th Century***

This course exposes students to methods of historical inquiry that uncover evidence beyond the written word. Historical contextualization of film and photography forms the basis of case studies that model the process of archival recovery and analysis from the perspective of the historian. Through this process, students will better understand the ways in which visual/material objects circulate, and how this circulation helps define social relations across geographic bounds. Along the way, students will consider how interpretations of historical phenomena can be impacted by critical interventions in the fields of archival studies and documentary studies. Site visits to Cooper Union's Library, its Archives and Special Collections, and the Lubalin Study Center for Design and Typography will reinforce these processes and provide opportunities for in-person engagement with material artifacts. Final projects will consist of rigorously researched, historically rooted multimedia works, with the opportunity to present at a community symposium.

*3 credits. Eilin Pérez.*

### ***SS-334 – Microeconomics***

Microeconomics is primarily the study of the determinants of prices and the distribution of income. The focus is on studying the strategic behavior of individual business firms, workers and consumers in dynamic interaction with the institutions that shape and constrain this behavior, while also being subject to change themselves through legal and political action. We will look at how certain aggregate patterns 'emerge' from the complicated interaction of interests while studying how societies can structure production and distribution systems toward specific goals.

*3 credits. Loujaina Abdelwahed.*

### ***SS-371 – "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-382 – Game Theory***

This course presents the study of strategic & interactive decision-making processes among rational parties to extract the maximum payoff. Using matrices and simple mathematical formulations, students will be introduced to various models, and in particular, to the prisoner’s dilemma, sequential games, and Pareto optimal solutions.

*3 credits. Edner Bataille.*

## **History and Theory of Art | Core Curriculum**

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

This two-semester art history core course, developed as part of the Foundation year for students in the School of Art but open to all students, is organized around a set of themes running through the history of modernity from the 18th century to the present. Within specific themes, significant works, figures and movements in art/design will be presented chronologically. Students will be able to identify and critically evaluate significant works, figures and movements in art/design in the modern period; be able to describe the main social and political contexts for the changes in art/design over the last two hundred years; and engage, in writing and class discussion, with theoretical perspectives on art/design production. The course will involve museum visits. Grading will be based on class participation, papers, and exams.

*3 credits. Lex Lancaster, Stéphanie Jeanjean.*

## **History and Theory of Art | Electives**

### ***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-271 – The Hellenistic Age***

Following the campaigns of Alexander, the Greeks spread across the Middle East as far as Egypt, Central Asia and India, where they encountered many cultures vastly different from their own. The result was the creation of a diverse, multicultural world, connected by shared elements such as the use of the Greek language, but in which every individual region and society was unique. This diversity is especially evident in the art produced in this period, where we see the Greek obsession with human form, preferably nude, mixing with older artistic traditions in Egypt and Mesopotamia that relied on hierarchy and repetition to perform their functions. In Italy the Romans adopted aspects of Greek art as a means of disrupting their rather stodgy political ideology, with

mixed results, whereas in India Greek motifs, popular for reasons as yet unknown, were pressed into the service of Buddhism. We will focus especially on themes of interaction (how do old and new artistic traditions combine?) and identity (what did these combinations mean to the people who made and used them?) as well as on the roles of power and resistance.

*2 credits. Henry Colburn.*

### ***HTA-273 – The History of Photography***

Photographs are both representations and bear a material trace of “what was in front of the camera,” contributing to the complex way in which a photograph creates meaning. Photography and its many histories have also been shaped by the various disciplines, institutions, and people who use it. This course considers “photography” as a relational term that operates within and through a variety of apparatuses that create possibilities of power and control, as well as representation and agency. We will read foundational texts in the history and theory of photography and discuss key figures, artists, photographers, and technologies. The course concludes with post-digital practices and questions about the relationship between machine vision, data analysis, and image generation shaping our visual present.

*2 credits. Rachel Hutcheson.*

### ***HTA-298 – History of Graphic Design: The Avant-Gardes (1918 - 1939)***

The course will explore the development of early 20th century avant-garde graphic design and typography movements. Concentrating on the interwar years (1918–1939), we’ll discuss the artistic origins and rapid expansion and influence of the new visual language in Russia, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, etc.) and Japan concluding with the arrival of modern graphic design in the United States. The course will investigate its pioneers (including many lesser-known figures who expanded upon these ideas) and their attitudes, evolving ideologies, principles and struggles, distinctive visual vocabularies, technological advancements, publishing programs, and the utopian spirit that helped contribute to the cultural transformation of everyday life. The course includes slide lectures, original materials, primary readings, class discussions, and individual research assignments.

*2 credits. Greg D’Onofrio.*

### ***HTA-300 – Single-Artist Seminar: Ocaña***

Spanish artist Ocaña enacted Andalusian traditions and imagery through paintings and performances. In his montages, “teatrillos,” and processions, he staged angels, virgins, and women characters through cross-dressing and papier mâché dolls (which he called religious fetishes). By way of Ocaña’s practice, the course will delve into topics such as the ornamental, the vernacular, the baroque, and the queer urban, among others. We will closely look at Ocaña’s repertoire and context as well as connect it alongside other artists, writers, and figures including poet and playwright Federico García Lorca, artist and cartoonist Nazario, actress and media personality La Veneno, artist and mezzo-soprano Manuela Trasobares, and artist and performer Jerome Caja. Students will be able to relate to the work of Ocaña through interests and references of their own.

*2 credits. Blanca Ulloa.*

### ***HTA-310 – Queer Art and Theory***

This course focuses on conversations between queer art practices, queer studies of contemporary art, and queer theory. The term “queer” is mobilized to both rework the slur of shame and injury into a term of self-identification and non-normative political positioning, and also as a critical questioning of the norms and categories of sexual identity and practice (“queering”). Queer theory has direct import for the study of

contemporary art, as many of its key concepts have been developed in and through the visual, and scholars have taken up issues of gender, sexuality, and sexed embodiment as central to the formation of art historical narratives and their exclusions. In turn, queer artists contribute to queer theory by appropriating and contesting conventional art practices, mediums, and histories in order to visualize and produce alternatives. Rather than presenting a genealogical history of queer art, this course explores key theoretical texts that have shaped contemporary queer art practices, and at the same time, how queer art practices operate as their own theoretical propositions and interventions. This course also focuses on how the political aims of queer art and theory are crucially shaped by intersections of critical race, postcolonial, transgender, class, and crip politics. Investigating visual practices of queering as they intersect with queer theories and studies of contemporary art, we explore critical concepts and visual tactics that include abstraction, archival interventions, camp, disidentification, ecologies, performativity, necropolitics, public feeling, and worldmaking.

*2 credits. Lex Lancaster.*

### ***HTA-338 – View Source: Internet Art***

In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the invention of the World Wide Web signaled a new era of global capitalism, information exchange, and connectivity. For artists, the Internet became an ideal platform for networked computational experimentation, building on practices underway since the 1960s such as mail art, video art, cable television, and telematic and cybernetic art. Free from earlier closed government and academic networks, and exchanging the white cube for users' desktops, artists quickly gained access to new tools, audiences, and communities.

In this course, we will look closely at key works of Internet art from the 1990s to the dotcom crash in the early 2000s, including Donald Rodney's *Autoicon* (1997–2000), *Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace's* *CyberPowWow* (1997–2004), Mendi + Keith Obadike's *Black.Net.Art Actions* (2001–2003), programming duo *jodi.org's* glitched out websites (1995–1999), and cyberfeminist collective *VNS Matrix's* online and irl agitprop (1991-1997). We will approach each work and practice as a node in the larger history of Internet art, connecting it with other works and online communities to better consider the ways that artists seized on this digital cultural shift to explore issues of personhood, identity, community, consumerism, surveillance, globalism, narrative, access, and code. We will learn about the distribution, display, and preservation of Internet art by examining landmark online and independent exhibitions, its uptake by conventional art institutions, and ongoing archival efforts. To further our discussions, we will visit digital arts-focused local institutions and host guest artists and researchers. You can expect readings in media theory, postcolonial studies, posthumanism, cyberfeminism, queer theory, cultural studies, and art history, along with primary texts from early online forums and magazines. And, of course, we'll also watch the cult 1995 film, *Hackers*. ♪('□'\*)و

*2 credits. Robin Simpson.*

### ***HTA-313-P – Globalization and Contemporary Art***

Over the last three decades, the practice and theory of contemporary art has been transformed by the battling logics of globalization. This course will ask how the global turn at the end of the twentieth century opens new spaces to consider the relay between Western and non-Western cultures. To probe those artistic and exhibition practices, we will also touch on theories drawn from history, economics, and sociology. This course will explore the rise of the "global exhibition" (3rd Havana Biennial and Documenta 11); emergent histories and subjects (Isaac Julien, Yinka Shonibare, An-My Lê); the technological imaginary (Hito Steyerl, Atlas Group, Otolith Group); and counter-globalization initiatives (Forensic Architecture, Emily Jacir).

*2 credits. Melanie Marino.*

### ***HTA-313-H1 – The Politics of Contemporary Art: 1989 - Present***

This course centers on the politics of Contemporary Art from 1989 to the present. With world events including the fall of the Berlin Wall, the revolutions of 1989, the massacre at Tiananmen Square, The Zapatista Rebellion, the end of Apartheid in South Africa, Occupy Movement, post-911, and more recently the #MeToo movement and BLM, artists from around the world have been at the forefront of leading activist movements. Scientific and technological innovations and climate awareness have led artists to also adopt new techniques of artmaking to engage in the ethical implications of technoscience and our ecological impact in the world. We will analyze artistic strategies including public art, relational aesthetics, activist interventions, tactical media, and new modes of artmaking. We will also ask the following questions: What is the relationship between aesthetics and politics? What are the practical aims and goals of artists? How do local activist interventions impact and spur similar movements across the world?

*2 credits. Constanza Salazar.*

### ***HTA-351 – Modernism and Intermediality***

This course reevaluates the high modernist ideals of medium specificity and autonomy by animating artists' work across media and collaborations with creatives in other disciplines, including dance, performance, theater, music, craft, design, poetry, publishing—even forays into archaeology and ecology. Throughout, we will devise alternate vocabularies and frameworks to account for the period against the restrictive conventions of formalist criticism, which dictated that visual artists focus on the formal concerns of their given medium without recourse or reference to other disciplines, especially literature and popular culture. Problematizing the modernist project's exclusionary rhetoric of medium "purity" as vested in paradigms of gender, sexuality, race, labor, class, and nationality, we will assess the affordances of expanded media as counterhegemonic expression. The course introduces strategies such as embodiment, genre conflation, improvisation, ethical participation, and empathetic corporeality, alongside notions of alterity, disaffiliation, transmediality, subcultural codes, collaborative kinship, and solidarity. Centering on artists and movements in Central, South, and North America between 1920-1960, we will chart how cross-disciplinary projects structured transnational networks through performance, publications, and exhibition-making. A sampling of figures we will investigate include: Anni Albers, Paul Cadmus, Carlos Chávez, Lygia Clark, Joseph Cornell, Gunther Gerzso, Martha Graham, Sarah Grilo, Helen Frankenthaler, Lincoln Kirstein, Carlos Mérida, César Moro, Isamu Noguchi, Jackson Pollock, Alice Rahon, Augusta Savage, Cecilia Vicuña, Xavier Villaurrutia, Charles White.

*2 credits. Megan Kincaid.*

### ***HTA-316 – Monuments, Artist Interventions and the Struggle for Memory***

In this course students will gain an understanding of public art within the historical and social context in which they have been constructed and interacted with the viewers. The course charts the broad scope of monuments and memorials, and considers how some of the iconic examples of art in public sphere have been produced, negotiated, and perceived. We pay special attention to the ways in which the past is implicated in our contemporary moment, and consider debates involved in erecting and removing monuments. We will ask: What visual strategies have artists used to commemorate some of the key historical events and episodes in 20th-century art? How have subsequent generations questioned, reimagined, and subverted these strategies? The course surveys monuments and memorials from the reconstruction period to radical new works of art dedicated to social justice and marginalized identities, while also exploring embodied and ephemeral interventions such as parades, performance, and graffiti.

*2 credits. Eli S. Zadeh.*