COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES COURSE DESCRIPTIONS - FALL 2020

HSS1 (3 Credits)

HSS1 Freshman Seminar. A literature course concentrating on poetry and drama. Selected texts from antiquity and the Renaissance are common to all sections, with works from other genres, periods and cultures chosen by individual instructors. The course develops aesthetic appreciation of literary texts and encourages a range of critical responses. Through close reading and extended discussion students learn to articulate their responses in written and spoken form. *3 credits*.

HSS3 (3 Credits)

HSS3 The Making of Modern Society. A study of the key political, social and intellectual developments of modern Europe in global context. This course is organized chronologically, beginning with the Industrial and French Revolutions. Students develop an understanding of the political grammar and material bases of the present day by exploring the social origins of conservatism, liberalism, feminism, imperialism and totalitarianism. In discussions and in lectures students learn to study and to respond critically in written and spoken form to a variety of historical documents and secondary texts. *3 credits*.

HUMANITIES (3 Credits)

HUM 243 The Fairy Tale. This course introduces students to the development of fairy and folk tales through history, and across cultures and geographies. While we focus on these tales in their originary contexts, we will consider the work they perform in such diverse modern appropriations as Disney cartoons, gaming, and the men's movement. Excerpts from the major collections of Western Europe, West Africa, the Middle East, South and East Asia will furnish our primary readings. We pay particular attention to the collected tales of the brothers Grimm, the Panchatantra, The Thousand and One Arabian Nights, The Tales of Anansi and Brer Rabbit, and Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang. Our investigation will be interdisciplinary, with our critical approach drawing from theorists such as Freud, Jung, and Frazer, and modern scholars such as Maria Tatar and Jack Zipes. *3 credits*.

HUM 250 Shakespeare: Hamlet. Who is Hamlet? What is *Hamlet?* Shakespeare's most famous play has a complex history and an even more complex legacy. This semester's Shakespeare course will focus on one play – but what a play. *Hamlet* has been a celebrated stage work, an inspiration for artists and writers, and a headache for scholars: Shakespeare didn't leave us a manuscript, and we have two different versions of the text, so any performance of the play requires a lot of decisions. Hamlet's story has become an international story, and the title role has been taken up both by male and female actors. The first half of the course will be an intensive, careful reading of the play and its historical context. In the second half, we will look at adaptations and disseminations – *Hamlet* in the visual and cinematic arts, in ballet, in famous stage interpretations, and as a means of connecting cultures: *Hamlet* off the coast of Sierra Leone, a

Hamlet-figure in Indian cinema, Shakespeare's play in contemporary China. For four centuries, Hamlet has been a figure of youth struggling against system, caught between identity and obligation. We will work together to understand what Hamlet – and Ophelia, Gertrude, Claudius, Polonius, Laertes, and Old Hamlet – are up against, why they do what they do, and why the world has given them so much attention. Course requirements: unfailing attendance to our class meetings, weekly response paper-ettes, two research papers, and a bit of memorization.

3 credits.

William Germano

HUM 307 Theatre Collaborative. An examination of theater-making both theoretical and practical, students will work together to explore the act of play from the various perspectives of the actor, writer, director, designer, and producer. The class will explore ensemble driven devised theater-making as well as more traditional methodologies in a study of process that will culminate in group projects inspired by the myth of Icarus. Throughout the semester students will be expected to attend several performances and subsequent in-class talkback sessions with guest artists. *3 credits.*Joshua Gelb

HUM 315 Science and Contemporary Thought. The aim of this course is to reflect on the role Of science in our society, with particular emphasis on the philosophical, political and social aspects of contemporary thought. Although the importance of science in our daily life is indisputably assumed —giving rise to a sort of myth of technology—it is important to analyze its influence on other aspects of contemporary thought, as well as on the very concept of knowledge. The essence of science, in fact, lies in the desire for searching, leading to a necessarily provisional knowledge which survives as a *paradigm* until it is eventually contradicted by new investigations. Moreover, it is important to acquire consciousness of the political, economic, and cultural constraints acting on both the methodology and the goals of contemporary science. Nowadays these constraints cannot be ignored, but few are really prepared to reflect free from political or philosophical bias. *3 credits*.

Diego Malquori

HUM 323 The Presence of Poetry. The Presence of Poetry. This will be a class in which the center of attention is the poem itself. We will concentrate on modern English and American poetry. The common text will be The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry Vol. 2, third edition (Jahan Ramazani, Richard Ellmann, and Robert O'Clair) but students are encouraged to look into other anthologies and studies of Poetry. *Paul Franz*

HUM 352 The Personal Essay. In this course we will study and discuss essays in Philip 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, social issues, in short, our personal responses to any number of topics and situations, enlarging ourselves in the process. *3 credits.*Brian Swann

HUM 356 Issues in Contemporary Fiction. Study of literary topics including particular genres, themes, sensibilities and critical approaches. The focus of this course will change in individual semesters. *3 credits*.

Sohnya Sayres

HUM 373 Seminar: Writing Climate Change. How do you tell the story of climate change, which is premised on an invisible process centuries in the making and in which the main characters are the planet Earth and the human species? What different strategies have literature, journalism, documentary film, and science writing used to communicate the realities and urgent needs of the climate crisis? Finally, what is the relationship between writing and activism, and how can different forms of writing support the climate justice movement? We will address these questions by encountering work from many mediums that tell the story of climate change in different ways: short stories, novels, journalism, political manifestos, and environmental science articles from authors including Jesmyn Ward, Naomi Klein, and Mohamed Nasheed (former president of the Maldives). Students will write weekly responses and two papers.

3 credits.

Phillip Polefrone

HUM 385 Alcibiades and the Fall of Athens. In 431 BCE, democratic Athens, the first state of its kind, led not by kings or dictators but by its people (the demos), went to war for hegemony of the Greek world. Alcibiades of Athens (450-404 BCE) was one of the key players in this major historical showdown. Charismatic, flamboyant, willful—these are just a few of the many epithets that have been employed since antiquity to try to capture the allure of one of the most fascinating, if elusive, personalities of the world stage, arguably the first popular culture "superstar." The course will trace Alcibiades' formative years before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE), when he was a strikingly handsome youth and a devoted student and associate of the philosopher Socrates whose political ambitions, however, conflicted with the teachings of his beloved mentor. We follow his rise to power as a general (one of ten, and the only elected position in democratic Athens--all others were determined by lot) to become a foremost statesman of late-fifth century Athens, and examine in detail his pivotal role, for both good and ill, in the second half of the Peloponnesian War. Because their fates are intimately entwined, the course focuses not just on the figure of Alcibiades but also on democratic Athens itself, following its rise and humiliating fall as the war neared its end, with oligarchic Sparta and its allies emerging as victors. Starting at the very height of the Athenian fifty-year long "Golden Age" (ca. 480-431 BCE), the period of empire, we appraise the rollercoaster events and the dynamic individuals who populate the era, in search of the ambiance of a momentous, and remarkably short historical time period which attained legendary status within a few years of its decline, a status that has never seriously been questioned. 3 credits. Mary Stieber

SOCIAL SCIENCES (3 Credits)

SS 318D Seminar: Science and Technology in the Islamic Worlds. Science and Technology in the Islamic Worlds will examine inventions and discoveries attributed to residents of Islamic regions (Muslims, Christians, Jews, and other culture groups), and those which were used there. We will look at the hows and whys of adoption, adaptation, and notions of modernity within a transcultural setting. We will begin with the seventh century founding of Islam, continue through its geographic and cultural peaks in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and carry on to consider more recent scientific and technological exchanges—intra-Islam, with China and with the West. 3 credits.

Sarah Lowengard

SS 340 Cause and Effect. Does providing social welfare benefits spoil the poor? Do Nike ads increase their shoes sales? Does having an Amazon Prime membership leads you to buy more from Amazon? Does health insurance improve people's health? Does hiring a new professor improve the academic performance of Cooper students? Does giving aid to poor countries improve their economic performance? We can get data on all these variables and run regressions and come up with answers, but are they the right answers? Probably not. In all these questions, the direction of the causation can go both ways (For instance, with a Prime membership you are more likely to order from Amazon because it is easier, but also you probably got the Prime membership because you shop online a lot). Also in all these question, there is a potential that other factors can affect the relationship and in most cases we cannot control for all these factors. Therefore, simply running regressions does not necessarily give us the right answer. This course will help you think about how to answers these cause-and-effect questions. After taking this course, your attitude towards the world will change. You will doubt many claims that are being thrown at you by news reporters, President Trump (definitely), and even your professors! The course will teach you to think systematically about various types of cause-effect questions and use various types of datasets to try to answer them. You can apply the skills you learn in this course to questions in economics, psychology, business, politics, and even the sciences.

3 credits. Loujainia Abdelwahed

SS 334 A Microeconomics. This course introduces students to the concepts and tools of microeconomics, which serve as the foundation for further economics courses. Micro-economics is a subfield of economics that studies how individuals and firms make decisions, and how these decisions determine the allocation of resources in a market. Topics that we will discuss in the course include how markets operate and the forces that affect the markets, welfare economics, theories of the firm behavior, and various market structures (competition, monopoly, monopolistic competition, and oligopoly). As we progress through the course, we will think about answers to policy-relevant questions, such as: should governments subsidize essential goods? does price change of cocoa affect the demand for coffee? When should a firm make the decision to quit the market? How should restaurants set their prices? *3 credits. Loujaina Abdelwahed*

SS 334 B Microeconomics. Microeconomics is the study of individual economic behavior and how it leads to specific social outcomes in a capitalist economy such as relative prices and the distribution of income. This course presents an overview of the essential theoretical, historical and policy debates in the study of market processes in capitalist economies. We begin by developing fundamental economic concepts and examining some of the pertinent historical facts relating to life in capitalist economies such as wages, prices, profits, productivity and technological change. We then compare and contrast theories that purport to explain these historical trends. Course topics include: consumer behavior; supply and demand; production and the business firm; allocation of resources and business competition; the distribution of income; financial markets; global trading systems; and the relationship between markets, hierarchies and democracy. Questions that we will address include: How, exactly, do individuals and firms relate to the institutional structures in which they find themselves (the fundamental question of microeconomics vs macroeconomics)? Are there empirical regularities and patterns produced by market processes that can be explained using economic theory? Are the forces that produce

these phenomena historically determined? Are social phenomena simply the sum of individuals' choices? How are individual choices constrained by social institutions? How do legal/political institutions shape market outcomes such as prices and profit? How do competing economic theories explain these phenomena? Do market processes lead to fair and optimal outcomes? What is meant by the term 'efficiency'? Are market processes stable? What are the benefits and costs of business competition? How should governments regulate and shape market behavior? What is the role of financial markets? Is 'free trade' desirable? The course is intended for students who have little or no background in economics. *3 credits*. *John Sarich*

SS 360 American Intellectual History. What does it mean to be an American? What are the principles of American politics? How can we draw upon American intellectual history to address questions about education, immigration, health care, the arts, the economy, race, the power of the president, and other topics? Authors we will read this semester include Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, William Apess, Alexis de Tocqueville, Emma Goldman, W.E.B. DuBois, Jane Addams, John Rawls, and James Buchanan. *3 credits. Nicholas Tampio*

SS 369 Cognitive Psychology: Conversations on Consciousness and Attention. Consciousness is often called the main mystery in cognitive science. At the same time conscious experience seems to be trivial, we don't see changes in our awareness until we make a mistake in a simple cognitive task or someone tells us that we missed something salient. Consciousness studies is a multidisciplinary field in science that includes approaches and methods from neuroscience and physics, philosophy and anthropology, artificial intelligence and linguistics. We will try to learn more about the contribution of all these sciences, all aimed at answering one question: "What does it mean to have consciousness?" Some representative questions we will be discussing are: What is the function of consciousness? How intelligent is the unconscious? What is the relationship between consciousness and attention? Can a machine ever be conscious? Is consciousness fundamental in the universe (as Eastern philosophies argue) or did it emerge as matter became ever more complex (as Western science insists)? Is there a stream of consciousness or is this just an illusion? What could happen if we didn't have consciousness? The course brings together modern and historical ideas to give a perspective on how the problem of consciousness could be addressed. Each topic presents a question that we will try to answer, each topic includes reading part, demonstration of effects and experiments and a small written review task. 3 credits. Maria Kuvaldina

SS 390 The Rise of the Modern City in the European Middle Ages. Explores how early medieval landscapes with castles and small villages became wider communities—the first modern cities. Focuses on the major debates of the Middle Ages: the tensions between country and city life; the role of the church; Scholasticism; the debate between reason and faith; the role of the French cathedral in medieval life; the lay reaction to ecclesiastical control and the rise of communal Italian cities such as Florence, Venice and Siena centered around the civic palace; and the early requirements for city beautification. We will "visit" (virtually) the first hospital, universities and prototypical housing. Everyday life will be illustrated from the material remains of art and architecture through a cross section of different social environments. 3 credits.

Michelle Hobart

ART HISTORY (2 Credits)

HTA101(Fall), 102 A-D (Spring) 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. *2 credits. Raffaele Bedarida, James Colby Chamberlain, Stephanie Jeanjean*

HTA 221 Buddhist Art: Origins to Modernity. As a part of the ongoing discourse on the tripartite interrelation among art, religion and modernity, this class investigates "Buddhist art," the visual culture of one the world religions, rooted in the premodern societies of India, Central, South East and East Asia and Tibet, from which its distinctive material forms, visual principles and ritual practices developed. More recently, the presence of Asian Buddhist material/visual cultures has asserted itself anew through transnational exchanges and confrontations, particularly between Asia and the modern and contemporary West. This course attempts to historicize this phenomenon by taking a macro approach to Buddhist art (without sacrificing specifics related to individual cases) by investigating two possible constituents of modern/contemporary Buddhist art: its core historical principles carried over from its origins, which have been considered "timeless," and its uniquely "timely" complication of or deviation from its original systems. We will spend half of the course studying some original principles of historical Buddhist art in areas such as visuality, representation, copy, agency, function and performativity, while quickly tracing the geohistorical spread of the religion throughout Asia over a period of more than 2,400 years. In this section, we will visit selected works and sites that represent some typologies of premodern Buddhist art, such as relics, icons, mandala, pagoda, gardens and "Zen art," and examine them in "context," i.e., concerning their relations to the ritualistic/symbolic practices and fundamental philosophy of the religion. The latter half of the class will explore the issue of collisions in modernity between two claims: an insistence on the immutability and authenticity of persistent premodern systems of Buddhist art and experimentations reflecting the ever changing globalizing identities of the religion and regions in Asia, corresponding to recent social, political and cultural landscapes, including museum displays, temple politics, Orientalizing commodification and appropriation by avant-garde artists. 2 credits. Yasuko Tsuchikane

HTA 264 Contemporary Artists of the Black Atlantic (1960's-Present). This course explores the contemporary work of artists of African descent based in Africa, Europe and the Americas from the Black Power Movement in the United States and the Independence era of Africa to the present day. This course will probe the assertion of "black Atlantic identities" and will include

photography, installation art, as well as internet based work. 2 credits. Rose Ojo-Ajayi

HTA 275 Twentieth Century Art: Multi-Culturalism, Identity Politics and the Aftermath. The course will examine the Multi-Cultural movement that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s often associated with the 1993 Whitney Biennial. Artists from previously under-represented groups gained notable prominence in the visual arts. Likewise, post-modernism, cultural and feminist theory dominated academia and had a significant impact on art practices. We will examine key figures that emerged during the period such as Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, The Guerrilla Girls. Carrie Mae Weems, Glenn Ligon and David Wojnarowicz. Likewise, we will cover seminal texts of theorists such as Laura Mulvey, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, and Kobena Mercer. The course will evaluate the impact that such artists and theorists have on current practices. *Yaren Jones*

HTA 278 Modernism in Latin America. This course will use a comparative framework to examine the history of modernism in Mexico, Central America, and South America. Class sessions will be organized around 3 nodes. The first will focus on the often turbulent exchanges between Anglo America and Latin America, probing different artistic responses to the double legacy of colonialism and modernism in the 1920s and 1930s in Mexico City, São Paolo, Montevideo, and Havana. The second will compare radical art practices in South America from the 1950s and 1960s, on one hand, and neo-avant-garde centers in Europe and North America, on the other; specifically, we will look at Cinetismo and Neo-Concrete art's destabilization of the autonomous art object and the conventional roles of artist and spectator. The third will examine those complex languages of abstraction in tandem with overtly politicized conceptual art in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia from the late 1960s through the 1980s. We will conclude by reframing the utopian aspirations of the 3rd Havana Biennial. Premised on the idea of cultural identity as a relational construction, this course will consider theoretical writings by artists alongside recent post-colonial critiques of populism, regionalism, and nationalism. Class discussions will address the contexts of modernity and postwar desarrollismo; the identity politics of race, class, and gender; and the artistic strategies of inversion and anthropophagia, among others. 2 credits. Melanie Marino

HTA 296 The Portrait: Re-examining Portraiture and the New Subject. This course will reexamine the genre of portraiture beginning in the mid-19th century when photography enters discourse as an alternate medium to painting and sculpture. Starting with Nadar's studio practice we will trace new subjects that emerge during modernity. Likewise, we will investigate marginalized subjects that are newly represented during the 20th century in the works by James Van der Zee, Dorethea Lange, Gordon Parks and the social documentary movement. Contemporary figures in both photography and painting such as Andy Warhol, Alice Neel, Robert Mapplethorpe and Cindy Sherman will be examined. The course will question the reemergence of painting in contemporary practices by figures such as Kehinde Wiley, Martin Wong, Jordan Casteel and Kerry James Marshall. We will conduct a case study of the recent acclaimed exhibition "Posing Modernity: The Black Model from Manet and Matisse to Today" at the Wallach Gallery. *2 credits.*Karen Jones

HTA 300/ARCH 225.02 Single Artist: Untimely Architectures, John Hejduk's Oeuvre, 1995-2000.

The whole of the architect John Hejduk's *Oeuvre*, spanning with consistent progression the entire second half of the 20th century, is the result of a long and intense artistic and intellectual journey that extends from the immediate post-war era to the threshold of the new millennium. Hejduk's unbroken series of highly original and emblematic projects collected in more that 20 volumes, each of them treated as the development of a specific conceptual reflection, constitutes one of the most lucid and intellectually coherent and provocative artistic investigation of the nature, destiny and possibility of architecture, and of the artistic work in general, in the context of late-capitalist society. Through the lens of John Hedjuk's work, through the close reading of 13 of his published books, and with an approach that will engage a variety of disciplines and subjects, the seminar will have the opportunity to encounter and discuss, directly or indirectly, as points of contact or objects of opposition, some of the major theoretical positions, projects and personalities that formed a significant part of the multifaceted architectural, urban and political discourses or our most recent past. *2 credits*. *Guido Zuliani*

HTA 312 Art Beyond Sight. This course develops from recent developments in museum education regarding the inclusion of a larger diversity of audience, namely visitors with disabilities. While this course will focus on the visual arts and its access to the visual impaired, it will also address various current initiatives beyond vision. Students will become familiar with the canonical and often rare literature on the subjects, including references in: access to art, museum education, blindness, sensorial perception, etc. Students become aware and evaluate the relevance and challenges presented by verbal description, conversation, sensory experiences, and creative practice as educational tools for in those programs. Along with the course, students will have the opportunity to meet professionals in the field of museum education as well as participants in museum programs for visually impaired visitor. They will also be given opportunities to work on tangible projects that could improve access to art. Then, one of the goals for this course is to give students firsthand opportunities to contribute to bridging the existing gaps between visual arts and the visually impaired audience.

Stephanie Jeaniean

HTA 313 A1 Seminar: Oral Art History. The spoken word has always been a crucial component of both artistic practice and transmission of memory about artists and art objects. Because of its nature, however, orality tends to be overlooked in art historical accounts. During the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the new millennium, artists have explored speech more and more systematically by turning to artists talks, pedagogy, participatory art as a major component of their work. Concurrently, art critics and historians have focused their attention to the non-written communication not only methodologically by utilizing interviews and other forms of conversations, but also historically by reconsidering the importance of orality and its erasure for our understanding of the past. 2 credits.

Raffaele Bedarida

HTA 313 V Seminar: Other Abstractions: South Asia and its Diaspora, 1960's-1990's. This course explores abstraction within a global context, in the postwar period commensurate with anticolonial and independence movements across the global south and its diaspora. In histories of twentieth century art, abstraction is located solely within a Euro-American postwar narrative, as

an innovation of "Western" modernism. Artists considered as progenitors of this period of abstraction are also recast solely within imperial, Euro-American exhibitions and histories of modernism that ignore transnational influences. This course will focus instead on artists working with abstraction in the post-independence period of the 1960s through the 1990s across South Asia and the Indian Ocean and its diaspora in Britain, France and the United States. The course will consider the aesthetic, social and political conditions of artists who were working within the legacy of modernism in a transnational and transcultural context, both within their countries of origin and in Euro-American metropolitan centers as well as across pre-colonial and post-colonial eras. We will study works from painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, photography, experimental film, conceptual art, installation and performance art. Students consider concepts of the nation, modernity, ornament, temporality, citizenship, gender and sexuality, urbanism, post-coloniality and space. *2 credits.*

HTA 324 Museum as Frame: Art in New York. Through class meetings and museum visits we will investigate the idea of the museum, its history, cultural significance, meaning and societal influence. In particular, we will consider how the museum experience affects the attitudes and assumptions of museum visitors. We will explore the intellectual under-pinnings of the modern museum since the Enlightenment, with special attention to issues of nationalism and eurocentrism; the complexities of museum sponsorship (public, private, and corporate), and how they shape cultural presentation; and the emergence, since the 1960s, of community-oriented museums alongside the growing importance in society of multi-culturalism and ethnic identity. We will also consider standard art-historical issues of style and society as they relate to the various artworks we see. 2 credits.

Andrew Weinstein

HTA 325 Native American Art. This course presents a broad overview of the visual arts of Native America in their historical and contemporary contexts. For the majority of the lectures, we will proceed geographically, examining artworks produced by peoples of the Southwest (Anasazi, Mimbres, Hohokam, Pueblo, Navajo, Apache), East (Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, Chitimacha, Seminole, Miccosukee, Cherokee), West (Mandan, Cheyenne, Crow, Kiowa, Metis), Far West (Chumash, Pomo, Wiyot, Washoe), North (Beothuk, Innu, Cree, Dene, Inuit), and Northwest Coast (Proto-Salish, Makeh, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Kwakwaka'wakw). During our last lecture, we will look to art produced after 1900, when a pan-Indian identity began to develop, resulting in works that are not always easily categorized by specific tribal communities or geographic areas. The works that we will consider over the course of the semester span a wide spectrum of media: pottery, basketry, textiles, architecture, sculpture, painting, performance, installation, photography, etc. We will grapple with complex questions regarding whether or not all of the objects under review should be deemed "art" in the Euro-American sense of the term, which in many cases has been retroactively accorded these objects. We will also be attendant to the effects that new economies, markets, materials, technologies, and patronage have had upon the circulation of these works, as well as the production/reception of newer works.

2 credits. Elizabeth Hawley