

**COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS - FALL 2021**

**HSS1 Freshman Seminar. (3 credits)** 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 The Making of Modern Society. (3 credits)** 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and in lectures students learn to study and to respond critically in written and spoken form to a variety of historical documents and secondary texts.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 231 Dance in Epidemics and Pandemics: Experimental Dance from AIDS to COVID-19.** The moving body is the fundamental material and main subject of dance; the body is also fundamentally at risk to and a vector of transmissible diseases. In very different eras, two major public health crises — the AIDS epidemic, and the COVID-19 pandemic — have challenged how we relate to our own bodies, and dance has been uniquely situated to address these challenges as it works to conceive and shape the body. Some themes the course will engage include: How did the AIDS crisis cause American society to confront its understanding of sexuality (among other things), and what role did dance play in this confrontation? How has COVID highlighted existing societal inequities along racial and class lines, and how has a cultural practice like dance - that often depends on many people gathering together, and requires many financial resources - both reflected these inequities, as well as offered possibilities for change? Finally, given the ongoing nature of COVID, what can our study of the AIDS crisis teach us about the current moment, in dance and in society? In examining the intersection of dance and these public health crises, this course will consider how sexuality, race, and class converge on the body, and use methods particularly developed by and through dance scholarship to analyze these essential issues with a multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach. Finally, we will ask what dance can do as we navigate through the lasting effects of the current pandemic. *3 credits.* *Buck Wanner*

**HUM 324 A & B The Polar Imagination.** This course will explore our fascination with the ends of the earth: the Arctic and the Antarctic. What is the history of our engagement with these regions long thought to be uninhabitable? What's important about the search for the Northwest Passage and the landless "North Pole," first in the age of big ice and now in the era of polar melt? At the other end of the globe, what does the vast and forbidding Antarctic continent have to tell us? What are the polar regions to us now, in times of re-escalating political tensions and rising temperatures? To give shape to these questions we will look at literary works inspired by the planet's extreme regions (for example, Mary Shelley, Coleridge, Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne and other nineteenth-

century authors as well as contemporary writers), histories of famous explorations (for example, Shackleton's voyage to Antarctica), and recent scholarship on climate change and polar history. Along the way we will look at questions of conflict between the technologies of developed nations and indigenous peoples' habits of sustainability; the geopolitics of research stations; art activism; documentary filmmaking; polar tourism; and the fate of polar species in an environment whose climate is rapidly shifting. In short, the course is an advanced introduction -- no prerequisites other than the HSS core sequence -- to an interdisciplinary subject that touches upon history, science, technology, politics, literature, and art. *3 credits.*

*William Germano*

**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 361 Modern Philosophy: Knowledge and the Mind.** Investigates questions revolving around mind and body, knowledge of the world and nature, self-knowledge, truth and deception, and knowledge of others, examining texts from the early modern period of the 17th century through 19th- and early 20th-century philosophical revolts against the European Enlightenment. Particular focus is given to ways of understanding the history of modern epistemology and science in relation to global and contemporary perspectives. *3 credits.*

*Matthew Bower*

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

*Sohnya Sayres*

### **SOCIAL SCIENCES (3 Credits)**

**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 reading, discussion, 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. While ostensibly relevant to both art and architecture students, this course has much deeper appeal across the college regardless of discipline. 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 such

groups value art, architecture, and engineering, if critical perspectives on imperialism can alter the perception of one's own work, and so on – all this leading to a richer debate over cultural norms in the West. *3 credits.*

*Neema Verma*

**SS 334 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 337 How to Economics?** The aim of this course is to show you that you already use principles of economics in your everyday life. You made the decision to read this course description, why? Because the additional benefit you are getting out of reading it (which is having more information about a potential course to fill your schedule) is higher than the additional cost you incur to read this description (which is using the time to do something else). This is marginal analysis: a fundamental concept of decision making in economics. Economics is the study of decision making under scarcity, something that we all do daily because most of our resources are scarce. Thinking about the overall economy, we are the consumers, the suppliers of labor, and potentially the producers; therefore, our decisions affect the overall economy and the shocks that happen to the economy affect us as well. This course will introduce you to basic macro-and microeconomics concepts and help you think about how to use them understand the behavior of individuals, firms, and the government. with specific focus on current events. *3 credits.*

*Loujaina Abdelwahed*

**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.* *Loujaina Abdelwahed*

**SS 342 Anthropology of Ritual.** The study of ritual takes us to the heart of anthropological approaches to experience, performance, symbolism and association. Once thought to be "vestigial" organs of archaic societies, rituals are now seen as arenas through which social change may emerge and are recognized to be present in all societies. Throughout the course we will explore varying definitions of ritual and its universal and particular aspects, while surveying ethnographic case studies from around the world. *3 credits.* *Ricardo Rivera*

**SS 345 The Raymond G. Brown Seminar: Understanding Capitalism: Competition, Conflict, Crises and Change.** In this course we will explore what capitalism is, how (and in what sense) capitalism works, why (and in what sense) it doesn't work, where and when it works, how it changes over time and how our policy actions influence and condition its trajectory and very existence. A key point of contention among students of economic history is the tension between: (1) the changing and varied institutions of the capitalist mode of production across time and across geographic space and; (2) the apparent repetitive patterns identified by economic historians, which suggests that there exist 'economic laws of motion' that are, in some sense, independent of particular policy and specific historical institutional structures. The long-term repetitive patterns include: persistent unemployment; persistent poverty and inequality both within and across national economic units; repeated cyclical patterns of booms and busts (of varying periodicities) as well as severe economic crises affecting the global capitalist world every 40-60 years; degradation of the natural environment. To frame the questions, we are compelled to use a multidisciplinary approach, making extensive use of case studies and examples from history, anthropology, and the other behavioral sciences as well as recent developments in economic theory such as "complexity theory" and nonlinear processes. The emphasis will be on understanding the relationship between social/state policies and successful national development policies—which also includes the profound question of the meaning of 'development'. A fundamental research question might be: If the institutions that comprise the 'Developmental State' have been instrumental in framing, shaping (and sometimes taming) capitalism development – can social/political forces push the system toward economic transformation and technological change that is more tailored to environmental and social justice? *3 credits.* *John Sarich*

**SS 347 A & B Macroeconomics.** **A special section open to Freshmen and Sophomores, intended for students with an interest in taking intermediate and advanced courses in economics in subsequent**

**years and eventually participating in the FED competition. Juniors and Seniors need permission from the HSS Advisor or HSS Dean.** 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, Billy Bataille*

**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 some Literature, film, history, social science, and theory, but above all, we will work our way through of the "canonical" texts which inform that current scholarship, theory, and indeed popular culture (and our own ideas about women and men, gender and sexuality). *3 credits.* *Atina Grossmann*

**SS 378 Time, Travel and Communication in Early Modern Europe.** Time, Travel and Communication in Early Modern Europe explores technologies available in a time period that extends approximately from the Age of Exploration through the French Revolution (about 1500-1800). Interpretation of its themes--time, travel, communication--will be broad, and include close considerations of design technologies and material culture. In addition to readings (both primary and secondary) and discussions (in-class and online), and a few hands-on projects, successful students will learn to research and analyze artifacts that are relevant to the course themes. Together we will plan a journey that focuses our investigations on hows and wheres of travel in the early modern period, what travelers might bring with them, what they find along the way and what they do when they get where they're going. Think Assassin's Creed. Minus the assassin (probably) and blood and gore (if I can help it). And based on the history skills you have and learn in class. *3 credits.* *Sarah Lowengard*

### **ART HISTORY (2 Credits)**

**HTA 101(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 18<sup>th</sup> 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, Stephanie Jeanjean*

**HTA 212 Introduction to African American Art.** This lecture course is an introduction to the work of African American artists from the colonial era to contemporary times. While examining the African underpinnings in the production of visual art from artists of African descent since the colonial era, the work of African American artists will also be examined within the over-all context of American art production. Students will explore major art movements, such as the New Negro Movement/Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement, as well as study the impact of political movements on artists and their work, including the Feminist Movement, and #BlackLivesMatter on works of art. The intersection of class, gender, sexuality in addition to the assertion as well as disruption of African diasporic identities will be explored. This course will examine artworks of various forms including but not limited to photography, installation, and new media. *2 credits.*

*Rose Oluronke Ojo-Ajayi*

**HTA 261 Art and Social Practice.** This course focuses on socially-engaged and relational artworks and initiatives in Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa from the 1960s to the present. By studying the development of participatory practices outside of the institutional networks and market structures of the Euro-Atlantic art world, we will examine the shifting boundaries between art and activism, investigate the politics of the art world, and address how activated spectators, collectives and collaborative projects shaped cultural production and social life locally and in a global context. *2 credits.*

*Agnes Berecz*

**HTA 270 The Art of Greece and Rome.** This course is an introduction to the ancient Greeks and Romans by way of their material culture. In antiquity – as in the present day – people used stuff. Some of this stuff, such as drinking cups or coins, were part of one’s everyday experience. Other items, such as weapons or temples, only played a role on special occasions. By studying the stuff that people left behind, we are able to understand various aspects of their lives, from what they ate and drank to how they believed the universe worked. This course focuses on the art and architecture of the Greeks and Romans, from the Bronze Age to Late Antiquity, and on how we can use these objects and monuments to ask and answer questions about the past. *2 credits.*

*Henry Colburn*

**HTA 299 Ceramics Within and Beyond Categories.** Ceramics, or fired clay, in its intrinsically multifaceted and global nature, resists a straightforward categorization, such as “crafts.” It signifies a medium-defined genre of visual art, that of material culture as well as socio-political practices which have been prized around the world throughout human history. Due to the absence of a core mega-narrative and central theories, investigating ceramics across the globe can be flexible and exploratory, dealing with various identities and cross culturally-connected and disconnected diverse lineages within its world history. This course will experiment with one

scenario of the world history of the medium by unpacking ceramics as thing (material, technologies and objects), value (symbols, identities, aesthetics and concepts) and ritual (display, performance, community and daily life) through time and space. The class will proceed in two parts: reviewing selected historical episodes telling stories of contacts and exchanges; and introducing some major critical discourses and issues over the multivalent status of ceramics in relation to modern/contemporary art and society. As a point of entry to history, our global, chronological mapping will start with East Asia, one of the hubs of world ceramic cultures, examining its prehistoric and later enshrinement of the medium, and moving through the Ages of Exploration, Empires and colonial/postcolonial periods in Europe, Africa, Middle East. We will then return to an Asia in contact and conflict with 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Euro-America, where some artists/designers exploring ceramics' new potential as a distinctive material/medium have emerged as cultural celebrities.

*2 credits.*

*Yasuko Tsuchikane*

**HTA 300 Single Artist Seminar: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.** This course examines the work and legacy of Korean American artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. Cha's work spans across writing, performance, video, installation, and more. Often dealing with themes of memory, diaspora, language, and gender, Cha's contributions to the visual art field have been less recognized than her best-known work, the experimental book *Dictée*. This course engages the artist's archive to explore her distinctive intermedia oeuvre, reading under-studied visual and performance works against Cha's reception history to ask *why* and *how* her legacy has been shaped and/or foreclosed by the disciplinary demands of art history, literary studies, and Asian American studies. Each week, selected works will be considered in conversation with primary and secondary texts. In particular, we will seek to understand how Cha's work can be read in the context of its making, the Bay Area in the 1960s and 1970s, where the Asian American movement was just one among many powerful social movements. Students will gain skills in close visual analysis, research, and writing. Content warning: Cha died young in an incident of racialized and gendered violence in New York City. This course emphatically resists spectacularizing this incident or allowing it to overshadow Cha's vibrant life and work. Students will have the option to not be present for in-class discussions of potentially triggering topics, or to participate through alternative methods agreed upon in collaboration with the instructor. *2 credits.*

*Mia Kang*

**HTA 305 Performativity.** Performativity is the capacity of speech, utterance, gesture, and language to impact or create the world. In this course, students will explore the relevance of speech acts to social norms and identity, as well as creative forms of self- and collective fashioning and redress. This course moves from debates around the performative—the study of words which do things—to accounts of gender, race, and sexuality which emphasize their constructedness and thus, their alterability. This course also prioritizes performance art as one among many answers to the problem of embodiment and experiment. Together, we will explore key texts and performances within the field of performance studies to address the generative exchange between art and critical theory. Key words or sites include the relationship of speech to deed; discourse to materiality; inscription to violence; and embodiment to history. Students will have the possibility of exploring their own performance practice in a final project. *2 credits.*

*Sarah Richter*

**HTA 313 F1/FA 393A I Sculpture: Arte Povera.** As an art history and studio class hybrid, Sculpture:

Arte Povera merges the pedagogy of both with the hope to expand ways of thinking and talking about sculpture while making it. Arte Povera serves as a case study and an entry point to anchor the discussion historically and methodologically. Emerged in 1960s Italy to protest American imperialism, technocracy, and consumerism, Arte Povera has resounded globally for its focus of non-traditional, organic materials, process, and performativity. The course will raise questions on materials and their temporality, ethics, politics, and cultural specificity. All students will do both studio and art history work. Students taking the class for HTA credits will produce more written work, and students registered for studio credits will produce more sculptural work. *3 credits.* *Bedarida, Lehyt*

**HTA 313 Q Seminar: Modernism, Colonialism, Internationalism.** This course situates modernist painting within a global context. We will begin by considering how the major artistic tendencies of the first half of the twentieth century, among them cubism, abstraction, concretism, realism, and surrealism, developed amidst the circulation of peoples, objects, and concepts under colonialism. Then, we will trace how these tendencies developed differently in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the United States, connecting the work of individual painters to the larger themes of the postwar era: the aftermaths of Auschwitz and Hiroshima; the decolonization of the global south; the formation of international institutions; the spread of commercial culture; and the ideological divisions of the Cold War. *2 credits.* *Colby Chamberlain*

**HTA 313 S Seminar: When North Is South: Latin American Art Today.** This course will consider the history of modern and contemporary art in "Latin America." Informed by postcolonial discourses, the course will examine the complex cultural specificities dissolved by the umbrella category of Latin American art. We will use a comparative framework to evaluate selected constellations in art from Mexico, Central America, and South America. The classes will be organized around 3 conceptual 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. The second will track distinctions between radical art practices in Latin America from the 1960s through the 1980s and neo-avant-garde centers in Europe and North America. The third will consider the global turn in contemporary art, connecting recent artistic responses to the crises ushered by globalization. *2 credits.* *Melanie Marino*

**HTA 322 Global Mediterranean Culture (391-1492).** The focus of this course will be the Mediterranean Sea, between the late antique and modern period (ca. 391 and 1492), in a number of its distinctive manifestations, political, religious, social, cultural, and economic. Once upon a time, the Mediterranean Sea was possessively defined as the *mare nostrum* (our sea), and claimed by the Roman Empire or some other superpower. As a result, the Mediterranean, since then, has been viewed almost exclusively with a Euro centricity, founded on colonialism and exploitation. Current historiography, the social sciences, has broken away from that single local, and ultimately incomplete narrative for the Mediterranean. The primary goal for this course is to provide a "wider and more humane history" that is more inclusive of "invisible people and cultures" and provides alternate narratives to the ones currently in the history books. The conception of the 'Great Sea' as a boundary-less space allows us to address the many lacunae in its history that are now being acknowledged. *2 credits.* *Michelle Hobart*