Course Catalog

MLSC 501 The Shaping of Western Thought
Humanities Core or Elective
Instructor: J. Dennis Huston, PhD

This course will focus on readings in literature, philosophy and religion that have been instrumental in shaping Western thought throughout the centuries. Students will study and discuss:

- Homer's Iliad, considered by many to be the most important document in shaping the Greek sense of courage, heroism, fame, and the relationship of man (and woman) to the gods
- Euripides' Medea, as an example of a woman who saw herself as concerned with the same principles that concerned men - with tragic consequences
- Plato's Republic, to examine how Plato tried to replace Homer's mythology with a new concern for reason and for merit
- Selections from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament including Exodus, The Book of Job, and The Gospel of Mark, to see how the Judeo and Christian religions resembled and departed from the pagan world
- Virgil's The Aeneid, to examine a new kind of epic hero
- Augustine's Confessions, focusing on the cost of embracing a religion that turned Augustine away from the world and from all that did not directly concern his relationship with God
- Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, to see medieval and more modern views acting in conflict with one another

MLSC 502 Our Environment: Science and Culture
Science Core or Elective
Instructor: Ronald L. Sass, PhD

Is global warming a fact or merely a fear? Will we run out of water? Are fossil fuels really in short supply? How hazardous to human life is hazardous waste? These and other issues are central to our existence on the planet, yet often misunderstood and hotly debated by scientists, futurists, and politicians. In this course, students will learn environmental concepts, the science and culture behind them, and possible reactions to related problems from a political, economic, and cultural perspective. The instructor will introduce the necessary background material in biology, ecology, and chemistry as needed, but the emphasis will be on obtaining scientific literacy in environmental studies.

Topics include principles of ecology and the environment, populations, natural environments, agriculture, air, weather, climate, and pollution, water, geological process, energy sources, hazardous waste, sustainability, and environmental policy objectives.

MLSC 503 Violence and Human Nature
Social Science Core or Elective
Instructor: David Schneider, PhD

Are we inherently violent by nature or do we learn violence? How common is violence? Can violence be a rational choice? Can we control violence? The topic of violence has engaged social scientists from many fields and can provide an illuminating and interesting focus for understanding the research and rationale of psychologists, political scientists, anthropologists, and sociologists. Topics covered in this course include early concepts of human behavior, evolutionary, biological, cross cultural, and historical approaches, cultural factors and the mass media, the sociology of violence, Freud and other emotion theorists, group violence, and legal, political, and psychological solutions in controlling violence. Students will read classic studies and selected journal articles and become familiar with various statistical databases on crime and violence.

Topics will include the following:

- Early concepts of human behavior
- Evolutionary, biological, cross cultural and historical approaches
- Cultural factors and the mass media
- The sociology of violence
- Freud and other emotion theorists
- Group violence
- Legal, political and psychological solutions in controlling violence

MLSC 504 Islam: State and Society
Social Science Core or Elective
Instructor: Dina Alsowayel, PhD

This course offers an analytical and theoretical examination of government and social systems in the Arab and Muslim world. We visit key countries in the region to understand the variables that explain each system. We look beyond newspaper headlines to analyze the apparent newsworthiness of the region. Why does it continue to grab our attention and remain the center of US foreign policy? Why are some countries “moderate” others “radical.” Why are some monarchical and others republican. Why and how does Islam play a role in each? Does oil matter? What are the biggest challenges in each? Why? We take the headlines and go beyond for a critical look at the region. Iraq, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, among others, serve as the focus of our comparative discussion. Because no one discipline is sufficient for an adequate understanding, this course reaches across the disciplines to include various subjects. History, economics, political science, gender studies as well as the literary and cinematic are the venues for learning about the region. Finally, the course will maximize student participation and

students will be expected to be fully engaged through class discussion, oral presentations and writing assignments.

MLSC 505 Shakespeare and Film
Humanities Core or Elective
Instructor: J. Dennis Huston, PhD

This course will examine several Shakespeare plays and their theatrical productions. The instructor will teach each play as a text (and a script) first, and then study the films of these plays in an effort to understand the choices the film-makers have made in adapting Shakespeare's plays to the screen. In this course, then, we will be concerned with studying both Shakespeare's plays and what happens to those plays in the hands of a creative film-maker.

The following works will be studied:

- Richard III (Ian McKellen film)
- Twelfth Night (Trevor Nunn film)
- Henry V (Kenneth Branagh film)
- Much Ado About Nothing (Kenneth Branagh film)
- A Midsummer Night's Dream (Michael Hoffman film)

If there is sufficient class time, the following plays also will be studied:

- The Merchant of Venice (Al Pacino film)
- Othello (Laurence Fishburne film)
- Hamlet (Mel Gibson film)
- Macbeth (Roman Polanski film)

MLSC 506 The Solar System, The Sun, and The Mind of Man
Science Core / Elective
Instructor: John W. Freeman

This course will explore the beauty of our near-by cosmic environment, the solar system, both as a work of nature and also from the standpoint of a challenge to the observational and analytical capabilities of human beings.

The course will follow two parallel tracks: a historical/conceptual track and a solar system object track. The first track will address the history of man's understanding of the solar system and the various paradigms or models used to describe the physical "universe." We will begin with a look at the naked-eye observations accessible to the ancient Greeks and try and put ourselves in their place to see how we would have modeled the solar system given the data that they had to work with. In this track we will examine the evolution of knowledge of the solar system from the Ptolemy through the present day, covering the contributions of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein. Along the way, we will attempt to examine the processes that lead to the great paradigm shift from the geocentric to the heliocentric solar system. We will also discuss

briefly the social environments in which the great scientists struggled for acceptance of "radical" ideas.

In the second track we will tour the solar system beginning with the Sun, examining each planet and its satellite(s) in detail. We will examine spacecraft images of the planets and photographs from the Apollo missions. Our discussion of the earth will include a brief look at how the earth's atmosphere came to be as it is today and also at anthropomorphic changes such as global warming and ozone depletion. Finally, we will review briefly how the solar system came into being, the contemporary search for planets around other stars, and the probability of extraterrestrial life and intelligence.

The course will involve papers and presentations as well as three outdoor exercises: 1. Observing the progression of the Sun northward from week to week to understand the seasons; 2. Observing the phases of the Moon to understand why they occur; 3. Observing the available/visible planets.

The course will be non-mathematical; however, a few equations maybe shown to illustrate a point. Readings will include original works such as those by Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton and some modern commentary. Optional readings will be suggested for further readings for the interested student.

MLSC 507 Introduction to the Social Sciences and Social Systems
Social Science Core or Elective
Instructor: Richard J. Stoll, PhD

A series of interrelated themes will be discussed in this course, including ideas relevant to a number of disciplines in the social sciences and the use of these ideas to explore interesting social science questions. But just because an idea is interesting does not mean it is valid. Participants also will explore how to determine if these ideas actually account for behavior in the real world (i.e., how could these ideas and insights be tested.)

MLSC 508 Earth System Dynamics
Science Core or Elective
Instructor: Ronald L. Sass, PhD

This course involves exposing the advanced student to the interactions among the mechanisms that combine to produce a working earth. Participants will learn concepts of physics, chemistry, biology, geology, meteorology, and ecology. This course will be graded by problem sets, short written presentations, and a final presentation.

Topics may include the following:

- Human impact overview
- Climate and climate change
- The atmosphere
- The oceans and el Niño
- Terrestrial systems

- Soil ecosystems, forests, and agriculture
- Modeling dynamic biogeochemical systems
- Biogeochemistry: Carbon cycle
- Nitrogen cycle
- Phosphorus and sulfur cycles
- Hydrologic cycle, precipitation, deserts, and drought
- Atmospheric chemistry
- Chemical interactions between biota and atmosphere
- Ecological responses to climate change

MLSC 509 Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
Social Science Core or Elective
Instructor: David Schneider, PhD

In the past century, social scientists have learned an enormous amount about stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, yet the subjects remain poorly understood by the public and, in particular, public policy makers. We all hold stereotypes, show prejudices, and discriminate, although not necessarily in traditionally racist or sexist ways. This course will explore what social scientists, especially social psychologists, have learned about these issues, with particular attention paid to the research of the last 25 years. While we will cover traditional racial and gender issues, we will also consider material related to obesity, homosexuality, mental and physical disability, and age among other topics. Reading will include a text, some instructor written materials, and research papers. Students will be encouraged to contribute their own experiences and related reading. Extensive writing required.

MLSC 510 Music and Other Arts: Collaboration and Fusion
Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: Nancy Bailey

This course will introduce students to the collaboration between music and other arts – the visual arts, story, poetry, drama, mythology, film, and dance. By investigating eight major musical and several smaller works, it will be possible to discuss different aspects of the collaborative process and how they lead to artistic fusion. Recorded performances (CD and DVD) of these musical works will provide the primary sources for this class. Readings will include the poems, plot synopses and libretti (for deviation from and additions to these sources), statements by the collaborators themselves, and important scholarly interpretations of these materials. Because students might not have studied music in an academic context, musical language, techniques, and terminology will be taught as the class progresses.

Each class will have a different focus:

- Music and image
- Music and story
- Music and word
- Tristan und Isolde, a German “music drama” that illustrates Wagner’s concept of Gesamtkunstwerk (the total work of art).
- The total work of art in the 20th century: ballet, stage and film

- Reinventing the Baroque in the 20th century: Yo Yo Ma, the Bach cello suites and Inspired by Bach; Purcell's Dido and Aeneas as interpreted by choreographer Mark Morris
- Changing the program: Holst's The Planets, in both its original version and the Houston Symphony collaboration with NASA

MLSC 511 An Introduction to the Roman Empire: Society and Culture during the Pax Romana
Humanities Core or Elective
Instructor: Michael Maas

When the emperor Augustus achieved supreme power in 31 BC, the Roman state began a period of stable rule and prosperity that lasted for more than two centuries. This course will examine the basic elements of Roman civilization during the Pax Romana. How was imperial power exercised and represented in art and architecture? What place did women, soldiers, slaves, and foreigners have in Roman society? What were the basic modes of religious expression? What were the basic parameters of law and administration? How did the city of Rome develop as the hub of a multi-ethnic state? To answer these and other questions, we will discuss ancient texts in translation and modern interpretations. Time will be devoted each week to methods of scholarly research and writing. No previous knowledge of Roman history is required.

MLSC 512 Contemporary China and the Chinese Diaspora
Humanities Core or Elective
Instructor: Steven Lewis

Transnational forces are changing the lives of nearly a quarter of humanity, the 1.4 billion people of Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the diasporic Chinese communities of the Americas, Europe and East and Southeast Asia. In order to explore the political, economic and social processes of liberalization that have created this new era of the increased circulation of people, ideas, commodities and technologies across national boundaries, seminar participants will use materials and methods from many scholarly disciplines and traditions: political science, history, economics, anthropology, economics, gender and media/cultural studies. And in order to study these increasingly mobile populations that often fall outside the boundaries of conventional area studies approaches in the social sciences, participants will critically examine innovative comparative case study and survey methodologies. Specific seminar topics include (1) globalization and the history of the political and economic liberalization of governments in Asia; (2) nationalism, nation-state formation and the politics of collective identification in China and Chinese societies; (3) the transformation of traditional Chinese economic and cultural organizations in the context of the integration with the global economy; (4) consumerism and the emergence of a global market and industry for Chinese cultural media; and (5) energy, international security and population aging and mobility policies in Asia.

MLSC 513 DNA: Human Identity and Origins
Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Alma Moon Novotny

“Who am I?” “Where did I come from?” All branches of knowledge address these fundamental questions. This course examines how DNA informs the structure and function of humans, and how humans have in turn used DNA as a source of information to solve mysteries and improve lives. We will introduce the structure of DNA and show how it influences physical traits and is passed on from parent to child. We will review the original goals of the Human Genome Project and discuss how the surprising results that emerged from it have altered the way we view the role of genes in human development. We will examine how breakthroughs in DNA technology have allowed us to answer questions about human origins, worldwide migrations and personal genealogy and aided criminal investigations and medical treatment.

This course will also use the specifics of DNA investigation as examples of science in action. The study of DNA provides abundant examples of how science, as a social process, progresses to better approximations of reality through modeling, technological improvements, paradigm shifts and steady accumulation of knowledge. Fundamental to any core discussion of science is how objective knowledge emerges from the activities of humans who are often prejudiced, egotistical and even dishonest. The goal of the course is to provide students with an understanding of both DNA and the methods of the scientists who study it.

MLSC 514 South by Southeast Asia: Crucible of Diversity in Religion and Politics
Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Fred von der Mehden

The section will cover an ethnological and pre-colonial review of the region as well as laying out the foundations of the course. At this time we will assess where we can obtain in-depth information on countries and problems of the area with particular attention given to internet sources.

- The role of religion in framing culture and politics in the region. This is an area of the world’s major religions – Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism as well as animist and Chinese influences. There will be a short description of the theology of these religions as well as popular interpretations
- The impact of colonialism – all major colonial powers were there – British, Dutch, French, Portuguese, Spanish and American. What was their long-term impact on the culture and politics of the region? What of contemporary foreign influences?
- The past and present impact of nationalism on politics, economics and culture in the region. The efforts to establish a sense of the nation in often disparate communities.
- An analysis of the political systems of the region, what forces frame them, how they operate and their future. We have communism, democracy, limited democracy and authoritarianism in the region and their differences need to be explored in terms of institutions, ideologies and policies.
- What are the prospects for democracy in the region? Who are its opponents and proponents and what are their arguments and power bases?
- The challenge of economic growth equity and modernization in the region. A history of development in the area will be followed by an analysis of the issues facing economic growth and equity in the region.

- The foreign policy issues facing the area including efforts at regional cooperation (ASA, SEATO, ASEAN), relations with the major powers and particularly with the United States, and a history of international conflicts in the area.
- What are some of the key contemporary problems facing the region?
    - The rise of radical Islam
    - The India-Pakistan Issue
    - Demands and problems of minority groups in countries of the region.

MLSC 515 Science in the First Person
Science Core / Elective
Instructor: John W. Freeman

Have you wondered what it would be like to participate in a major scientific discovery, or to deal with highly competitive or cantankerous colleagues, or to convince a skeptical world that your idea is right and the rest of the world has got it wrong? By reading material written by scientists who have made major discoveries, we will look at how science is done from the first-person perspective. We will see how scientists confront troubling thoughts when they see the modern world in conflict with the nature they love, and why science has been called a "contact sport." We will primarily use non-mathematical accounts accessible to a general audience. These accounts capture the challenge and beauty of science as an important human endeavor while at the same time elucidating various methodologies of science. Along the way, we will look briefly at some of the tools of science such as the use of models and graphic analysis. Either the scientific concepts encountered will be explained or a detailed understanding of the concept will not be necessary for an appreciation of the context of the discovery.

Readings include:

- *"Lucy: The Beginnings of Mankind" by Donald Johanson and Maitland Edey
- "Disclosing the Past" by Mary Leakey
- *"The Fermi Solution" by Hans Christian Von Baeyer
- *"The Double Helix: A Personal Account of the Discovery of the Structure of DNA" by James D. Watson
- *"The View from Bald Mountain: Thirty Years in an Arizona Grassland" by Carl and Jane Bock
- "De Revolutionibus" by Nicolas Copernicus
- *"Sidereus Nuncius" by Galileo Galilei (Albert VanHelden translation)
- "Dialogs Concerning Two New Sciences" by Galileo Galilei
- "Principia" by Sir Isaac Newton
- "The Life of Isaac Newton" by Richard S. Westfall
- "Einstein" by Walter Isaacson
- *"The Making of the Atomic Bomb" by Richard Rhodes
- *"The Theory of Everything" by Stephen Hawking
- *"From So Simple a Beginning: Darwin's Four Great Books." Edited by Edward O. Wilson.
  (This book contains Charles Darwin's books:
    - "Voyage of the Beagle"

    - "The Origin of Species"
    - "The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex "
    - "The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals")
- The Fossil Footprints of Laetoli by R.L Hay and M.D. Leakey, 1982, Scientific American, 246: 50-57.

*These books should be purchased by the student. Other readings will be provided.

MLSC 516 Pictures and Words: A View of Muslim Politics Through the Arts
Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Dina Alsowayel

In this course comprised of three related segments, students will take a deeper look into the topics introduced in Islam: State and Society (MLSC 504). They will first consider Iranian film and its relationship to the only revolution in the region and have an opportunity to hypothesize about the relationship between the visual arts and politics. In the Iranian example there is a clear connection between the two. Is that limited to Iran or a broader finding? How does that relationship function and what impact does it have? What does post-revolutionary film tell us about the political situation? Students will next look at the work of fiction authors and consider the themes that dominate the literature. What are these themes? To what extent are these politically driven? Finally, students will apply the skills gained in the first two segments by focusing on one country whose selection is to be determined by the current political situation (newspaper headlines). The objective is to identify the necessary tools for achieving a thorough understanding of one polity. The goal is to construct a set of analytical skills that can be applied universally. What are the important questions? Why?

MLSC 517 Modern Drama on Film and in Performance
Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: J. Dennis Huston

Participants in this course will focus on drama not only as text but as performance. They will read modern plays and discuss them as they are often discussed in English courses, concentrating on theme, character, world, imagery, language and dramatic action. They will also examine the "texts" as scripts, as working papers for actors and directors – in short, as source materials for performance. Participants will view movie versions of many of these plays. Course work will consist of readings, film viewing and essays, and as a final project, participants will make a film version (in essay form, not an actual film) of a scene from one of the plays studied in class.

Plays to be studied will likely be chosen from the following list:

- "Waiting for Godot"
- "The Homecoming"
- "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead"
- "Long Day's Journey into Night"
- "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"
- "A Streetcar Named Desire"

- “Death of a Salesman”
- “Oleanna”
- “Angels in America”
- “Proof”

MLSC 518 Judging Science
Science Core / Elective
Instructor: C.D. Gus Armeniades

Scientific discoveries and the resulting advances in technology play an ever-increasing role on our lives. More and more, we are asked to make decisions that require scientific knowledge and technical expertise. Which of the processed foods we buy in the supermarket may contain harmful ingredients? How safe are the various weight loss regimes and miracle drugs, advertised in television and print? Science is also involved in certain controversial policies of our elected officials and contested decisions of our courts: air pollution control, management of natural resources, support of stem cell research, safety of prescribed drugs. Do we possess sufficient scientific literacy to make informed decisions at the market place or the voting booth?

In this course we will explore the simple, logical steps, used to acquire and extend scientific knowledge and will discuss several examples of sound, as well as flawed scientific conclusions. We will review certain conflicts that arise between science and other major forces in our society: ideological and political beliefs, entrenched economic interests, decisions of our courts of law. All along, we will attempt to develop simple but sound criteria for dealing with the task that confronts all of us: judging science.

Topics to be discussed include:

- The acquisition of scientific knowledge (examples of important scientific discoveries)
- The margins of science and the influence of corruptive forces
- Brave new world: “cutting-edge” scientific and technological developments
- Science and the Courts of Law

MLSC 519 Psychology of Beliefs
Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: David Schneider

Beliefs are among the most primitive, important, and central of mental constructs. For example, our beliefs help define our identities. We seek psychotherapy in an effort to change our beliefs about self. Many of our reactions to others are based on our beliefs and our perceptions of theirs, and it is impossible to understand racism, prejudice, religious and national conflicts without considering disagreement over basic belief systems. We join many groups because we believe the group will support our beliefs, and our participation in groups changes many of them. While there are several ways to approach the study of beliefs, we will focus on problematic beliefs, sometimes called anomalous or bizarre beliefs. Examples are beliefs in ESP and the paranormal, astrology, the reality of events that could not possibly have occurred, scientific theories and medical cures that are rejected by most experts, as well as extreme religious and political ideas.

While most such beliefs are almost certainly wrong, it is far from clear that many of our most cherished beliefs have much more justification. By studying anomalous beliefs and the reasons for them, we can learn more about our "more normal" ones.

MLSC 520 Art Music in Western European Culture
Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: Nancy Bailey

This course will trace music from the medieval courts and cathedrals to twentieth and twenty-first century concert halls. It will be taught using selected pieces of music that I think are representative of a specific time, place and situation in western Europe and western Russia. Music tells a great deal about how a society functions; it opens windows to social history, philosophy, concepts of math and of science, art, literature, and architecture.

We'll establish how the piece of music works, the composer and the composer's role in society, how the piece was performed (instruments), where it was performed (venues), and what purpose it served in that society. Finally, we will look at how and where we perform it today, what the issues are with its modern day performance, and what that performance says about us.

Some of the musical works studied include:

- J.S. Bach: Cantata 80: Ein' feste Burg. Brandenburg Concerti nos. 2 and 3
- Mozart: Piano Concerto in A Major, K488
- Beethoven: Symphonies nos. 3 (Eroica) and 9
- Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique
- Mahler: Symphony no. 3
- Richard Strauss: Don Juan
- Debussy: La Mer
- Schoenberg: Pierrot lunaire
- Stravinsky: Rite of Spring, Symphony of Psalms

MLSC 521 The Sustainable Environment
Science or Humanities Core / Elective
Instructors: Ron Sass and Walter Isle

This course is intended to introduce students to some of the central concepts and issues of environmental studies, including environmental science, policy, history, and literature - with an emphasis on scientific characteristics of the environment and human experiences and attitudes toward the environment in which our societies exist. We will move around among various approaches to our general topic, and one of the tasks of the student will be to integrate a variety of readings. Some of this integration can be accomplished in class, some in outside assignments. Attendance is expected, as is participation in class discussion. Class discussion can only move forward if everyone has completed the reading assignments before a given class. Students should bring to class the text of the reading for that day. There will also be frequent assignments which will follow from the readings. Sometimes these assignments will be short, two-page essays, sometimes problem sets related to environmental science. You can expect an assignment for each

week. There will be a longer project due at the end of the semester which will include an oral presentation of the topic to the class and a 10-12 page essay.

MLSC 522 Evolution in Science and Society
Science Core / Elective
Instructors: Julia Smith Wellner, Alison Henning

In this course, participants will learn about the physical and biological development of our planet and its life, as well as discuss how biological evolution is viewed in today's society. Emphasis will be on the study of evolution as it is recorded in the fossil record. Participants will have the chance to examine fossil specimens as well as environments of fossil formation. The specific objective of this class is for participants to develop an understanding of evolution with a focus on how the theory has been built over time. The broader objective is to practice critical thinking and presentation skills while focusing on how society faces scientific data. This class is intended as a core course in science or as an elective.

MLSC 523 Theory and Practice of Punishment
Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Larry Jablecki

This course will focus on the writings of some of the most influential scholars in sociology, legal philosophy and political theory who have contributed to the creation of ideal or normative views of legal punishment and exposing the harsh realities of how non-violent and violent criminals are actually punished. The first half of the course will be reading and discussing selections from the works of some of the major historical and contemporary thinkers regarding the definition, justification and purpose of punishment. This is the centuries old debate between the utilitarians/consequentialists and the retributivists who have proposed radically different answers to these questions. The second half of the course will focus on the writings of a contemporary sociologist who has exposed the inequalities in the current system of punishment in America and a professor of law and public policy who has documented the consequences of the prevailing American crime control politics. More specifically, both of these works will direct the class discussions to how crime control policy makers have used knee jerk rhetoric and moral panics to create laws and sentencing policies resulting in racial disparities, the destruction of families and communities, harsh prison sentences for non-violent offenders and mass incarceration.

MLSC 524 Evolutionary Psychology
Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: David Schneider

Darwin's theory of evolution has influenced psychologists and other social scientists for the past 150 years, often in crude and not always useful or acceptable ways. Major developments in evolutionary biology over the past half century, have opened opportunities for more sophisticated applications to psychology. One of the fastest growing and most controversial areas of modern psychology, evolutionary psychology seeks to explain fundamental issues such as sex differences, proclivities toward violence, cooperation, trust and competition in social groups, the ways and whys of human cognition, as well as the existence of art, music, literature, and religion.

This course will explore these topics and more, and we will examine arguments both for and against this controversial perspective on human behavior.

MLSC 525 Plagues and Populations
Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Alma Novotny

How does responding to disease affect the structure of society and the direction of human evolution? Evidence from the Human Genome Project indicates many of our fastest evolving genes influence our resistance to disease. Agricultural societies, urban environments and industrialization all present humans with disease challenges different from the ones they faced as hunter-gatherers. This course will examine the interaction of pathogens and human societies. Each student will select his or her personal favorite plague and examine the biology of the disease agent, its exploitation of the human host, its transmission and epidemiology. They will then show how their disease impacts the economics, politics, social structure, and values of affected populations and how the response to disease may limit its impact. Finally, the students will present their findings to the class and write a paper summarizing these findings.

MLSC 526 Contemporary Moral Issues
Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: Larry Jablecki

The cardinal objective of this course is to stimulate students to analyze and evaluate the opposing viewpoints of scholars who have expressed their views on some of the most disputed moral issues in contemporary American culture. Required readings will focus on abortion, the death penalty, euthanasia, world hunger and poverty, sexual morality, drugs and addiction, and affirmative action. Students will be required to complete two 6-8 page essays and a 15-20 page research paper which they will present to the class. Arrangements will be made for a tour of a prison unit and the opportunity to discuss the death penalty with several inmates.

MLSC 527 Comparative Approaches to the History of Emotions
Humanities & Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Kathryn de Luna

From the raging kings and cursing monks of medieval Europe to dance hall romances in modern Niger and “being cool” in 20th century America, this course studies emotions from a range of world regions, time periods, and disciplines. In our readings and discussion, we explore fundamental questions about the nature of feelings. Are emotions biologically encoded or culturally controlled reactions? Are emotions “felt” differently in other cultures or time periods or are emotions universal? Can emotions be perceived collectively or are they part of individual experience? Are women “more emotional” than men? Are emotions irrational or rational? In considering these questions in the context of a series of case studies from history, anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics, we will be engaging with some of the most complicated and enduring questions facing the student of liberal arts: what does the range of human experience tell us about the relationship between the body and culture, the individual and society, people and objects?

Assessment for this class will be based on: 1) students' performance during class discussion (including the discussion they lead); 2) students' work for in-class activities, and 3) five response papers.

MLSC 528 Physics for Society
Science Core / Elective
Instructor: B. Paul Padley

This course will introduce the essential physics that students need in order to understand today's core science and technology issues. Topics will range from the physics of energy, to climate change, to spy technology, to quantum computers. We will address questions such as how practical are alternative energy sources? Can satellites really read license plates from space? What is the quantum physics behind iPods and supermarket scanners and how much should we fear a terrorist nuke?

The course will explore critical physics topics: energy and power, atoms and heat, gravity and space, nuclei and radioactivity, chain reactions and atomic bombs, electricity and magnetism, waves, light, invisible light, climate change, quantum physics, and relativity. The course will generally be non-mathematical or any mathematics used will be explained in context.

MLSC 529 Gender Equity
Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Nusrat Ameen

We live in a time when social, political, cultural and economic relations are more extensively globalized than they have ever been. This course will focus mainly on the status of women in different cultural settings around the world. We will examine the implications of gender violence and inequality that exist around the world and the power relations within the home, within nations, for women in different parts of the world. Thus the course will evaluate the position of women in situations of forced labor, trafficking, prostitution, rape and domestic violence. The course will pay particular attention to how women, as individuals and in organized groups, have faced challenges to improve their lives and how the micro credit programs have empowered them. Readings will consider policies designed to improve standards of living for women around the world and to enhance gender equity and women's empowerment.

During the course students will be required to visit the YMCA which deals with forced labor and trafficking issues and the TAHIRIH Justice Center, a nonprofit organization that works to protect immigrant women and girls from gender-based violence.

This class will give students the opportunity to share and to learn from each other the values embedded in society. Indeed, I hope this class will enable us to shape our thoughts regarding our own roles in the community and help us to develop strategies for change in the development of women.

MLSC 530 Knowledge, Politics, Morality and Religion in 17th-18th Centuries Western Philosophy

Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: Larry Jablecki

In the history of Western philosophy the 17th-18th centuries are characterized as the Age of Enlightenment, during which scholars in all fields of knowledge were experiencing freedom from the centuries old yoke of religious authority. Human reason and the pursuit of knowledge de-throned the Christian teaching on the life of faith and biblical revelation. In this course we will focus on the writings of some of the major thinkers who made important contributions to the making of the modern mind, namely, Hobbes, Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant. Their views on knowledge, politics, morality and religion will be explained in the context of the climate of intellectual and religious opinion in which they lived.

MLSC 531 African Crisis in Context
Social Science or Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: Kathryn de Luna

We know Africa largely as a place of "crisis"… as a place plagued by ethnic warfare, stifled by government corruption, unable to feed itself, and, if not beyond hope, certainly far from "developed". In this class, we will explore questions at the heart of understanding problems in contemporary Africa: Why is Africa underdeveloped? Are problems like corruption and ethnic warfare somehow part of African cultures? Are famines the product of climatic or human agency? What are the ethics of AIDS vaccine research in Africa? This class explores the historical, cultural and economic contexts of some of the most pressing issues facing the continent in order to better understand causes and consequences of thinking about Africa as a place of crisis. We will study the Rwandan genocide, famine, the AIDS epidemic, poverty, and political corruption by reading scholarship produced by historians, anthropologists, political scientists, economists and development experts. We will also read non-scholarly accounts and view films written by Africans, by journalists, and NGOs to better compare the kinds of narratives formulated about the same "crisis". Students will be required to lead part of a class session, write two short 4-5 page reaction papers to course readings, and, as a final project, produce a 6-7 page editorial / journalistic essay that focuses on a current "crisis" in Africa but is informed by readings from the course.

MLSC 532 The Grand Design
Science Core / Elective
Instructor: John W. Freeman

This course tackles the BIG questions: why are we here – why is anything here; why is there something rather than nothing; where did the Universe, the stars, planets and life itself including us come from; is ours the only universe; and finally are the laws of nature sufficient unto themselves to explain all that we see or is there a case to be made that a Divine creator is/was involved?

Two recent books address these questions: "The Grand Design" by Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow and "Knocking on Heaven's Door: How Physics and Scientific Thinking Illuminate the Universe and the Modern World" by Lisa Randall. Taking inspiration from these

books this course will explore these big questions. We will balance the discussion with two more books that take a somewhat different view: “A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief: The Language of God” by Francis Collins and “Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life” by Stephen Jay Gould, both eminent scientists in their own right.

The course will follow three parallel paths:

1. A description of the birth and evolution of the Universe through the present epoch including the evolution of life on Earth;
2. A synopsis of the laws of physics that have allowed this evolution to take place;
3. Finally a discussion of whether a Divine creator is necessary to explain the Universe as we find it today.

Path 1. Will include a discussion of the evidence for a multiplicity of universes of which ours, by happenstance or probability, turned out to have the right set of physical constants to provide for a stable universe and hence the possibility of life. It will also include a description of several fundamental objects such as our planet, stars, black holes, super novae, etc. and dark matter and dark energy.

Path 2. Will cover, in layman’s language, some of the basic principles of physics such as gravity, relativity, quantum mechanics, elementary, the Standard Model, string theory, the Higgs boson, and supersymetry, etc. that are relevant to the discussion.

Path 3. We will watch for and discuss evidence of “Divine intervention” including such things as "Cosmic Coincidences" which suggest that something more may be at work than just natural laws that may make our Universe somehow special.

The course will be non-mathematical. All physics will be developed as we progress and no previous scientific knowledge is required.

Surgeon General’s Warning: this course may stretch your mind - perhaps beyond the point of no return to traditional/parochial beliefs.

MLSC 533 Self-Determination in the Arab World
Humanities or Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Ussama Makdisi

This course investigates the history of the struggle for self determination and democracy in the Arab world. It provides a historical perspective by exploring the antecedents to the current so-called “Arab Spring,” specifically by comparing the anti-colonial nationalisms of the 20th century with the today's pro-democracy movements. It will also examine the role of the West, including the United States, in hindering or promoting anti-colonialism, nationalism and democracy in the Arab world.

MLSC 534 Human Rights in World Affairs
Humanities / Social Science Core / Elective
Instructor: Daniel Cohen

The course examines the history of human rights and humanitarianism from the eighteenth century Enlightenment era to the present. How did human rights become the premier moral language of our times and the idiom in which recent generations frame their idealism? While universal human rights may seem timeless, they have a long and checkered political and philosophical history. This seminar will explore that history through anthropology and legal studies as well as through case studies of non-governmental organizations. Special attention will be given to international law and shifts in international politics in the twentieth century. The course will also analyze the passions that motivated people to pursue human rights and the empathy that led them to uproot injustice. Human rights organizations have gained tremendous attention and credibility among people and governments, yet what are the dilemmas faced today by supporters of global human rights and proponents of humanitarian interventions?

MLSC 535 "Please sir, I want some more": Dickens, Oliver Twist, Poverty and Social Justice
Humanities or Social Sciences Core / Elective
Instructor: Robert Patten

During the worldwide celebrations of Charles Dickens's bicentenary in 2011-12 Oliver Twist received vibrant new attention because its treatment of children, welfare, poverty, domestic violence, and anti-Semitism seemed so relevant to contemporary issues.

In this course we will read the novel alongside and against the economic and social theories and practices of Dickens's time, and ask many questions. How did Dickens's novel, published in a humorous periodical, adapt radical political imagery of the Napoleonic and post-war period to early industrial society? What does the novel offer as an alternative to policies that would make the social safety net more minimal than any other way of life? Was it possible, probable, useful to depict, or common as an experience for an orphan to rise from the workhouse to middle-class respectability? How did the stain of illegitimacy affect women and their offspring? Was poverty a structural consequence of capitalism, a condition confined to ethnic and religious subgroups, a fate for unmarried or widowed women more than men, or the inescapable birthright of particular cohorts of Victorian society, such as orphans, the illiterate, single mothers, Jews, and the elderly? In a fiercely competitive society, who are the criminals? Could they, should they, be portrayed sympathetically?

We will close by looking at two films that refigure Oliver Twist's depictions of injustice and discrimination for different periods of the post-WW2 era. David Lean's 1948 movie was banned in the US because Alec Guinness's portrayal of Fagin was felt to be anti-Semitic. Lionel Bart's 1960 musical Oliver!, released in film version in 1968, was the first modern British musical to transfer successfully to Broadway, and is still the most frequently staged drama in UK schools. Excerpts from it were performed at Mansion House, the Lord Mayor's residence in the City of London, during the banquet commemorating Dickens's 200th birthday, 7 February 2012.

Each student will write a carefully-mentored research paper about some aspect of Oliver Twist and its Victorian or contemporary historical context and will give frequent reports on the research during seminars.

MLSC 600 Introduction to Graduate Research, Analysis and Exposition
Elective
Instructor: Deborah Barrett

This course is designed to provide students experience with scholarly research, analysis, writing and oral expression at the graduate level. Students will learn the analytical approaches used in reading, performing research and writing in the disciplines represented in the MLS program—the humanities, social sciences and sciences.

The objectives of the course are to develop the students' abilities to do the following:

- Perform library or Internet scholarly research at a graduate level;
- Conduct graduate-level analysis of representative graduate-level readings and topics similar to those they will encounter in their MLS program at Rice;
- Demonstrate the advanced analytical and critical thinking abilities required inside and outside of the graduate classroom;
- Express the results of scholarly research and analysis and their original ideas in the written formats that meet the criteria for graduate-level essays, papers, and reports; and
- Use oral expression, discussion, and presentation techniques at the level expected in graduate classrooms.

We will read several representative texts from the three disciplines and discuss research and writing conventions across all three, with a focus on the structure of argument, the validity testing and use of evidence, the use of effective language, tone, and style in traditional academic and contemporary writing, and the conventions for managing and documenting source materials found in the library and on the Web. We will explore some of the theories, sources, language and the qualitative and quantitative research methods scholars use as they conduct original and secondary research in their fields.

Classes will consist of some lecture and oral and written practice, but will primarily involve interactive discussions based on the readings. Students will write short papers and complete a longer original research project (10 to 15 pages).

MLSC 601 Introduction to Western Art: Caves to Cathedrals
Humanities Elective
Instructor: Linda Neagley

Participants in this course will be introduced to major art historical periods and monuments of the Western world from the first appearance of images in the caves of Paleolithic Europe to the construction of Medieval cathedrals and the illumination of books of hours in the 15th century. Each class will focus on a work representative of a larger cultural period and will examine how the complex interaction of architecture, sculpture, painting, mosaics and luxury arts expressed

important political, cultural, religious or social themes. Participants will learn how visual language can communicate ideas of authority, political and regional identities, epic pictorial narratives, and religious beliefs. When possible, students will read primary source materials and critical scholarly articles.

Monuments discussed in detail will include the Egyptian pyramids of Giza, the Athenian Acropolis, the Roman Pantheon, the early Christian church of Saint Peter's in Rome, the Hagia Sophia, the Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo, Charlemagne's palatine chapel at Aachen, Romanesque epic narrative and the Bayeux Tapestry, the urban Gothic cathedral of Chartres and Duke Jean de Berry's Très riches heures.

MLSC 602 Against the Grain: Dissenters and American Society
Humanities or Social Science Elective
Instructor: Alex Lichtenstein

This course will offer a biographical focus on ten Americans who challenged the orthodoxies of their time and place: Henry David Thoreau, William Lloyd Garrison, Eugene Debs, Margaret Sanger, Howard Kester, Lillian Smith, Irving Howe, Bayard Rustin, William Sloane Coffin, and Daniel Ellsberg.

Were these radical dissenters visionaries or cranks? What led them to challenge the conventional wisdom of their day? Which of their ideas came to fruition, and which ones were rejected? By examining unpopular ideas and the men and women who propounded them perhaps we can understand the dynamics of social change in America.

Each week the class will focus on a different individual, using a biographical sketch, historical context, and reading and discussion of key documents related to the individual.

MLSC 603 How Come Communism Collapsed?
Humanities or Social Science Elective
Instructor: Gale Stokes

This history course will investigate the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1991 and related historical issues. Why did Marxism, which is based on a critique of capitalism, succeed in Russia, since Russia was essentially an agrarian state? What led to the emergence of the Cold War after World War II? Was it the Yalta agreements, aggression by the Soviet Union, American intransigence, or something else? When did the Soviet system sign its own death warrant? Who was the prime mover in the events of 1989: Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, or the East Europeans themselves? And what about Yugoslavia? Why did the collapse of communism there mean bloody warfare, whereas it did not in the USSR and in Czechoslovakia?

MLSC 604 Exploration and Discovery in Antarctica
Science Elective
Instructor: Julia Smith Wellner

Students will learn about the seventh continent through the history of austral exploration and an explanation of the scientific research that has happened, is happening and will happen there. The course will begin with a basic scientific description of the highest, driest, coldest, windiest continent on Earth. Participants will next study journals of some of the original explorers as well as recent works analyzing the "glory days" of polar exploration. The class will then move through the early scientific work and on to the modern hypothesis-driven science that is taking place now and is being planned for the future, particularly that for the International Polar Year (March 2007-February 2009). The class will close with an examination of tourism and its effects on the fragile nature of the Antarctic ecosystems and cryosphere. Readings will include primary source texts by both explorers and scientists. Students will study the history of a place that easily captivates the imagination.

Goals include:

- Learning the basics of polar science and the research of modern global change
- Analyzing facts and thinking critically about how interpretations change over time
- Practicing written and oral communication skills through class discussion and writing assignments

MLSC 605 Transnational China: The "Middle Kingdom" in Global Perspective
Humanities Elective
Instructor: Richard J. Smith

Almost everyone in the contemporary world is aware that the 21st century may well be "China's century." How did China come to this position of international power and influence after decades of being described as "the sick man of Asia?" What is the relationship between China's rise to prominence and the development of the rest of East Asia, past and present? This course will focus on the ways that geography, history, and the forces of "globalization" have shaped the politics, economics, social life, and culture of East Asia. Although the focus of this course will be primarily on China, some attention will be given to other parts of East Asia, including pre-modern and contemporary Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. The two interpretive frameworks will be: 1) "ways of world-making" – the social construction of "reality" – and 2) "globalization" – transnational circulation of ideas, people, products and practices, past and present.

MLSC 606 The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters
Humanities Elective
Instructor: Matthias Henze

This seminar seeks to acquaint students with the principal parts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, with the modern, historical-critical study of the Bible as an academic discipline, and with a few episodes in the reception history of the Bible in the West. Our reading of the biblical literature will primarily be historical-critical in the sense that it emphasizes that the Hebrew Bible is rooted in the ancient Near East, its history and literature. At the same time we will be sensitive to traditional, Jewish and Christian readings of the Bible as they evolved over two millennia and examine how these faith-based traditions arose, how they differ from modern critical approaches, and how the two can complement each other.

MLSC 607 Medical Anthropology: Health Across Cultures
Social Science or Science Elective
Instructor: Eugenia Georges

This course examines how the body, health, illness and healing have been conceptualized across different cultures and different historical periods. The course also explores the complex interrelationship between biology and culture, and discusses how historical, political and cultural factors have helped shape our biology to produce specific distributions of health and disease.

MLSC 608 The Challenge of Climate Change: Past, Present and Future
Science Elective
Instructor: Ronald L. Sass

Global climate change is actively studied and critically assessed at four different levels: (1) detecting a change in the global climate (warming), (2) attributing that change to anthropogenic causes (greenhouse gases), (3) modeling future climate to determine the degree of change (warming) under different economic and cultural scenarios and (4) an emerging study of possible human and environmental responses to climate change either by strategies of mitigation or adaptation.

The degree of uncertainty among scientists and the level of skepticism among informed others increases as we progress from an assessment of detection, to attribution, to prediction and finally to response. This course addresses these four levels of understanding, attempting to provide reasonable evidence for a particular position at each level and a consideration of the validity and accuracy of those positions.

During the eleven class sessions participants will investigate the current state of knowledge in (1) Past Climate Change, (2) Present Climate Change, (3) Future Climate Change, and (4) Levels of Response to the threat of Climate Change. The background level of science and mathematics required can be variable and will depend on the previous experiences of the participants.

MLSC 609 Eye and Brain, Mind and World
Social Science or Science Elective
Instructor: James Pomerantz

How do humans know about the world around us? How does any system, natural or artificial, know about any other system? The question of epistemology is among the most fundamental in all of philosophy, and there is no better example with which to begin an answer than human perception, because it is through our senses that we acquire most of the knowledge we gain in our lifetimes. This course focuses on vision because it is the best understood, and perhaps the most important, of the human sensory systems, and it reveals how the eye and brain interact to give us reliable (albeit usually misleading) understandings of the world. We approach vision and the other senses from several disciplines, including: biology (anatomy and physiology of perception, brain function), engineering (robotics, artificial vision), art (representation of color and space in paintings), technology (the relation of vision to photography), medicine (disorders

of perception such as color and face blindness), linguistics (the relation between language and perception), and cognitive science (the study of sentient systems). Along the way, we learn about how other animals perceive as well as about how our ability to perceive develops from infancy into old age.

MLSC 610 Psychology of Happiness
Elective
Instructor: Dave Schneider

Truth, beauty, and, yes, happiness, are issues that have engaged thoughtful people over the centuries. What is happiness (and what makes us happy)? Until recently we have relied on philosophers and religious thinkers for answers to that question, and many (but far from all) of them have provided useful recipes that seem to work for at least some people some of the time. The last century or so has seen many psychologists and self-help gurus who have also handed out (well, more often sold) recipes that generally seem to be less satisfactory than the wisdom of the ancients. Interestingly until recently psychologists have tended to ignore this seeming important topic, but in the past 10 or so years social and personality psychologists, neuroscientists and even economists (the so-called dismal science) have begun to pose empirically answerable questions about happiness and to find some data-based answers to what makes people happy (hint: money and religion have relatively little to do with it). In this course we will read some of the traditional wisdom provided by religious and philosophical thinkers but we will focus primarily on questions and issues that are subject to empirical resolution.

MLSC 611 Journalism in Crisis: Transformation of the News Media and the Implications for American Democracy
Social Science Elective
Instructor: Bill Dawson

The American news media – newspapers, wire services, magazines and broadcast outlets – are undergoing a wrenching transformation. A key reason is the rise of the Internet to its place of paramount importance in modern society. News that not long ago was delivered in an evening newscast or a morning newspaper is now instantaneously available online. The Internet is universally expected to become the medium by which news is primarily conveyed. Meanwhile, classified advertising that contributed heavily to newspaper revenues is migrating to free Internet sites. The circulation of many newspapers and the audiences of network news programs – the nation's major purveyors of news in recent decades – are now in steep decline. Increases in online advertising have not kept pace. Compounding these economic challenges for the business of news reporting, other crucial factors are in play. News institutions continue to be consolidated in fewer corporate hands, while many investors demand higher and higher profits that would be envied by most industries. One result: Hundreds of editorial jobs have been eliminated at local and regional newspapers, national newsmagazines and network news organizations in an accelerating trend. While new online journalism forms are growing in numbers – mainly brief clips of streaming video and opinion-based blogs – many close observers of American journalism fear a net reduction in basic and investigatory reporting on the operations of government and business at all levels. If the historic watchdog role of journalism shrinks, what

are the implications for American democracy? This course will examine historic, social, economic and political aspects of the transformation of American news media.

MLSC 612 The Dead Sea Scrolls
Humanities Elective
Instructor: Matthias Henze

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls a little over half a century ago in the Judean desert has been celebrated as the most significant manuscript discovery of the 20th century. And it would be difficult to overestimate the significance of the discovery. The Scrolls include the oldest existing biblical manuscripts, provide invaluable information about the varieties of Judaism at the time of Jesus and have added dramatically to our understanding of the rise of Christianity. Students will study the fascinating history of the discovery and publication of the Scrolls. They will read the most important Scrolls, learn about the beliefs and practices of the Jewish group that authored them, and discuss what can be learned from the Scrolls about the nature of Early Judaism and the origins of Christianity.

MLSC 613 Changing Views of Victorian England
Humanities Elective
Instructor: Newell Boyd

Since the early days of Margaret Thatcher's prime ministership when she frequently ballyhooed the virtues of "Victorian Values," scholars have been revisiting the stereotypical history of lives and lifestyles during Victorian times in Great Britain. For much of the last century we have perceived Victorians as living soberly prudent lives in overstuffed houses filled with overstuffed furniture. We have commonly depicted the Victorians as people who revered the institutions of religion, family, country and social convention. This course will explore the result of recent historical research which challenges the more traditional views. What has emerged has been a Victorian England that was more irreverent, less inhibited and more sensual than has been understood before.

MLSC 614 Public Speaking
Elective
Instructor: Dennis Huston

This course is designed to give the student exposure to and experience using basic principles and skills of oral communication in the public context. Emphasis will be on the development of speech organization, support and delivery. Informative and persuasive speeches will be practiced. An important outcome of the course is that the student better understand and appreciate the important role public speaking plays in modern society.

Over the course, students will give approximately 10 different types of speeches:

- How-To Speech
- Description Speech
- Persuasion Speech

- Technical Speech
- Speech about an Occasion
- Speech of Actuation
- Extemporaneous/Impromptu Speech
- Debate
- Final Persuasion Speech (long)

After each set of speeches, group discussions will focus on what worked, what did not work and what the students can do to make the speech better. Class size is limited to 16 students.

MLSC 615 Ten Masterpieces of Northern Renaissance Art
Elective
Instructor: Linda Neagley

Students will be introduced to the great masterpieces of painting produced in Northern Europe during the Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries. Each week, the class will focus on a single work of art from this period and explore a constellation of issues around the creation and reception of the painting. Students will learn in-depth methods of visual analysis and interpretation of works within their historical contexts and look at skills and strategies that may be applied to the full range of western painting and that can provide useful tools for enriching visits to museums or the experiences of European travel.

MLSC 616 Oceanways of the British Empire
Elective
Instructor: Newell Boyd

Never in the history of imperial expansion has there ever been anything that compared to the British Empire at its height in the days of Queen Victoria. In size the Empire was supreme, ruling the largest area and the largest number of people. The circumstances surrounding its acquisition were haphazard; its motives and benefits mixed. The residual effects of the Empire upon the modern world are incalculable. This course will examine these aspects of the Victorian Empire and compare them with imperial activities of the present day.

MLSC 617 Creative Nonfiction
Elective
Instructor: Deborah Barrett

Creative nonfiction takes many forms, including expository writing, personal essay, narrative story-telling, literary journalism, memoir, nature and science writing, travel and food writing, historical narrative, biographical narrative, and academic and cultural criticism. This course is designed to help students read and write creative nonfiction with a focus on the voice, structure, messages, style, and technique found in contemporary creative nonfiction. The material covered applies to the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences.

The course will include critical reading and discussion of modern and contemporary essays specifically selected to demonstrate the breadth of the genre coupled with writing exercises and

the respectful criticism of peer work in a workshop format. In addition, we will look at publishing creative nonfiction, including selecting the publication, understanding the process, and editing of their work. Students will turn in short essays to be read and critiqued by their peers throughout the semester and develop and turn in a portfolio as the final project for the course.

The course objectives are to help students—

- Develop their unique voice and range as writers
- Address form and style in their writing, focusing on structure, flow, point of view, place, character, and language
- Engage their readers using a number of writing techniques
- Express themselves gracefully and demonstrate a writing style that is clear, concise, coherent, and confident
- Expand their talents as critical readers of published nonfiction essays, their own work, and the writing of their peers
- Learn to edit their own and the work of others and to accept and provide constructive feedback

MLSC 618 The Awakening of Russia: A Musical and Historical Passage
Elective
Instructors: Nancy Bailey, Newell Boyd

There was a spectacular flowering of Russian culture in the aftermath of the death of Czar Nicholas I (1825-55). Ushered in was a relatively liberal ear which, combined with a powerful national upsurge, yielded a period of remarkable creativity - noted especially in this course by Russian music. This interdisciplinary course will couple the historical and musical threads of Russian culture from the death of the aforementioned Romanov Czar until the end of World War I and the outbreak of the Russian Revolution.

MLSC 620 Masterpieces of the Poetic Tradition
Elective
Instructor: Joseph Campana

This course will introduce students to the appreciation and analysis of poetic masterpieces. We will focus on poetry produced in the English and American literary tradition, with particular attention paid to the poems, poets, and cultures that influence the development of those traditions. Students will look closely and deeply at particular works and consider a variety of reading strategies. Each class will be organized around a series of questions that emerge from distinct topics—an individual poetic work, a single author, a historical moment or literary movement, or a literary genre or theme. Students will be asked to approach these poems as if they were scholars and as if they were poets. Where possible, we will juxtapose masterpieces from the history of poetry with contemporary poetry in dialogue with that rich history. In addition, we will seek opportunity to understand the relationship between poems and other art forms.

MLSC 621 Art Music in Western European Culture II
Elective
Instructor: Nancy Gisbrecht Bailey

This is the second course in a sequence devoted to advanced musical understanding. In the first part of this sequence (Art Music in Western European Culture I), we examined a wide range of music from a single time period. In this, the second part of the sequence, we will instead concentrate in depth upon one piece of music per class and will combine a focus upon advanced listening skills with music specific research techniques. The first weeks of the class will review musical listening, discourse and the specialized skills necessary for musical research. Subsequently, each class session will focus upon a major work by a significant composer such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mahler, and Debussy, among others. The in depth, multi faceted exploration of the musical work will be at the core of a series of concentric circles. Each student will then choose their approach to the outer circles – the work's creation, composer, relationship to other contemporary arts, role in society, and, finally, the time and place in which it was composed -- and will present their findings in class.

Possible study works include (and the instructor reserves the right to change her mind): Mozart: Così fan tutte. Beethoven: Symphony no. 7. Schubert: "Wandererfantasie." Mahler: Kindertotenlieder. Debussy: Twelve Preludes, Book I. Stravinsky: Apollon Musagète (the Balanchine ballet). Copland: Appalachian Spring (the Martha Graham ballet).

MLSC 622 The Scepter'd Isle: Ancient and Medieval Britain
Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: Newell Boyd

From the murky prehistoric times of Stonehenge and New Grange to the tumultuous times of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, the dramatic combinations of history and myth have continually fascinated lovers of the British Isles. This course will explore ancient and medieval Britain, meandering from prehistoric sites to the early invaders, from the delightful legends of Glastonbury to the centuries of Roman invasions, from the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy to the Norman invasion, and from the hegemony of the Roman Catholic church to the challenge of secular kings. Classroom presentations, which are in reality a potpourri of the instructor's personal interests, will be presented in approximately the sequence listed below and will be augmented to include, maps, pictures, music, art, and videos. Daily topics will not follow a traditional chronological course; rather, this course will meander through the ages, pausing to linger especially on those delicious intersections where myth and history collide.

MLSC 623 What Modern Was: Celebrating the Centennial
Humanities Core / Elective
Instructor: Nancy Bailey

What constituted "modern music" in 1912? Works such as Arnold Schoenberg's Pierrot lunaire, Claude Debussy's Jeux, and compositions by American composers Henry Cowell and Charles Ives set the bar for musical modernism that year. But other pieces from France, Germany, Russia, Spain, Hungary and England suggested that the future would present major changes.

What did audiences in the United States know about such music? What did they think about it? What did the founders of the Rice Institute think about new musical trends? How did the music played at the opening festivities of the Rice Institute reflect these perceptions of musical modernism?

This course will consider these questions from a variety of parameters. We will discuss the "modern" pieces themselves as well as music heard and composed in the United States. Study material will consist of musical listening (this will include a live performance at the Shepherd School that reproduces the original inaugural concert), the reading of secondary sources on American music, and the reading of contemporary American musical journalism describing what was being heard in Europe. With the help of these diverse materials, we can get a sense of "what modern was" and its relationship to the momentous events of 1912 in Houston, Texas

Probable musical examples for discussion of musical trends:

- Richard Strauss: Ariadne auf Naxos
- French music for the Ballets Russes: Debussy's Jeux, Ravel's Daphnis et Chloé
- Spain: Granados' Goyescas; Falla's Nights in the Gardens of Spain
- England: Vaughan Williams' Phantasy Quintet
- Bartók: Bluebeard's Castle
- Russian piano music by Rakhmaninov, Scriabin and Prokofiev

MLSC 624 Advanced Creative Nonfiction
Elective
Instructor: Deborah Barrett

This course offers students an opportunity to continue to practice writing creative nonfiction in a guided workshop format. The primary emphasis in the course will be on the professor and students reading and providing constructive feedback on the students' creative nonfiction writings. In addition, the students will read further examples of various types of creative nonfiction writing and complete writing exercises designed to allow them to work on the voice, structure, and technique of their writing.

Throughout the semester, students will turn in short writing exercises and essays, culminating in either perfecting an essay to submit for possible publication or drafting a proposal for a book-length publication.

The course objectives are to help students do the following:

- Develop even further their experience and understanding of the rich and diverse creative nonfiction genre
- Refine their own voices and techniques commonly used in creative nonfiction in their own writing
- Improve their own writing style so that they express themselves gracefully and effectively
- Determine their space in the broad creative nonfiction genre and further explore the opportunities for continuing to develop their creative writing abilities

- Perfect one of their essays and select a publishing target for it or develop a proposal for a book-length project

This course is designed for students with experience in writing creative nonfiction, such as completion of MLSC 617 or a similar course or creative writing workshop experience elsewhere. For those who have not taken a creative nonfiction course in the MLS program, consultation with the instructor is recommended before enrolling.

MLSC 625 The Shapes of Poetry: A Workshop
Elective
Instructor: Joseph Campana

This course examines the fundamental architecture of poetry. How do poets create a sense of shape? What are the nuts and bolts of a poem? Students will read widely in the history of poetry, from traditional meters and historical forms to contemporary free verse and experimental or open forms. Part workshop and part seminar, this course will feature critical and creative assignments and is designed for writers and non-writers of any level of experience. Each class will be organized around a series of questions that emerge from distinct topics related to form and shape. Each meeting will begin with a "poem of the day." Next, we will discuss —an individual poetic form, a poetic work, a single author, a historical moment or literary movement, or a literary genre or theme. Where possible, we will juxtapose masterpieces from the history of poetry with contemporary poetry in dialogue with that rich history. In addition, we will seek opportunity to understand the relationship between poems and other art forms.

MLSC 626 The Brotherhood: Lives and Loves of the Pre-Raphaelites
Elective
Instructor: Newell Boyd

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB), founded in 1848, was a small group of British artists who boldly challenged the conventions of Victorian-era art and the materialism of industrialized England. It was conceived in opposition to the then current Royal Academy of Arts style which the brotherhood considered mechanical and contrived. Instead they preferred a more detailed, natural to nature, and colorful style used prior to the time of the Italian artist Raphael (1483-1520). While the PRB influenced the British art world for the remainder of the century, this course will focus on the intriguing personal lives of the artists, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and John Millais, rather than the art they created. These artists, along with their wives, paramours, and models (often all one and the same) were part of a highly prolific Victorian creative class which for this course will revolve around the locale of central London and the influence of the towering figure of art and architecture - critic John Ruskin.