

## NEW HUMANITIES COURSES AY 2022-2023

### English

**Hum/En 32. Introduction to Black Feminist Poetics.** *3-0-6; third term.* This course is a comprehensive exploration of the poetics (acts of making) of Black feminisms across literature, culture, and theory, centering on works that engage social justice, healing practices, abolition, self-care, and more. Students will read and study several examples of the lives and works of Black LGBTQ+ people and others who have long reimagined dis/ability, ethics, gender, race, and sexuality within Black feminist contexts. Such works have radically retheorized community, embodiment, home, self-love, and more, in ways that challenge cultures of violence in favor of imagining beloved communities and futures. Through a combination of regular study and practice, students will build expertise to practice Black feminist poetics in their own lives and work and will propose their own goals for future study in the field. Instructor: Murphy.

**Hum/En 35. Beginning with Poems.** *3-0-6; first & second terms.* Why begin the study of literature with poems? Written words are the building blocks of literature, and poetry, in Coleridge's famous equation, is "the best words in the best order." To be understood and appreciated, poetry requires a close attention to words and their ordering as they are read and reread. All good literature requires such attention, but practically speaking, poetry provides the best way to acquire the art of rereading because of its shorter forms. More importantly, poetry can be the most emotionally intense and satisfying of literary forms. We will read a small number of poems written in English from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries from several genres - sonnet, ode, elegy, verse epistle, satire, villanelle - and on several subjects - love, death, and politics. Poets will include William Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, and William Butler Yeats. Instructor: Pigman.

**En 139. Ancient Greek Epic Poetry.** *9 units (3-0-6); not offered 2022-2023.* We will start the term by reading Homer's 'Iliad' (possibly 8th century B.C.) for two weeks. This is a disconnected, strange, and violent poem, which raises the excellent question how it could become a widely revered classic down to our own time. To look for answers--answers that perhaps also apply to any "classic" book-- we will go on to study the acts of interpretation, revision, and recycling that made the 'Iliad' fresh and different, sometimes virtually unrecognizable, for each new generation of readers. We survey surprising ancient Greek philosophical interpretations, a medieval romance by Geoffrey Chaucer set in ancient Troy, a fake Scottish epic poem allegedly composed by "Ossian," Chuck Palahniuk's novel 'Fight Club' (1996), and other works. My suggestion for you will be that the 'Iliad' has remained alive for millennia only through quasi-biological processes of mistranscription, mutation, and nonlinear evolution. Instructor: Haugen.

**En 133. Paradise Lost.** *9 units (3-0-6); first term.* We will spend the term studying the famous and eccentric epic poem 'Paradise Lost' (1674) by the British poet and politician John Milton. Each week we will read about 1,000 to 1,500 lines of difficult but beautiful poetry, looking especially for its visual images, literary and mythological references, and poetic sounds, as well as Milton's copious and paradoxical philosophical stances. You will never forget the central character of Satan, the parliament of devils in Hell, the theological conversations in Heaven between God and Jesus, Eve being tempted by diabolical arguments to eat the forbidden fruit, and Adam and Eve being driven from the Garden of Eden at the point of an avenging angel's sword. Instructor: Haugen.

**En 163. Octavia E. Butler and the Literature of Black Futures.** 3-0-6; *third term*. We will begin this course by reading a selection of Octavia E. Butler's (1947-2006) novels and short stories, including her 1993 novel *Parable of the Sower*, which became a New York Times bestseller in 2020. Born here in Pasadena, California in 1947, Butler's writing explored issues such as chattel slavery, climate change, genetic engineering, pandemics, nuclear apocalypse, and post-apocalyptic life. She was also attentive to Black and indigenous modes of care, healing, social justice, and organizing. We will pay special attention to Butler's critical and theoretical contributions to the fields of Afrofuturism, Black studies, feminisms, gender and sexuality studies, and the environmental humanities by reading her works in conjunction with select works of criticism and theory. In the second half of the course, we will explore connections between Butler and the works of other Afrofuturists and Black science fiction writers today, such as Tomi Adeyemi, Akwaeke Emezi, Nalo Hopkinson, N. K. Jemison, Nnedi Okorafor, and others, in order to explore our own ideas for extending Butler's literature of Black futures. Course requirements will likely include class attendance and participation in discussion, weekly reflections on the readings, a midterm project proposal, and a final project and essay. Instructor: Murphy.

**En 115. The Women of Ancient Epic.** 3-0-6; *second term*. Epic remains the most ancient and most modern of literary genres. Women in ancient epic begin as prizes of honor for male warriors and become powerful witches and queens, while some contemporary women writers allow their ancient heroines to speak in their own voices. From Homer to the present, epic narratives also traverse continents as they narrate the founding and foundering of empires historical and imaginary. This course introduces students to key classical epics while exploring historical and contemporary adaptations from Dante's *Divine Comedy* to Madeline Miller's *Circe*. By examining the afterlives of epic, we will consider how the genre changes when taken up by the gender typically marginalized in the classical tradition. Possible authors include Homer, Apollonius of Rhodes, Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Christa Wolf, Ursula K. Le Guin, Madeline Miller, and Maria Baranda. Instructors: Jahner, Pigman.

### History

**H 124. Russia.** 3-0-6; *first term*. Current events have us looking to the past for explanations. How does Russian history help us to understand what is happening in Russia today? Contemporary political commentary emphasizes the recent past: the history of the Soviet Union and its collapse in 1991. This course takes a longer look at Russian political, economic, social, and cultural history - from imperial Russia to the present day. The emphasis is on longer continuities over eras: tsarist, Soviet, post-Soviet. Topics covered include: the nature and role of the state, internal politics, rule of law and property rights, serfdom, inequality, art and social commentary, popular resistance, censorship, and the effects of all of these on the lives of ordinary Russians. Instructor: Dennison.

**H/HPS 129. History of Satellites: From Sputnik to Starlink.** 3-0-6; *not offered 2022-2023*. The artificial satellites encircling the planet make up a global information infrastructure. Most of us living in industrialized regions use satellites daily without even realizing it. How did satellites become so integral to terrestrial technological systems? How did Earth orbit transform from a wilderness into a landscape during the second half of the 20th century, and how is that landscape changing in the 21st? We will trace the history of satellites beginning with the first artificial "moons" and moving into the current moment of private industry ascendancy, taking into account the development, use, and decay of these technologies. We will consider how designers and users shape satellites, and map out the ways that objects in orbit reflect and reinforce power and geopolitics on the ground below. Instructor: Rand.

## History & Philosophy of Science

**HPS/PI 135. The Moral Brain.** 3-0-6; *second term*. This course will critically examine attempts to understand moral judgment and behavior from the perspective of neuroscience and controversies surrounding its implications for moral philosophy. Starting from an evolutionary perspective, we will investigate the search for moral precursors in non-human primates and the evolutionary innovations in cognitive, emotional, and motivational mechanisms purported to underlie human morality. From there, we will investigate controversies regarding this emerging "neuroethics" for debates in moral psychology and normative ethics, including the role of reason, desire, and the self in normative theory and whether neuroscience can play any role in adjudicating among competing theories of normative ethics. Instructor: Quartz.

**HPS/H 157. Models and Theory in Ancient Astronomy: From the Babylonians to the Greeks .** 9 units (3-0-6); *third term*. In the context of knowledge of heavenly phenomena, model-making played a continuous role throughout the history of Babylonian astronomy, from the 2nd millennium BCE to the Hellenistic period. This course looks selectively at the development of models for astronomy, from arithmetical linear models in 2nd millennium BCE to 1st century BCE Babylonia to the geometrical cinematic models of Hellenistic Greek astronomy. Questions about the relationship of observation to theory and model-making, and the relationship of astronomical models to the representation of the motion of heavenly bodies and to cosmology will be of interest. The material will be set against its historical and cultural contexts, including the relationship of astronomy to astrology. Readings will be taken from cuneiform texts and translations of Greek astronomical treatises. Instructor: Rochberg.

## Languages

**L/VC 111. Introduction to 21st-Century French Cinema.** 3-0-6; *not offered 2022-2023*. L/VC109 and L/VC110 are taught in alternate years. This course looks at popular genres (comedy, thriller, animation film) and auteur cinema. It focuses on major trends in contemporary French movies and their relationships to French society (exploration of class, ethnic, gender and sexual identity, etc.). It analyzes the reappropriation of the national heritage, the progressive feminization of the filmmaking profession and the new appearance of directors who are immigrants or children of immigrants. Throughout this class, students will further develop their understanding of the methods and concepts of cinema studies. Conducted in English. Instructor: Orcel.

## Music

**Mu 52. Fundamentals of Western Music Theory.** 3-0-6; *first term*. Intended for students with no or limited musical training, this course is an introduction to the elements of Western music. We will practice reading, notating, and analyzing music through the study of rhythm and meter, scales, intervals, chords, and basic harmonic progressions; musical examples will be drawn from a variety historical periods and styles, including classical, pop, jazz, film, and musical theater. The final project will be a short musical composition. This can be a stand-alone course for students who want to understand how music is put together, or it can serve as preparation for those who might benefit from a review of the fundamentals before taking further courses in music theory. Instructor: Lu.

**Mu 53. Listening to Music.** 3-0-6; *second term*. Most of the music we encounter can be thought of as the organization of a very limited set of tones into distinct patterns of repetition, and it has been this way for

hundreds, if not thousands, of years. And yet, music has come to mean infinitely more than its sonic surface: we study great works of music like we do great works of literature and art; we use our musical preferences to convey our social and political identities; we expect - and technology has enabled - our public and private spaces to be saturated in music; and certain musical works possess such power that they are sometimes altered, if not banned outright. But how has music acquired all of these meanings? How does it communicate? What is it that we are listening to when we are listening to music? In addition to serving as an introduction to the academic study of music, this course aims to deepen our musical appreciation and understanding by critically examining listening habits of the past and present. Knowledge of Western music notation and harmony is helpful but not required; the basics will be reviewed as needed. Instructor: Lu.

**Mu 137. Themes in Western Music History and Historiography: Pre-1600.** *9 units (3-0-6); third term.* This course surveys the music and musical institutions of Ancient Greece, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Nearly two millennia of musical developments, needless to say, cannot be adequately covered in ten weeks; the course thus aims to build literacy in music from these periods by contextualizing musical works and their creators against broader themes, including music and the church, music and politics, music and gender, the evolution of musical notation, and the rise of secular music. At the same time, we will interrogate the central historical narratives of Western music that we have inherited and grapple with how historiography - the writing of history - shapes the way we understand the musical past and present. Instructor: Lu.

**Mu 138. Themes in Western Music History and Historiography: 1600-1800.** *9 units (3-0-6); first term.* This course surveys the music and musical institutions of Europe during the Baroque and Enlightenment eras. Two hundred years of musical developments, needless to say, cannot be adequately covered in ten weeks; the course thus aims to build literacy in music from these periods by contextualizing musical works and their creators against broader themes, including music in the European courts, music and religion, words and music, music and gender, music and Enlightenment ideals, and the rise of instrumental music. At the same time, we will interrogate the central historical narratives of Western music that we have inherited and grapple with how historiography - the writing of history - shapes the way we understand the musical past and present. Instructor: Lu.

**Mu 139. Themes in Western Music History and Historiography: 1800-Present.** *9 units (3-0-6); second term.* This course surveys the music and musical institutions of the so-called "Western art music" tradition from the Romantic era until the present. Over two hundred years of musical developments, needless to say, cannot be adequately covered in ten weeks; the course thus aims to build literacy in music of this period by contextualizing musical works and their creators against broader themes, including music and the nation, music as art and philosophy, music and appropriation, music and genre, and the musical canon. At the same time, we will interrogate the central historical narratives of Western music that we have inherited and grapple with how historiography - the writing of history - shapes the way we understand the musical past and present. Instructor: Lu.

**Mu 150. Special Topics in Music.** *3-0-6; third term.* An advanced humanities course on a special topic in music. Topics may include specific genres of music, the music of particular eras or geographical regions, or the relationship between music and other aspects of culture. The course may be re-taken for credit except as noted in the course announcement. See registrar's announcement for details. Instructor: Lu.

## Visual Culture

**VC 55. Environmental Media in Practice.** *3-0-3; third term.* Media technologies are knotted up in environmental relations. From early cinematic experiments to the sensors and drones used in conservation research, technology has long shaped how environments are known and understood. Simultaneously, technological systems and devices are embedded within harmful, exploitative, and wasteful practices, examples of which include lithium extraction, the carbon emissions of data centers, and e-waste. In this course, we will think through the complexities of eco-technical encounter, using them as generative provocations for producing creative projects that engage environmental questions while aiming to reduce environmental harms. Through a blend of theory and practice, we will survey texts and creative works on environmental media, techno- and eco-feminisms, and queer ecologies, alongside visits to the Huntington. These reference points will then inform how we devise new projects that take both environmental questions and impacts into consideration, and experiment with methods such as using solar power, repurposing recycled or obsolete devices, and testing biodegradable materials. Instructor: Livio.

**VC 56. Worldbuilding for the Multiverse.** *3-0-3; second term.* Worldbuilding is an imaginative exercise practiced in the arts and sciences to envision alternative universes. Worldbuilding is also employed in statecraft and social organizing as a form of pre-figurative politics to bring about change within existing relations of power. This course explores the creative craft of envisioning a world as a system of relations, while critically examining the ethical implications of how its actors and elements are represented - and what (or who) is left out. We will take an interdisciplinary approach through lectures and readings in art, theory, and fiction. We will analyze forms of worldbuilding across disciplines and media - from novels to experimental film to architectural renderings to PowerPoint presentations. How do artists build and represent an imagined world through landscapes, seasons, sensory capacities of bodies, and relations of gender, race, and political conflict? How can the social structures in artworks reflect and elaborate upon the worlds we know? We will also draw inspiration from the work of visionary Black science fiction author Octavia Butler, whose archive is held by the Huntington Library. Students will create projects to build their own worlds through writing and visualizations across media of their choice (sculpture, drawing, photography, video, and other creative technologies). Instructor: Berrigan.