

**Popular Music and the Sociological Imagination**

R. D'Angelo

Musician and musicologist Brian Torff writes, "perhaps nothing tells the story of the American experience as vividly as our popular music." This seminar is an exploration into the important role of popular music in American culture. Jazz, blues, rock, and hip-hop are studied through the lens of sociology. We will study: How and why music is of interest to sociologists? How is music a vital part of American culture? In what ways does music reflect and share meaning in the context of larger social concepts including inequality, social class, race, urbanization, gender, region, and technology? What makes some music popular? What is cultural appropriation in music and can it be avoided? Our musical heritage brings the past forward in new, exciting and disruptive ways.

**Evolution of Energy Consumption and its Implications for Society**

**J. Ribeiro**

The focus of this course will be to study the history and evolution of society's energy consumption/demands, as well as the scientific/technological innovations that were developed to keep pace with these societal demands. Special attention will be paid to both the positive and negative impacts each of these scientific/technological breakthroughs had on society, drawing on specific events that highlight their consequences and impacts on society.

**Fiction Takes Flight: Prose In The Digital Age**

**J. Shore**

In an age where you can strap on a virtual reality headset and receive information in rapid synthetic bursts of immersive delight, it has become increasingly difficult for prose to win the hearts and minds of the public. Fiction writers have risen to the challenge, though, creating inventive and capturing works that affirm life in a way that digital media cannot. This class will focus on modern fiction that possesses urgent, relevant and entertaining prose. By reading and analyzing these fully formed pieces of fiction, students will become better writers and thinkers. Students will develop their writing and analytic skills by exploring the language, style, characters and themes of each work.

**Seeing emotions through lenses: Therapeutic photography and cinema**

**P. Lin**

Photos not only record what is important to us, but reflect a lot about us as well. Exploring our own snapshots and albums can provide deep personal insights that words alone often cannot fully explain. Therapeutic Photography are photographic practices done by people themselves to increase their own self-knowledge and awareness, improve family and other relationships, and activate positive social change. Similarly, movies are powerful and enjoyable medium for learning and exploring psychological issues. This course will survey core human character strengths and weakness. The course is largely experiential and includes a lot of classroom activities, such as film appreciation and photography. It presents practical ways of using one's character strengths to promote and maintain well-being and happiness.

**Nature and the Post-Wild World**

**M. Larsen**

This course is not going to be a crusade against plastics or an instruction book on sustainability, though those important subjects will certainly come up. What we will do is transport ourselves, through classic texts, into the idea of nature, and try to ascertain what that term - nature - means, exactly, in 2023. For Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature" was a mode in which one could understand oneself and one's place in the world. For Edmund Wilson, his term "Biophilia" meant that we need to come into contact with the "green" natural world, at least occasionally, in order to be happy and re-wire ourselves back to health. For Rachel Carson, nature was under assault in the Industrial Age, not only visibly but invisibly, and required serious advocates. Through ancient, romantic, realistic and modern lenses; through Thoreau, London, and J.A. Baker; through poetry, music and film; we will come to some helpful conclusions about what nature can be, and what we can do to retain it in a post-wild world.

## **The Value of Play**

### **V. Kaninski**

George Bernard Shaw once said, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." Can play be that secret ingredient to a happy life no matter what age you are? Students will survey what it means to play and why it matters whether you can play. This course will also examine the value of play and how science is backing up the fact that play is essential to our health, examine the lessons that animals and humans learn through simple games on different stages of their development. Students will evaluate some of the common theories about play and how it is used in the modern corporate world to boost creativity and team building. We cannot explore play without playing; thus, students will be engaged in many class activities.

## **Exploring New York Through Children's Literature**

### **S. Birch**

We live in an amazing city! This course explores our city through the lens of children's literature. Students will see the ways New York is portrayed in texts written in varied styles and for differing age levels. Students will begin by exploring picture books such as *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold and *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros. We will then read and discuss stories geared toward elementary learners, including *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg, and *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord. Later in the semester students will delve into stories for middle schoolers and young adults, like *New Kid* by Jerry Craft and *The World Outside* by Eva Wiseman. In class, we will focus much attention on the author's background and the New York setting of the stories, and we will also explore the city, going to some locations from the books we read.

## **Brooklyn and the History of Science**

### **M/ Hanophy**

Home of what was once the longest suspension bridge in the world, site of the construction of naval vessels from the War of 1812 through the Second World War, and location of the first modern medical school and teaching hospital in the U.S. – Brooklyn boasts many firsts in the fields of science and technology. Our course will examine the key role that Brooklyn played in developments in medicine, environmental science, engineering, education, and pharmaceuticals.

## **The History of New York City Through Horror Cinema**

### **M. Merchant**

This course will use horror films as a primary source for studying the history of New York City, focusing on the fears and anxieties reflected in the genre. The films selected will span from early classics like *King Kong* and *Catpeople* to later works by established New York directors such as Larry Cohen, William Lustig, and Frank Henenlotter. Through analyzing these films, students will gain insights into the historical trends and cultural changes that shaped the city from the Great Depression to the 70s, 80s, and 90s. It's worth noting that some of the required films may have content warnings due to their rating, including R, NC-17/X, and unrated films. Overall, this course promises to be a unique and engaging way to explore the history of New York City.

## **Writing the game: An exploration of sports in literature**

### **H. Wood**

The course will explore the multifaceted representations of sports in literature. From novels about baseball, football, and cricket, to essays about tennis, and theories on timekeeping in football and soccer, literature is rich with stories about the games we follow. Delving into how the sports and athletes are portrayed, the class will look into what themes and literary devices characterize these stories. We will also use the literature as a springboard to answer several key questions. Why write about sports in the first place? Why play? Why watch? (We will attend an SJC sporting event in an attempt to answer these questions firsthand). In keeping with these inquiries, the class will also look at the connections between sports and the arts (specifically via concepts of theatricality and elements of story), while also exploring the connection of athletics to communal identity in the United States and abroad.

## **Public Health & Extreme Violence in the US**

### **J. Pascarella**

This course will discuss trends in violence in the US and how society addresses, tolerates and is intrigued with certain components or acts of violence. Topics will include murder, and extreme murder incidents and offenders such as serial killers, mass murderers, assassins, terrorism and online bullying. Also, the course will discuss how and why other acts of violence are tolerated such as police violence and violence in organized sports (Boxing, MMA,

UFC, Football, the Ice Hockey Enforcer). These behaviors will be discussed within the framework of social psychological theories and the impact on the overall Health of society

### **Solo Performance in Theatre**

#### **W. Trevino Multitudes and Contradictions**

This course will introduce students to the art of solo performance as both a unique genre of theatre and as a powerful means of personal expression. Students will explore NYC's rich tradition of solo performance through readings, videos, and live performances, while learning to compose critical theatre reviews and to respond directly to artists in a meaningful way. Simultaneously, students will gain an appreciation for solo performance through the process of creating, rehearsing, and presenting assigned projects. Class exercises will guide students in generating written performance material, integrating memorized texts with physical movement, and developing their skills in literal and abstract expression. The course will culminate in a public showcase of 5-minute solo performances.

### **What's So Funny?**

#### **E. VerSteeg**

Everyone loves to laugh, but we often struggle to explain why something is funny. Is humor consistent across time, place, and culture? Or does comedy depend on context? Humor can be considered low-brow, while drama is considered high art. Is this a fair or true assessment? Can drama, or even tragedy, be humorous? In this class, we will seek to explore what makes a work of art (both written and visual) funny, as well as comedy's function in a society. We will examine theories about humor, types of humor, and humor in fiction and nonfiction, stand up comedy, and even memes. While we seek to ask what makes these pieces humorous, we will also take a broader look at the cultural contexts of certain humorous works to see what aspects of comedy are universal and what aspects depend on historical or social trends. Finally, we will consider the use of humor. What purpose does it serve us as people and our broader society? Is humor an effective means of social change or simply a way to waste time? Is humor helpful, both on a personal and communal level, or is it ultimately unimportant?

[ACES 1]

### **Multitudes and Contradictions**

#### **E. Cementina**

Within each person and place, exist multitudes. The closer we examine ourselves, our friends, our family, our partners, and our homes, the more contradictions and complexities we will discover. The texts in this course will help us investigate the questions that arise when we begin to engage with the various parts that make up an identity: How do we give voice to a particular aspect of ourselves without silencing the rest of who we are? How do we respond when the outside world defines us by one characteristic (and makes assumptions based on that one characteristic)? How do we approach relationships with people about whom we have conflicting feelings? How do we set boundaries while also being vulnerable enough for true connection? How do we honor our ideals, while also giving ourselves permission to live as flawed humans? How do we navigate, and fit into, spaces that are multilayered? Through this process of inquiry, we will sharpen our skills of our observation and analysis, and, hopefully, we will gain a better understanding of—and empathy toward—our ourselves, our communities, and our environments

[ACES 2]

### **The Art of Noticing**

#### **J. Beckwith**

A course designed to focus on creative experiences, both in and around the campus. Experiences for 2023 include:

- Writing and Illustrating Books: from Abecedarians to Zines, unleash your creative communicator.
- In the SJNY Art Studios: use art materials and the printing press, publish a broadside, a poetry chapbook, a graphic novel, a comic book, or a ... what-you-will.

On Field Trips around NYC: consider the publishing professions at The Center for Book Arts, The Grolier Club, Printed Matter Book Fair NYC, The IFPDA Print Fair, The Poster House, and printmaker's shop, "PrintSpace".

### **The Classics 2.0: Great Western Ideas & Their Reception Today**

#### **M. Burke**

This class will examine the origins of ideas and themes which still grip us today in the West. Now in the age of the microchip and the engineered gene, we might ask ourselves, "Why should we study thinkers and writers who lived

over 2,000 years ago?" Why look at poets who go on and on about the homecoming of some long lost, most likely, fictional wanderer (as well as pirate) and the fantastical doings of nonexistent and imaginary gods and goddesses of ancient Greek society? Yet it is upon such phrases and ideas like these that a central pillar of our Western Culture and world view rests. How? How do such claims matter to us today? How do such claims impact our lives in a world characterized by such rapid change, especially technological change, which grants us seemingly omnipotent control over nature from splitting atoms, soaring into space to uncovering the origin of the universe, from unlocking the human genome, conquering devastating diseases to manipulating human nature, from making communication across the globe instantaneous to befriending thousands of people on Facebook and other social media sites? In this course, we will investigate such matters by focusing on the classical origin of Western culture and philosophy, in particular that rich and prolific period of time in Greece starting with the poetry of Homer and Hesiod through to Augustine. This is a period of time that witnessed the introduction and exploration of virtually all the fundamental philosophical issues that continue to exercise our intellects today: the nature of reality, love and friendship, human (and divine) nature, and how one ought to live. This course will provide an overview of these topics in ancient Greek society and the myriad of ways that they have been received and influence our society and culture today.

### **(R)evolution of the scientific thought**

**A. Egbert**

Description coming soon...