

FS 1973 First Seminar Course Descriptions (8 Sections)
Spring 2014

FS 1973-01

A Creative Process

Chuck Tomlins (*Art*)

TTH, 2:00pm – 3:15pm, CH 251

Students will gather information from the seven Leonardo da Vinci Principles taken from his notebooks, along with the Thirteen Thinking Tools presented in the Root-Bernstein's book, Sparks of Genius. Explorations will be made into an integrated approach to Creative Thinking, utilizing the notion that learning how to think creatively in one discipline will allow that process to be understood and acted upon in other disciplines. Skills that are "new" to the student will emerge, requiring research with an open mind, as well as leaps of "faith" into subject areas and disciplines that will make the "familiar strange and the strange familiar."

FS 1973-02

The History of Written Language

Diane Beals (*Educational Studies*)

MW 2:00-3:15, CH 253

Moving from oral to written language fundamentally changed human cognition, culture, and education. In this course, we examine the origins of writing and reading, historical uses of written language, and how written language shapes and preserves thought, interaction, and history. As a case study, we take advantage of the resources of Gilcrease Museum to study the development of the Cherokee writing system and how it shaped Cherokee culture in the 19th century

FS 1973-03

Thinking

Ron Jepperson (*Sociology*)

TTH 2:00-3:15, CH 253

People think they truly know many things: about society, politics, people, the cosmos, the physical world, a spiritual world, themselves. And people over time have believed...well, almost everything and anything. This course will introduce some ideas about believing (/claiming) as a fallible human activity, ideas drawn from both philosophy and social studies. It will also survey some basic tools of thought that have proven useful for careful thinking in academic, professional, and everyday life. Hence this course will be both an introduction to what is often called "critical thinking" and an introduction to the anthropology of belief. The course is suitable for those students who are willing and able to question ideas--both others' and one's own.

FS 1973-04

History of Photography in the Americas

Andrew Wood (*History*)

TTH 2:00-3:15, CH LL017

Liberally meaning “writing with light,” photography has come to profoundly shape our contemporary world. Through a challenging set of critical readings, discussion, documentary film and individual research, this seminar will critically explore the relationship between photography and history in a variety of different contexts.

FS 1973-05

You Are What You Buy: The Rise of Consumer Culture in the 20th Century

Kristen Oertel (*History*)

MWF 11:00-11:50, CH 256

At its most fundamental level, consumer culture defines one’s self-identity in terms of how much and what kind of products a particular person consumes. It is the advertising industry’s job to encourage mass consumption, which in turn stimulates mass production, which then enables companies to profit and pay their workers the money necessary to buy more. “Pay them more, sell them more, prosper more is the equation,” claimed the 1929 publication, “Selling Mrs. Consumer.” This equation created consumer culture in the twentieth century, and we will examine it carefully and critically using historical, literary, and sociological tools.

FS 1973-06

Neanderthals: Fact and Fiction

Donald Henry (*Anthropology*)

T 2:00-4:45, HH SR

The seminar centers on what is arguably one of the most important problems in paleoanthropology; that is the lifeways of Neanderthals and their bio-cultural relationship with modern humans. In reviewing these issues, students will be asked to compare those conclusions reached in the scientific literature with accounts presented in popular film and narrative. Here we will grapple with the question of the degree to which *fact* is important over *fiction*? Students will also have the unusual opportunity to examine artifacts and other evidence recovered from the 55,000 year old shelter site of Tor Faraj, southern Jordan, a likely Neanderthal occupation.

Students will be asked to provide short, outline-based presentations on reading assignments at bi-weekly intervals. These tasks, representing 60% of the course grade, are intended to sharpen organizational and analytic skills in *informational* writing. A term paper, accounting for 40% of the course grade, will be developed on a selected topic.

FS 1973-07

A world of Hurt

Diane Burton (*English*)

MWF 10:00-10:50,

In the last few years, we have been confronted by more and more stories and images of human suffering. Writers and artists throughout history have sought ways to expose the causes of suffering, in the hope of stopping, or at least lessening, it. But in their efforts they face a dilemma that sometimes seems irresolvable: how to report on suffering without exploiting its victims, that is, how to produce an artistic impact strong enough to attract and convince an audience of the powerful without causing further pain to the powerless.

This course will use texts and images primarily from the last 25 years to address the tangled relations between aesthetics and ethics in circumstances of human extremity, and the ways writers and artists have found to approach them.

The aims of this course are for us to develop habits of critical thinking and to practice these habits in reading, writing, research, and discussion. The means we use will be the examination of suffering and its representation, particularly in regard to the relations between ethics and aesthetics. Required work for the course will include weekly email responses to the readings and viewings, two short papers (5-7 pp), one class presentation, and one longer research-based paper (10-12 pp.) or equivalent project, preceded by a proposal and an annotated bibliography. In addition to the reading and writing, the course will emphasize class discussion and participation.

FS 1973-08

A Cultural History of Route 66

Randall Fuller (*English*)

TTH 11:00-12:15

A fixture in popular culture for decades, Route 66 has been the subject of a romantic comedy book series, TV shows, several mystery novels, cookbooks, and scholarly research. Often romanticized for the way it linked the industrial Midwest to the sparsely populated west, the road is even more significant as an icon of American freedom. One of this course's underlying premises is that Route 66 provided the U. S. with a coherent, integrated story of its own developments as a technological power in the twentieth century. By studying the cultural myths surrounding the road, we will attempt to understand what those myths have to say about the past century or so. We will take an interdisciplinary approach in studying Route 66, using history, art, film, literature, music, cultural studies, and environmental science to learn more about this resonant cultural artifact. And we will pay special attention to Route 66 as it passes through Tulsa and the rest of Oklahoma.
