

# MONTERRAT CLUSTER AND SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

## FALL 2016 - SPRING 2017

### CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

#### CONTEMPORARY 1: DEVELOPMENT: WINNERS AND LOSERS

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

##### **Agents, Processes & Crises** (fall)

The most recent global crises have at least one common denominator: some of their roots lie in efforts to promote development and economic growth. The pursuit of development has led to the formation of "insider" groups, which have power to allocate resources and determine development priorities. It has also generated "outsiders," who lack such power. In this course we will study key global actors pursuing development, such as nation-states, corporations, multilateral organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We will also evaluate how tensions among "insiders" and "outsiders" have contributed to global crises: humanitarian, environmental, financial, and socio-economic.

##### **Poverty, Inequality, Welfare** (spring)

In order to understand more deeply the issues related to growth and development, we need to agree on what, exactly, is meant by those terms and how they differ. From an economic perspective, we will explore which dimensions can be identified, why we consider specific dimensions to be important, and how we can measure changes along each relevant dimension. For example, how does access to health care and education impact development, and vice versa? Is there a conflict between individual and societal needs or between insiders and outsiders? If so, how do we resolve those conflicts? We will compare the costs and the benefits of developing - and of the alternative, not developing - in regions such as Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the transitional economies of eastern Europe.

#### CONTEMPORARY 2: ENCOUNTERING THE STRANGER

Common Area Designation(s): Cross-Cultural Studies or Social Science  
CIS Concentration(s): Peace and Conflict Studies (fall)

##### **Madmen, Monsters, & Others** (fall)

Why do we sometimes imagine "Others" as monstrous? This course will explore, through text and the visual and plastic arts, representations of the "Other" from the classical period through the Age of Exploration. We will begin by examining tales of "unusual" men and women in Homer, proceeding to study of Persians, Indians, "Ethiopians," and barbarians in Greek and Roman literary, historical, geographical, philosophical and scientific texts. With the emergence of Islam, followers of Mohammed were imagined "infidels" others along with European women and men labeled "witches" or "wild men." We will pursue "wild men" supposedly living "uncivilized" in remote forest locations throughout Europe before moving on to the "new peoples" of Africa, the Americas and the Far East. *This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.*

##### **Madness: Real or Imagined?** (spring)

Is a mental disorder an illness like hypertension or diabetes? Or is mental "illness" a metaphor, like a "sick" joke for example? Practitioners, social scientists, and philosophers have long debated this issue. In this seminar, we will trace the earliest notions of madness, first blamed on spirits and demons, then rooted in the body, later found in pathological upbringing, argued by some to be of a social imagination, only to reappear as an expression of disordered genes and brain chemicals. The mentally ill, incarcerated, medicated, or neglected, are often without a voice in controlling their destiny. How can we alleviate the suffering of outsiders from a malady that may falsely be claimed to reside within?

#### CONTEMPORARY 3: GLOBAL CHANGE AND INEQUALITY

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science  
CIS Concentration(s): Peace and Conflict Studies

##### **The Magic of Modern Life** (fall)

Magic is what happens when mysterious or unknown forces create fantastical changes. In this course we will study the sociology of the relationship between global social forces and the fantastical experience of modern life. We will discuss cultural, political, and economic dimensions of global institutions, states, and markets that shape our everyday individual lives attempting to reconcile how globalization has created great wealth as also complex inequalities. To examine the "magic" of modern life, we will investigate the unseen sociological sources and consequences of the privileges and conveniences of today's global age, from global food chains to smart phones and digital technologies. *This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.*

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#### ***Luxury and Global Suffering*** (spring)

In this course, we will give closer attention to the sociological dynamics of global advocacy efforts to address and ameliorate global social problems. We will focus on the global environmental movement, the global anti-poverty movement, and the nonviolence movement, exploring how globally-derived luxuries are connected to globally constituted forms of social suffering in each of these issue areas. We will explore some of the actors and salient discourses emerging around these social problems. And we will use our sociological lenses to identify and analyze the ways in which efforts to address global problems may fall short of addressing the interdependent link between global luxuries and global sufferings. *This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.*

#### **CONTEMPORARY 4: HOW DOES SOCIETY MAKE CHOICES?**

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

#### ***Mathematics of Choice*** (fall)

Is our election system fair? Is a drug safe and effective? Should taxes be lowered? Should the minimum wage be raised? Is the death penalty an effective deterrent to capital crimes? We are constantly presented with such questions of social choice. There are many ways to approach these problems: Mathematics can provide a tool for decision making. But two people arguing opposing sides of an issue may both use mathematical and statistical methods to support their claims. By examining arguments used to address questions such as the ones posed above, we will see the power of mathematics in social choice as well as the ways in which mathematical information can be misinterpreted and misused.

#### ***Ethics of Choice & Inequality*** (spring)

How do contemporary societies choose how to distribute resources, income, and wealth? Income inequality is a hot topic in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign and indeed has been a central issue in elections around the globe. In this seminar we will explore the choices society makes when dividing up its bounty. We will first look at inequality in the U.S. and the world to understand how society has chosen to divide wealth today. We will then investigate theories of justice to understand philosophical foundations for making economic and social choices. Finally we will explore some strategies for improving income and reducing inequality based on these theories.

#### **CONTEMPORARY 5: IMAGINING ENEMIES**

Common Area Designation(s): Historical Studies  
CIS Concentration(s): Peace and Conflict Studies

#### ***World War Two in Europe*** (fall)

Nearly 60 million people died during six years of global war. This class will look at issues relating to ideology and individual experience in WWII, investigating how the politics of fascism and Communism shaped citizens' ideas of identity, morality, and privilege. We will examine how participants in the war explained their actions, how they justified what they were fighting for and who against, and at what point, if ever, they chose to disobey the rules of their country or came to disagree with the values of their regime. In considering such questions, we will also explore how the remembered experience of this catastrophe continues to influence European politics and frame many of its conflicts today. *This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.*

#### ***Commies, Yanks, and Nukes*** (spring)

The Cold War struggle that shaped the world post-1945 involved a competition not only for military might, but also for moral supremacy. During this time, leaders of the US and the USSR each sought to demonstrate the alleged superiority of their country's social system and the failures of that of its greatest rival. This course will explore this clash of values, paying particular attention to the impact of the nuclear arms race on the politics and the popular culture of both superpowers. Ultimately we will look at the collapse of Communism during the Reagan and Gorbachev eras. What enables both political systems and public perceptions of "friends" and "enemies" to change? *This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.*

#### **CONTEMPORARY 6: THE ARC OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE**

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

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CIS Concentration(s): Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

### ***Beginnings of Social Injustice*** (fall)

Although American society has made significant strides in its pursuit of “liberty and justice for all,” many social groups continue to experience significant marginalization and inequality. Why? In this course, we will apply psychological lenses to explore the arc of social injustice—how social inequality based on gender and sexual identity (lesbian, gay, bisexual [LGB]) is created, maintained, and mitigated through the actions of individuals and groups. In this class, we will focus on the beginning of this arc, considering how phenomena such as prejudice, stereotyping, and motivations to preserve the status quo work in tandem to create and maintain social injustice. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning experience. This course counts toward the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies concentration.*

### ***Endings of Social Injustice*** (spring)

If each of us in the Holy Cross community is called to “be men and women for and with others,” how might we act in ways that promote justice? In this course, we will consider when and how social injustice based on gender and sexual identity can be alleviated. Here, we will explore how evidence-based interventions such as prejudice-reduction strategies, educational programs, and structural modifications can effectively mitigate social injustice in the U.S. and other countries around the world. As we do so, we will explore the lives of selected social activists (e.g., Margaret Sanger, Harvey Milk) who worked for gender and sexual rights and consider the promise and pitfalls of their work. *This course also entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning experience. This course counts toward the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies concentration.*

## CORE HUMAN QUESTIONS

### CORE 1: ANCIENT BORDERS

Common Area Designation(s): Literature  
CIS Concentration(s): Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (Fall)

#### ***The Greeks and Manliness*** (fall)

What were the borders of masculinity and femininity in ancient Greece, and who defined them? In this course, we'll consider how the Greeks thought about, fought over, and tried to achieve their visions of manhood. Alongside our discussion of Greek limits of gender, we will also analyze how modern society continues to battle over the characterization of ancient men and women today. Our evidence from the ancient world includes Homer's *Iliad* and Plato's *Symposium* as well as statues, paintings, and monuments, and we'll study the modern reception of ancient gender with a focus on literary treatments and cinematic representations ranging from *Redeployment* to *300*. *This course counts toward the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies concentration. This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

#### ***Roman Memories*** (spring)

How do a society's limits change after a disaster? The Romans suffered their fair share of terrible events, and we will focus this semester on analyzing how they attempted to form and reform their society's borders by remembering the past and commemorating it for the future. We will read a selection of works, such as Caesar's account of Italy's battles and Vergil's story of how Rome was born out of destruction, as well as writings of Horace, Lucan, and the emperor Augustus. Alongside our study of the ancient world, we will periodically broaden our perspective by considering how modern responses to trauma confront society's limits. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

### CORE 2: ARCHAEOLOGY AND IDENTITY

Common Area Designation(s): Arts

#### ***Archaeology & Ancient Identity*** (fall)

What made a Greek Greek? What made a Roman Roman? In other words, what borders—geographic or metaphorical—did each of these cultures adopt to distinguish themselves from outsiders, and under what circumstances did they cross those borders or alter them? We will study some of the archaeological evidence that helps us to answer these questions—such as the Panhellenic (all-Greek) sanctuaries of Delphi and Olympia—home of the Olympic Games; or the buildings, like amphitheaters and bath complexes that the Romans built wherever they had power. We will also read ancient authors who thought about Greek or Roman identity, including Herodotus (“The Father of History”) and Tacitus; and consider whether the archaeological evidence supports their ideas.

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### ***Archaeology & Modern Identity*** (spring)

Archaeological evidence is often used to demarcate real and metaphorical borders between modern peoples: it offers—or seems to offer—physical evidence in support of the stories we tell about our origins, our identity, and our right to inhabit a particular geographic territory. Moreover, enemies and rivals often discount or even destroy archaeological evidence in order to undermine narratives of group identity. This semester, we will trace such uses of archaeological evidence. Case studies will include Benito Mussolini's evocations of the Roman Empire; interpretations and misinterpretations of the impressive ruins of Great Zimbabwe; and the role of Masada in a modern narrative of Israeli identity.

### **CORE 3: ARTISTS ON THE BORDERS**

Common Area Designation(s): Arts

### ***Encountering the Barbarian*** (fall)

Western literature is replete with depictions of non-Europeans as savages and primitive peoples. These compelling yet appalling representations illuminate the European conceptualization of the barbarian: idealized and vilified exotic that exists beyond physical and cultural boundaries. At a time of renewed nativism on both sides of the Atlantic, it is worth reflecting on the origins and enduring quality of such fearful imagery. This course examines seminal works of art and literature—from Classical Greece through the nineteenth century---that reinforce and delineate the European notion of the "other."

### ***Encountering Ourselves*** (spring)

The borders of perception are as constraining as any physical boundary. Modern art and literature challenge the bifurcation between human consciousness and the material world. When the figurative gives way to the abstract, the frontiers between sensation and experience become blurred. This course explores art and literature associated with modernist movements (e.g., symbolism, expressionism, Dadaism, surrealism and gestural abstraction) that reject the constraints of rational analysis by embracing the spontaneity of "unreasoned order" in the unconscious mind.

### **CORE 4: THE BORDERS OF MATHEMATICS**

Common Area Designation(s): Mathematical Science

### ***Mathematical Thinking*** (fall)

To what extent are mathematical ideas common to all human cultures? We will examine examples from traditions around the world and find fascinating evidence of mathematical thinking in the varied ways people have mapped the physical world, kept records, structured their art and crafts, understood their family relations, and created games to challenge their minds. We will introduce modern mathematical concepts to study those examples of mathematical thinking in detail. However, not everyone agrees that these products of other cultures lie within the boundary of what our culture has defined as mathematics. Why have we created that border? Can or should we try to transcend it?

### ***Thinking about Mathematics*** (spring)

In a 2005 poll, almost 40% of those surveyed said they actively hated mathematics in school, more than for any other subject. At the same time, almost 25% said mathematics was their favorite subject, often due to its unambiguous, "right or wrong" nature. Some people even devote their lives to the subject, but many of them would disagree strongly about its appeal. What is it about mathematics, or the way we teach it, that creates such divergent opinions and boundaries? We will study how the history of mathematics has influenced how the subject is taught. We will also consider the testimonies of individual mathematicians to learn what mathematics means to them.

### **CORE 5: THE MEANING OF FREEDOM**

Common Area Requirement: Philosophical Studies

### ***The Disintegrating Cosmos*** (fall)

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We all want to be free. We also want to live meaningful lives. We would like to think that we can have our freedom and our meaning too, but it's not as easy as that. Drawing on a range of sources from philosophy, literature, and psychology, this course explores the *tension* between "freedom" and "meaning" as it unfolds in human life and thought. A meaningful life, it would seem, requires a sense of purpose, or a role to play in "the order of things." This is what the ancients called a *cosmos*—a vision of the universe as forming an ordered whole in which people (and things) had a place where they belonged. When that vision disintegrates, as it does with the shift from ancient to modern world-views, that sense of purpose is lost and our "place" becomes harder to define. Freedom comes to be understood not as having a role to play but as being able to be or do whatever one wants. It is no accident, then, that in our pursuit of freedom, we often end up feeling lost, or depressed. Can we live freely *and* meaningfully? We'll see.

### ***Transgression and Transcendence*** (spring )

Even the best of us don't always do what we're told. We don't want to have to play by the rules or draw inside the lines. That can be a bad thing, when our transgressions prove harmful to ourselves and others, or lead to the breakdown of the moral order. But it can also be a good thing. In "wildness," Thoreau says, is "the preservation of the world." The goal of this course is to understand what he means by that. While it is clear that we need established boundaries to maintain order within our lives and in our relations with others, it is equally clear that those borders can limit not only our freedom and knowledge but our integrity and creativity. The greatest artists, after all, are the ones who draw *outside* the lines, not just to suit themselves but for the sake of a greater good. They are not "transgressing" but "transcending." What's the difference? Can what happens in art also be true of human life? Readings include selections from the book of *Genesis*, Greek tragedy and the dialogues of Plato, Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, Thoreau's *Walden*, and examples from music and the visual arts.

## CORE 6: TYRANNY AND ITS REMEDIES

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

### ***Tyranny and Law: Comparisons*** (fall)

Divine law formed the core of ancient communities; its transgression represented what the Greeks referred to as "tyranny." The motives of tyrants—wanton desire, hubristic ambition, the hope of remedying injustice—are elusive and various. In this course, we will take a comparative, cross-cultural approach to the understanding of communal order represented among ancient Greeks, Hebrews, and Hindus. We will also inquire into their various understandings of political disorder and injustice and how these should be remedied. Readings will include Ancient Greek epic, tragedy, and political philosophy; the Hebrew *Bible*; and the ancient Hindu treatise, Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

### ***Tyranny, Reason, and Terror*** (spring)

Among ancient Greeks, the Socratic diagnosis of tyranny as a perverted psychology of desire was foundational to the development of sound statecraft and the just political order. The modern period begins with Machiavelli's rejection of this psychological basis of statecraft, and the reformulation of the character of a secure and decent political order. Readings for this course will include Classical Greek and Roman political theory, Renaissance literature on tyranny and politics, works of modern political philosophy, and ancient and modern case studies in tyranny and exemplary statecraft (Alcibiades, Lincoln, Gandhi, Churchill, Ataturk, Stalin).

## DIVINE

### DIVINE 1: BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

Common Area Designation(s): Philosophical Studies

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### **Symbolism** (fall)

Symbols (such as a cross or a ring) speak to us in ways that take us beyond the obvious and the tangible. They provide the bridges that link us to some aspects of reality that we often intuitively grasp but usually do not fully cognitively comprehend. Where do symbols come from? Who invents them? How is it that symbols animate people from different ages and of diverse cultures? Do the symbols always mean the same thing, or do their meanings change through time? In our search for answers to these questions, we will read the works of the twentieth century philosophers, psychologists, and mythologists, including Ernst Cassirer, Erich Fromm, Carl Gustav Jung, Mircea Eliade, Joseph Campbell, and Jean Shinoda Bolen.

### **Mysticism** (spring)

Science attempts to reveal to us the truth about reality, but even some of the most brilliant scientists admit that there are layers of reality that forever remain out of the reach of science. Einstein, for example, thought that science was compatible with mysticism. In the course of this semester, we will first look at two examples of the twentieth-century mysticism (as presented by philosophers Albert Schweitzer and Martin Buber), then two Christian mystics and theologians (Master Eckhart and Giordano Bruno). We will compare Western mysticism with the mysticism of the far-East as presented in the *Upanishads* and *Dao de Jing*. Studying these works will enable us to make a bridge between the most obvious and easily measurable aspects of reality and those aspects that are the deepest and the most concealed.

### **DIVINE 2: FANTASTIC VOYAGES**

Common Area Designation(s): Studies in Religion

### **Journeys of the Imagination** (fall)

Fantasy literature has both entertained and inspired generations of readers. Heroic journeys into strange lands, battles against demonic forces and the delight of discovery continue to attract avid readers even in the modern age of technology and skepticism. In this semester, we shall read some masterworks of the imagination that offer profound meditations upon the spiritual and moral struggles of humanity. Authors include: Dante Alighieri, George MacDonald, G. K. Chesterton, J.R.R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. In addition, students will read and evaluate selected critical essays on the main texts.

### **Personal Pilgrimages** (spring)

The pilgrim traditionally makes both a physical and spiritual journey to a chosen destination, or, perhaps, to a destination that has chosen the pilgrim. In this class, we will focus upon three authors who made remarkable journeys that continue to resonate with contemporary pilgrims: *The Confessions of Augustine of Hippo*, Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, and the stories, letters and journal of Flannery O'Connor. Together, these journeys demonstrate that personal pilgrimages can take many different forms. In addition, students will read and evaluate selected critical essays on the main texts.

### **DIVINE 3: IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY**

Common Area Designation(s): Studies in Religion

### **Exploring Differences** (fall)

One of the most important tasks for the human person as a moral being is to come to "know thyself," as the ancient philosophers recommend. But how do we do this? The African ethic of Ubuntu suggests that persons come to know themselves through other persons, that is, through relationship within diverse communities. Our willingness to place ourselves outside the boundary of our "comfort zone" and compassionately encounter difference, disability, and "otherness" may paradoxically lead us to a more honest and merciful knowledge of the self. Through film, readings in theology and literature, and Community-Based Learning (CBL) project in the Worcester community, we will consider difference and disability and how such encounters with others in their "otherness" bring us to a more challenging and deeper knowledge of ourselves. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

### **Modifying Technologies** (spring)

The second half of the year will focus on the ways in which advances in modern western reproductive and genetic medicine and technologies challenge our notions of "normal" and "disabled" and how we understand the boundary between them. As these advances bring us the hope of cure as well as more choice and control over our bodies and minds, what might be lost with the

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diminishment of difference and diversity? With the help of readings in bioethics and social ethics as well as continued involvement in Community-Based Learning (CBL), we will consider the following question: Can the human community thrive while those who are outside the “norm” are increasingly stigmatized, isolated and perhaps eliminated? Students will become knowledgeable about medical and genetic technologies that may be used to diminish diversity and reinforce boundaries between “normal” and “disabled.” Methods of assessing student progress will include formal papers, journals that integrate CBL and seminar readings and discussions, and a final presentation. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

#### **DIVINE 4: THE BODY AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

Common Area Designation(s): Studies in Religion

##### ***Are Christians a New People?*** (fall)

In the ancient world, not unlike today, the body stood at the center of discourses about identity; it marked the boundaries between groups. The first Christians participated in these same discussions as they figured out what they believed and who they were in the Roman world. This course examines the ways Christians and others used the body to talk about race, ethnicity, gender and status. We will pose the question of whether Christians thought of themselves as a new racial or ethnic group as we examine different strategies of defining human difference. In addition, students will have the chance to explore similar issues in different historical contexts, including their own environment.

##### ***Embodied Christianity*** (spring)

At the core of Christian belief and practice is the startling proposition that the divine became flesh, died, and was resurrected in bodily form. The divine and human are inextricably tied together. This course will investigate how this connection shaped early Christian experience and belief. How did the first Christians explain the incarnation and resurrection? How did they experience their own transformations in their bodies? We will explore the variety of ways Christians imagined and practiced this divine/human relationship by studying theology, ritual, martyrdom and asceticism. Students will also pursue similar questions in their own contexts.

## **GLOBAL SOCIETY**

#### **GLOBAL 1: ANCIENT CHINA IN GLOBAL SOCIETIES**

Common Area Designation(s): Cross-Cultural Studies  
or Historical Studies

##### ***Dao and the Arts*** (fall)

In this seminar, we will explore how an ancient Chinese way of viewing the world has shaped art, music, poetry, and literature within China and beyond. This powerful vision, based on the true path, the Dao 道, offers all humans a guide for living with the self and others in harmony with nature. When first hand experience can enhance our journey, we will join composer/musician, Professor Korde, and his class, to witness how musicians from around the globe learn their craft so well and feel the music so deeply that they produce works that seem effortless and spontaneous. Our main text, *Trying not to try: the art and science of spontaneity*, by a contemporary philosopher, brings together the wisdom of China with modern cognitive science to help us learn new ways of approaching life and art.

##### ***Transcending History*** (spring)

In what ways can film, photography, musical works, and visual arts convey information that moves us beyond standard historical narratives into new ways of understanding the past? In this course, we will ponder this question, beginning with an in-depth examination of the ways that historical writing, film, and opera represent different aspects of the life Mahatma Gandhi, the modern world’s most influential advocate for non-violence. Then, we will turn our analysis to explore how other significant global events, such as the Holocaust, use of the atomic bomb during World War II, and the American war in Vietnam, have been portrayed in various media productions.

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### GLOBAL 2: EARLY AMERICA AND THE WORLD

Common Area Designation(s): Historical Studies

#### ***Pirates to Patriots*** (fall)

We talk a great deal about “globalization” and “global economies” in the twenty-first century. However, people living in America were “globetrotters” touched by international webs of trade as early as the time of Columbus. This course will explore North America’s first global age beginning in the 1400s and extending through the American Revolution. We will examine this history thematically by focusing on various kinds of trades and the people who pursued them. We will begin with the gold and silver of the Manila treasure galleons and the pirates who plundered them. We will end with the Patriots who eschewed tea for coffee as they boycotted English goods on the eve of revolution.

#### ***Canton to King Cotton*** (spring)

This course will begin by looking at the formation of the Early Republic through a Pacific lens. We will explore the ways in which the fledgling nation’s involvement in the China trade, linked together with the trade networks of the Atlantic World, enabled the florescence of American democracy. We will examine the social, cultural, economic, and political implications of these global trade connections as we question their effects on individual lives among people of African, European, and Native American descent. We will explore how such connections contributed to distinct regional identities in areas ranging from the South, New England, and the Far West, to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. These distinct identities often led to conflicts, the most notorious of which was the American Civil War.

### GLOBAL 3; JOURNEY TO CENTER OF THE EARTH

Common Area Designation(s): Historical Studies  
or Cross-Cultural Studies

CIS Concentration(s): Africana Studies

#### ***Heart of the Continent*** (fall)

We all know the outline of the African continent that fills the center of most world maps. But many people are never exposed to the histories that made that map. Sometimes African culture today even seems “unknowable.” In this course, we take a journey that dives deep into the continent to examine its history from the ancient past to more recent events, from the “ground (and water) up.” Using the formidable African landscape as a guide, we follow rivers and cross deserts, visiting several countries in the news today, including Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa. The heart of Africa need not be shrouded in mystery; learning about it is an expedition of the mind. *This course counts toward the Africana Studies concentration.*

#### ***Leaving the World Behind*** (spring)

The millions of African women and men and their descendants who traveled the globe by force and by choice for centuries transformed the world. What does the history of the world look like through their eyes? Using world historical events including modern slave trades, the eighteenth-century democratic revolutions, the World Wars, and recent trends in globalization, we move between the African continent and a wider world and back again. Most importantly, many of our sources are the essays, letters, poetry, and film of African women and men who re-imagined ideas about freedom, citizenship, gender, and modernity through their travels around the world. *This course counts toward the Africana Studies concentration.*

### GLOBAL 4: LITERARY WORLDS & WORLD LITERATURE

Common Area Designation(s): Literature or Cross-Cultural Studies

#### ***Global Issues in World Lit*** (fall)

This course explores both timely and timeless global issues as represented in fiction from across the twentieth century and from a variety of literary traditions. Among others, we will address political and economic systems, imperialism, globalization, mass production, consumerism, reproductive technology, psychological manipulation, behavioral conditioning, fear of pandemic diseases, and censorship. By focusing on major novels from England, the United States, Portugal, South Africa, and India, we will discuss the relevance of these topics in our contemporary world and engage with contemporary debates in world literature and comparative literary studies.

#### ***Magical Realism in the World*** (spring)

What do we mean by realism when discussing works of literature and art? How is it different from magical realism? These are some of the driving questions that will help us read and discuss well-known novels from Latin America, Italy, India, and the United States. Such works of literature engage with specific reinterpretations of world historical events, (such as the Haitian Revolution, slavery in

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the United States, and India's transition from British colonialism to independence), while presenting elements that might be considered magical, unreal, fantastic, or speculative in otherwise realistic or everyday contexts. Throughout the semester we will explore some of the literary and aesthetic techniques used in this genre and ask why they resonate with both local and global readers.

#### GLOBAL 5: MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

Common Area Designation(s): Literature or Cross-Cultural Studies

##### ***Theatre of the Damned: Inferno*** (fall)

This course will guide students in their exploration of Dante's classic medieval masterpiece, the *Inferno*, as a journey of the individual in the cosmic Otherworld. The thirty-four sections of Hell host a range of characters (from Dante's own literature professor, to ill-starred lovers trapped in an infernal whirlwind, to flying monsters, centaurs and murderers steeped in blood, and even Odysseus and Lucifer themselves) who appear on our traveler's stage, one after another. What can the encounter with this fantasy world tell us about our human spirit and how we judge the "other"? Each chapter may be read as a short theatrical piece in a variety of performances that instruct and entertain the reader.

##### ***Misfits in Renaissance Italy*** (spring)

What happens when the modern mind awakens from the Dark Ages? This course will focus on the birth of modern consciousness as the Age of Faith gives way to individual creativity. The Renaissance brought not only lofty domes and the rediscovery of human beauty, but also genuine humor and entertainment, often through performance and satire. We will center our attention on absurd characters from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Brunelleschi's cruel pranks on an unsuspecting fool, and the slapstick misapprehensions of the *Commedia dell'Arte* from the imagination of Machiavelli and Bibbiena.

#### GLOBAL 6: MUSIC, GLOBAL SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Common Area Designation(s): Arts or Cross-Cultural Studies

##### ***Worlds of Music*** (fall)

This seminar will focus on selected musical traditions from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Our goals are two-fold: to explore the special aesthetic experience of world music including relatively new styles such as Jazz; and to develop an awareness of the inter-relationship between music and culture. While our primary focus will be on music, we will also draw on film, literature, and visual art in order to broaden our understanding of a given culture or society. Special "hands-on" workshops and concerts will be an important element of the course. Self-designed innovative projects that combine music and new media will be encouraged. On occasion, we will join Professor Karen Turner's seminar, *The Dao and the Arts*, for special presentations. **No previous experience in music is required.**

##### ***Performing Histories*** (spring)

This course will focus on works of Art that draw their inspiration from historical events, literature, and mythology. We will study selected works (opera, film, song cycles) by writers, composers, and visual artists including: Lin Manuel Miranda's hip-hop musical-*Hamilton* (which is inspired by a biography of Alexander Hamilton); John Adams' opera, *Dr Atomic* (which dramatizes events leading up to the first test of the atom bomb) and writings, film, and opera inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's legacy. We will consider primary sources as well as the unique perspective that a specific artist brings to the project. This seminar and Professor Karen Turner's seminar, *Transcending History*, will come together for special joint presentations, concerts and workshops. Self-designed innovative projects that combine writing, music, and new media will be encouraged.

## NATURAL WORLD

#### NATURAL 1: ENERGIZING OUR WORLD

Common Area Designation: Natural Science

##### ***Energy and the Environment*** (fall)

Fossil fuels have long been the primary source of energy in the U.S. This energy has allowed for the creation and development of many important scientific and medical innovations. No doubt, the developed world would not be the same without it. But what is the real cost of using this form of energy? In this course, we will explore the use of fossil fuels and their impact on our

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environment. We will examine data that demonstrate how air quality and global climate have changed since the Industrial Revolution. And, we will explore solutions. We will rethink old techniques that offer sustainability while we discover new technologies that offer a greener alternative to fossil fuels.

### **Nanotechnology and Energy** (spring)

In nature, many of the most interesting habitats occur at boundaries (say where a forest meets a field), and in chemistry, nanotechnology occupies the boundary between individual molecules and bulk materials. In the news you may have heard of using nanorobots for surgery or surveillance and nanoparticles polluting our waterways. In this course, we will continue to explore how we power our world, but bring in possible solutions using nanotechnology. You will learn what nanotechnology is, why so many scientists are excited about its potential, and examine applications in energy, medicine, electronics, and materials. You will learn what is really going on in the laboratory and how nanotechnology is going to affect your life.

### **NATURAL 2: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

Common Area Designation(s): Philosophical Studies

#### ***Me and the Environment*** (fall)

What kind of person should I be? What do I owe to others, and to myself? These two questions form the core of any ethics class, but we've recently added a third: What, if anything, do I owe to *non-human* others – animals, nature, the environment? We will always begin with some philosopher's abstract theory – Mill's utilitarianism (concerned with pleasure and pain), Kant's ethics (concerned with respect), Regan's animal rights – and we'll always end up in some applied issue (factory farming, the new agriculturalism, animal use in medical testing, and anything else you bring up). Throughout, however, the emphasis will be on developing your *own* answers to those three questions. In the end, that's all that matters.

#### ***The Environment and Me*** (spring)

We'll continue to explore the ethics of our relationship to ourselves, human others, and the non-human others of the environment. We'll still be working with our three questions, but now adding a fourth: what kind of role can those non-human others play in *our own* moral development? There's no question that we affect the environment, but ... how does the environment affect *us*? We will be working with somewhat deeper, more holistic theories of human nature and the environment in this class – Aquinas' natural law, Aristotle's virtue ethics, Schweitzer's reverence for life, Leopold's concerns about ecosystems – and we will move on to different, more complicated applied issues. In the end, though, it comes back to you: what do *you* believe?

### **NATURAL 3: I AM, THEREFORE I EAT**

Common Area Designation(s): Philosophical Studies

#### ***I Mean, Therefore I Eat*** (fall)

We've all heard the saying "We are what we eat" – but what does this really mean? In what ways does eating contribute to the making of a self or a group? In this course, we will explore how specific dietetic decisions reflect a detailed and comprehensive image of a person or a community. We will start by considering the different ways in which foods can mean something to us: how particular foods can be associated with an occasion, a person, a place. Next on the menu will be the ethical, environmental, and political values that our diets reflect. This class will draw upon a wide range of resources, including classical and contemporary philosophical texts, food essays, magazine and newspaper articles, videos and images. Students will schedule two visits to Brigham Hill Community Farm during the gardening season to participate in the Community Harvest Project. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

#### ***I Esteem, Therefore I Eat*** (spring)

The recipe for creating pleasure through food is complex. Start with the palate. Americans hold food experts in high esteem; Italians do not. Are some experts more right than others? Is the quality of a food objective or is it simply a matter of personal taste? Add a dash of art. Some chefs aspire to impress their table guests. But can food be art? Could a cook ever compare to Michelangelo or Leonardo? Stir food's effect on the body into the mix. Most food labels display nutritional "facts." We use them to seek the "mental pleasure" of a healthy diet. But how should we interpret these facts? Is nutrition a science like – say – cell biology?

### **NATURAL 4: SENSING AND SHAPING LANDSCAPES**

Common Area Designation(s): Arts

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### ***Between Nature and Metropolis*** (fall)

Although at first the natural and urban environments appear to have little in common, these worlds are in many ways intertwined. Our ideas of the city are shaped in response to our ideas about nature, and vice versa. In addition, our sensory experiences and values affect how we interpret these settings, and inform a range of political, social, and cultural agendas. This course will explore these issues at a time when the boundary between Nature and Metropolis is increasingly blurred. How have people sensed and shaped natural and urban environments, and the spaces "in between," in different times and places?

### ***Imagined and Built Landscapes*** (spring)

This course focuses on the relationship between imagined and built landscapes. We will consider how architects, artists, and urbanists have proposed different definitions of landscapes and explore the cultural, social, political and symbolic meanings of their topographic projects. Anchored around the landscape painting, *The Arcadian Shepherds* (1647) by the French artist, Nicolas Poussin, this course is also an experiment in holding a sustained examination of a single image and how art can provide a lens to sense and shape our experience and imagination of the land.

## NATURAL 5: WILDERNESS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

Common Area Designation: Historical Studies

### ***The Idea of Wilderness*** (fall)

Wilderness, whether understood as a concept in the American imagination or as the reality of a resource-rich hinterland available for exploitation, is central to the American experience. This course will trace the incorporation of wild, ostensibly unsettled, lands into the expanding American republic from the first European settlements to 1940. This process was accompanied by evolving religious and cultural attitudes toward nature and wild lands. Integral to the narrative of the European settlement of North America was the progressive displacement of the original inhabitants and the destruction of the Indian way of life.

### ***The Last Wilderness*** (spring)

In the second semester, we will examine how an expansive environmental movement emerged in the U.S. after World War II. This movement addressed issues related to quality of life, species preservation, and the effects of human activity on the natural world. The growing appreciation for the remaining wild lands culminated in the 1964 "Wilderness Act" which ensured that significant tracts of land would be preserved in their natural condition. This course will also examine how the national parks movement affected the lives of Native Americans living on lands designated to be preserved as wilderness. In a powerful counterpoint to the first semester's reading of "The Journals of Lewis and Clark," we will read an account of a 2001 expedition in search of the Amazon's last uncontacted tribes.

## NATURAL 6: WRITING/READING PLACE

Common Area Designation(s): Literature

### ***Go West, Young Man and Woman*** (fall)

Since America's beginnings, the frontier has shaped our sense of who we are. Frederick Jackson Turner claimed that westward expansion gave rise to a sense of freedom and opportunity by "breaking the bond of custom [and] offering new experiences...." This course will use American literature to complicate Turner's thesis: To what extent was the American West always a myth since it had been populated by native people long before Europeans "discovered" the continent? How does "nature" continue to be important to our sense of wellbeing? How does the possibility of adventure and discovery still influence our national identity? Students will produce literary analysis and creative work.

### ***Bright Lights, Big Cities*** (spring)

Cities and suburbs are their own natural environments that are no less "real" than mountain ranges or Saguaro forests. In this course, we will briefly explore the history of cities before you begin to venture out on your own into cities – first Worcester and then New York – to continue the great literary tradition of the travel essay and writing about place. We will also survey the terrain of literary responses to urban life and examine the myth of alienation and disconnection that arises out of crowded subways. Finally, we will look at recent efforts to get back to nature (or live more simply) in cities. This is a hybrid creative writing and literature course.

# MONTERRAT CLUSTER AND SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

## FALL 2016 - SPRING 2017

### SELF

#### SELF 1: BIOLOGY OF AGING

Common Area Designation(s): Natural Sciences

##### ***Understanding Aging*** (fall)

We all age, but why? And how? In this course, we will explore the different evolutionary, physiological, and molecular theories of aging and how they apply to modern human societies. We will also consider the diseases of age, including Alzheimer's disease, cancer, and type 2 diabetes. Aging and diseases of age are influenced by both genetic and environmental factors, and we will consider how to evaluate risk. We will discuss how scientists conduct studies on aging and analyze how citizens make health care choices based on media reports of scientific discoveries.

##### ***Combating Aging*** (spring)

We all age, but why? And what can we do about it? In this course, we will evaluate the therapies that are being developed to combat aging, and the research that led to those discoveries. Scientists study aging using people that age slowly (centenarians), people that age rapidly (progeric diseases), or non-human model organisms. Each of these systems has led to fundamental changes in the way we understand aging and the diseases of age. We will also consider the business of science, and how research funding and pharmaceutical profit margins drive discovery. Each student will choose a topic in the Biology of Aging for a research paper and presentation.

#### SELF 2: CULTURE IN MIND

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science or Cross-Cultural Studies

##### ***Cognitive Development*** (fall)

How do young children and adults acquire and reason with complex concepts and systems of knowledge? What is common to all humans, and what is the influence of the environment or learning context? In this course, we will seek a better understanding of how humans think, learn, and develop. We will read and discuss research at the intersections of developmental psychology, cognitive science, and education. The major themes of our discussions will include the contributions of nature and nurture, the continuity/discontinuity of the developing mind, and the mechanisms of change.

##### ***Language and Thought*** (spring)

What language do you think in? Is there thought without language? To what extent are we the same and to what extent are we different thinkers from one another? Drawing on approaches in cognitive psychology, linguistics, and anthropology, we will continue our exploration of human cognition by examining its architecture and processes in the context of language and culture. We will explore these influences both in terms of general mechanisms and in specific domains of thought, including how we perceive color, how we use space-time metaphors, and how we reason about the natural world. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

#### SELF 3: HEALTH, DECISION-MAKING & SELF

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

##### ***Risk-Taking During Adolescence*** (fall)

Adolescence is a time period of many developmental changes and often the testing ground for risky health behaviors. Adolescents ask, "Who am I?" and "How I can become who I want to be?" This seminar will examine how brain development, identity struggles, perceptions of peers, and the media contribute to risky health behaviors such as substance use. Students will examine psychological theory and research and will consider how different decision-making models help us to understand how young people make health choices. The seminar will include a community-based learning component where students are placed in youth development settings to bring to light the connections between psychological research and theory and adolescents' everyday experiences. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

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### **Promoting Positive Development** (spring)

What are the most effective ways to prevent adolescents from taking health risks and to promote positive youth development? This course will examine how strengths-based strategies promote the resilience of adolescents and support them in avoiding health risks. Students will continue their Community-Based Learning experiences from the fall and reflect upon how communities can be effective agents in promoting mental health, connections to school and family, and adaptive decision-making among adolescents. Special topics will include strengths-based models of resiliency, problem-solving and creativity, resiliency across cultures, mentoring, and school- and community-based prevention and intervention. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

### **SELF 4: THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS**

Common Area Designation(s): Social Science

### **Self Discovery** (fall)

Influenced by Aristotle, John Locke coined the term “pursuit of happiness”. Thomas Jefferson never explained his use of this phrase as stated in the Declaration of Independence. The Social Sciences, however, have plenty to say about it. And, Positive Psychology in particular makes a large contribution to this area of inquiry. Positive psychology concerns itself with the use of psychological theory, research and clinical techniques toward understanding resilient and adaptive, creative, positive, and emotionally fulfilling aspects of human behavior. As you pursue your own independence at the beginning of your college career, you will explore what the science of happiness has to say about your own pursuit of happiness as you declare your independence.

### **Flourishing** (spring)

So, what is the good life anyway? Who is capable of achieving it? What are the factors that sustain it? How can you achieve it for yourself? How do you know if you’re living it? We all have opinions about these matters, but psychologists approach these questions scientifically, based on objectively verifiable evidence. Through the lens of Positive Psychology, you will tackle these compelling and life-enriching questions as you reflect on your own adjustment to college life, a Community Based Learning project requiring 2 hours/week on site, and exposure to those with serious life issues to address. *This course entails a commitment to a Community-Based Learning component.*

### **SELF 5: THE SELF IN FILM & MEDIA**

Common Area Designation(s): Literature or Arts

CIS Concentration(s): Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies

### **Gender in Film & Media** (fall)

You are what you watch....or do you watch what you are? Is being male the same thing as being masculine? Does being a girl automatically mean you’ll one day be a woman? Most importantly, where do we get those ideas and do we have the power to change them? This introductory course will look at a variety of representations in film, television and other media to interrogate these questions. Students will explore a variety of theories about gender and apply them analytically to the viewed content. The goal is for students to be able to think critically about the way representations both shape and are shaped by our understanding of gender. *This course counts toward the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies concentration.*

### **Sexuality in Film & Media** (spring)

We live in an environment in which Marriage Equality and the popular catch phrase “No Homo” coexist, albeit not in harmony. What does it mean to be Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning or Asexual in 2016? For that matter, how has being straight evolved in relationship to these identities? Furthermore, how do we understand the orientations of Transgender and Intersex people? For close to a decade now, a national program has been promising at-risk GLBTQIA youth that It Gets Better, and this course is going to follow-up on that question by using film, television and media to analyze what progress has been made. Students will use a variety of Queer theories to investigate whether these representations reflect or even enact a social or political agenda. The goal of the course is for students to develop a critical eye for analyzing dynamic representations of sexuality and orientation. *This course counts toward the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies concentration.*