

Montserrat Seminar Descriptions 2010/2011

The Montserrat Program is grouped into five different thematic clusters: Core Human Questions (C); The Divine (D); Global Society (G); The Natural World (N); and The Self (S). Each cluster contains seminars examining the theme from a variety of perspectives.

↻ Core Human Questions ↻

MONT 100C

Lies and Deceptions (fall)

We learned when we were children that it's wrong to lie. But most of us believe that there is such a thing as a "little white lie", and that some lies have noble motives. And we can deceive others without ever actually lying. Some kinds of deception are deplorable, but not all are: illusionistic art, for example, is a deception to which viewers and audiences assent, while optical illusions amuse and intrigue us. This semester, literature and the visual arts will help us examine the full range of deception, from lies to practical jokes; from illusionistic art to obscurantist writing. And we won't neglect one particularly common form of deception--the kind we practice on ourselves.

MONT 101C

Truth and Beauty (spring)

The ancient Romans believed that artisans—including great writers, painters and sculptors—learned their crafts best if they studied both theory and examples. This semester, we will study beauty using this twofold approach. We will consider some prominent theories of beauty, especially as it relates to concepts of truth and justice. And we will simultaneously consider concrete examples of beauty in prose of all sorts, including novels, short stories, Supreme Court decisions, political analysis and sports writing. We will look for beauty in the visual arts—where most people expect to find it—and also in some extremely unlikely places.

MONT 102C

Happiness: Image and Reality (fall)

We all want to be happy. But what is "happiness"? Is it entirely a matter of appearances? What, if anything, do we mean when we talk about "true" happiness? Is happiness something we can be mistaken or deceived about? Can we fool ourselves (and others) into thinking that we are happy? In posing these questions, this course will explore the ways in which our understanding of happiness—and maybe happiness itself—might ultimately depend not only on our ability to tell the difference between image and reality, but on how we conceive of the relationship between them. Plato and other philosophical, psychological, and literary works will guide us.

MONT 103C

Looking Good and Being Well (spring)

Though we say that love is blind and beauty is in the eye of the beholder, experiences of love and beauty can teach us something about the relationship between reality and appearance, or truth and image. In art, images are not just more or less accurate copies; they are creative revelations in which truth and invention go hand-in-hand. But then, we must learn to see these images for what they are: "looks matter" not only in the way that something appears, but also in the way that you yourself look at it. What happens in art happens in life. Rather than concern ourselves with misleading appearances, this semester we shall focus on the question of what it means to see truly. We shall explore the idea that "having eyes for" beauty is an important condition for living well.

MONT 104C

Looking for Justice (fall)

What happens when we start to question the conventions of the political community in which we live? Once we see that such appearances deceive, the authoritative look of our conventions collapses. When reflection or philosophy makes it hard to honor conventions and customs that have sought to define us, how then shall we live? Is it natural to go looking for the truth about justice? What standards, if any, emerge as an alternative to convention? The quest for justice pushes back against confining boundaries laid down by custom and law, in search of uncompromised standards or self-sufficiency. We will read and explore representations of such quests in classic works of political philosophy and literature - by such authors as Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Mark Twain.

MONT 105C

Living with Justice (spring)

While we desire to live by our own rules, we also long to be part of a greater whole; to live with others, not alone. Within every political community, looks matter – the way we look at others and how in turn we look to others: relatives, friends, colleagues, fellow-citizens. We form judgments by looking; so too others judge us by our looks, especially what we say and do. This horizon of opinion regarding justice ultimately lies beyond our control. If we are inevitably subject to such limits, how then shall we live? We will read and examine the consequences of appearing to be just (or not) in classic works of political philosophy and literature - by such authors as Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Rousseau, and Jane Austen.

MONT 106C

Your Lyin' Eyes (fall)

Philosophy is usually understood to be a search for wisdom, where 'wisdom' means something like 'truth-without-error'. This course explores the same search for wisdom with the following modification: we shall understand wisdom as 'truth-without-lying'. This modification highlights the ethical aspect to philosophy as well as the traditional question as to whether error amounts to a form of lying/deception (after all, to whom are the eyes lying?). Additionally, we will be asking the question of whether/how lying and truthfulness are related (are they simply opposed, do they presuppose one another, and if so, how)? Possible authors to be read will include Socrates, Plato, Maimonides, Descartes, and Nietzsche.

MONT 107C

Your Cheatin' Heart (spring)

If, in an ethical sense, the eyes can lie, does this also mean that the heart cheats? Put differently, is it the case that any particular lie we make to ourselves or others presupposes a fundamental orientation toward the world which is rooted in denial and deception? In continuing the line of questioning raised in the Fall semester, we shall explore philosophy's search for wisdom as an attempt to move beyond self-deception. One of the questions which will guide us is: can philosophy actually move us beyond such fundamental self-deception? Possible authors to be read will include Scarry, Havel, Machiavelli, Shakespeare, and Freud.

MONT 108C

Masks, Disguise, Identity (fall)

A mask or disguise may hide the wearer's identity, but it may also reveal a truth about it at the same time. How can wearing a mask, trying on another identity, free us from the constraints of our own identity or give us another perspective? What happens when what we thought to be true is unmasked as an illusion? How do we use words to create and also to disguise identity? We will explore the use of masks in ancient Greek tragedy (including Euripides' *Bacchae*, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, and Sophocles' *Ajax*), epic disguise and lies in Homer's *Odyssey*, and masks we create through language and wear, intentionally or not, every day.

MONT 109C

Looks, Beauty, Judgment (spring)

We will investigate ways in which beauty is often linked to pleasure, virtue, truth, or power. A central text will be Homer's *Iliad*, in which a long war is fought over a beautiful woman by (mostly) beautiful warriors who die beautiful deaths. Is beauty worth dying for? Since we know that appearances can deceive, do we trust our own judgment about beauty? How does art, whether verbal or visual, makes something horrifying into something beautiful and thereby allow us to look at it? How does beauty affect how we live? Through examples both ancient and modern, we will consider how looks matter.

MONT 110C

Constructing Personality (fall)

Identity and individuality are reflected and constructed in early Western drama. In classical and Renaissance tragedy, mythical figures, historical personages, and figures of high status strive to find meaning as they navigate, often blindly, between the sacred and the profane, confronting the conflicting claims of the individual to self, society and the cosmos. The tragic hero articulates consciousness through dialogue and illustrates character through action. This class explores how stage identity is constructed in early Western drama and how it reflects, reaffirms, and sometimes challenges the normative values of society.

MONT 111C

Deconstructing Personality (spring)

Modern and post-modern drama have undermined and deconstructed stable notions of individuality and identity. In the aftermath of the enlightenment, Western drama begins to reflect a rationalist mindset, embracing the scientific method.

Modernist drama oftentimes characterizes reality in materialistic and psychological terms, challenging humanistic notions of free will and individual culpability. In the latter half of the twentieth century, these integrative schemes give way to post-modern skepticism. In lieu of cohesion and rationality, contemporary writers present alienating and absurd images that consciously blur the line between illusion and reality.

MONT 112C

The Reality of Physics (fall)

In this course we will explore what physics tells us about the information we receive from the objects around us. Much of this information comes to us in the form of light and sound waves. We now can gather information about the interiors of objects as well. Students taking this course do not need to know any physics and will not use much math. Students will, however, learn a great deal about the nature of light and sound waves and the nature of "reality" at the atomic level. At the end of the semester, students should have a much better understanding, in several senses, of the reality of physics.

MONT 113C

Living With Technology (spring)

The most impressive fruit of modern science is modern technology. We generally assume that technology is a good thing and makes our lives better. Is this really the case? What exactly do we mean by the term technology? Does technology affect how we experience one another, nature, and all of reality? Are the "unintended side effects" of most technological innovations really just side effects? Is there a way to live with technology thoughtfully? We will explore these and related questions through reading and discussing several science fiction novels and numerous essays that should prod our thinking.

MONT 114C

The Truth of Beauty & Goodness (fall)

As Plato's "Parable of the Cave" teaches, at times we become painfully aware that what we took to be reality in its truth was but a shadow, a mere appearance. Such moments leave us disoriented, anxious. How do we find our way after such an experience? Does the good that might guide us make itself known to us, and can we discern it in its truth? What role might beautiful appearances play in this process? We will explore questions such as these by reading classic texts drawn from the Bible and from ancient and medieval literature and philosophy—works such as Plato's Republic, Euripides' The Bacchae, and Dante's Inferno.

MONT 115C

Saving the Appearances (spring)

At the beginning of the modern era, the world as it had appeared to medieval people became questionable. Thinkers began to doubt appearances, hoping to arrive at truer knowledge. One result was the development of modern science. A more problematic result was the loss of symbols that had revealed how God was present in the world—symbols that gave life direction and purpose. In response, poets such as Milton sought ways to "save" what had "appeared" in traditional symbols while still acknowledging the progress made possible by science. We will explore these dimensions of the modern project by studying such philosophical and literary texts as Descartes' Meditations, Shakespeare's Hamlet, and Milton's Paradise Lost.

MONT 116C

The Uses of Illusion (fall)

Though we generally think of illusions as tricks meant to deceive, in fact illusions can serve a variety of other purposes as well. In all the movies on this course, the characters use illusion ~ to distance themselves from reality, to maintain the appearances that they feel define them, to manipulate others, to perpetuate myths, or perhaps to bring them closer to what they want and need. The films will be chosen from the classic and modern repertory and will include both American and foreign movies.

MONT 117C

The Quest for Reality (spring)

Some of the films in the second half of this course focus on characters who are trying to move beyond the illusory. They are seeking a deeper understanding of what is real ~ in both life and art. And in some cases they come upon it unexpectedly. Moreover, the filmmakers whose works we will examine are on the same quest. They are attempting to evoke a deeper sense of what is real, and their search sometimes requires them to experiment with both familiar and imaginative styles. The movies will include some of the following: Grand Illusion, Music Box, Long Day's Journey into Night, Six Degrees of Separation, Red Beard, Dreamchild, Vanya on 42nd Street, Cabaret, The Dead, Vincent and Theo, Caught, The Last Station, Blue Velvet, The Third Man.

❧ The Divine ❧

MONT 100D

Birth of Christian Art (fall)

Art and architecture were a vital aspect of Christianity from the early centuries; icons were painted in Byzantium, books were illuminated in Syria, and Emperors commissioned lavish churches in Constantinople, Rome, and Jerusalem. This high-level art became a landmark of Christianity around the Mediterranean, and its creation involved concepts of salvation imagery and representations of political and theological authority. In this seminar we examine the historical responsibility of Early Christian art in disseminating theology, reflecting imperial ideology, and reacting to political events, such as the advancement of Islam in the 7th century. We will rely on written sources (historical and religious) and on material cultural to better understand the intricate relations between “East” and “West”.

MONT 101D

Islam and Visuality (spring)

Islam nurtured a unique artistic and visual language that was fashioned by Muslims’ exposure to and dialogue with other peoples and civilizations, including Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and others. The Muslims’ conquest of Byzantine territories and their rule over Christian populations brought about an endless process of creativity that is constantly reflected in Islamic art. This cross-cultural artistic exchange provides us with a foundation for understanding of the dynamics at play in the creation of diverse religious visual traditions around the Mediterranean and beyond. Through the analysis of works of art we will gain insights into the circulation of ideas and material goods between the Christian and the Muslim worlds, and interpretation of religious art.

MONT 102D

Christianity & the Holocaust (fall)

When and how can religious thought, language, and practice lead toward seriously unethical, even inhuman consequences? This seminar will ask how paths taken by faithful Christians for nineteen centuries before the 1930’s and ‘40’s may have contributed to making the Holocaust possible. We will look at important themes in the relationship between Judaism and Christianity since the time of Jesus. We will explore ways of thinking that could have contributed to genocide, as well as those that, understood and emphasized differently, might have prevented it. What emboldened some Christian believers to resist the Nazis? Has Christian thought and action developed significantly in response to the horror of the Holocaust?

MONT 103D

Nazi Medicine & Ethics (spring)

What can be learned of biomedical ethics from a study of the Holocaust? How did a healing profession justify its murderous actions? Were physicians and scientists pawns of a totalitarian regime, or were they active contributors to the racial Nazi ideology? How did the Holocaust come to shape our current code of ethics in human experimentation? This seminar will seek answers to these and many related questions from a voluminous literature that is populated by contributions from historians, biomedical ethicists, philosophers, theologians, journalists, and artists. Far from a value-free discipline, ideological forces will be shown to be at the core of scientific inquiry. This lesson is of particular importance to aspiring scientists and practitioners.

MONT 104D

Transcending Self Reflection (fall)

Socrates’ admonition, “Know thyself” challenges us to understand and articulate our identity, our origins and our ultimate purpose and destiny in relationship to the transcendent. We will examine how ancient authors employ epic, lyric and epinician poetry, drama, historical narrative, philosophical reflection, letters and memoirs to shape “self” image in light of this tripartite goal. The critical lens of transvaluation will help us consider how various cultures offer contemporary interpretations of that reflective process as expressed through gesture, masks, tests, disguises and artistic depiction and in both personal friendship and more corporate social endeavours. Creative and critical assignments will help students engage in the reflection process.

MONT 105D

Model Christian Discerners (spring)

Discernment of spirits” is central to St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises where he invites retreatants to deepen their relationship with God through a series of meditations divided into four “weeks.” Rooted in the biblical and pagan traditions of self-reflection, “discernment” remains a central concern throughout two millennia of Christian experience. St. Ignatius’s writings will serve as our critical lens for examining how authors ranging from St Augustine and Theresa of Avila to Therese of Lisieux and Thomas Merton, employed varied genres while contemporary artists use film and

other media to enhance our understanding of “discernment.” Students will engage in the process of “discernment” through critical and creative assignments.

MONT 106D

Relationships: Human, Divine (fall)

During the first semester we will study friendship: within the family, with other human beings we experience as “friends,” and with God. We will explore how friendship has found expression in the language of symbol, in literature and in music, from ancient to modern times. We shall examine the relationship of friendship to faith, hope, and love, but also to infidelity and sin, and to forgiveness. The seminar will explore how the relationship of God to human beings is incarnated in the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, and how human beings’ relationship to God is expressed in covenant, in prayer, and in vocation. How hierarchy and mutuality function in all relationships will also be considered.

MONT 107D

Connections: Creator, Creation (spring) During the second semester we will study the connections between the Creator and creation as well as the connections among creatures, including animals, human beings, plants and the earth. We will examine how these connections are depicted in specific biblical texts and in later Christian literature, exploring how the relationship between Creator and creation has found expression in symbols, in art and in science, from ancient until modern times. We shall pursue the relationship of Christianity to ecology while also reflecting on abuse and excessive consumption of creation as sin. Finally, we will ask, “If interdependence is a given, and stewardship a responsibility, how can sustainability be attained?” This course counts toward the concentration in Environmental Studies.

MONT 108D

From Myth to Science (fall)

We distinguish ourselves from all other animals by our imagination and the ability to communicate to others what we imagine. For at least 20,000 years the chief product of our imagination, and the chief tool we used to help us live our lives, was our mythmaking. Over the last 300 - 500 years the dominant product of our imagination has been scientific theories. This semester we will trace the transformation by following a storyline through some of the antecedents of modern science, from its origins in Paleolithic myths to its emergence in the Newtonian revolution.

MONT 109D

Scientists Argue About Gods (spring)

In the first semester we considered the origin of science from its mythmaking beginnings. This semester we will use that knowledge to examine current discussions about gods from practicing scientists who are atheists, agnostics and theists. We will attempt to survey the more passionate, sometimes obnoxious and insulting, arguments of some atheist and theist scientists and compare them to the more temperate and nuanced discussions of others. We also hope to give fair hearing to scientists of both the Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic traditions.

Global Society

MONT 100G

Culture and the Self (fall)

How does one’s cultural background influence the way one experiences and responds to events in the world? In this seminar, we will explore this topic from a variety of perspectives. We will examine questions such as whether language and culture affect people’s perception of the physical and social world, and to what extent do cross-national differences in material wealth relate to individual happiness and well-being? We also will investigate cultural difference in the concept of self and how those differences influence a broad range of psychological processes, and will consider culture’s role in other topics such as communication, fairness and violence.

MONT 101G

Coordination and Conflict (spring)

In a global society, people’s lives are connected in a complex network of social, political and economic institutions. In some instances, this enables people to work together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, but in other cases, it results in destructive conflict. In this seminar, we will examine the individual and structural factors that influence whether people are likely to work together cooperatively or engage in conflict. We will consider how the existing research on coordination and conflict applies to current global problems involving issues that may include natural resources, economic markets, war and violence. This course counts toward the concentration in Peace and Conflict Studies

MONT 102G

Disaster Economics I (fall)

This course is the first half of a two-semester sequence that will introduce the basic concepts of microeconomics and explore ways in which economic analysis can help us understand the effects of disasters on society. Disasters interrupt economic activity and cause changes in consumer priorities and market conditions which can be used to illustrate the principles of economics; economic theory can provide valuable insights for policy makers and individuals affected by disasters. The course will examine the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, the January 12, 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and the devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The course will cover the first half of a standard introductory course in microeconomics.

MONT 103G**Disaster Economics II (spring)**

This second course of the sequence will use economic analysis to explore causes, impacts and policy reactions of financial disasters that have from time to time wracked the world economy. A number of financial disasters will be considered, including the most recent collapse. Some topics to be considered are the incentives to engage in financially risky behavior, the positive and negative impact finance can provide to an economy, the influence of a financial crisis on individual markets and the effectiveness of regulations. The course will cover the second half of the topics of a standard course in principles of microeconomics.

MONT 104G**Body, Power, Global Health (fall)**

This course introduces the political anthropology of global health. We'll look at health, body, and illness around the world in contexts of wealth and poverty, asking: How does poverty in places like Sumatra make the human body especially vulnerable to illnesses such as malaria? How can poverty itself in places like Haiti – pre- and post- 2010 earthquake—be seen as social structural violence, tied to disease? Can child malnutrition in Indonesia be interpreted as the historical result of such structural violence? Can the trafficking of children into prostitution in Southeast Asia be interpreted in the same light? Texts include Paul Farmer's *AIDS and Accusation*; we study *Partners in Health's* assistance to Haitians, post-earthquake. Guest lectures by activists help us answer: How shall we ourselves live our lives, knowing of the linkages between poverty, power, and the vulnerable body? Part of a full-year sequence.

MONT 105G**The Vulnerable Body in America (spring)**

This seminar brings our questions and findings about the international dimensions of body, power, poverty, and illness to a new concentration, this semester, on the political anthropology of health in today's United States. We continue to draw on the medical anthropology scholarship by Paul Farmer and Nancy Scheper-Hughes, exploring their insights in regard to questions such as the health vulnerabilities of socially marginalized communities (for instance, some American Indian reservation groups). Through students' own ethnographic fieldwork explorations of Worcester, we shall ask: How do poverty, social location, and body interrelate right here in this city? Guest lectures by Massachusetts community health advocates, medical anthropologists, and health care providers push us to ask: How shall we live our lives in regard to "infections and inequalities," in Farmer's phrase?

MONT 106G**History and Traditions (fall)**

In this course, we will investigate democracy: what it is, its history and traditions, and how it is practiced as a response to injustice and inequality. We first examine the history of democratic participation through case examples including the American Revolution and the Boston Tea Party, the American Women's Suffrage Movement, Civil Rights and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and Apartheid in South Africa. As we examine stories of collective action, we will apply key concepts of democratic participation to field projects in the local Worcester community. By linking theory and practice, students will explore how the history and traditions of practicing democracy inform contemporary understandings of politics and citizen engagement.

MONT 107G**Leadership and Power (spring)**



Many contemporary scholars and practitioners argue that democracy is at risk because of declining citizen participation and political engagement. Building on the history and traditions of democratic participation, this course focuses on the extent to which individuals and institutions respond to contemporary public problems using the tools of civic engagement and public action. Through community-based team projects, we will focus on current issues and debates about such topics as health care access, educational disparities, the changing structure of unions, affordable housing, and community development. Using socio-political analysis, we will interrogate whether strategies for change are effective today, and if not, what kind of political leadership and civic power are necessary for revitalizing the democratic tradition.

MONT 108G**Public Colonial Histories** (fall)

What was colonialism? How did it endure? Has it ended? This course is part of a full-year sequence that will explore the public and private histories of colonialism in the 20th century. This semester we will consider the process of empire and nation building in colonies across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. At its peak, in 1914, a few colonial powers controlled nearly 80% of the world's land surface. Within 50 years, most of these colonies had achieved independence as anti-colonial nationalist movements swept across the globe in the wake of the Second World War. In particular, we will focus on British rule in India, the development of its independence movement, and the creation of the modern states of India and Pakistan. This course counts toward the concentration in Peace and Conflict Studies.

MONT 109G**Private Colonial Voices** (spring)

This semester will be devoted to understanding what it was like to live under a colonial power and answer the question how colonialism affected individuals—the men, women, and children—who lived under colonial authority. To understand the intimate reach of empire, this course will examine the social, educational, and medical policies of colonial authorities as well as examine the attitudes and reactions of colonizers and the colonized to the imperial project. Interdisciplinary at heart, this course will rely upon governmental documents, newspapers, theoretical works, memoirs, novels, and film to investigate the transformative nature of colonialism. This course counts toward the concentration in Peace and Conflict Studies.

 Natural World **MONT 100N****Art & Land in Latin America** (fall)

This class will consider how writers and other artists from Columbus forward have looked to the landscapes of Latin America to understand their culture, history, and identity. We will explore how artists from around Central and South America have drawn inspiration from the jungle, the sea, the pampa, parks, and gardens to establish a sense of self and national belonging. What protections does the land offer? What threats does it pose? We will focus mainly on Latin American short stories and poetry, with special attention to painting and film. All texts in English, with the option of reading in Spanish. This course counts toward the concentration in Latin American and Latino Studies.

MONT 101N**Landscapes of Spain** (spring)

Crossing the Atlantic, we will study how writers and other artists from Classical Antiquity forward have looked to landscapes of the Iberian Peninsula to understand their culture, history, and identity. From the plains of Castile to the rías of Galicia and the Catalanian muntanya, the landscapes of Spain present a central irony: on the one hand, they inspire a sense of common national purpose, while on the other, they help to establish deep-seated regional differences. Our readings will focus mainly on Spanish narrative and poetry, with special attention to painting and film. All texts in English, with the option of reading in Spanish.

MONT 102N**Development, Medicine, Society** (fall)

Understanding of animal development and reproduction has increased dramatically in the last half a century. In what ways has this expanded knowledge changed human medicine? How has new technology influenced reproductive decisions, and how has it influenced basic research? Following an overview of developmental biology, this course will explore these issues and others related to human development and society. We will also consider the impact humans have on animal development, by direct or indirect means. Throughout history, we have selectively bred animals for food, work and companionship. We will examine how these relationships changed in the age of molecular biology.

MONT 103N**Development and the Environment** (spring)

Normal development is completely intertwined with the environment, be it the local environment of the womb, the nest/home or the greater outside world. What role does the environment play in shaping our physical features, minds and health? This course will consider human and animal development in an ecological context. We will examine how changing our environment with the intent to improve our lives may have unintended biological consequences. Topics will include environmental toxins and animal reproduction, modern lifestyle choices and the timeline of childhood development, and the conflicts that arise when different groups have separate opinions about environment and health links.

MONT 104N**Justice in Theory** (fall)

Our very problematic relationship with the environment has generated a great deal of debate and acrimony. No one disputes the claim that we are, for example, consuming natural resources at an ever-increasing rate. What is in dispute is whether that is wrong. In this class we will try to answer that (and other) questions from the perspective of various theories of justice: theories of who is entitled to what, and when they are entitled to have the power of the state backing their claims. Then we will touch on contemporary environmental theory: what is “nature”, “wilderness”, “the environment”, and what kind of value can appropriately be assigned to it? And what follows?

MONT 105N

Justice in Practice (spring)

It turns out that neither the benefits nor the burdens of our current environmental practices are evenly distributed: time and again, both at home and abroad, vulnerable populations bear the burdens (polluting industries, contaminated media, waste sites) while privileged populations enjoy the benefits. In this class we will look briefly at some of the human costs of our industrialized lifestyle, then explore both the laws addressing those costs and the grassroots movements that arose when the laws failed. Going back to our theories of justice from the first semester: what should we do?

MONT 106N

The Evolving Natural World (fall)

All of life on earth, including humans, has been shaped by evolution. We will discuss the patterns and processes of biological evolution, and explore our place in the natural world as products of evolution, like all living things, descended from a single common ancestor. The origin, history, and future of humans on our planet can be explained by evolutionary processes and the interconnections among organisms. Topics to be considered include: the process of Darwinian evolution, the tree of life, human evolution, sexual selection, sociobiology, and Darwinian medicine.

MONT 107N

Human Impact on Evolution (spring)

Like few other species in the history of life, humans have the capacity to dramatically impact the evolution and dynamics of other species causing their extinction or explosive population expansion. That humans have begun to change global biodiversity and climate makes us an important force in the future of life on earth. This course will address how humans impact the natural world, and how our actions have and may affect the evolution of other organisms (including ourselves!). Topics will include: conservation and biodiversity, biophilia, genetic engineering, and the view of science in society.

MONT 108N

Mathematics Over Time (fall)

How did mathematics grow out of human beings' attempts to understand the natural world? Where did the mathematical topics you learned in high school come from? Are there distinctive features of specifically mathematical knowledge? In this course we will study some of the development of arithmetic, geometry, and algebra over time. We will take a close look at some of the most important sources, including the Elements of Euclid, and trace their influence on how mathematics is understood and presented today. One focus will be the development of the idea of proof and its role in mathematics.

MONT 109N

Mathematics Across Cultures (spring)

Were the Islamic artists who created the geometric mosaics of the Alhambra in Granada, Spain “doing mathematics?” To what extent are mathematical ideas a part of all human cultures? In this course, we will examine ways of thinking about the world, works of art, crafts, games, and so forth from several different African, Asian, Native American, and European cultures. These ideas and objects will share many features with concepts developed in Western mathematics and we will analyze and study them using that mathematics. But did their creators think about them in the same way? And are there implications for how mathematics should be taught and learned in a multicultural world?

MONT 110N

Math/Music: Structure and Form (fall)

Why does the Western musical scale contain twelve notes? Why do some collection of pitches sound more pleasing than others? How do you tune a piano? While Bach was an incredible composer, was he also a great mathematician? These and related questions can best be understood through the language of mathematics. We will utilize mathematical concepts such as graphs, trigonometry, logarithms, equivalence relations, group theory, and irrational numbers to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for music. The requisite musical theory (eg. notation, time signatures, pitch, scales, intervals, circle of fifths, and the overtone series) will be covered.

MONT 111N

Math/Music: Aesthetic Links (spring)

Ever notice that many lovers of math and science are also excellent musicians? Why do parents play Mozart and Bach to their children to make them smarter? Can mathematics be considered an art? Building on the foundational work from the first semester, this course will explore the creative and artistic connections between math and music. We will study, analyze and listen to composers who, whether they are cognizant of the fact or not, use mathematical ideas in their creations. The class will culminate with each student writing and performing (or finding someone to perform) their own mathematical/musical compositions.

MONT 112N

Literature and Science (fall)

This course will explore the way literature and science inform each other, meeting at a matrix of shared humanistic concerns. We will not examine science and literature from the vantage point of science fiction. Instead, we will look at them in the way they most realistically illuminate each other. Some of the most eloquent literary statements in science have been in defense of science itself, the way, for example, the Second Law of Thermodynamics can be read to provide a defense of evolution. At the same time, many of our writers embrace science as the means of humanistic expression. We will explore these and other topics in works of both fiction and non-fiction.

MONT 113N

Literature and Medicine (spring)

For much of the twentieth century there has been a disconnect between the practice of medicine and the patient as person, as if the person were irrelevant to the diagnosis and treatment of the patient. With Kubler-Ross's 1969 stress on the person's five stages of grief in terminal illness (*On Death and Dying*), medicine began the long road back to a more humanistic approach to the patient. The AIDS pandemic accelerated the process, with patient memoirs effectively reasserting the patient's identity and stake in one's treatment. This course will explore the interaction of the humanities and medicine in both fiction and non-fiction.

MONT 114N

Serendipitous Science (fall)

Most scientific discoveries come about as a result of a series of carefully planned and executed experiments. Occasionally, however, "even the best laid plans of mice and men..." lead to completely unexpected and beneficial results. In this course, we will look at various examples of such serendipitous discoveries and, with the benefit of hindsight, study what it was that went wrong that turned out so right. Specific examples will include both serendipitous and "pseudoserendipitous" results: the vulcanization of rubber, the synthesis of urea (the first successful production of a "naturally occurring organic compound"), and the discovery of various medical treatments. This seminar and the one that follows are designed for non-science majors and carry the natural science common area requirement.

MONT 115N

The Road to Armageddon (spring)

In this semester, we will follow the trail of scientific advances from early concepts of energy, to concepts of mass, to the interconversion of energy and mass represented by Einstein's famous equation: $E = mc^2$, the success of which led to the production of the first atomic weapons. Along the way we will encounter the professional jealousies, rivalries, misogyny, ethical dilemmas, and honest differences of opinion that are often overlooked in the analysis of great discoveries. Finally, we will consider, with the benefit of hindsight, whether this is another plan that "went awry" or whether the use and resultant destruction and carnage of the bomb is what the men and women of the Manhattan Project envisioned when they began.

❧ SELF ❧

MONT 100S

Constructing Childhood (fall)

This year-long seminar poses fundamental questions about childhood and society. In what ways is childhood socially constructed? How do children's lives differ in their social organization across cultures, historical periods, and within a society? Can we claim that some childhoods are better for children than others? During the fall semester, we will begin to answer these questions by analyzing sociological research on the varied lives and selves of contemporary children. Throughout the semester, students will be given opportunities to reflect on their own childhood, comparing it to the childhoods of others.

MONT 101S

Changing Childhood (spring)

During the spring semester, we will continue our exploration of childhood and society by examining how children's lives are transformed by social change. How have revolutions in the organization of family life, work and consumption,

and media and popular culture restructured childhood in the past and the present? In examining recent changes in society, we will consider whether childhood is disappearing or being transformed into a new post-modern form. During the semester, students will investigate some aspect of childhood and social change through social research.

MONT 102S

Fathers and Sons (fall)

For many centuries, the narratives that we have used to define ourselves—as societies, as well as individuals—have revolved around familial relationships. In this full-year course, we will engage a range of sources—ancient, modern, and contemporary—to explore foundational parent-child myths and their literary representations. In the fall, our focus will be fathers and sons. Beginning with ancient accounts (Zeus, Oedipus, Abraham and Isaac) and their modern interpretations, we will analyze drama, fiction, memoir, and film driven by father-son plots, from Hamlet to *This Boy's Life*. In addition to developing critical reading and writing skills, students will have opportunities for self-reflection through forms of personal writing.

MONT 103S

Mothers and Daughters (spring)

In the second semester, we will turn to a different family dynamic—that between mothers and daughters. Starting with the myth of Demeter and Persephone, we will explore how the mother-daughter plot of loss and reunion shapes, in turn, narratives of female identity. Reading fictional and non-fictional works by such authors as Louisa May Alcott, Alice Walker, Jamaica Kincaid, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Danzy Senna, we will analyze the effects of race, ethnicity, class, and national origin on mothers' and daughters' perceptions of themselves and each other. As in the fall term, students will undertake a range of analytic and personal writing assignments. This course counts toward the concentration in Women's and Gender Studies.

MONT 104S

The Great American Duel Begins (fall)

Many debates that consume our nation today descend from the political duel fought by Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton at its birth. What is our relationship to nature, to government, to money, to God? Jefferson wanted a nation of farmers who governed themselves, Hamilton—a nation of investors connected by a strong central government. Both argued eloquently for political freedom, yet Jefferson owned slaves and Hamilton distrusted the people. We will study their famous publications and their private letters, their relationships and even their homes to understand how their ideals and contradictions still shape us today.

MONT 105S

The Great Duel Continues (spring)

After immersing ourselves in the life, times, and writings of Jefferson and Hamilton, we will trace how their ideas have been spun into a web of American identity and policy. This semester will study the subsequent American revolutions their ideas helped to spark: Emancipation, states' rights, the New Deal, the Sixties, even today's division between Democrats and Republicans bear the stamp of both men. Ultimately, Jefferson and Hamilton offer models of the impact one person can have on a nation's history; their example will challenge us to think how we too might contribute to the work of our own day.

MONT 106S

Popular Music and Identity (fall)

This course will examine how popular music influences all aspects of personal and collective identity in American culture. How does popular music influence the ways we think about race, gender, age and social class? What role do corporate and commercial interests have in promoting and sustaining certain conceptions of personal identity through music and music video? Studying a wide variety of popular music, including Pop, Rock, R&B, Hip-Hop and Soul and reading from top scholars in the fields of music, sociology, cultural and gender studies, students will consider the ways popular music both reflects and shapes the culture in which we live. This course counts toward the concentration in Women's and Gender Studies.

MONT 107S

Rap Music and Self-Expression (spring)

Not since the advent of Rock-n-Roll have audiences, critics, scholars been so apprehensive about the power and probity of a form of musical expression. Why is rap so powerful? And why are all forms of music that enable or invite self-expression understood to be dangerous? This course will examine the relationship between rap music and the politics of self-expression. Front and center will be the controversies raised by rap music as well as the forms of personal, political and social expression rap alone makes possible. Studying a wide variety of rap and hip-hop music, students will examine the musical, historical, cultural and aesthetic conditions that have made rap music the voice of a generation. This course counts toward the concentration in Africana Studies.

MONT 108S

Mistaken Identities (fall)

How do you know who you are? What does it mean to recognize another? This seminar focuses on the tendency to “prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet,” as Eliot says in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” We will study various works (including Poe’s tales, Nabokov’s novel *The Eye*, and Hitchcock’s film *Vertigo*) in which characters pretend to be another person or believe another person is actually someone else. Throughout the semester, we’ll investigate how these works – featuring doubles, “evil twins,” con artists, and so on – are designed so that readers’ initial misperceptions nevertheless lead to satisfying conclusions. We’ll also consider cultural phenomena such as celebrity impersonations, avatars, social networking, “passing,” and identity theft.

MONT 109S

Role Models (spring)

Stories about how the self is formed, about growing up from childhood to adulthood -- often called “novels of education” -- are a staple of modern fiction, from the classic *Great Expectations* to the recent *Persepolis*. These novels about forming a unique identity have, at the same time, repeatedly inspired readers not only to identify with, but to adopt and adapt the characters’ stories as their own, onto the stage, into films, songs, sequels, and more. We will study novels of education and a variety of film adaptations to understand how such narratives and our experiences of them are shaped by the self-defining and creative act of identifying with someone else.

MONT 110S

Language in Motion (fall)

In this seminar we will examine the key role that hands can play for deaf individuals in language acquisition, communication and constructing their identities. An understanding of these topics will lead us to explore broader and more complex issues of the Deaf Community in terms of education, culture, the role of developing technology, perception of the non-deaf community, and social power. The seminar will utilize a variety of approaches: readings about deafness, “hands-on” activities and personal visits from deaf persons. Readings for this seminar may include *The Hand*, *A Journey into the Deaf World*, and *Language in Motion* (the book which inspired the title of this seminar).

MONT 111S

Hands in Motion (spring)

In the second semester we will explore the unique properties of the human hand which make it possible for us to invent the tools with which we construct our material lives. Before we talk or walk, our hands explore our relationship to the world. We use them to gather information and to express our feelings and ideas. This seminar will be a “hands-on” course: we will use and invent tools. In addition, we will examine the practice of craftsmanship and how the habits of skilled tool use can aid us in constructing our own lives. Readings for this seminar may include *To Engineer is Human* and *Women’s Work, the First 20,000 Years*, among others.

MONT 112S

Power, Protest & Social Change (fall)

The history of the United States is, in large part, a story of power and protest. Injustice and oppression are universal elements to the human story, but what makes a person willing do something concrete about it? What makes a person act? How do groups organize and movements come into being? How does social/political change happen? How is it resisted? We will explore these questions through three case studies of modern social movements: African-American civil rights, New Left/anti-war and gender/sexual rights/liberation. We will pay special attention to the variety of individual experiences and perspectives within these struggles for justice as well as interrogate our own sense of what is possible in a democracy. This course counts toward the concentration in Women’s and Gender Studies

MONT 113S

Voicing the Political Self (spring)

What constitutes a political self? In this seminar, we will examine the wide variety of ways in which individuals express their political values in the public sphere. Through the study of autobiographies, films, oral history and works of art, we will begin to answer these questions as a way to understand and to articulate our own motivations and potential as political beings. In the examples of others, we will begin to question why we believe what we believe and how might we live out those beliefs in the larger global community. Students will create a work in whatever medium - narrative, film, drama, art, etc. -- they choose to express their political autobiography during the course of this class.

MONT 114S

Gender and Leadership (fall)

Can anyone become a leader? How does gender influence who, when, and how one becomes a leader? Does

leadership vary across different disciplines such as science, politics, business, etc.? Is the role of gender in leadership a story of the past? We will examine memoirs, case histories, film and television, and social science research on these timely questions about gender and leadership. Toward the end of the course, students will apply their knowledge on leadership to their own plans for their years in college and beyond. This course counts toward the concentration in Women's and Gender Studies

MONT 115S

Women and Social Change (spring)

If women belong in the home, how do they convince audiences when they are presenting public speeches? How do they persuade other women and men to accept them as leaders? This challenge has confronted women social activists from America's earliest days. Yet women successfully campaigned to gain the vote, and now take leading roles in American politics. What rhetorical skills have contributed to these successes? We will explore these questions in printed texts and electronic media while students develop their own public speaking skills on social change issues that are important to them. This course counts toward the concentration in Women's and Gender Studies.