Spring 2011 USIE Seminars

Anthropology

**Female Automobility: Women, Cars, and Culture**

Student Facilitator: Alexandra Athens | Faculty Mentor: Jessica Cattelino

From the way we interact with the environment to our conceptions of ourselves and others, transportation shapes our lives daily. Because the United States remains an automotive-centric society, it is important to consider the relationship between individuals and automobiles. A gendered approach to studying this relationship is particularly informative, as automobiles have historically been associated with males and masculinity. In this course we will utilize anthropological, women’s, transportation, and media studies in order to better understand the relationship between women and the automobile. Conceptions of the relationship between women and cars have changed and continue to change, and these transformations reflect and reveal larger socio-historical-political factors. The study of these historical and modern developments, depictions, and relationships will be approached through various topics. Selected topics include notable technological advancements, the law, the “road trip”, media analyses, and niche automotive occupations/pursuits.

**Some Like It Hot: Evolution and the Psychology of Food Preferences**

Student Facilitator: Leonid Tiokhin | Faculty Mentor: Daniel Fessler

This course will examine human food preferences through the lens of evolutionary theory. Like all other organisms on earth, humans have been shaped by evolutionary forces operating over large time scales. As such, we can gain substantial insight into human food preferences and food choice psychology by thinking about the function of food preferences and asking “why do we like the foods that we do?” We will discuss a wide range of issues, including people’s consumption of “distasteful” foods such as spices, the evolution of disgust, learned taste aversions, changes in eating behaviors across the menstrual cycle, food moralization, and cross-cultural variation in food preferences and proscriptions. Students are encouraged to bring up topics of personal interest for discussion.
Tweeted on My Facebook Friend’s Blog: The Dialogue and Practice of Social Media

Student Facilitator: Alyssa Bricklin | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Mott

This class recognizes Social Media as a behavior more significant than just following your favorite band on Twitter. In the second half of the past decade, Social Media has rapidly grown into an undeniably powerful force in the marketplace. Companies and organizations are using Social Media not only as a way to communicate information to their consumers, but also to foster relationships with them. Through class discussion we will begin to think critically about our role as consumers of this medium and explore the possibilities of someday being producers of it ourselves. The course starts with a theoretical evaluation of Social Media as a dialogue, and then we move to learning about the practical application of Social Media – identifying the various tools and examining case studies of large businesses, small businesses, and nonprofits. The class is designed so that we will be interacting with Social Media along the way.

Tralfamadorians, Jabberwockies, Whatchamacallits, and The Onion: When Nonsense Makes Sense

Student Facilitator: Michelle Mikolajczyk | Faculty Mentor: Reed Wilson

In this seminar we will read selected works of Lewis Carroll, Roald Dahl, Shel Silverstein, Kurt Vonnegut, and contributors to The Onion. The course is designed to show how these authors connect to one another by how they emphasize the limits of mankind’s physical abilities and understanding. We will explore how they critique aspects of Human Services such as those relating to medical and pedagogical (e.g. doctor, teachers, etc.) fields through vague statements, fabricated vocabulary, and satirical rhetoric (hyperbole, puns, and wit). By the end of the seminar, we will untangle the authors’ language to reveal a string of interpretable linear thoughts, and use the idea of time (both time passing and time as construct) to explain the nonsensical (time as the healer of wounds and time as the discoverer of the unknown) that pervades the entire selection of readings.
“Not Gay - Just a Fairy”: The Evolution of Queer Representations in American Comic Books

Student Facilitator: Kelsey Sharpe | Faculty Mentor: Christine Chism

Batman and Robin jokes aside, there is a considerable overlap in the comic book and queer communities; this course will trace the evolution of queerness in comics, largely in terms of the mainstream American comic book industry. We’ll start with The Temptation of the Innocent and the Comics Code Authority, and move to queer coding in mainstream comics, incorporation of homosexual (or obliquely homosexual) characters into the mainstream, and eventually the development and success of explicitly LGBT titles. The class will largely move chronologically, but occasional class seminars will be set aside for special themes or topics.

Ethnomusicology

Music of Protest and Struggle in the Post-Colonial World

Student Facilitator: Andrew Harkness-Newton | Faculty Mentor: Anthony Seeger

This course will serve as an introduction to a chronologically and geographically diverse array of music movements that sought to confront conditions of poverty, corruption, rampant inequality, racism, tribalism, loss of cultural identity, violations to basic human rights, economic imperialism and neoliberalism. We will analyze the content of the songs themselves as well as the lives of the musicians that created them. Many of the artists covered in this course suffered censorship, imprisonment, torture, and even assassination at the hands of the state to get their message across. Though not all of them were able to see the change they envisioned in society, they all managed to capture the imagination of the public and keep hope alive during the most grievous of times.

Love, Drugs, Politics, and History: The Mexican Corrido

Student Facilitator: Marcos Ruedas | Faculty Mentor: Anthony Seeger

This class will examine the Mexican corrido, or traditional ballad, as an oral and musical tradition from Mexico and the American Southwest. As a song form that is often written by the community, the corrido offers unique first-hand accounts of significant historical events and provides insight into the social and political conditions of the time period from which it was written. The bicentennial celebration of Mexican Independence this year marks an important time in history to reflect on the rich cultural history that is kept in this song form and assess how current music trends document
our own history. This class will examine how the corrido documents Mexican and Mexican-American history from the perspective of the people. The corrido will be examined from its early beginnings just before the Mexican Revolution through its most popular contemporary form as the narcocorridos that document the current drug cartel phenomenon. Students will gain an understanding of music as a medium of preservation for social, economic, and political circumstances and sentiments in history.

Geography

**Hippies and Tree Huggers: The U.S. Environmental Movement in the 1960s and 70s**

Student Facilitator: Hayley Moller | Faculty Mentor: David Rigby

Together, we will delve into this alluring world to explore the U.S. environmental movement of the 1960s and 70s in the context of the sustainability movement today. By analyzing the development and important historical moments of the movement, this course will address the linkages to and departures from “hippie” methodology in environmental approaches today. The course will emphasize the methodologies of both personal action and policy development, and in doing so will provide students with effective tools with which to approach environmental issues throughout their lifetimes. In sum, we hope to determine if, in fact, the hippies had it “all right.”

Health Services

**Game of Life: The Social Determinants of Health**

Student Facilitator: Roman Roque | Faculty Mentor: Alice Kuo

This seminar explores the social underpinnings of health, with particular emphasis on race as a negative factor for discrimination and a positive factor for resiliency. We will examine historical and contemporary measures of health, and the importance of the healthcare workforce, reform, and public policy in promoting optimum health for all.
Human Complex Systems

**Complexity: What If?**

Student Facilitator: Jovo Vijanderan | Faculty Mentor: Dario Nardi

Complexity Science is a fast emerging field combining multiple academic disciplines. In an age where change is inevitable and ubiquitous, this course seeks to answer the question “How can we model change and use it to our benefit?” This course will utilize tools found throughout modeling in the complex systems and apply them to scenarios found in multiple facets of our everyday lives. Students will also explore the field of complex systems through many different real-world applications such as Biology, Artificial Intelligence, and policy making. The practical aim of this seminar is to encourage Students to stop and explore the thought “What

International Development Studies

**Nio Far: Working Together Towards a Sustainable Future**

Student Facilitator: Antoinette Brou & Anne Flaherty | Faculty Mentor: Michael Lofchie

Development is not just black and white, with a simple right or wrong answer; rather, development is a field known for its shades of grey. In this course, we will explore various perspectives and attitudes towards international development, specifically the field’s past failures and successes and their current path towards progress. From the personal accounts of the mayor of an African Commune to the analytical viewpoint of a UCLA professor, this seminar will present a holistic view of development and teach students to think critically about current development trends.
Medicine

**AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Modern Plague**

Student Facilitator: Garret Ma | Faculty Mentor: Thomas Coates

During this seminar, we will explore AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa and by the end of the seminar series you will have a greater understanding of the implications of AIDS on its society; not only on its people but its economy, politics and international level. We will examine how “globalization” has led to greater activism for AIDS humanitarian work from Western countries. More importantly, we will discover how has and how will Sub-Saharan Africa overcome such a disease burden. This seminar will focus on the development of AIDS/HIV in the 1990s, the biochemistry around the virus and its current threat to the political and economic stability of this impoverished area of the world. More closely we will look beyond the individual concerns that AIDS brings but at the aggregate and how it afflicts the country as a whole. At the end of the class we will address the most fundamental question: “Why should we care?”

Public Policy

**What is Cyberwar?**

Student Facilitator: Millie Tran | Faculty Mentor: Alexandra Lieben

This seminar’s objectives are twofold: to define cyberwar and to discuss the future of the internet given this nebulous concept. This course is designed to provide you with a brief introduction to cyberwar as a still evolving and contentious topic, the nature of cyber threats and what all of this means for the internet. To understand and critically engage in this debate on whether the perceived threat is real, we must first define the concept — “What is cyberwar?” We will utilize an interdisciplinary approach, looking at the issue through various lenses and stakeholders.
Scandinavian

**Comics: Not Art, Not Literature**

Student Facilitator: Matt Seneca | Faculty Mentor: Patrick Wen

This course will provide an in-depth survey of a unique, vastly underappreciated art form: the comic book. It will chronicle one of modern art history's most fascinating narratives while broadening students' background in and understanding of both literature and visual art. Of special interest will be comics' awakening to literary themes and complexity, and its artists' shaping the medium into a distinct visual/cognitive language. The course will focus on formal innovation, and how it has elevated the medium to the level of craft and expression it is capable of today.

Women’s Studies

**Rethinking Citizenship: Immigrant Youth, Gender, and Civic Identity**

Student Facilitator: Amalia Castaneda | Faculty Mentor: Sharon Bays

This seminar seeks to challenge traditional ways of viewing the concepts of citizenship, civic identity and immigration by exploring them through the experiences of Latina immigrant Female Adolescents in South Los Angeles. As South Los Angeles urban communities experience an influx of immigration and consequent demographic transformation, the conventional definitions of citizenship and civic identity become more blurred as they encounter different sets of national, bi-national and sub cultural identities. The predominant definition of citizenship centers on ascribed rights and privileges granted to an individual upon birth or naturalization. Civic identity is a concept used to identify being part of or attached to a given community and/or nationality.