Spring 2019 USIE Seminars

African American Studies

**Depictions, Ideals, and Perspectives of the African-American Family as Told by Television**

*Student Facilitator: Chinyere Nwonye | Faculty Mentor: Pat Turner*

Explore the history of Black representation in American television from the 1950s to the present. Assess the relationship between televisual representations and reality to consider how TV reflects and creates ideals of the African-American family. Contemplate the impact of media depictions on our own perceptions of people and culture.

Chicano/a Studies

**#CentralAmericanTwitter: U.S Central Americans & Hashtag Activism**

*Student Facilitator: Leslie Aguilar | Faculty Mentor: Leisy Abrego*

Central American communities have been present in the United States as early as the 1940’s; however, these longstanding communities have often been overshadowed by dominant monolithic Latinx discourses. As a result of an increasing use of social media, Central American visibility has increased tremendously over the last year. One of the biggest platforms, known as the #CentralAmericanTwitter hashtag on Twitter has played an important role in centering Central American experiences, narratives, histories, and contemporary news. The course can be a tool for students to conceptualize, analyze and discuss on ways to tackle such inequalities that impact Central Americans today. This class will also allow non-Central American students to also engage with the complexities and heterogeneity of Latinx communities in the U.S. Students will explore the various topics that have been taking place in #CentralAmericanTwitter, that include, but are not limited to, the Central American exodus/refugee crisis, Black/Indigenous Central American communities, Central American cultural production, Central American Studies, etc.
Communication Studies

**The Smartphone: The Frenemy in Your Pocket**

*Student Facilitator: Michael Gannon | Faculty Mentor: Michael Suman*

The smartphone can be our friend and our enemy, for it is both a blessing and a curse. We will study reasons for why this is, looking at negative communicative effects such as anxiety, cognitive deficit, decreased attention span, mobile dependency, and addiction, just to name a few. On the flip-side, we will look at positive effects such as increased communication, quicker information access, stronger connections to the outside world, new communication styles, multifunctionality, and others. Ultimately, we will discuss the history of the smartphone and its impact on individuals and society. Students will leave this class knowing more about the frenemy in their pocket.

**The History of Sexology**

*Student Facilitator: Gillian Parker | Faculty Mentor: Michael Suman*

Introduction to the history of sex research from the 19th century to the present. Topics include German origins of sex research, eugenics, homosexuality, female sexuality, sexual behavior, Kinsey reports, sex therapy, gender identity, feminism, the AIDS crisis and the current state of the discipline.

**Introduction to Human-Centered Design in iOS Applications**

*Student Facilitator: Kevin Tan | Faculty Mentor: Paul Eggert*

Good design is arguably as important for a product as the engineering underlying it. Cutting-edge technologies and mechanisms become meaningless if the consumers who they are intended for cannot intuitively utilize them; it’s one thing to have a revolutionary creation, but it’s another for it to be aesthetically pleasing and easy to use. In a world increasingly reliant on digital devices, what role has design played in setting Apple apart as the most successful tech company in the world? In this seminar, we will explore the enormous world of design through the lens of Apple’s characteristic “human-centered design”, and will discuss how it greatly influenced the success of both the iPhone and iOS. Students will learn basic principles of design before examining in depth how iOS applications have evolved over time. Finally, the seminar will culminate in a study of design in popular mobile applications such as Instagram and Youtube, a brief look into Google’s “Material Design”, and a project in which students design an app of their own.
Education

**Netflix n’ Instill: Education through the Screen**

*Student Facilitator: Nosayaba Omorogieva | Faculty Mentor: Kim Gomez*

What happens when fiction reflects reality? If we took an in-depth look at popular TV shows and movies, what would we find? Do our identities shape how we consume and interpret screen media? Through exploration, analysis, and diligent Netflix n’ Chill, this course aims to answer these questions. This seminar is an introduction to the commercialization of historical events, relatable circumstances, and social issues through Netflix and other popularized streaming services. Throughout this course, we will be analyzing and discussing popularized screen media as educational entertainment or ‘edutainment’. Using a curated selection of streamable shows and movies with historical or relatable subplots, we will attempt to identify and understand the intersection between media and holistic education.

English

**The Devil’s in the Details: A Survey of Literary Depictions of Satan**

*Student Facilitator: Collin Wolters | Faculty Mentor: Mitchum Huehls*

Satan has been a popular cultural figure for hundreds of years. And, through this duration, depictions of Satan have been as varied as the media in which they’ve been found. Books, poems, paintings, movies, television shows, and music all feature their own canonical depictions of Satan, with all iterations representing different moments in history. However, despite the diversity of these depictions, Satan consistently personifies evil. This seminar will focus, then, on the details of these literary and cultural depictions and how such details suggest different ideas of what is evil or bad. The course will explore questions such as "How does this depiction respond to those before it?" and "How does this depiction use certain details to represent immorality or evil?"
Ethnomusicology

Fusion Music: The Effects of Colonization, Nationalism, and Globalization

Student Facilitator: Huirong Laura Jane Yee | Faculty Mentor: Helen Rees

Musicians and composers take inspiration for their music and compositions from their surroundings, and with increased globalization and cultural contact, explorations into new musical languages have led to the creation of genres now labelled “fusion” or “world” music. These typically refer to fusions of traditional (non-Western) and popular (Western) music; however, musical borrowing has been occurring since long before the term “fusion” was coined. This course will explore how ubiquitous the practice of musical borrowing is and has always been through several case studies of both historical and contemporary music fusion. Key points will address how colonialism, nationalism, and globalization – amongst other phenomena – have permeated local expressions of identity through music. Listening exercises will equip students with an expanded musical vocabulary to describe what they can hear in the music, as well as discuss the reasons for and origins of what they can hear.

Linguistics

Fusion Music: We Speak your Language: Collaborative Art as a Means of Community Inclusion

Student Facilitator: Danielle Potheau | Faculty Mentor: Mary Elizabeth Glavin

Analysis of the role language, art, and creativity plays in personal identity, community, society, and environment. Explore art as a vehicle for generating an inclusive and engaging community. Seminar allows students to discover personal creativity and talents, and culminates in the creation of a collaboratively constructed artwork to be installed on the UCLA campus. Networking, conflict resolution, community organization, dissolving language and cultural barriers. Examination of relationships between language, culture, art, self, and community.
**Fusion Music: Shining Light on Invisible Disabilities**

*Student Facilitator: Nathan Mallipeddi | Faculty Mentor: Jesse Aron Harris*

Individuals with invisible disabilities represent a large group of disabled persons who are often overlooked due to the secretive nature of their disability. Even though people with these types of disabilities suffer mental, physical, and social impairment, they are often forgotten in the services provided by government and society due to preconceived notions of disability rankings. This discussion-based seminar will shine light on the concept of invisible disabilities and guide student discussion on the challenges and solutions in achieving disability parity. Students will also connect the topic of invisible disabilities to other powerful social movements in society, like gender, race, and sexual orientation.

**Management**

**Social Entrepreneurship: Innovations in Social Impact**

*Student Facilitator: Anna Nordstrom | Faculty Mentor: Paul S. Park*

How can businesses, nonprofits, and governments come together to instigate social change? This class will utilize discussion and hands-on learning to dive into topics of social impact, specifically related to challenges on college campuses. Through guest speakers, interviews, and group discussion, students will learn about unique approaches to impact. Students will have the opportunity to consult on challenges at UCLA by researching the current landscape of the challenge, brainstorming solutions, and presenting in groups their proposed solutions.

**Musicology**

**Wot Do You Call It? : The Evolution of Grime Music**

*Student Facilitator: Bethanie Sonola | Faculty Mentor: Robert Fink*

Designed for non-majors. Examination of grime genre within the social, cultural and political context of the UK from early 2000s to present. Emphasis on using musical output as lens into issues such as post-colonialism, racialized poverty and government accountability. Use of scholarly readings, news articles, musical examples and documentaries that connect students to relatable case studies.
Philosophy

Patriarchy and Prisons

Student Facilitator: Hannah Hsieh | Faculty Mentor: Alexander Jacob Julius

Introduction of the phenomenon of mass incarceration in contemporary American discourse. Interrogation of mass incarceration in relation to class, race, gender, and sexuality; essential role of patriarchal structures and institutions in the development of the traditional legal system and the practice of incarceration; what various disciplinary lenses and epistemologies (history, legal theory, philosophy, political theory, etc.) reveal about mass incarceration. Key thinkers and ideas from across humanities and social sciences are highlighted.

The Ethical Considerations of the Use of Slang/Swear Words

Student Facilitator: Pallavi Adapa | Faculty Mentor: Andrew Hsu

This course will offer an overview of ethics and philosophy of language in order to allow students to grapple with the difference between formal and informal language (slang), and the social implications of the use of one over the other. There will also be discussion regarding the use of swear words, and the ethics of such use.

Philosophy of Modern Information: Community and Isolation

Student Facilitator: Joshua Khorsandi | Faculty Mentor: Andrew Hsu

Preparation: None, but having taken a philosophy course is always helpful. Modern readings of subjects concerning: Escapism, Epistemology, and Morality. Exploration into our relation towards information and technology within both offline and online communities. Considerations of how our immense increase in access to information impacts our daily lives. Questions concerning the way information interacts with social media, e.g. how have new forms of expertise affected our understanding of social media? Lecture and discussion-based class time.
The Mechanical Mind and Mindlike Machinery: An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and Consciousness

Student Facilitator: Zoe Lee / Jone Bacinskaite | Faculty Mentor: Sam Cumming

In this course, we will be analyzing and evaluating the actuality of artificial intelligence technology from a holistic overview of philosophical and cognitive theories as well as neurobiological and technical bases. Specifically, we will be investigating what it means to be conscious or intelligent and examining the structural and functional similarities and differences between the human mind and artificial intelligence. We will then critically and effectively analyze, evaluate, and philosophize about various past, current, and future AI technologies. This will include discussions of the ethical issues and societal impacts to consider in the use of intelligent machines, the representation of artificial intelligence in media and art, and the potential for artificial intelligence to achieve conscious behavior. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we will build a comprehensive and integrated understanding of philosophy, neuroscience, and computer science to fully grasp the nature and state of the human mind and mind-like machinery.

Physics

God Does Not Play Dice: Why Einstein Hated Quantum Mechanics

Student Facilitator: Bozco Vareskic | Faculty Mentor: Christopher Regan

A study of the fundamental scientific principles of quantum mechanics: wave particle duality, wavefunctions, and the uncertainty principle; An investigation of the philosophical aspects of the theory that made it controversial even among the world’s best physicists: determinism, entanglement, locality, many worlds, and free will.

Lifelong Kindergarten: Reimagining STEM Higher Education Pedagogy

Student Facilitator: Alejandra Cervantes | Faculty Mentor: Shanna Shaked

Analysis of teaching methods and their efficacy in achieving student learning outcomes and retention in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) higher education. Guided STEM lesson plan design, with focus on UCLA STEM as the case.
Physiology

**Musicophilia: Your Brain in Today’s World of Music**

*Student Facilitator: Abraham Sumpad Chorbajian | Faculty Mentor: Alan Grinnell*

Whether we listen to music to relax, exercise, or study or while playing an instrument, we all have had experiences with music at some capacity, be it a social, personal, or professional level. Investigation of the science behind relationship between the brain and music and how this relationship affects the way we feel or act when listening to music. Examination of the science behind how the brain interprets and responds to music in music composition, music therapy, and the music industry through discussion and experts in these fields coming in to guest speak. Reflection of how this relationship affects the way students (among others) perceive music in today’s music scene, which includes music on the radio and film. Analysis of the genres of hip-hop, jazz, pop, and classical in context with how our brains process these genres. Application for music as a therapeutic tool in treating neurogenerative diseases when drugs fall short.

Psychiatry

**The Empirical Lotus: Intersection of Buddhism and Science**

*Student Facilitator: Ray Vaca | Faculty Mentor: Marvin Belzer*

Brief introduction to the recent dialogue that has taken place between Buddhism and science. Topics include Buddhist history and philosophy, meditation, neuroscience, physics, and cosmology. Emphasis on areas of convergence and divergence between the two traditions. Experience with Buddhism or science is not necessary.
Psychology

Positive Psychology: Living a Happier Life

Student Facilitator: Joseph Nguyen | Faculty Mentor: Philip Sayegh

Analyze scientifically-verified strategies and psychological studies to show what we should truly strive for in order to live a happier life. Understand ways of increasing happiness by learning about the common misconceptions and psychological biases, review several psychological studies in several different aspects on our lives, and learn how to apply those studies to our daily lives. Students will also have the opportunity to explore different cultural and national perceptions of happiness and compare it with their own society’s views. The outcome of this course is to ultimately give you an awareness of the many factors surrounding our well-being that you can use to be a ‘happier’ and more successful student at UCLA.

Sociology

Gendered Society: Examining Societal Influences on Sexual Identities through Biology and Sociology

Student Facilitator: Cory Drew Epstein | Faculty Mentor: Abigail Cope Saguy

Examination of processes by which gender is socially constructed. Topics include distinction between biological sex, sociological gender, sexual orientation, masculinity and femininity, gender inequality, and recent changes in gender relations in modern industrial societies.

You, Me and Our Mental Health

Student Facilitator: Zarina Jaffer Wong | Faculty Mentor: Michael Gaddis

Interactions with mental health involving the personal and societal stigma surrounding mental illness. An in depth analysis of the history of mental illness and how this history has affected contemporary stigma. Movement from historical ideas of mental illness to modern ideas and treatments of mental illness specifically regarding college campuses. Introduction to CAPS programs across a range of college campuses. Methods range from data analysis to personal anecdotes. These experiences will then be compiled so students may form comprehensive educated opinions about the mental health treatment in America with a focus on colleges.