FALL 2014

Humanities Course Offerings

HUMA 401: Foundations of Western Culture: *Evil*
Ruane. Gen. Ed. 8/Disc. Humanities. MWF, 2:10-3:00 p.m. HS 214
What is evil? Is it a force, an entity, an illness, an absence of good? Is it necessary? Is it a matter of perception, so that one person's evil is another one's good? Can humans exist without it? In this course we will read portrayals and explanations of evil from various time periods and sources including the Bible, Plato, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, and *Paradise Lost*, as well as in modern theories and texts. We will consider manifestations of evil through violence, suffering, scapegoating and apathy; in characters such as Satan and witches; and in historical circumstances such as Nazi Germany.

HUMA 444D (Honors): Plague: “Literary Histories of Epidemic”
Gaudet. Gen. Ed. 8/Disc. Humanities. INQ. WI. TR, 3:40-5:00pm. MURK 102
Explore the meanings of epidemics as represented in literature. Topics include mysterious ancient disasters, the Black Death, AIDS, and hypothetical diseases used as thought experiments, as well as current controversies about the spread and prevention of disease. How do disease and its control shape state and social structures? How have the meanings of disease, health, medicine, and the body changed over time? What kind of art does disease give rise to?

HUMA 500: Critical Methods in Humanities: *Genesis.*
Ruane. Gen. Ed. 8. INQ. WI. MW, 12:40-2:00 p.m. DEM 253.
Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Sodom and Gomorrah, Noah and the flood -- these and other foundational western stories come from Genesis, the first book of the Bible. In this class we will read the book closely and consider its ancient Near Eastern background, its literary features, and the ways various stories have been portrayed and interpreted in religious traditions, philosophy, literature, art and theater. The class will include numerous short writing assignments oriented towards a final paper on a related topic of the student's choosing. Writing Intensive.
HUMA 512A-D: Renaissance & Early Modern, an Interdisciplinary Introduction
Hight (A), Ferber (B), Golinski(C), Witt (D). Gen.Ed. 6, 8, 4, or 7 (see below)
WI. Discovery: Arts, World Cultures, Hist. Persp., or Humanities
T R, 11:10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. HS 216
The Renaissance and Early Modern World explores the interrelationship of art, literature, philosophy, and history from the High Renaissance to 1700. We study the works and ideas of such influential figures as Shakespeare and Milton, Raphael and Rembrandt, Galileo and Newton, Descartes and Hume. Writing intensive.

How HUMA 512 works:
This interdisciplinary course is team-taught by four professors who are experts in art history (section A), literature (section B), history (section C), and philosophy (section D). Regardless of which section a student signs up for, she or he attends the same lecture as students in the other sections. Occasionally, students will be divided into their specific sections for additional discussions. Because the professors leading each section emphasize different disciplinary approaches to the material, students earn a different General Education/Discovery credit depending on which section they’re in.

Section A: Gen Ed 6/Disc. Arts
Section B: Gen Ed 8/Disc. World Cult.
Section C: Gen Ed 4/Disc. Historical Persp.
Section D: Gen Ed 7/Disc. Humanities

HUMA 650. Humanities & the Law. LeBlanc. WI. TR 2:10-3:30 p.m. Murk. G02.
This fall in “Humanities and the Law,” we will examine some of Dostoevsky’s writings about law, justice, criminality, and jury trials. Texts include “Crime and Punishment”, “Diary of a Writer”, and “The Brothers Karamazov”. All readings, discussions, and writing assignments are in English. Writing Intensive.

HUMA 700: Sem. in the Humanities: Love and Ethics: Plato, Tolstoy, Today
Peebles. WI. W, 2:10-5:00pm. HUDD G10
In this seminar, geared to senior humanities students and graduate students in Liberal Studies, we will interrogate the notions of ethics and love (and their relation) in Plato’s Symposium, in Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina and A Confession, in two twentieth-century films (by George Cukor and Billy Wilder), and in a contemporary court case (the 2003 Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court same-sex marriage ruling). What makes a decision ethical? When is love unethical? Can there be a universal definition of either concept? Is the love associated with Romanticism inherently redeeming, or fundamentally egotistical and harmful? Frequent presentations, a seminar paper, and constant, close reading. Writing Intensive.