

Course Descriptions for Fall 2012

Special Topics, Honors, SIGN 350

HIST250/REST250/POLI250. (crosslisted)

The Practice of Democracy: The 2012 Presidential Campaign in Historical Context
Dr. Daniel Prosterman

“The Practice of Democracy” will provide students with an opportunity to critique the 2012 presidential election campaign and the ways in which it connects with American political history. We will critically engage several campaign themes—the role of the media, political advertising and rhetoric, the electoral process, and a variety of policy issues—as well as explore how these subjects have evolved in American history. Throughout the semester, we will examine how conceptions of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and citizenship have shaped and continue to influence the evolution of political discourse in the United States. Assigned texts will reflect the diversity of contexts within which authors have analyzed the culture of presidential campaigns, including literature, satire, documentaries, music, advertisements, case law, cartoons, and memoirs.

HONR 220. “Darwin’s Plots”: Evolution and Literature
Dr. Janet Zehr

Taking its title from a book by Gillian Beer, this course will examine *revolutionary* changes in worldview brought about by Darwin and other evolutionary theorists. While these changes will be examined mostly through literary texts, the course will touch on religion and psychology as well as on biology and literature. Topics will include:

- (1) Darwin’s own writing as literature—his style, figurative language, etc.
- (2) Evolutionary psychology, especially the differences between “Darwinian Feminists” like Sarah Blaffer Hrdy and more conservative writers like Robert Wright (*The Moral Animal*)
- (3) Re-examination of love relationships in novels using the concepts of evolutionary psychology, such as “Female Choice” and “Male Parental Investment”
- (4) Literary works that are about coming to terms with the implications of evolution, for example, Tennyson’s *In Memoriam A.H.H.* and A.S. Byatt’s *Angels and Insects*
- (5) Examination of various religious responses to evolution

PSYC 282. The Psychological Study of Dreams.
Dr. Linda Dudley

The psychological investigation of dreams has expanded tremendously in both scope and sophistication in the last fifty years. Psychologists have studied different types and forms of dreaming experience, examined the relation of dreams to other psychological experiences and processes, and explored the various connections between dreaming life and waking life. This course will address why psychologists are interested in dreams, how they have studied dreams, and what they have discovered. Prerequisite: Psychology 10.

RELI 220 A. Judaism from the Maccabees to the Mishnah.
Dr. Richard Vinson

A study of Judaism from 525 BCE (the completion of the Second Temple) to around 200 CE (the composition of the Mishnah). The period includes the restoration of a Jewish monarchy under the Maccabees, the building program of Herod the Great, the Roman occupation of Palestine, the founding of the Dead Sea community, and the production of some truly interesting Jewish literature: the Apocrypha (Judith, Tobit, 4th Ezra, etc.), Jewish “pseudepigrapha” (1 Enoch, the Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs, Psalms of Solomon, etc.), the works of Josephus and Philo, and the Mishnah. Students will study the history, archaeology, literature, sociology, politics, and religious practices of Jews of the period.

**RELI 220 B. Desert Mothers, Mystics and Martyrs: Women of Early Christianity.
Rev. Amy Rio-Anderson**

This course will provide an overview of women in the early centuries of Christianity. Particular focus will be given to religious leaders, innovative spiritualists, and women living in times of crisis and persecution.

**SIGN 350-A. Digital Divide
Ms. Heidi Echols**

The senior interdisciplinary seminar offers an integrative learning experience in which seniors explore a critical question from multiple perspectives; develop a creative response to that question; and communicate their responses effectively. Students will explore questions of how technology shapes society; who has access to technology, how do men and women use technology, what is the local and global experience of technology, etc.

**SIGN 350-B. Bullies, Mean Girls, and Gay-bashers: Ending the Violence in Our Schools
Dr. Gary Ljungquist**

This course will focus on the issue of violence, coercion, and threats in schools perpetrated upon victims who are deemed different from and less powerful than the perpetrators. Often bullying involves perceived differences of appearance, race, ethnicity, intelligence, socio-economic class, gender identity, and sexuality. While the course will seek information about and explanations for such behaviors as bullying, the “mean girl phenomenon”, and violence against perceived GLBTQ students, the main emphasis will be on how to confront, combat, and eliminate bullying of all kinds. Study of such initiatives as Standtogether, stopbullying.com, and It Gets Better will be included as examples of the movement against bullying. The course will deal with bullying at all levels of the education system from kindergarten through college. The final project will enable students to apply disciplinary perspectives and research as they seek creative responses to the problem of bullying.

**SIGN 350-C. Power
Dr. Daniel Prosterman**

This senior interdisciplinary seminar will be devoted to the question of power in society. How is power constructed, wielded, maintained, and challenged in our world? Students will be relied upon to consider how their own individual disciplines may inform our understanding of this concept, as we work toward developing a richer, more complex, and hopefully revelatory new conception of power as seniors prepare to graduate and change the world.

**SIGN 350-D. Digital Divide
Ms. Elizabeth Novicki**

So where is the digital divide? Digital Divide can be defined widely: it can mean those who do or do not have access (or even diminished access) to the internet; it can mean those who use digital media in different ways; it can mean that some groups are included or excluded in the digital world; it can also refer to technological ownership. In this course students will identify a group in their community affected by the digital divide (fellow students in their dorm, local school, local business, etc); explore multiple disciplinary insights regarding the group’s digital divide; and integrate those insights into a creative response.

**SOCI 310. Sociology of Sexualities.
Dr. Elroi Windsor**

This course examines the social construction and social control of sexuality. Topics include addressing ethical and methodological challenges of sex research, evaluating differences in sex education curricula, and understanding the role of sexuality in media and the commodification of sex. The course also explores social meanings of sexual bodies, practices, diseases, and violence.

