

Graduate courses with a Renaissance / early modern focus offered in the fall of 2018

REN-R 502 Topics in Renaissance Civilization (4 cr.) will be taught by Bret Rothstein and will meet with ARTH-A638 – W 2:30-5:30pm in PY 113

TOPIC: *The Early Modern Thing*

This seminar will examine various aspects of early modern visual and material culture, including conceptions of objecthood; historical approaches to ephemera; attitudes toward the acquisition, maintenance, and display of material things; questions of utility and inutility; latent versus overt animatism; anachronism; and the importance of revision, modification, and/or destruction of objects. Our goal will be to address major themes pertaining to the cultural life of the senses in Europe and the Americas from roughly 1350 to 1750.

ART HISTORY

ARTH-A638: The Early Modern Thing

Taught by Bret Rothstein

W 2:30-5:30pm in PY 113

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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

CMLT-C647 Between Shakespeare and Orson Welles – The Shadowing of Sovereignty

Taught by Eyal Peretz

MW 5:45P-7:00om, in SY 105

From Shakespeare plays to the films of his greatest cinematic heir, Orson Welles, a fundamental strand of thinking develops tying the demise of the classical image of political power to the birth of a new art, the art of modernity. A mysterious shadow has been cast on the face of classical power, demanding the elaboration of a modern conception of political power, as well as demanding the birth of a new art that enters into a troubled and complex relation with both classical as well as modern power, an art that takes place in, and as, the shadow of political power.

The task of this class is triple: first, to give close attention to what is precisely at stake in two main artistic media of modernity, theater and film, when examined from the perspective of the question delineated above. We will want to understand what the stage is, what acting is, what character is, what the camera is, what editing is, etc, if we take them to emerge in relation to the question of a certain shadowing of political power, or sovereignty. Second, we will want to examine some of the major philosophical and conceptual discussions of the problem of modern political power from Hobbes, Machiavelli, and Rousseau, to our contemporaries, Arendt, Foucault or Agamben. Third, we will try to develop a framework through which to better think what precisely is involved in the relation between the dimension of the political, as it opens for the moderns, and that of the work of art.

ENGLISH

ENG-L611: Early Modern Women's Writing

Taught by Penelope Anderson

T/Th 9.30-10.45am, Lindley Hall 016

From an aristocrat who wrote the first science fiction and stormed the enclave of the Royal Academy of Science to a lesbian nun who wrote poetry in New Spain (now Mexico), early modern women's writing offers an extraordinary diversity of forms, topics, and critical approaches. In this readings course, we will track the development and change of critical methodologies by reading some of the most exciting and aesthetically significant writing of the early modern period, in a wide variety of genres. We will use the relatively brief period of extensive critical focus on women's writing (from the 1970s forward, though we will also reach back to consider these writers' sense of each other) to think seriously about potential critical approaches for your own future work. These methodologies will include feminist, queer, political, archival, historical, and formal approaches; we will read Isabella Whitney, Aemelia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Lady Mary Wroth, Katherine Philips, Margaret Cavendish, Lucy Hutchinson, Hester Pulter, Aphra Behn, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Anne Bradstreet, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, among others.

This course will include a substantial consideration of archival research, working with the Lilly Library, and will count toward the research skills requirement of the English Ph.D. program.

ENG-L610/ L740: "Learning to Die"

Taught by Shannon Gayk

2:30-3:45 TR

One of the truisms about the medieval *ars moriendi*, the art of dying, is that its real function is to force attention to the *ars vivendi*, the art of living. In many *ars moriendi* narratives, the protagonists usually understand this too late; death appears to them as untimely, as a miniature, personal apocalypse, as both revelation and destruction.

In this seminar, we will be thinking about the *ars moriendi* and its relationship to apocalypse in two scales, looking at representations of the death of the human being and the death of the nonhuman world. We will consider questions such as: What do human life and civilization mean

in the face of inevitable decay and death? What ends does imagining apocalyptic futures serve? How do we understand the ethical or moral utility of remembering death? To what extent and to what ends do *memento mori* and apocalyptic texts seek to mobilize their audiences to act? How do we think about the forms and aesthetics of such literature? Do attempts to represent death and apocalypse push mimesis or expression to its limits? How do such texts raise questions about how to *read* forms and signs, how to make meaning out of unfamiliar or abnormal patterns, and how to think (or think beyond) the end?

We will explore these questions both in relationship to premodern works that offer proleptic elegies for the death of the self and the destruction of the world and in contemporary critical and theoretical work on environmental apocalypse that contemplates what it means to confront species extinction, climate change, and environmental decline in the Anthropocene. We will inhabit that strange temporal space that we might call, following Augustine, “the present of future things,” where the prophetic and the nostalgic meet, where the future appears within and shapes the present. Our primary corpus will be largely drawn from premodern didactic, philosophical, and religious writing, including texts such as Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*, *Pearl*, *Piers Plowman*, Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations*, Thomas Hoccleve’s *Series*, lyrics and drama, and texts from the *ars moriendi* tradition in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Critical reading will be largely drawn from recent ecocritical and new formalist studies. Course assignments will include regular attendance and engaged participation, a presentation, several pieces of short writing, and an article-length essay for those enrolled at the 700-level or a conference paper for those enrolled at the 600-level.

FRENCH AND ITALIAN

FRIT-F513: “L’Affaire Michel Servet”

Taught by Eric MacPhail

Monday 4-6PM, Woodburn Hall 108

Le supplice de Michel Servet, advenu le 27 octobre 1553 à Genève, lança le grand débat moderne sur la tolérance religieuse. Médecin espagnol réfugié en terre protestante, Servet avait développé une interprétation plutôt hétérodoxe de la sainte Trinité qui l’exposa au zèle ardent de Jean Calvin et ses sectateurs. Dans l’immédiat, l’exécution de Servet provoqua une guerre de pamphlets entre Sébastien Castellion, Théodore de Bèze et Calvin lui-même où se posait la question du droit des magistrats de punir les hérétiques. Bientôt, sous la pression des guerres de religion, la tolérance fut reconnue comme instrument de pacification par les grands penseurs politiques tels que Michel de L’Hôpital, Jean Bodin, et Michel de Montaigne. A la fin du siècle, aux Pays Bas, Thierry Coornhert a défendu la valeur absolue et intrinsèque de la tolérance religieuse, y compris la tolérance du catholicisme dans les nouvelles Provinces-Unies du Calvinisme. Un siècle après, le réfugié Huguenot Pierre Bayle a fondé la doctrine moderne de la tolérance, plutôt envers ses coreligionnaires qu’envers leurs adversaires catholiques. Nous allons suivre l’histoire de l’idée de la tolérance jusqu’aux philosophes des lumières et notamment le Baron d’Holbach, « athée spéculatif » comme on disait à l’époque. La tolérance religieuse, serait-elle, comme le voulait Holbach, une simple contradiction ?

FRIT-M504. Renaissance Italian Literature and Culture: *The Italian Erudite Comedy*
Taught by Massimo Scalabrini
W 4:00-6:00 pm: BH 018

In this course we will analyze in depth the Italian *commedia erudita*, from Ludovico Ariosto to Giordano Bruno. We will pay attention to the classical models and the humanist antecedents, the style and the themes of the genre. We will also discuss the role played by this genre in what has been defined the great comic culture of the Italian Renaissance. Students will give a formal presentation, take a final exam, and write a short review article as well as a research paper.

GERMANIC STUDIES

GER-N508. Golden Age of Dutch Culture: Dutch footprints
Taught by Esther Ham
MW 4:00-06:15pm in GA 1106 (This class meets second eight weeks only)

The Dutch Republic in the 16th and 17th century was unique in Europe in many ways. We will discuss the Republic and its endeavors in the world, with a special focus on its impact on Asia, especially the more than 350 years of the Dutch East India Company and the colonization of Indonesia.

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE & MEDICINE

HPSC-X 705: The Cultural History of Astrology
Taught by William Newman
W 1:00-3:30pm in BH 664

As Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky, and other scholars whose work spans the history of science and art have shown, astrology long formed one of the central themes of concern to European and Islamic intellectuals. Astrology was arguably one of the first “applied sciences,” linking the empirical research and abstract theorizing of astronomy to the world of practical results. From providing the basis for planting crops to predicting the outcomes of battles, weather, and individual fates, astrological expertise permeated many aspects of medieval and Renaissance life. At the same time, the zodiacal signs, decans, and planets served an important role in the art of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, providing visual *topoi* for manuscript illuminations, panel paintings, frescos, and encoded natal charts found in the ceilings of various Renaissance villas. Astrological themes also permeate the history of literature, ranging from the polyvalent work of Geoffrey Chaucer up to the satirical output of Jonathan Swift. The present course will begin by providing the basic astronomical information necessary to understand astrological material and then pass to a discussion of these themes in late antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early modern period.

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

HISO-S 628 Cervantes and The Senses: Body/Brain/Mind/Cognition
Taught by Steven Wagschal
1:00-2:15 p.m. T/R (LH 112)

This course will explore *Don Quixote* and other early modern Spanish texts in their cultural contexts, with special emphasis on brains, minds, bodies and especially the senses, alongside readings in early modern scientific and philosophical thought as well as current theories and research from cognitive studies.

Primary readings will be mostly in Spanish, while secondary readings will be mostly in English. The class meetings will be conducted in Spanish and/or English depending on the make-up of the class and the needs of the graduate students.