FS 1973 First Seminar Course Descriptions (Sections)  
Spring 2018

FS 1973-01  
A Creative Process  
Chuck Tomlins (Art)  
TTH, 2:00pm – 3:15pm, CH LL017

Students will gather information from the seven Leonardo da Vinci Principles taken from his notebooks, along with the Thirteen Thinking Tools presented in the Root-Bernstein’s book, Sparks of Genius. Explorations will be made into an integrated approach to Creative Thinking, utilizing the notion that learning how to think creatively in one discipline will allow that process to be understood and acted upon in other disciplines. Skills that are “new” to the student will emerge, requiring research with an open mind, as well as leaps of “faith” into subject areas and disciplines that will make the “familiar strange and the strange familiar.”

FS 1973 02  
World Philosophies  
Michael Futch (Philosophy & Religion)  
TTH, 11:00pm – 12:15pm, CH 253

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to some of the key themes and problems of philosophy through a comparative analysis of various philosophical schools across different cultures. Topics to be addressed include the nature of human happiness, personal identity, the relation between mind and body, the possibility of knowledge, the reality of space, time, and matter, and the existence of god(s). We will approach these topics through a careful reading of authors from European, Indian, Chinese, and Arabic philosophical traditions.

FS 1973 03  
Gangster Films  
Victor Udwin (Language)  
TTH, 11:00pm – 12:15pm, OH 200

Filmmakers have utilized the gangster genre to frame a variety of issues. Students in this course will learn how a film frames an issue and how it then affords its audience the opportunity to experience new perspectives on that issue. Students will learn to work from short clips to identify the issue in any film and to discover the perspective that it takes on that issue—the film’s argument. Finally, from an understanding of the argument students will learn to establish a correlation between a film and its audience’s historical context.

FS 1973 04  
Dangerous Passions in 18th C Literature  
Megan Gibson (English)  
MW, 2:00pm – 3:15pm, CH 253

Communicating through emotions is a vital part of our social and cultural engagement; whether dealing with negative gendered stereotypes (boys don’t cry, women are too emotional) or daily communications (from emojis to facial expressions), questions about how, when, and where we should appropriately show emotion permeate our lives. Though even different cultures in today’s world disagree about the answers to these questions, the questions themselves are longstanding, and gained special attention in the eighteenth century, where displays of emotions were hotly debated, and sometimes considered dangerous. In this course, students will read works of long eighteenth-century literature that feature
strong emotions such as desire, passion, anger, suffering, and grief. Throughout the semester we will ask the following
questions: What kinds of emotions are safe to experience and when? In what contexts are emotional displays controversial
in terms of gender or politics? What happens when reading inspires such strong emotion that it becomes dangerous, as
when copycat suicides followed readings of Goethe’s *Sorrows of Young Werther*? Students will read works by authors
such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Jane Austen. Requirements include weekly informal
response posts, class presentations, two essays, and smaller creative in-class exercises, including an acting project
imitating the stylized “attitudes” of eighteenth-century actors.

**FS 1973 05**
**Higher Education and Its Critics**
Matt Hindman (*Political Science*)
MW, 3:30pm – 4:45pm, CH 253

Students attend college—and often pay a small fortune to do so—for many reasons. Often, these motives
include familial expectations, greater opportunities for long-term economic achievement, and the excitement of
participating in a new and adventurous life-stage. Are these sufficient reasons to attend college? Are they a
university’s reason for existing? Or are we getting it all wrong? This course will explore several of the many
controversies plaguing higher education in the 21st century, starting with these basic questions about what the university *is*, what it *should be*, and what we expect it to *help us become*.

**FS 1973 06**
**Culture, Character, and Education**
Avi Mintz (*Education*)
TTH, 2:00pm – 3:15pm, LH 312

What enables students to succeed in school and in life? Many researchers, teachers and administrators have
sought to help students succeed by implementing better teaching methods and offering a broad, rigorous
curriculum. But what is the relationship between knowledge and skills in history or mathematics, for example,
and future success in academics, in the workplace, and in one’s personal life? Perhaps students’ character is as
important to their future success as is their academic preparation. Indeed, in this course, we will consider the
work of scholars who suggest that culture and character powerfully influence student success in school and
beyond.

**FS 1973 07**
**How Culture Drove Human Evolution**
Briggs Buchanan (*Anthropology*)
TTH, 2:00pm – 3:15pm, HH SR

In only 60,000 years modern humans have dispersed across the planet and now occupy a wider range of habitats than any
other terrestrial species. During this period the complexity and diversity of technology and cultural complexity has grown
at an explosive rate. These facts cannot be explained simply by the larger relative brain size of humans. No single human
can survive in any single habitat. Rather, we owe our success to culture, or social learning. This capacity has enabled humans
to gradually accumulate information across generations and develop enormously complex cultures. In the course we will
cover a range of topics including: defining culture, culture in nonhuman species, cultural evolution in the lab and field,
culture as an adaptation, maladaptive culture, and cultural evolution today.
FS 1973 08
Life Hacks from Chinese Philosophy
Thomas Buoye (History)
TTH, 2:00pm – 3:15pm, LH 314

Are you an earthworm or a crab? Does a good life emerge from planning or from responding well to small moments? Does excellence come from what we choose to do or from our natural abilities? Can we ever know if the way of which we speak is the true way? Are there life hacks in Chinese philosophy? Take this course and find out how the teachings of Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, Modi, and Laozi are relevant to our lives today.

FS 1973 09
Scaring Victorians: Fear in Nineteenth-Century British Literature
Karen Dutoi (English)
TTH, 3:30pm – 4:45pm, KH 112

In this course, we will study what scared people in Victorian Britain (1830s-1900) as expressed by the era’s literature and culture. The things that scared Victorians could be revealed in the fantastic—such as the magical transformation of *The Beetle* or the hideous truth of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—or the seemingly every day—such as country estate that hides *Lady Audley’s Secret*. These fictional expressions often exposed the era’s fears of a changing society: the poverty created by the Industrial Revolution, the interaction of cultures due to increased travel, and the agitation of women for basic rights. We will also examine how the entertainment value of these fears gave rise to genres such as sensation fiction, horror, detective novels, and science fiction. In addition to the titles already given, our main texts will include Arthur Conan Doyle’s “The Speckled Band” and Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market.” The course will use this material as the basis for fulfilling the First Seminar goals of understanding methods of research, completing 20-25 pages of revised writing, and presenting an oral project.