

## Critical Thinking and Writing:

HONR 111

MWF 11:00-11:50 (Richard England)

TR 8:00-9:15 (Charlotte England)

TR 2:00-3:15 (Caroline Porter-Long)

Arguments bind us, divide us, batter us. Vying for approval on paper, in quiet conversation, on millions of televisions, or the battlegrounds of the web, arguments define the boundaries of common sense, set personal and global agendas, and control minds. Masters of persuasion make laws, reshape traditions, and wage wars. To understand and create arguments we must analyze their structure, language, and logic. In this class you will learn to think critically about any kind of claim through debate, research, and writing. This is not so much a composition class as an arena for wrestling with ideas and words. By December you will be a keener critic and better author of provocative texts and persuasive speeches. Practice is the only true teacher. This seminar class will require you to take an active role in your own learning. Debate and research are two foci of this class. In formal and informal debate on current controversies you should defend your own beliefs with a calm temper and a polite tongue. Respect the opinions of those with whom you disagree.

*One required honors course for entering honors students that grants elective credit or general education credit for ENGL 103 (cannot be substituted for with AP or IB English credit).*

## Issues in Humanities:

HONR 211.042 TR 11:00-12:15

Charlotte England

Honors 211 A Brief History of Fantasy Writing for Children 1700-2000

In the fifteenth century William Caxton raised his young son on the fables of Aesop; three hundred years later, Jean Jacques Rousseau resolutely banished them from his fictional son's bookshelf! We will enter the debate about the

philosophical perils and possibilities of unrealistic fiction as it heats up in the eighteenth century and go on to read a variety of later fantasy and fairy tale texts with an eye to understanding how they reflect important aspects of the cultures that produced them. Along the way expect to examine late Victorian ideas about cosmology, evolution and human society with Kingsley's *Waterbabies*, explore Edwardian Social concerns in the hilarious work of Edith Nesbit and Kenneth Grahame and revisit Oz and Wonderland (among other magical realms) where grown-up concerns and cultural ideals of childhood meet. Expect to do lots of writing, some research into the roots of popular fairy tales and a certain amount of philosophizing about the place of the fantastic in the lives of real world children.

*Satisfies a Humanities General Education Requirement*

## Issues in Humanities:

HONR 211.041 TR 12:30-1:45

Cynthia Cooper

Media Violence: Causes and Consequences

Media violence is one of the most debated social and constitutional principles in American society today. While some critics label media violence as a corrupting force in American culture, especially among children, others stand firm behind the First Amendment rights of media producers. From this viewpoint media are free from censorship and follow a marketplace economy model--producing whatever the consumer market will bear. But what if violent media products are also potentially harmful? Should it be treated like other potentially dangerous, yet legal, consumer products such as liquor and cigarettes and have government restrictions been enacted to mitigate the potential harms?

It is also essential to explore the economic benefits of violent media products and to consider the role of violence as an important dramatic tool. How do media producers determine the "appropriate" amount of violence for a given storyline? Should audience preference be a factor? These production issues will be

explored through our viewing of film and television programs.

This course explores the ongoing debate surrounding the perceived effects of media content on human thought and behavior. Course readings include research on various media (video games, movies, television, music lyrics) and effects theories (limited, mediated, and cathartic) with an emphasis on applying these to specific real-life cases. The course also studies recent attempts to mitigate media effects through content regulation including Internet filtering devices and ratings of movies, television, music and videogames. Students will explore these issues through papers, projects and case studies.

*Satisfies a Humanities General Education Requirement*

## Interdisciplinary Seminar:

HONR 311.041/POSC 399 TR 9:30-10:45

Greg Cashman

"Utopia Meets Reality": Russian Revolutions Through Literature

1917 is one of those bookmarks in history, a time of momentous upheaval that marked a critical turning point. In Russia the February Revolution overthrew the tsarist government of Nicholas II; a second revolution, in October, placed Lenin's Bolshevik Party in power and began the world's first national experiment with socialism. "Stalin's Revolution" followed Lenin's, creating the monstrous "Great Terror" of the 1930s. And at the end of the century, Gorbachev unwittingly set off another revolution, whose end has not yet been determined.

We can learn much about the Soviet Union from Russian writers who have struggled to tell the story of the great transformations wrought by Lenin and Stalin (and Gorbachev). This course will attempt to explore the philosophical aspects of Marxist socialism, the attempt to "build socialism" in Russia, the "messiness" and brutality of revolution and its social, cultural, economic and political results by examining some of the great works of Russian fiction, poetry, biography and film.

Revolutions are giant leaps into the unknown, and they often have unintended consequences. The revolutionary "experiment" has life-changing effects-- socially, culturally, psychologically, politically, economically--on those real people who are the subjects of this great experiment.

The reading list for this class will include Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* (and we'll be watching the film), Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* and *Heart of a Dog*, Yevgeny Zamiatin's novella *We*, Eugenia Ginzberg's *Journey into the Whirlwind*, Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*, and Vladimir Voinovich's *The Fur Hat*. Familiarity with Russian history or politics is not necessary.

## Interdisciplinary Seminar:

HONR 311.042 MW 9-10:40

Stephen Adams

Silicon Valley: Nerdvana from a Garage

Do you have a profile on Facebook? Do you find your way in cyberspace via Google's search engine or on terra firma using Google Maps? Do you buy and sell using eBay? Listen to tunes downloaded from Apple? Print out that term paper using Hewlett-Packard? Then you are a beneficiary of just some of the manifold innovations from Silicon Valley, a two-county region south of San Francisco with a long tradition of reinventing itself. If it were a separate economy, the Valley would rank twelfth in the world.

In this class, we will examine the significance of this high-tech region and determine how a collection of orchards was transformed into what has been called "the largest legal creation of wealth in the history of the planet." We will explore the garage-based culture of the Valley, and how geekdom became cool in the playground of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and the Google guys. We will discuss whether Silicon Valley is a uniquely American phenomenon and trace attempts around the world to replicate this engine of innovation in places with names like Silicon Forest, Silicon Island, Silicon Bog, and Silicon Wadi. Be part of the Valley Crowd!

## Interdisciplinary Seminar:

HONR 311.043 MWF 12-12:50

Robert Smith

### Manufactured Culture: Representation in Performance

*The Gang of Four*: a band, Chinese government officials, or a group of artists whose work reinvented government support for the arts in America? Performance[Art]: Theatre? Art? Political forum challenging normative ideas about race, gender, sexuality, class, identity? The new voice of YouTube? Serious/Fun?

Using critical texts, we will attempt to trace the topography of performance art, identifying significant themes, ideas/trends, performers and performances within the context of past and contemporary artistic movements. Further, we will explore our own histories and interests, creating and structuring experiences to communicate personal concerns, ideas and interventions. "Manufactured Culture: Representation in Performance[Art]": an historical, conceptual, experiential, investigative journey.

## Interdisciplinary Seminar:

HONR 311.044 MWF 11:00-11:50

Derek Bowden

### Music and Landscape

What can music tell us about places? Or how does landscape speak to artists who make music? This course is an introduction to the study of landscape interpretations through music analysis. Students in this course will not act as music performers or theorists, but as perceptive listeners. Listening to compositions written as expressions of actual or imagined places reveals 'soundscapes' otherwise left out of such works of art as landscape painting, photography and literature. The study of musical 'soundscapes' offers an aural dimension to the study of past, present or imagined places. The course will begin with a brief overview of landscape studies and methods used by researchers and scholars in a variety of disciplines. Following the introduction, students will spend the remainder of the semester acting as musicologists,

interpreting landscapes through the study of selected musical compositions from a variety of historical periods and geographic places. Furthermore, students will gain an in depth understanding of the importance of music in the expression of place and identity. No previous musical or geographical knowledge is required.

*Satisfies General Education IIIA*

## Honors Research/Creative Project

Richard England

HONR 312.041, M 2:00-2:50

Honors students complete a research or creative project in a 300-400 level course of their choosing (this does not have to be an honors course) and will present their research or creative project at a public symposium or conference.

One credit, pass/fail.

## Honors Thesis Preparation

Richard England

HONR 490.041, W 2:00-2:50

In Honr 490, before students begin work on the thesis, students select a thesis committee comprised of a thesis director (mentor) and two readers. The mentor and one reader are chosen from the student's major department. The other reader is selected from faculty in one's school. Additionally, students do preliminary research on their topic and write a two-page prospectus (which must be approved by their committee) describing what they hope to accomplish in their thesis. In addition to meeting as necessary with their mentor, students will meet together regularly with the Honors Program Director to discuss progress and problems.

One credit, pass/fail.

## Honors Thesis

Richard England

HONR 495-041, TBA

The Honors thesis is a three or four credit, focused, in-depth project in one's major field. What distinguishes an Honors thesis from a research paper in a regular classroom is the willingness of the student to go beyond the

classroom and to assume the responsibilities associated with commitment to scholarship.

*Prerequisite: Completion of HONR 490*

*Corequisite: Honors 496-041*

## Honors Thesis Consult

Richard England

HONR 496-041, TBA

*SPRING 2009*

*SPRING BREAK ABROAD*

## The Cultural Impact of the First World War

Stephen Gehrich

The objective of this class is to try and understand why, and how, the First World War created a cultural break between the innocent and well-deserved optimism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the troubled disillusionment of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will explore this apparent discontinuity by examining how people perceived the quality of their lives and the condition of the world in the years just prior to the War, through the War itself, and into the post-War period. These perceptions are reflected in the art, literature, and poetry of the times, and we will study these (along with video documentation) to try and "feel" what these people must have felt as their old world and ways of life were destroyed, and were replaced by what we now call "modernity." We will also look at how the First World War is remembered today; how it has been memorialized, and to a large extent mythologized, and its continuing impact on our world.

The course will include a trip to France and Belgium during spring break to visit many of the battlefields of the war. Although the battlefields today are often only empty fields, the monuments, cemeteries, and memorials that commemorate the battles give a sense of the enormous struggle and loss that took place on those fields less than 100 years ago.



# Thomas E. Bellavance Honors Program

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Course Offerings For

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Fall Semester

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2009