Summer 2014

Undergraduate Course Descriptions

Summer Session I: May 27 - July 5

Approaches to Gender and Sexuality – SCA-UA 401.001
Prof. Melissa Fisher
What are the processes, relations and sensations that constitute the phenomena of gender and sexuality? What aspects of human experience count as gendered or sexual, and how does the answer vary across fields such as psychology, medicine, sociology and religion? Our interdisciplinary approach to gender and sexuality studies will include contemporary as well as historical debates, from slavery and lynching to Abu Ghraib and gay marriage. As we analyze the intersection of gender and sexuality with race, nation and class dynamics, we will uncover the extent to which ideas and imperatives about these phenomena saturate the world around us. (Counts as introductory course for the GSS major or minor; counts as introductory course for the SCA major but NOT the minor)

Prof. Sukhdev Sandhu
Throughout the 20th century New York musicians, hailing from all parts of the world and operating in a wide variety of genres, have railed against the different forms of injustice they experienced in their home or new-found city. They channelled the metropolis’s clamourous energy to incubate protest musics, fashion genres, carve out independent cultural spaces. They fought noise with noise, hatched new rhythms to combat the machinic poses they felt capitalism was demanding of them, offered dissonance and innovation as shields against corporate stultification. This class will look at a broad range of musical styles including jazz, folk, punk, No Wave, disco, and hip hop in order to explore the creative (and also exhilarating, child-like, melodramatic) uses of anger. It is a class about shouting as survival, about sonic warfare. There will be soundwalks, film screenings, and some rather eccentric characters profiled. (Counts as elective for these SCA majors/minors: AMST, A/P/A, MET, SCA; counts as Comm Elect)

New York City in Film – SCA-UA 623.001
AJ Bauer
What are the diverse ways in which New York City has been imagined on the silver screen? How does a cinematic perspective shape our understanding of urban spaces? This course analyzes films that portray New York as a site of local encounter and global exchange in both commercial and documentary films since the 1960s. We will investigate the dramatic mapping and remapping of urban space through works that articulate questions of gentrification, immigrant labor, organized crime, and sexual subcultures. In turn, we will examine how these stories have helped shape and contest the city's image of itself--as a space of struggle, belonging, illegality, emancipation, and transformation. The goal is to see how each particular film captures a distinct moment both in the city's history over the past fifty years as well as in the history of filmmaking. In so doing, we will blend the perspectives of urban studies, ethnic studies, and visual culture, placing films within their aesthetic, political, and historical context. (Counts as elective for these SCA majors/minors: AMST, MET, SCA)
Summer Session II: July 7 - August 16

Approaches to Metropolitan Studies – SCA-UA 601
Prof. Michael Ralph
A broad and interdisciplinary introduction to the field of urban studies. Surveying the major approaches deployed to investigate the urban experience in the social space of the modern city. This course explores the historical geography of capitalist urbanization with attention to North American and European cities, to colonial and postcolonial cities, and to the global contexts of urban development. Major topics include urban politics and governance; suburban and regional development; urban social movements; urban planning; the gendering of urban space and racial segregation in urban space. (Counts as introductory course for the MET major or minor; counts as introductory course for the SCA major but NOT the minor)

Urban Cultural Life – SCA-UA 608.001/002
Prof. Sukhdev Sandhu
(This course requires a 60 dollars activity fee. Students who register for this course as 0 credits must be registered for another summer course and will receive a pass/fail grade)
Few cities enjoy as rich a cultural life as New York City, with its galaxy of neighborhoods, museums, galleries, theatres, concert halls, and alternative spaces. Through walking tours, attendance at cultural events, and visits to local cultural institutions, students explore the definition of urban culture. Sites include the familiar and the unfamiliar, the Village and the outer boroughs. Students examine the attributes that constitute culture and community from an interdisciplinary perspective. Readings and films expand their understanding of these concepts. (Counts as elective for these SCA majors/minors: AMST, MET, SCA)