

Honors Seminar Descriptions

Fall 2022

HONR 492

Section 1: Music, War, and American Collective Memory – A. Shupe

Section 1: MWF 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM

How do Americans collectively remember war? What role does music play in war memory? This course discusses these questions by studying music that relates to, commemorates, and criticizes the American legacy of militarism. Wars have shaped American identity since the country's founding and music has both reinforced and protested every war with American involvement. Classical and popular music, as well as music in films, serve to support Americans' perspectives on war. Though other cultures are, of course, impacted by American military actions, war media, including films and their soundtracks, such as *Apocalypse Now* and *Platoon*, focus on American experiences and American suffering to the exclusion of others. The same has been true for many American composers, even when their works stand as musical protests against war. Collective memory is far from unified and different groups of Americans use music to reinforce their identities in varied ways. For example, Southern veterans of the Vietnam War often identify strongly with Civil War veterans the Lost Cause because of perceptions that the Vietnam War was unethical and similarly lost. These relationships are expressed and consumed through American popular music and literature. Through an exploration of music in American collective memory of war, students will gain listening skills and musical vocabulary, and they will learn to listen in a critical way.

Section 2: Globalize This: Fear and Loathing in the Age of Progress and Prosperity - K. Jagers

Section 2: TR 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

In this course we will explore both the perils and promises of globalization. For better or worse, the process of globalization is fundamentally transforming the economic, cultural and political foundations of the globe. While globalization holds out the promise of progress – providing significant opportunities for the emancipation of much of the world's population from the tyranny of poverty, ignorance and political repression – it simultaneously evokes a sense of fear and loathing throughout much of the globe. Globalization is a contentious process -- its meaning almost entirely dependent on who is talking about it. Pro-market economic reformers, displaced workers, environmental and human rights activists, security experts and cultural nationalists, to name a few, all compete for the right to stake claim to the idea of globalization and shape public perceptions about its potential impact on the world in which we live. In a very real sense globalization has become the buzzword that serves to crystallize disagreements concerning the speed and direction of social and political change in the world at-large. While both the meaning and merits of globalization have become highly politicized in recent years, with intellectual debate about this topic sometimes transforming itself into contentious political action and legislation, in this class we will seek to evaluate the origins, nature and impact of this phenomenon by using insights and analytical tools from the humanities (e.g., history and philosophy) and the social sciences (e.g., economics, political science, psychology and sociology).

Section 3: Freedom in Focus: Understanding the Quest for Human Liberation Through Philosophy and Film - K. Jagers

Section 3: T 2:00 PM – 4:50 AM

The modern age has rightly been referred to as the “age of freedom.” Compared to life in ancient and medieval societies – where superstition, communal obligations and entrenched hierarchies of social power effectively undermined the autonomy of individual action and thought – the modern age represents a “rational” rejection of these traditional forms of social stratification, authority and control. Forged by the ideals of the European Enlightenment, the modern world was envisioned to be a world in which the individual would be liberated from the dead hand of ignorance, tradition and hierarchy. While the desire of humankind to shed the yoke of unjust authority relations and systems of social control is, as noted by President Bush, “on the march,” nevertheless, the appropriate role of freedom in society continues to be a matter of considerable debate and conflict. While “spreading freedom’s blessings” may be “the calling of our time,” what, precisely, does this mean? What does it mean to have free will; to live in a free society; to express oneself freely? Moreover, is the march of freedom inevitable? Is it desirable? Should it be unbridled in its promotion and construction? Is freedom the “natural” condition of mankind – “the birthright and deep desire of every human soul” -- or do humans actually covet other values – personal happiness, social order, fealty to God, commitment to community, the pursuit of social justice, etc. – which may actually conflict with the unchecked promotion of individual freedom? While there is a temptation in our society to uncritically accept the idea of freedom as an unalloyed “good,” in this course we will seek to deconstruct the idea of freedom and systematically explore its social and ethical boundaries. In this course we will view the concept of freedom through the analytical lens of philosophy and the artistic lens of modern cinema. Why cinema? The arts – painting, literature, theatre, music, dance and film – play an important role in human society not simply because they entertain us but also because they force us to reflect upon and challenge our commonly held beliefs concerning social reality (metaphysics), human knowledge (epistemology), and moral values (axiology). In other words, the arts help us better understand, as well as shape, our collective human experiences. Contemporary cinema, while often infantile and banal, nevertheless, possesses the capacity to both challenge and mold our values, desires and even identities with its powerful narratives and images. In this class we will use film as a pedagogical tool for better understanding the role of freedom in our lives. Every week we will analyze a film using different conceptions of freedom found in philosophy, psychology, theology and economics. As such, the films provide the context under which we can explore the philosophical concepts under investigation. In addition to exploring how modern cinema addresses the idea of freedom, we will also explore the significance of this artistic medium as a mechanism for both social liberation and social control. Throughout the course of the semester we will examine this topic by approaching the concept of freedom through a myriad of distinct -- and often incompatible -- philosophical perspectives: (1) psychological freedom; (2) spiritual freedom; (3) biological freedom; (4) metaphysical freedom; (5) social freedom; (6) political freedom; and (7) economic freedom. As we shall discover, only by exploring the many dimensions of freedom, and then investigating how each dimension is influenced by the degree of freedom found in the others, will we be able to achieve a deeper understanding of the promises and pitfalls associate with the pursuit of human liberation in the contemporary world.

Section 4: Freedom in Focus: The Cultural Cold War in Literature and Film – J. Brown

Section 4: MWF 11:00 – 11:50 AM

Spies! Fallout shelters! Communists! The Cold War was at times frightening and comical, thoroughly strange and strangely practical. New buzzwords entered the dinner table conversation and "atomic" was used to describe everything from motels to cocktails. Burt the Turtle taught American schoolchildren how to "duck and cover" while some Americans built bomb shelters in their back yards. This seminar will be a survey of the ways in which films and books tried to capture the terror and the terrible absurdity of the era.

Section 5: Chicago's Music: The Crossroads of History, Race and Culture - J. Pippen

Section 5: TR 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

What can music tell us about a city? How have musical practices been used to create community? This course considers these questions by examining the city of Chicago. A center for trade and the major metropolis of the American Midwest, Chicago provides many insights into how people create community through music. Blues, jazz, classical music, soul, punk, and hip-hop have all found homes in Chicago. Despite the widespread popularity of these practices, racial and class-based divisions persist in Chicago. Indeed, some have used musical practices to create exclusive groups and to reinforce division. In exploring the history of Chicago's music, students will gain foundational listening skills and music vocabulary and will practice listening through a variety of theoretical, analytical, historical, and cultural lenses.

Section 6: The Greatest Conversation Piece Ever Invented In America: Baseball - P. Vaughan Knaus

Section 6: MW 3:00 PM – 4:15 PM

Ah, Baseball...Number 42; Chicago Black Sox; the Boys of October; America's "Second National Anthem"; the Babe; doping; lock-outs; the stand-up triple, three-up-and-three-down, walk-off homer; Cracker Jacks and cold ones; Field of Dreams, A League of Their Own, Pride of the Yankees. America's Baseball's history provides a point of entry into American culture, American values, and, American dreams. For students, there is no better way to understand the creation and destruction of the color and gender lines in twentieth-century America than to draw examples from the history of race and gender in sports, a history which is now richly documented in biographies, historical works, speeches, and textual film. Scholars acknowledge that an examination of sports can be instrumental in raising important themes in American history. Baseball's history provides a point of entry into American culture.

Section 7: A History of Sex in Art – S. Zwick-Tapley

Section 7: TR 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM

****Warning: The content in this class may be offensive to some students.****

Nudity. Eroticism. Power. Victimization. Gender. Destruction and promotion of religious norms. Since the beginning of artistic expression the fine and performing arts have explored sex. What intrigues us most? What captivates us? In this class we will discuss ancient Greek theatre, Renaissance portrayals of Jesus, 2nd century Indian erotic temple art, English Restoration Theatre, Japanese Shunga, Argentinian tango, rap and contemporary American photography and film. In addition, the theme of censorship will be explored.

Section 8: Spain as Drama: From Comedy to Tragedy – JL. Suárez-García

Section 7: TR 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Why do Spaniards regularly talk very loudly, and use many proverbs from literature and oral traditions in their daily language? Why are they such idealist individuals, and why do almost mention in every conversation *jamón serrano* or *manchego* cheese, drink Rioja wine with meals, or cook with tons of olive oil? Why are Spaniards' friends, family members, or even unknown people in bars often involved in political verbal confrontations and cannot seem to agree on regional identities? Why is there so much discussion and division about the monarchy as an institution in modern times? Why do literature, history and traditions play important roles in Spanish Education in modern Spain? ***Spain as Drama: From Comedy to Tragedy*** aims to answer some of these questions. It is an interdisciplinary course that analyzes and interprets modern Spanish society using drama and theatre terminology. The starting point will be the Spanish Golden Age period, with references to medieval history and culture (minority groups, music, laws, health and pandemics), when the Spanish *Commedia* was considered the television and the social media of the 16th and 17th centuries. Students will read excerpts from Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (17th century) and Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* (20th century), explore Picasso's Guernica painting (1937), evaluate the famous Mediterranean diet, judge the controversy of Catalonia attempting to be independent and major political groups opposed to the Spanish monarchy. It will also investigate the changes and the problems of urban areas and finally discuss the environment and climate change in Spain, a country politically, socially, and economically dedicated to respect the environment (solar and Aeolic parks, bike trails in cities, recycling containers in plazas, Doña Ana natural area), but also Spain is a country where its citizens leave tons of garbage in every corner. At the end of the semester students will have a better understanding of Spanish society, its values, and its own identity as a member of the European Union (Mediterranean connection) and its particular ties to Latin America (mutual influence and recipient of many immigrants) and be able to critically discuss cultural peculiarities of modern Spain. Students will also be able to compare similarities and differences of the Spanish society with their own community and culture.

Section 9: Italian Cinema – C. Burghardt

Section 9: TR 5:00 PM – 6:15 PM

This course will analyze fifteen masterpieces of Italian cinema from 1945 to 1975. We will evaluate these films as individual works of art. At the same time, we will explore how these movies both reflected and affected the wider social and cultural environment of post-war Italy. In doing so, we will investigate the evolution of national aesthetics, politics, and genres. Viewing these movies provides a window into the recent history of a beautiful, diverse, and culturally significant nation. Finally, we will assess the similarities and differences of some of the great directors of world cinema, including Rossellini, De Sica, Fellini, Germi, Pasolini, Visconti, Olmi, Antonioni, Bertolucci, and Wertmüller.