

HUMANITIES (HUMS)

* **HUMS 0204a / ITAL 0030a, Six Global Perspectives on Knights** Alessandro Giammei

What do Batman (the Dark Knight) and Orlando (Charlemagne's wise paladin) have in common? What is the thread that connects the Jedi knights of *Star Wars* and those that sat around King Arthur's round table? How did medieval history and Renaissance poetry inform the expanded universes of superhero movies and fantasy literature, along with the inexhaustible fan-fiction that further extends and queers them? Chivalry, as a code of conduct and a network of symbols, inspired some of the most entertaining stories of the so-called Western canon, blurring the divide between high and popular culture. It offered storytellers (and nerds) of all ages a set of norms to question, bend, and break—especially in terms of gender. It challenged the very format of books, re-defining for good concepts like literary irony, seriality, and intermediality. This seminar proposes six pretty good trans-historical archetypes of fictional knights, combining iconic figures such as Marvel's Iron Man and Italo Calvino's Agilulfo, Ludovico Ariosto's Bradamante and *Game of Thrones'* Brienne of Tarth, Don Quixote and the Mandalorian. By analyzing together their oaths, weapons, armors, and destinies we aim to develop reading and writing skills to tackle any text, from epic and scholarship to TV-shows and comic-books. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Students enroll concurrently with HUMS 0299, Six Global Perspectives Lab. WR, HU o Course cr

HUMS 214b / EALL 2190b / EAST 2201b / PHIL 1119b / RLST 171b, Introduction to Chinese Philosophy Lucas Bender

This course represents an introduction to the most important philosophical thinkers and texts in Chinese history, ranging from roughly 500 BC–1500 AD. Topics include ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and ontology. We discuss the basic works of Confucian and Daoist philosophers during the Warring States and early imperial eras, the continuation of these traditions in early medieval “dark learning,” Buddhist philosophy (in its original Indian context, the early period of its spread to China, and in mature Chinese Buddhist schools such as Chan/Zen), and Neo-Confucian philosophy. The course emphasizes readings in the original texts of the thinkers and traditions in question (all in English translation). No knowledge of Chinese or previous contact with Chinese philosophy required. HU TR o Course cr

* **HUMS 0220a / ENGL 0820a, Six Global Perspectives on Biography** Ernest Mitchell

This course focuses on the humanities through an intensive study of transatlantic biographers. We examine six roles biographers can play: the archivalist, the contemporary, the fictionalizer, the listener, the miniaturist, and the systematizer. Our readings range widely over cultures, places, and times: from Senegalese griots to the *Lives* of Mary Shelley; from Gertrude Stein's “autobiographies” to the microbiographies of Jorge Luis Borges; from fragments by Walter Benjamin to Daphne Brooks' liner notes on Beyoncé. We devote sustained attention to developing writing skills and introduce students to the special collections, art galleries, and rare books libraries of Yale. Friday sessions alternate between writing workshops and field trips to Yale collections. This course is part of the “Six Pretty Good Ideas” program. Enrollment

limited to first-year students. Students enroll concurrently with HUMS 0299, Six Global Perspectives Lab. WR, HU o Course cr

*** HUMS 0240a / CPLT 0310a / EALL 020 / EALL 0200a, Six Global Perspectives on Poetry** Lucas Bender

This first-year seminar in the Six Global Perspectives series offers an introduction to college-level Humanities courses. We read six poems that are considered among the greatest in their very different cultural traditions. By filling in how each of these traditions understood the art of poetry, we consider the ways that verse, across cultures and historical eras, has allowed authors to navigate the challenging relationship between the universal and the particular. We make extensive use of Yale's rich manuscript archives, historical object collections, and art galleries, and we devote sustained attention to improving academic writing skills. Friday lab sessions alternate between writing workshops and field trips to Yale collections. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Students enroll concurrently with HUMS 0299, Six Global Perspectives Lab. WR, HU

*** HUMS 0245a / NELC 0090a, Six Global Perspectives on Evil: Murder, Law, and True Crime in History** Staff

Harem conspiracies, kings' assassinations, self-defense killings, witch hunts, and serial murderers. The history of murder, violence, and criminal investigation is as old as humankind. Yet, crime is not always considered evil, nor is evil always associated with crime. In this course, we discuss how the way evil was perceived and crime was punished has changed throughout history. From mythical accounts of murders, to real records of trials of humans, animals, and even objects accused of homicide or witchcraft, we analyze how aspects of social status or gender played a role in shaping punishment across Eastern and Western civilizations. We compare codified-law civilizations to those in which custom, social pressure, and community ethics determined correct behavior. Four historical cold cases with accompanying evidence are presented for in-class debate, and... perhaps students may be able to help solve an old mystery! At the end of the semester, we recreate historical trials using the same crime, evidence, and participants, but following the law and procedures of each one of the historical settings covered in this course. Will the verdict and sentence be any different? Friday sessions alternate between writing workshops and field trips to Yale collections. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Students enroll concurrently with HUMS 0299, Six Global Perspectives Lab. WR, HU RP 1½ Course cr

*** HUMS 0320b / AMST 0029b / AMST 029 / ENGL 0729b, Henry Thoreau** Michael Warner

Henry Thoreau played a critical role in the development of environmentalism, American prose, civil rights, and the politics of protest. We read his writing in depth, and with care, understanding it both in its historical context and in its relation to present concerns of democracy and climate change. We read his published writing and parts of the journal, as well as biographical and contextual material. The class makes a field trip to Walden Pond and Concord, learning about climate change at Walden as revealed by Thoreau's unparalleled documentation of his biotic surroundings. Student's consider Thoreau's place in current debates about the environment and politics, and are encouraged to make connection with those debates in a final paper. Previously ENGL 029. Enrollment limited to first-year students. HU

* **HUMS 0350a / HIST 0125 / HUMS 035 / PLSC 0243a, The American Death Penalty** Lincoln Caplan

This first-year seminar focuses on the U.S. Supreme Court's 44-year experiment in regulating the American death penalty. The aims of the course are to have students learn about the workings and history of the system of capital punishment in the U.S., which is one of the most controversial elements of American criminal justice, and decide whether, in their view, the experiment is succeeding or failing – why and how. For students interested in the criminal justice system. Enrollment limited to first-year students. SO

* **HUMS 0360b / HIST 0623b / JDST 0035b / RLST 0035b, Jerusalem: Judaism, Christianity, Islam** Sarit Kattan Gribetz

The Old City of Jerusalem is just 0.35 square miles large, about half the size of Yale's campus. Have you ever wondered what makes this tiny city so beloved to – and the object of continual strife for – Jews, Christians, and Muslims? Through engagement with a wide range of sources – including biblical lamentations, archeological excavations, qur'anic passages, exegetical materials, medieval pilgrim itineraries, legal documents, maps, poetry, art, architecture, and international political resolutions – students develop the historiographical tools and theoretical frameworks to study the history of one of the world's most enduringly important and bitterly contested cities. Students encounter persistent themes central to the identity of Jerusalem: geography and topography; exile, diaspora, and return; destruction and trauma; religious violence and war; practices of pilgrimage; social diversity; missionizing; the rise of nationalism; peace efforts; the ethics of storytelling; and the stakes of studying the past. Enrollment limited to first-year students. HU RP

* **HUMS 0410a / GMAN 0400a, The Top Ten: Best Books of the 21st Century** Sophie Schweiger

In 2025, *The New York Times* published a list of “The Best 100 Books of the 21st Century.” We will not read all of them. Instead, we will ask what it means to rank literature in the first place, as our class takes a closer look at some the different measures by which books can be made subject to a ranking – for example: sales numbers, expert opinion, and critical acclaim, or success through translation and adaptation. We study the different ways of awarding book prizes and curating lists of literature. Additionally, we study the circumstances that lead to literary “hypes,” including Netflix adaptations, BookTok, and the author-as-celebrity. We read novels and excerpts of novels by some of the *New York Times*' top-ranked authors, as well as by Nobel Prize laureates of recent years, and compare the different modes of selection and the benefits as well as biases inherent to the respective lists. We also look at currently circulating lists of “banned books” and the works of literature banned from official reading lists and syllabi to understand another aspect of the politics behind the curation of lists. We close our literary journey with a text by author Toni Morrison who, curiously, made all three lists. Enrollment limited to first-year students. HU

* **HUMS 434b / CLCV 1381b / NELC 1300b, Mesopotamia's Literary Legacy** Kathryn Slanski

This seminar explores myth, epic, love poetry, and wisdom literature from the ancient Near East, ca. 3000–323 BCE, within its own cultural context and in dialogue with literature from ancient Greece and the Hebrew Bible, conduits by which the literary legacy of the ancient Near East has left its mark on the Western tradition. HU

*** HUMS 0650a / EDST 0165a / EDST 065, Education and the Life Worth Living**

Matthew Croasmun

Consideration of education and what it has to do with real life – not just any life, but a life worth living. Engagement with three visions of different traditions of imagining the good life and of imagining education: Confucianism, Christianity, and Modernism. Students will be asked to challenge the fundamental question of the good life and to put that question at the heart of their college education. Enrollment limited to first-year students. HU

*** HUMS 0750a, Mastering the Art of Watercolor** Adam Van Doren

An introductory course on the art of watercolor as a humanistic discipline within the liberal arts tradition. Readings, discussions, and studio work emphasize critical, creative thinking through a tactile, “learning by doing” study of the watercolor medium. Students analyze and imitate the classic techniques of J. M.W. Turner, John Singer Sargent, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Edward Hopper, among others. Studio components include painting *en plein air* to understand color, form, perspective, composition, and shade and shadow. Basic drawing skills recommended. Enrollment limited to first-year students. HU RP

HUMS 1060a / EVST 2206a / HIST 1727a / HSHM 2010a / PHYS 1060a, Sustainable Energy: Physics and History

Students explore the physical logic of energy and power in parallel with the histories of technology for energy exploitation and economic theories of sustainability on the path to modernity. They learn the fundamentals of quantitative analysis of contemporary and historical energy harvesting, its carbon intensity, and climate impact. They also gain an understanding of the historical underpinnings of the current global energy status quo and its relationship to economic theories of sustainability. Mathematical proficiency with algebra is assumed. Students from all academic interests and experiences are welcome in the course. QR, SC, SO o Course cr

HUMS 1210b / ANTH 1200b / NELC 1200b, Unequal: Dynamics of Power and Social Hierarchy in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia Gojko Barjamovic

The course "Unequal" examines the historical roots of intolerance, slavery, and imperialism, emphasizing how our perceptions of history shape contemporary beliefs and policies. It challenges the notion that inequality is an inevitable outcome of societal complexity, positing that historical narratives often frame progress and freedom while obscuring themes of inequality. By investigating early human history, the course aims to unpack the concepts of identity, possession, value, freedom, and power, exploring their impact on modern society. Rather than focusing on specific literature or chronological period, "Unequal" centers around critical questions about human culture. The course employs innovative experimental lab assignments, allowing students to engage with the past creatively, such as cooking ancient recipes, brewing beer, and creating virtual museum exhibits. This interdisciplinary approach encourages a deeper understanding of the historical context that informs present-day issues, inviting students to rethink common narratives and assumptions about equality and progress. Ultimately, the course aims to foster critical thinking about the interplay between history and contemporary society. HU, SO o Course cr

* **HUMS 1270a / CPLT 1680a / ENGL 1029a / TDPS 1005a, Tragedy in the European Literary Tradition** Shane Vogel

The genre of tragedy from its origins in ancient Greece and Rome through the European Renaissance to the present day. Themes of justice, religion, free will, family, gender, race, and dramaturgy. Works might include Aristotle's *Poetics* or Homer's *Iliad* and plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Hrotsvitha, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Calderon, Racine, Büchner, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Wedekind, Synge, Lorca, Brecht, Beckett, Soyinka, Tarell Alvin McCraney, and Lynn Nottage. Focus on textual analysis and on developing the craft of persuasive argument through writing. Formerly ENGL 129. WR, HU

* **HUMS 1280a / CPLT 2000a / NELC 1280a, From Gilgamesh to Persepolis: Introduction to Near Eastern Literatures** Kathryn Slanski

This course is an introduction to Near Eastern civilization through its rich and diverse literary cultures. We read and discuss ancient works, such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Genesis*, and "The Song of Songs," medieval works, such as *A Thousand and One Nights*, selections from the *Qur'an*, and *Shah-nama: The Book of Kings*, and modern works of Israeli, Turkish, and Iranian novelists and Palestinian poets. Students complement classroom studies with visits to the Yale Babylonian Collection and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, as well as with film screenings and guest speakers. Students also learn fundamentals of Near Eastern writing systems, and consider questions of tradition, transmission, and translation. All readings are in translation. Permission from the instructor required. WR, HU

HUMS 1315a / HSHM 2210a / RLST 1315a, What Was the University? Noreen Khawaja

A deep history of the university as a political, intellectual, and ritual institution. Focus on key chapters and cases in the university's formation, from the mutual-aid societies of medieval Europe to modern research institutions such as Yale. What conditions gave rise to the particular type of school we call a university? How have universities played a role in the development of modern society? How might the history of this institution help us understand its role at the center of politics today? HU o Course cr

* **HUMS 1320a / CPLT 1690a / ENGL 1030a, Epic in the European Literary Tradition** Craig Eklund

The epic tradition traced from its foundations in ancient Greece and Rome to the modern novel. The creation of cultural values and identities; exile and homecoming; the heroic in times of war and of peace; the role of the individual within society; memory and history; politics of gender, race, and religion. Works include Homer's *Odyssey*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Inferno*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, and Joyce's *Ulysses*. Focus on textual analysis and on developing the craft of persuasive argument through writing. Formerly ENGL 130. WR, HU

* **HUMS 1390a / MUSI 1137a, Western Philosophy in Four Operas 1600-1900** Gary Tomlinson

This course intensively studies four operas central to the western repertory, spanning the years from the early 17th to the late 19th century: Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Wagner's *Die Walküre* (from *The Ring of the Nibelungs*), and Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*. The course explores the expression in these works of philosophical stances of their times on the human subject and human society, bringing to bear writings contemporary to them as well as from more recent times. Readings include works of

Ficino, Descartes, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Douglass, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Adorno. We discover that the expression of changing philosophical stances can be found not only in dramatic themes and the words sung, but in the changing natures of the musical styles deployed. HU

HUMS 1400a / NELC 1210a, The Hero in the Ancient Near East Kathryn Slanski
This course is an introduction to of ancient Near Eastern civilization through the prism of its heroes, figures at the intersection of literature, religion, history, and art. While our principle focus is on heroes from ancient Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible, students will also have opportunities to compare contemporary heroes to the ANE hero, and to consider if the ANE hero has a modern legacy. WR, HU o Course cr

*** HUMS 1740b / ENGL 3474b / HIST 2705b, Writing from the Archive: Imagining the Real** Adina Hoffman

Where do the dry, who-what-which details set down on a census form meet the far messier and richer reality of the people whose names are scrawled there? And how might a writer bring that meeting about? What can a shoebox of doodle-filled letters tell us about the ways that friendship, art, war, sex, and politics struck a couple of New York novelists, c. 1941? How do we respond as writers and as a culture when faced with the lack of such inky particulars? Blending seminar and workshop, this class is meant for students who want to write literary non-fiction based on archival materials. In an intensive, hands-on fashion, we'll dig into documents of all sorts as we read essays and excerpts from belletristic works that wrestle with the sometimes slippery fact of the archive. Throughout, we'll ask how best to bring vital prose into being. Weekly writing experiments that draw from various Yale collections and beyond will encourage students to see and respond to archival discoveries freshly and for themselves. A semester-long writing project will take shape as an extension of that seeing and responding. While no previous archival experience is required, this class calls for a serious commitment to the written word. By permission of instructor. Limit 12. WR, HU

*** HUMS 1770a / CLCV 3340a / PLSC 306a / PLSC 3369a, Tragedy and Politics**
Daniel Schillinger

The canonical Greek tragedians—Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—dramatize fundamental and discomfiting questions that are often sidelined by the philosophical tradition. In this seminar, we read plays about death, war, revenge, madness, impossible choices, calamitous errors, and the destruction of whole peoples. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were also piercing observers of political life. No less than Plato and Aristotle, the Attic tragedians write to elicit reflection on the basic patterns of politics: democracy and tyranny, war and peace, the family and the city, the rule of law and violence. Finally, we also approach Greek tragedy through its reception. Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, and Nietzsche: all these thinkers responded to tragedy. Texts include Aeschylus, *Oresteia*; Aristophanes, *Frogs* and *Lysistrata*; Euripides, *Bacchae*, *Heracles*, and *Trojan Women*; Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*; Plato, *Symposium*; and Sophocles, *Antigone*, *Philoctetes*, and *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Previous work in political theory, classics, or philosophy is recommended. HU

*** HUMS 1840a / AMST 1184a / ENGL 2464a, Approaches to Contemporary Biography: Writing and Reading Biography** Karin Roffman

The art of biography explored through groundbreaking examples, with particular emphasis on contemporary texts that explore the lives and work of artists. Topics on

biographical theory and practice include: the balance of life and work; the relationship between biographer and subject; creative approaches to archives and research; and imaginative narrative strategies. Some classes take place at the Beinecke Library and there are some visits by working biographers. Students must complete an original biographical project by the end of the semester. HU RP

*** HUMS 1850a / ENGL 3454a / HSAR 4460a, Writing about Contemporary**

Figurative Art Margaret Spillane

A workshop on journalistic strategies for looking at and writing about contemporary paintings of the human figure. Practitioners and theorists of figurative painting; controversies, partisans, and opponents. Includes field trips to museums and galleries in New York City. WR, HU

*** HUMS 1997b / CPLT 3005b / ENGL 3415b / JDST 3843b, Advanced Literary**

Translation Peter Cole

A sequel to LITR 348 or its equivalent, this course brings together advanced and seriously committed students of literary translation, especially (but not only) those who are doing translation-related senior theses. Students must apply to the class with a specific project in mind, that they have been developing or considering, and that they will present on a regular basis throughout the semester. Discussion of translations-in-progress are supplemented by short readings that include model works from the world of literary translation, among them introductions and pieces of criticism, as well as reflections by practitioners treating all phases of their art. The class is open to undergraduates and graduate students who have taken at least one translation workshop. By permission of the instructor. Formerly ENGL 483. Prerequisite: LITR 348.

*** HUMS 2000a / CPLT 1950a / ENGL 3505a / MUSI 4362a, Medieval Songlines**

Ardis Butterfield

Introduction to medieval song in England via modern poetic theory, material culture, affect theory, and sound studies. Song is studied through foregrounding music as well as words, words as well as music. WR, HU

*** HUMS 2035b / HIST 2635b, Antisemitism and its opponents in the Muslim world**

Staff

Antisemitism, as well as opposition to it, has long been a part of social, political, and intellectual life in Muslim-majority societies. These societies have also long included significant Jewish minorities, especially before the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948. This course takes a historical approach, carefully examining antisemitisms of various types in various periods as well as opposition to them by Jews, Muslims, and others in the Islamic world. HU

*** HUMS 2228a / CPLT 3450a / EVST 2228a / HIST 1759a, Climate Change and the Humanities**

Katja Lindskog

What can the Humanities tell us about climate change? The Humanities help us to better understand the relationship between everyday individual experience, and our rapidly changing natural world. To that end, students read literary, political, historical, and religious texts to better understand how individuals both depend on, and struggle against, the natural environment in order to survive. HU

HUMS 2501a / CLCV 2501a / HIST 1217a, The Roman Republic Staff

The origins, development, and expansion of Rome from the earliest times to the deaths of Caesar and Cicero. Cultural identity and interaction; slavery, class, and the family; politics, rhetoric, and propaganda; religion; imperialism; monumentality and memory; and the perception and writing of history. Application of literary and archaeological evidence. HU o Course cr

*** HUMS 2530a / ENGL 3846a / RLST 2330a, Poetry and Faith** Christian Wiman

Issues of faith examined through poetry, with a focus on modern poems from 1850 to the present. Poems from various faith traditions studied, as well as to secular and antireligious poetry. HU

*** HUMS 2555a / RLST 2555a, Metaphysical Fictions** Nancy Levene

This course takes up works that explore predicaments in historical and conceptual reality. At issue are world building, disruption, and alteration, perspective and time, relationship, interpretation, and varieties of threat and response. HU

*** HUMS 2631a / FILM 4270a / MUSI 4470a, Noise** Brian Kane

A study of noise from musical, philosophical, and cultural perspectives. Reading and discussion of theoretical, political, ecological, and avant-garde writings on noise; critical study of musical repertoire involving noise, sound art, and recorded sound; introduction to current debates in sound studies and auditory culture; hands-on work with electronic noise. WR, HU

HUMS 2720b / CPLT 2650b / EALL 2560b / EAST 2221b / GLBL 2251b, China in the World Jing Tsu

Recent headlines about China in the world, deciphered in both modern and historical contexts. Interpretation of new events and diverse texts through transnational connections. Topics include China's international relations and global footprint, language and script, Chinese America, science and technology, and science fiction. Special topic for AY 2025-2026 with guest speakers: AI, U.S.-China futurism, and tech policy Readings and discussion in English. HU o Course cr

*** HUMS 2740a / CPLT 3880a / NELC 3250a, The Education of Princes: Medieval Advice Literature of Rulership and Counsel** Shawkat Toorawa

In this course we read “mirrors for princes,” a type of political writing by courtiers and advisors. The genre flourished in the courts of medieval Europe and the Islamic world. We learn about the ethical and moral considerations that guided (or were meant to guide) rulers in their conduct, in the formulation of their policies, and about theories of rule and rulership. The works we read are from several cultural, religious, and political traditions, and include: Christine de Pizan, *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor*; Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*; Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*; Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Kalilah and Dimnah*, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus: Book of the Statesman*; Machiavelli, *The Prince*; Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government*. All texts are in English translation. Instructor permission is required. HU

*** HUMS 2790a / HIST 3292a / PLSC 3313a, Democracy and the French Revolution** Isaac Nakhimovsky

The French Revolution of 1789 and its legacies, as viewed through the late-eighteenth-century debates about democracy, equality, representative government, and historical change that shaped an enduring agenda for historical and political thought in Europe and around the world. WR, HU

HUMS 2800a, What Matters Most Staff

"What is a good life?" is a daunting question. While each of us needs to answer it, it is almost impossible to do so all at once. This course divides the question of the good life into smaller, but still very significant questions, like: Who do we answer to for the shape of our lives? What should we hope for? What is the role of suffering in a good life? Readings and discussion-heavy lectures engage a number of ancient and contemporary voices from a variety of religious, philosophical, ideological, and cultural perspectives. Through a series of small writing assignments, students respond to each of life's big questions for themselves and synthesize these responses into their own account of what matters and why. WR, HU o Course cr

* **HUMS 2900a / CPLT 2180a / RSEE 2090a, Medicine and the Humanities: Certainty and Unknowing** Matthew Morrison

Sherwin Nuland often referred to medicine as "the Uncertain Art." In this course, we address the role of uncertainty in medicine, and the role that narrative plays in capturing that uncertainty. We focus our efforts on major authors and texts that define the modern medical humanities, with primary readings by Mikhail Bulgakov, Henry Marsh, Atul Gawande, and Lisa Sanders. Other topics include the philosophy of science (with a focus on Karl Popper), rationalism and romanticism (William James), and epistemology and scientism (Wittgenstein). Events permitting, field trips will take us to the Yale Medical Historical Library, the Yale Center for British Art, the Peabody Museum, and the Marsh Botanical Garden. HU

* **HUMS 3061a / CPLT 3065a / GMAN 3060a, Bad Books** Kirk Wetters

Traditional humanities education always focused on "greatness"—but there is no denying the critical value and sometimes even the enjoyment of poor performances. In a world governed by norms and standards (against the appearance of laxness and relativism), "badness" and amateurism are inevitable. "Bad" works can be extremely popular and influential (e.g., in the cases of pseudoscience, misinformation, racism, antisemitism). The "bad" archive contributes to a reevaluation of critical standards, forms of official and unofficial censorship, freedom of speech and the function of taboos. The course explores famous works that have been considered aesthetically, morally, ideologically and politically pernicious (stopping short, however, of screeds and manifestos like Hitler's *Mein Kampf*). Nevertheless, this course warrants a strong content warning. The range of our considerations will be partly based on the students' wishes and judgments. HU

* **HUMS 3188a / CPLT 3180a / FILM 2827a / GMAN 3180a, Artificial Life:**

(Re)Production and the Limits of Humanity Austen Hinkley

A mad scientist creates a living being in a laboratory; automata band together to overthrow their creators; a moving statue appears more lifelike than a human being. Such fantastical images and stories of artificial humanity haunt human culture, from ancient myths to contemporary media. This seminar explores such imaginations of the artificially human, with an emphasis on their role within German culture, in order to examine the often-hazy boundary between artificial production and organic reproduction. We will discuss the significance of this boundary for our understanding of topics such as literature, art, labor, gender, and psychology. Readings are drawn from sources both ancient and modern, from discourses including religion, philosophy, alchemy, literature, and psychoanalysis. In addition to readings, film and other visual materials will be incorporated as primary texts. HU

* **HUMS 3304a / AMST 3304a / ANTH 3304a / ER&M 3304a / SOCY 3104a, Ethnography & Journalism** Madiha Tahir

While each is loathed to admit it, journalism and ethnography are cousins in some respects interested in (albeit distinct) modes of storytelling, translation, and interpretation. This methods course considers these shared grounds to launch a cross-comparative examination. What can the practices of each field and method—journalism and ethnography—tell us about the other? How do journalists and ethnographers engage ideas about the truth? What can they learn from each other? Students spend the first four weeks studying journalistic methods and debates before shifting to ethnographic discussions, and finally, comparative approaches to writing; data and evidence; experience and positionality. HU, SO

* **HUMS 3371a / PHIL 3371a / PLSC 3371a, Machiavelli and Machiavellianism** Steven Smith

It is generally agreed that modern political science begins with Machiavelli, but what that means remains a subject of considerable dispute. What were Machiavelli's accomplishments? Was he a political realist who taught us to seek for "the effectual truth" of things? Was he an advisor to princes or, at the very least, powerful executives who taught the importance of acting by "oneself alone"? Was he a populist who sought to reanimate a taste for Roman-style republicanism? Or did he seek to bring about a new kind of expansive territorial state fuelled by war and the desire for empire?

Machiavelli's influence has been widespread throughout the modern world. But just because his writings have been used and misused for a range of causes does not mean that we cannot discover an intelligible and coherent core to his work. We read Machiavelli's two most important works of political theory—the *Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy*. The latter is read along with the Roman historian Titus Livy who was Machiavelli's major source for his theories of political conflict, leadership, and liberty. We then consider his influence on some selected nineteenth and twentieth-century political theorists who have appropriated him as the central figure of modernity. Throughout the course we are attentive to the interpretive and methodological issues at stake in the recovery of the thought of this great Florentine political thinker. SO

* **HUMS 3372a / EDST 1372a / PLSC 3372a, Idolizing Education** Mordechai Levy-Eichel

What is learning? What is education? And why is it so easy to ask, yet so damn hard to answer these questions? Is there something wrong with these queries, with the assumptions we have about them—and what assumptions are those, anyways? This course will be an examination of the history, sociology, politics, and philosophy of education, as well as a critical examination of the scholarly study of education. Although there has probably never been more research into learning and schools, our presuppositions about what education should be have, in fact, narrowed and hardened. This course aims both to break and to refresh them. Examples will range chronologically from ancient to modern times, and will be taken from a broad range of traditions and institutions. Particular attention will be paid to the origins and growth of the research university, and the costs and benefits involved in the modern institutionalization of learning. We will focus on—in the words of a noted, but now neglected Yale psychologist (Seymour Sarason)—how education has, especially in modern western societies like ours, become both "scapegoat and salvation."

* **HUMS 3386a / HSAR 4405a / ITAL 3386a, The Dark Side of The Italian Renaissance: Sex, Scandals, and Secrets** Simona Lorenzini and Deborah Pellegrino

The course explores the more controversial, hidden, and overlooked aspects of the Italian Renaissance. While this period is celebrated for its artistic, cultural, and intellectual achievements, it also had its fair share of intrigue, corruption, and moral complexities. Through love poems, secret letters, intricate networks, and political conspiracies, the course paints a vivid picture of the social and cultural landscape of Renaissance and early modern Italy. We look at the complex figure of Michelangelo, both as an artist and poet, focusing on his queer relationship with Tommaso de' Cavalieri and his friendship with Vittoria Colonna. We then discuss how Renaissance art, often commissioned by powerful individuals—such as Isabella D'Este's patronage of Leonardo da Vinci—was used to promote political or social agendas. We examine the alliances, betrayals, and murders that took place in Renaissance courts and how they shaped the political arena. Topics include the assassination of Lorenzo de' Medici's brother, Caterina de' Medici's agency, and Borgia's rise to power as well as the use of poison as a political instrument in power struggles and schemes to eliminate rivals. The course highlights radical and sharp-witted women writers, such as Moderata Fonte and Arcangela Tarabotti, who protested against a patriarchal society, and gave voice to those who challenged gender norms. By uncovering these compelling narratives through the intersection of literature, religion, history, art, and sexuality, the course offers a more nuanced and critical view on this acclaimed era. This course counts as language across the curriculum (LxC). HU

* **HUMS 3401a / CPLT 3401a / RSEE 3401a / RUSS 3401a, The Stranger: Travel and Belonging Across Empires** Jinyi Chu and Hana Stankova

How has the “stranger” shaped national and imperial identities? This course considers travel and emigration in imperial contexts and brings Russian literature into conversation with European literature. We explore narratives of imperial exceptionalism, Russian parochialism, and the broader imperial contexts that shaped the world in the 19th and 20th centuries. Through a literary journey from the late 18th century to the mid 20th century, students consider how the Russian literary tradition and national identity were shaped by fraught exchanges between Russians and Western Europeans, as well as by Russia's expansion eastward. We read canonical works by writers who questioned or supported empires and think through ways in which they influenced one another. Through close readings, historicization, and theorization, students gain new perspectives on the issues of belonging and alienation in changing imperial contexts. WR, HU

* **HUMS 3466a / AMST 3334a / CPLT 3500a / FILM 3540a / GMAN 3460a, Uwe Johnson's Anniversaries: From A Year in the Life of Gesine Cresspahl** Austen Hinkley

Uwe Johnson's *Anniversaries: From A Year in the Life of Gesine Cresspahl* remains a monument of postwar German literature – and it was written in and about New York City. Across its 367 short chapters (each corresponding to a day of the year), the novel unfolds on three levels: the historical present in New York, memories and family history from Germany, and reporting from the New York Times on current events. The result is a view of life, politics, and history in the middle of the 20th century that is as rich and expansive as it is fragmented. The social and political climate of New York

in the late '60s is put into contact with memories of the rise of Nazism in Germany; reporting on the Vietnam war, the civil rights movement and the Prague Spring is refracted through the lenses of the protagonist's past life in East Germany and her new life raising her daughter alone in New York. This course undertakes a close reading of Johnson's sprawling novel with attention to its many historical, political, and literary contexts. Readings from the novel are complemented by relevant short readings on theories of media, politics, literature, and history. No prior knowledge of German language and literature is required.

HU

* **HUMS 3475b / FILM 3740b, Media and Protection** Francesco Casetti

Alarm systems safeguard private homes; passwords filter access to websites; digital watches monitor vital signs; x-rays scan passengers in airport terminals; locked doors requiring IDs isolate sensitive sites; GPS helps escape traffic jams; weather forecasts warn how to avoid impending disasters; whistleblowing platforms stop wrongdoing; online entertainment offers respite from external pressures; and social networks allow online exchanges between individuals who want to bypass physical interactions. A full range of media provide protection against what appears to be a threatening milieu. However, protection has a cost in terms of values and habits. It requires identifying and even materializing a threat and an enemy; it implies a step back from the direct experience of reality and others; and ultimately it idealizes a safe world. But is the world ready to be safe? Is the enemy a necessary invention? Is security guaranteed to all? And ultimately, is protection the only remedy for our fears? This seminar addresses such questions. HU

* **HUMS 3720b / CPLT 4890b / GMAN 3620b, Critique and Crisis** Kirk Wetters

In our time, when everyone is suspected of being hyper-critical, it is not surprising that the limits of critique, its function and institutional location are called to question. The idea of "post-critique" has been much discussed in recent year. In order to gain orientation with respect to such concerns, this course develops critical models, primarily from the German tradition, in order to show the great variety of options available beyond the "hermeneutics of suspicion." Topics include: post-critique, the history of critique/criticism, the Romantic concept of critique, traditional vs. critical theory, historicism, philology vs. hermeneutics, science (Wissenschaft) vs. the critique of positivism. Main protagonists include Kant, Schiller, Schlegel, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Max Weber, Lukács, Husserl, Benjamin, Adorno, Koselleck, Szondi, Gadamer, Gumbrecht, Latour, Felski. HU

* **HUMS 3800a / CPLT 1540a / ENGL 3195a, The Bible as a Literature** Leslie Brisman
Study of the Bible as a literature – a collection of works exhibiting a variety of attitudes toward the conflicting claims of tradition and originality, historicity and literariness.

WR, HU RP

* **HUMS 4144a, Love, Marriage, Family: A Psychological Study through the Arts**

Ellen Handler Spitz and R Howard Bloch

A psychological study of love, marriage, and family through literature, visual arts, and music, from the ancient world to mid-century America. An over-arching theme is the protean human potential for adaptation, innovation, and creativity by which couples and families struggle to thrive in the face of opposing forces, both internal and external. In this seminar, we study these themes not only as they have been treated in different

parts of the world at different times, but also the means offered by each of the arts for their portrayal. HU

* **HUMS 4145a / ENGL 2145a / FILM 4220a, The Aesthetics of Adaptation** Katja Lindskog

Adaptations of literary texts are the bread and butter of visual narrative media like TV and film. Adaptations of certain authors and texts have given rise to entire sub-genres and cottage industries. We consider what adaptations of literary texts, particularly very famous and beloved texts, might help us understand better about the texts themselves, and about the needs and expectations of the audiences of their adaptations. To that purpose, this course explores the purposes and effects of adaptation through a study of a variety of screen versions of adapted texts by authors including Jane Austen, Emily St. John Mandel, and Geoffrey Chaucer. Assigned readings include both literary texts and screen adaptations. HU

HUMS 4163a, AI as Global Cultural Artifact Sayan Bhattacharyya

The course seeks to help develop an understanding of how Artificial Intelligence has been imagined, in global culture, by writers and artists hailing from, or affiliating with, various parts of the globe; and also how, to some extent, human cultural imagination and demands have influenced developments in AI. We address these questions in a global sense as much as we can: while the culture of Western modernity will figure very prominently in the readings and discussion, we take a more enlarged perspective, with some of the readings being about, and/or from, places and imaginaries beyond the West: China, Afrofuturism, and South Asia. Readings consist mostly of imaginative literary works (short stories, and excerpts from longer novels), but also encompasses some non-fiction and graphic fiction. At least two weeks of class also focuses on non-textual culture (theater, film, paintings, and music that is connected to AI). The readings combine with assignments involving both traditional essays (midterm essay and final essay) and short assignments (assigned on a rolling basis, which let students explore the questions addressed in the course to a further extent). HU

* **HUMS 4165a, Culture and Artificial Intelligence** Sayan Bhattacharyya

The world is currently rife with talk of a fourth industrial revolution, which is supposedly being inaugurated by recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI). What might an AI-induced shift in how we manipulate information, generate sound, create visual art (both still and moving images), and tell stories signify in the realm of culture, and what might it portend for our sense of who we are in the world? How should we situate AI, when viewed through the lens of culture at large, within the story of modernity? While the recent uproar concerning large language models (LLMs) in AI is only two years old, AI as a field has, however, existed for almost seventy years now. This course looks at AI and explore its relation with culture in a threefold way: through (i) *historicizing* (by looking at the historical cultural conditions that enabled or facilitated certain habits of thought or régimes of truth that led to present-day AI); (ii) *analogizing* (by tracing the similarities between patterns of expression in culture and developments in AI); and (iii) *contextualizing* (tracing how cultural artifacts have influenced AI's directions and vice versa). The course's orientation towards AI is critical, interpretive and analytical. HU

* **HUMS 4183a / HSHM 4640a, Nature and Human Nature** Gary Tomlinson

This course explores the Western conception of the human place in the natural world as it has shifted across four centuries. It features, alongside corollary readings,

close study of three classic texts: Galileo's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (1632), Giambattista Vico's *New Science* (1744), and Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) #fundamental texts locating humans in the cosmos, in society, and in natural history, respectively. It finishes with a new work, Terrence Deacon's *Incomplete Nature* (2011), an attempt to explain the emergence of mind from the natural world.

No prerequisites, though the challenging nature of the materials suggests that this course will be aimed mainly at students beyond their first year. HU

* **HUMS 4320a / CPLT 2190a / ENGL 2821a, The Waste Land** Paul Grimstad
The seminar looks closely at the most influential poem of the 20th century, T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land." Attention to the poem both as a work of radical modernist experiment and as carrying on a kaleidoscopic dialogue with world literature. Taking our cue from the notes Eliot added to the poem we read selections from the Buddha's Fire Sermon, the Upanishads, versions of the Holy Grail myth, Dante's *Inferno*, *The Tempest*, Charles Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, and F.H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*. Further reading includes Eliot's earlier poetry, especially "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and his own criticism of the period, including "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "The Metaphysical Poets," and "Ulysses, Order and Myth." We also consider critical appraisals of the poem by Virginia Woolf, F.R. Leavis and Ralph Ellison, be attentive to comparable aesthetic innovations of the period in painting and music (cubism, Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, ragtime), and listen to audio recordings of Eliot (and others) reading the poem. Meditation throughout on the poem as a collage of allusions forming a complex work of art. At least one course that involves close reading literary prose or poetry. WR, HU

* **HUMS 4333a / GMAN 3333a, Kafka** Paul North
A name, a puzzle to be solved, a mirage-like figure provoking writers like Jorge Luis Borges to step beyond staid literary models, Jew, German, subject of the Kingdom of Bohemia, accident insurance lawyer, inventor of a device to make table saws safe, abject sufferer of tuberculosis, critic of philosophy and European culture, misogynist, queer, dreamer and recorder of dreams, jokester, refuter of Kierkegaard, challenger to Nietzsche, fabulist, reader of Freud, reader of Flaubert, reader of..., writer of short prose pieces "in a single breath," diarist, novelist. Kafka. HU

* **HUMS 4344a / ENGL 4733a, Henry James** Ruth Yeazel
Selected novels by Henry James, from *Roderick Hudson* through *The Golden Bowl*. Particular attention to the international theme and to the ways in which James's later novels revisit and transform the matter of his earlier ones. WR, HU

* **HUMS 4363a / ENGL 3714a, Moby-Dick** John Peters
This seminar engages in the interpretation of a single great book, *Moby-Dick* (1851) by Herman Melville. We also read some of Melville's most relevant earlier and later works, and pay attention to the book's historical, literary, artistic, religious, economic, environmental, and technological contexts. Field trips to whaling-relevant sites possible. WR, HU

* **HUMS 4430a / HIST 3232a / JDST 3270a / MMES 3342a / RLST 2010a, Medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims In Conversation** Ivan Marcus
How members of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities thought of and interacted with members of the other two cultures during the Middle Ages. Cultural grids and expectations each imposed on the other; the rhetoric of otherness – humans

or devils, purity or impurity, and animal imagery; and models of religious community and power in dealing with the other when confronted with cultural differences. Counts toward either European or Middle Eastern distributional credit within the History major, upon application to the director of undergraduate studies. WR, HU RP

HUMS 4501a / PHIL 1118a / RLST 1270a / SAST 2610a, Buddhist Thought: The Foundations Staff

This class introduces the fundamentals of Buddhist thought, focusing on the foundational doctrinal, philosophical, and ethical ideas that have animated the Buddhist tradition from its earliest days in India 2500 years ago down to the present, in places such as Tibet, China, and Japan. Though there will be occasional discussion of the social and practical contexts of the Buddhist religion, the primary focus of this course lies on how traditional Buddhist thinkers conceptualize the universe, think about the nature of human beings, and propose that people should live their lives. Our main objects of inquiry are therefore the foundational Buddhist ideas, and the classic texts in which those ideas are put forth and defended, that are broadly speaking shared by all traditions of Buddhism. In the later part of the course, we take up some of these issues in the context of specific, regional forms of Buddhism, and watch some films that provide glimpses of Buddhist religious life on the ground. HU o Course cr

HUMS 4527a / CHNS 2000a / EALL 2000a / EAST 2202a, The Chinese Tradition Staff

An introduction to the literature, culture, and thought of premodern China, from the beginnings of the written record to the turn of the twentieth century. Close study of textual and visual primary sources, with attention to their historical and cultural backdrops. Students enrolled in CHNS 200 join a weekly Mandarin-language discussion section. No knowledge of Chinese required for students enrolled in EALL 200. Students enrolled in CHNS 200 must have L5 proficiency in Mandarin or permission of the course instructor. HU o Course cr

HUMS 4570a / HSAR 1170a / HSHM 2240a, Nature and Art, or The History of Almost Everything Staff

This global introductory course surveys the interrelation of nature and art from antiquity to the present. Throughout the semester, we consider a controversial question: is it possible to understand the history of art and science as a more-than-human story? Challenging traditional narratives of human progress, we attend to episodes of invention and destruction in equal measure. We discuss how art history is inseparable from histories of extracted resources, exploited species, environmental catastrophe, racialized and gendered understandings of the 'natural' and 'unnatural', and politicized understandings of land as power. At the same time, we explore how makers across cultures approached the natural world as a locus of the divine, a source of inspiration, and the ground for both scientific inquiry and the pursuit of self-knowledge. The very notions of art and artistic creation are impossible to define without recourse to nature as both a concept and a site of lived experience. This course is open to all, including those with no prior background in art history. Sections will include visits to collections and sites across Yale campus. HU o Course cr

*** HUMS 4710a, Special Studies in the Humanities** Paul Grimstad

For students who wish to pursue a topic in Humanities not otherwise covered. May be used for research or for directed reading under the guidance of one or more faculty advisers. In either case a term paper or its equivalent is required, as are regular meetings

with the adviser or advisers. To apply, a student should present a prospectus and a bibliography signed by the adviser or advisers to the director of undergraduate studies. Enrollment limited to juniors and seniors majoring in Humanities.

* **HUMS 4910a, The Senior Essay** Paul Grimstad

Independent library-based research under faculty supervision. To register, students must consult the director of undergraduate studies no later than the end of registration period in the previous term. A written plan of study approved by a faculty adviser must be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies. RP