

WGS Undergraduate Courses Spring 2019

WSGS 203/THEO 202, Christianity, Embodiment, and Violence

Tuesday 6-8:40 pm (E. Vasko)

Want to make a difference? Tired of just talking about social justice? Interested in psychology, sociology, public policy, education, or health, but still need to take a theology course? The course examines the research, writings, and experiences of women and men in the Christian tradition. Particular attention will be paid to religious justifications for violence and discrimination; and the role that theology and faith communities have played in both condoning and resisting such violence in the US. Theme Areas: Social Justice and Faith and Reason.

WSGS 205/ENGL 204-01 Literature and Popular Music

TR 9:25-10:40 (T. Kinnahan)

In this course we will examine how a variety of writers and filmmakers have represented and responded to popular music from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. Beginning with slave songs and their adaptation by America's first hit songwriter, Pittsburgh's own Stephen Foster, we will examine the aesthetic and social dimensions of popular music, trace its power to both shape and reflect social vision, and survey the uses to which it has been put in literature and film. We will give particular attention to the ways that issues of gender and race impact experiences with popular music. Sample texts included August Wilson's play *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, an exploration of racial conflicts and female empowerment, and Nick Hornby's novel *High Fidelity*, which probes (often humorously) notions of masculinity and femininity as refracted through the lens of popular music.

WSGS 205/ENGL 204-2 Children's Literature: A Wrinkle in Time: Pausing for Girlhood in Children's Fantasy Books and Films

MWF 9:00-9:50 (B. Kaser)

Girlhood is a complicated "period" for any girl, but what happens when she is thrown into the spotlight or even a complex fantasy tale where she is the heroine? Why does life seem to stand still during girlhood? Why is fantasy or an extraordinary life so appealing to young girls during this time of their lives? How does childhood impact womanhood and what particular experiences shape a girl's future? In this course, we will explore girlhood from the nineteenth century into modern day via popular children's texts and films. We will question what models of girlhood influenced girls in different generations while also questioning what famous girls inspire our own generation.

We will pay particular attention to the heroines of fantasy texts, such as *A Wrinkle in Time's* Meg Murray and *The Hunger Games's* Katniss Everdeen, while comparing these texts to their film adaptations. We will consider why we keep bringing back these same examples of girlhood generation after generation through a wide variety of formats including movies, TV series, and toys. We will also study girls in the spotlight and how celebrity takes a toll on growing up. Ultimately, we will consider constructions of girlhood and what the "real" girl is verses the "ideal" girl. Our ultimate goal will be to build a toolbox of famous and fantastic girlhoods in order to better understand the following: how culture influences realistic girlhoods, how gender plays a role in childhood, how girlhood contributes to womanhood, and finally, how girlhood is constructed and why society constructs girlhood the way it does. This course will also serve as a brief introduction to feminist and gender studies. We will consider basic concepts in the field in order to better prepare us for discussions about girlhood and eventually tracing the connections between girlhood, femininity, womanhood, and gender.

Texts will include J.M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*, Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*, and excerpts from J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, amongst others. Works by Frances Hodgson Burnett, Robin McKinley, Edith Nesbit, and additional token authors of children's literature will also be considered. We will further examine Shirley Temple, Emma Watson, and other girls that have grown up in the public's gaze. Finally, we will inform these readings and observations with critical theory from feminist, fantasy, film, and childhood studies. We will particularly consider scholarly works by James Kincaid, Claudia Nelson, Jacqueline Rose, Laura Mulvey, Nancy Chodorow, and Judith Butler.

WSGS 353/PSYC 353: Psychology of Gender

MW 3:00-4:15 pm (J. Jenkins)

In this course we will explore what it might mean to be a woman, a man, or something in between or outside those possibilities. We will consider gender from a variety of vantage points, including those of biology, culture, race, psychoanalysis, psychopathology, and mythology. Goals for the course include rich conversation about the varieties of our gendered world and the further development of our individual perspectives on what it means to be a gendered subjectivity.

WSGS432W/ENGL432W Documentary Poetics

TR 9:25-10:40 pm (L. Kinnahan)

Looking primarily at 20th century N. American poetry, along with 1930s photo-documentary books and the rise of documentary photography, this course will focus on the diverse approaches, materials, and forms through which poetry explores the concept of "documentary" and "witness."

We will lay a foundation for this focus through looking at poetry and photo-documentary books from the first half of the century and then move to the contemporary period

(especially the 1990s to the present). We will read works that challenge us to think about intersectional relations between gender, race, and class, and the interactions of written and visual forms of expression. In particular, the course will explore the following:

- Relationships between photography and poetry, as well as the relationship of visual culture, visual art, and poetry
- Uses of documents, documentary material, & archives
- Relationship of documentary approaches to social ideas about gender, race, class
- Poetic documentary stances of "witness" - to poverty & economic changes, social migrations, social movements (Civil Rights, Women's Movement, etc), and socio-historical contexts & narratives (capitalism & industry; N. American histories of marginal groups/voices such as women, African-Americans, and working class; media and the dominance of the image; and more).

Tentative texts include:

- You Have Seen Their Faces, Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke White (photo-documentary book)
- Exodus, Dorothea Lange & Paul Taylor (photo-documentary book) (excerpts)
- Survey Graphic, early 20th-c. journal incorporating photography (excerpts)
- Selections of modernist poetry: William Carlos Williams, Mina Loy, Marianne Moore, Langston Hughes
- Muriel Rukeyser, The Book of the Dead
- Chris Llewelyn, Fragments from the Fire
- Mark Nowak, Shut Up Shut Down
- Claudia Rankine, Citizen
- N. Nourbese Philip, She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks (or Zong)
- Susan Howe, Singularities (or parts of it)
- Kevin Young, To Repel Ghosts
- Natasha Trethewey, Bellocq's Ophelia
- Pattie McCarthy, Marybones
- Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Graphic Novella

The two courses below are not cross-listed in WSGS, but students can petition to have them count for WSGS credit.

Hist 311W Writing and Researching in History

MWF 1:00 pm-1:50 pm(A. Bucciantini)

What does it mean to be a historian? What sorts of things do historians do? One of the major skills you have to have as a historian is the ability to find information and then present it clearly to an audience. Your audience could be a history professor, a student you are teaching, a visitor to a museum or historic site - even your friends and family. This class

aims to teach you how to master these critical skills of locating information, synthesizing and analyzing it, and presenting it well both in writing and orally. Along the way we will learn about one of the most exciting ways that information used to be presented to the public, through the "Great Exhibition". This includes looking at all the new technology developed for the exhibitions, all the new trends that happened at the exhibitions, and how social movements of the times were reflected at the exhibitions and in the audiences they attracted.

COMM 426/526: Free Speech and Responsibility

TR 4:30-5:45 (P. Arneson) Students can petition to have this course count for WGS credit at either the BA (426) or the MA (526) level.

WGS Graduate Courses Spring 2019

The courses below are not cross-listed in WSGS, but students can petition to have them count for WSGS credit. See the link below:

<https://form.jotform.com/62436279495973>

ENGL566-01 (20642) Literary Theory (J. Suh).

Over the course of the semester, we will familiarize ourselves with key terms and works of theory relevant to literary studies. We will also actively engage debates concerning the role of the intellectual, the place of literary studies in contemporary U.S. culture, and the boundaries between literary studies and other disciplines. To these ends, questions for the course include the following:

What does cultural production do? What should it do?

How has the relationship between literature and society been conceived?

What dialogues in other disciplines have contributed to the modern study of cultural production?

Practical goals include increased facility with advanced theoretical analysis, mastery of selected critical theoretical terms in literary criticism, and the mastery of argumentative summaries in writing.

COMM 426/526: Free Speech and Responsibility (P. Arneson).

Explores the rhetorical interplay between free speech and communicative responsibility. Historical cases and contemporary issues in free speech are examined from a standpoint of communicative responsibility.

For spring I'm going to focus about half the semester on free speech/civil rights in the labor movement, women's movement, and modern civil rights movement (Montgomery bus protest, voting march, education, etc.) and about half the semester on current free speech issues related to hate speech, etc. (Parkland School, FL; Southerland Springs, TX; mass murders in Pittsburgh, Las Vegas, NV; Orlando, FL nightclub; etc.).

The class is taught intersectionally (rhetoric, history, law, women's studies, etc.) and students have the opportunity to select their topics for presentations and paper.