The Center for the Humanities at Wesleyan University provides high-level academic programming to energize the campus and promotes innovative research and scholarship through our faculty and visiting fellows program. In addition, faculty offer courses that are either based on current research projects or experimental in nature.

Related Programs or Certificates
Social, Cultural, and Critical Theory Certificate (catalog.wesleyan.edu/certificates/social-cultural-critical-theory)

Faculty
Ethan Kleinberg
BA, University of California, Berkeley; MA, University of California LA; PHD, University of California LA
Professor of History; Professor of Letters; Director, Center for the Humanities; Executive Editor, History and Theory

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Stephanie Elaine Koscak
Visiting Scholar in the Center for the Humanities

Visiting Faculty
Axelle Karera
BA, York University; PHD, Pennsylvania State University
Visiting Assistant Professor, African American Studies; Visiting Assistant Professor, Philosophy; Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for the Humanities

Student Fellows
TBA

CHUM214 The Modern and the Postmodern
In this course we will examine how the idea of “the modern” develops at the end of the 18th century and how being modern (or progressive, or hip) became one of the crucial criteria for understanding and evaluating cultural change during the last 200 years. Our readings will be drawn from a variety of areas—philosophy, novels, music, painting, and photography—and we will be concerned with the relations between culture and historical change. Finally, we shall try to determine what it means to be modern today and whether it makes sense to go beyond the modern to the postmodern.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-HIST
Identical With: HIST214, COL214
Prereq: None

CHUM224 "Public Freehold": Collective Strategies and the Commons in Art Since 1960
Art since 1960 has forged a contradictory alliance between the legal field of intellectual property and the expanded tradition of poststructural thought. Taking its title from conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner, this course navigates this contradiction via four units, each corresponding to a specific artistic strategy: appropriation, scoring, collaboration, and participation. Testing the limits of the signable, saleable, and stealable, such techniques have thrown traditional concepts of originality and possessive individualism into arrears while giving rise, quite paradoxically, to some of the most celebrated careers and widely reported lawsuits involving allegations of creative property theft. Do such maneuvers amount to specious self-aggrandizement? Or do they indicate a renewed search to locate, foment, and protect sources of creative invention? The ever-expanding horizon of collaborative media access and increased pressures to enclose this new electronic commons have made such questions all the more urgent today. Artists considered include Claire Fontaine, General Idea, Pierre Huyghe, Juliana Huxtable, Sherrie Levine, Tino Sehgal, Sturtevant, Hito Steyerl, Andy Warhol, and Lawrence Weiner.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: ARHA249
Prereq: None

CHUM228 Virtue and Vice in History, Literature, and Philosophy
Beginning with Aristotle and Confucius and reading our way through significant texts of Christianity, humanism, postmodernism, and contemporary cultural productions, we will explore the ethics, power, and politics intersecting in the idea of virtue.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: HIST140, COL228, PHIL112
Prereq: None

CHUM276 Moving Through the Revolutionary Age: British Colonies and Early America, 1774–1815
Thomas Jefferson argued in his 1805 inaugural address that boundaries were less important than principles. Regardless of where they lived, Americans were Americans. British colonists were equally mobile and equally sure that their
British liberties followed them wherever they went, which in no small part led to the Revolution. In the period during and after the American Revolution, with the creation of states and colonies in northern North America, people and ideas moved with regularity from one region to the next, thus testing Jefferson’s ideals and extant imperial bonds. This course will examine the movement of peoples and ideas within and across these new boundaries to explore the idea of mobility as a revolutionary, Native, and loyalist ideal. American settlers wanted to push west, and some later moved north; Natives desired to maintain their migratory patterns and traditional lands; and British Loyalists moved to remain members of—and demand changes within—the British Empire, while also relocating to American states when necessary. The borders that divided colonies and separated states were challenged and ignored as soon as they were created. By exploring the political ideals, territorial claims, and movement of people during and after the American Revolution, students will be encouraged to study the Revolution not as an American event, but rather as a North American process shaped by those who moved through it.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM
Identical With: HIST310
Prereq: None

CHUM300 Black Phoenix Rising: Death and Resurrection of Black Lives
The Black Lives Matter Movement has renewed our collective need to theorize the value of black lives within a deluge of death and disappearance in black communities. This movement is part of a deep transnational tradition in black radical praxis that aims to transform scholarly, activist, and public discourse and public policies concerning the systemic and epistemic effects of institutional racisms and the prospects for antiracist futures. How might we envision a black radical praxis that simultaneously recognizes the vitality of black lives and challenges the cultural ideas and social practices that generate and justify black people’s death and suffering? This seminar traces a genealogy of black radical praxis that interrogates the necropolitics of race and positions this system of power against the prospect of thriving black people. In doing so, the course erects an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that features scholarship in critical race science studies, intersectionality, and transnational cultural studies as they inform how a black radical praxis can contribute to the uprising and raising up of black communities.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: AFAM300, SISP300
Prereq: None

CHUM302 Alliances, Commons, and Shared Resources
Some resources are only useful in large units and therefore need to be shared by multiple users. Examples include agricultural and forest land, fisheries, streaming video and music services, highways, computer platforms, and news reporting. This course studies methods of sharing resources including common property, formal and informal alliances, clubs, open source, and government regulation and ownership. Students interested in the environment, rural development, news and entertainment media, transportation, and communications should consider this course, as we will cover all of those topics and see their economic similarities.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ECN
Identical With: ECON220
Prereq: ECON101 OR ECON110

CHUM303 What If? Introduction to Counterfactual History
"What if the Roman Empire had never collapsed? What if the South had won the Civil War? What if Hitler had never been born? To ask these questions is to delve into a new field of historical inquiry known as counterfactual history. In the last several decades, the exploration of "what if?" scenarios has become a notable phenomenon in Western culture. As seen in countless novels, films, television shows, comic books, plays, and historical essays, the question of how history might have been different has begun to fascinate audiences as never before.

This course explores the rise of counterfactual history as a new force in contemporary Western culture. After examining the emergence of counterfactual history against the background of recent political, cultural, and intellectual changes that have taken place in the West, we will investigate how "what if?" narratives help us better understand the larger dynamics of history. Counterfactual history, for example, can help us better grasp the deeper aspects of historical causality. Is history driven by great individuals or broad structural forces? If we remove Hitler from German history, do we still witness the rise of Nazism? Studying counterfactual history also helps us appreciate the complexity of drawing moral conclusions about historical events. We can only judge the wisdom of the United States dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945, for example, by contemplating what might have happened had it not been done. Finally, we will also explore how counterfactual histories shed light upon the workings of collective memory. What do accounts of what never happened tell us about the memory of what did?

We will investigate these and other issues from a theoretical as well as from an empirical perspective, examining a wide range of academic scholarship on counterfactual history as well as primary examples of the genre from the realms of literature, film, and historiography. Our case studies will span many of the pivotal events of modern history, including the outbreak of the American Revolution, the Civil War, the rise of the Third Reich, the outbreak of World War II, the perpetration of the Holocaust, the dropping of the atomic bomb, and events of the post-9/11 world."

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Prereq: None

CHUM304 Britons and Other Life Forms
George Eliot wrote in Middlemarch that "if we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel’s heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence." This course will require us to think about the various ways in which writers conceive of and represent precisely our potential—or, as Eliot suggests, our inability—to comprehend “all” life, or even just "other" life forms.

We will consider literary approaches to relationality, with an emphasis on 19th-century British literature: How do these writers envision the connections between individuals and organisms, and how do they conceive of intimacies, environments, and totalities? To what extent do they imagine themselves as able to represent those connections? And how to these understandings impact literary form and political understanding? We will focus on formal questions, such as those of protagonist and minor character, poetic “I” and listener, as well as on two major forces of 19th-century culture: an emergent social theory that tried to conceive of humanity in terms of communities, populations, and "social bodies," and an increasingly prominent science that was starting to think in terms of environments and ecologies (it’s worth noting that the terms "environment" and "ecology" are 19th-century in origin).

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: ENGL307
Prereq: None

CHUM305 Matter, Community, Environment
In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to consider human communities without also considering questions of “nature” or “environment.” Actor-network theory condemns nature/society dualisms; ecological theory argues that there is indeed no “nature” or “society”—only the anthropocene; and, drawing from the former two positions, object-oriented ontology conceives of ideas (such as “community” or “society”) as objects and ecological actors. In this seminar, we will consider various approaches taken in recent years to thinking about our relations to the worlds we inhabit. We will attempt to think not only outside a focus on “us” as humans in the first place but even outside a focus on sentient life or life in general. Examining theories of matter, community, and environment, we will discuss and analyze work by philosophers, evolutionary biologists, literary scholars, and sociologists, among others. We will pay special attention to how theorists and critics are blurring the boundaries between nature and society, environment and community, life and matter. In addition to class participation and a series of brief reading responses, students will be required to produce a final paper dealing with any topic related to the course.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: COL303, SISP303, ENGL302
Prereq: None

CHUM307 Anthropocene as Modern Grand Narrative
The Anthropocene refers to the new age in which humankind started to have a significant impact in altering or rupturing the Earth’s system, and the Earth is now moving out of its current geological epoch (the Holocene) and into “a less biologically diverse, less forested, much warmer, and probably wetter and storrier state.” (Steffen, Crutzen, and McNeill 2007, Sciences Module, 614). This course begins by examining the debates on the definition and periodization. It then explores precursors to the concept of the Anthropocene, such as Confucian and Daoist writings on the taming of the natural environment for human needs, the catastrophicism vs. uniformitarianism debate, and contesting definitions of sustainability. Finally, it looks at how recent works of environmental history engaged with the concept of the Anthropocene and brought our attention to the impact of the transition from organic economy to carbon economy. Is the Anthropocene a new meta-narrative that professes to be the theory that explains all human activity? Is the Anthropocene a call to arms for environmental destruction of the natural environment? We will read and deconstruct the classic manifesto of New Age spirituality THE TEACHINGS OF DON JUAN, examine the Ayahuasca patent case, and consider whether contemporary physics really has the kind of notion of “material substance” needed for a traditional form of materialism before concluding with contemporary physics.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: RELI312
Prereq: None

CHUM310 French Crowds, Mobs, and Mobilities
"Under the date of 14th July 1789, Louis XVI entered in his diary but one word: "Rien." That day, a crowd of sans-culottes flooded the streets of Paris, overwhelmed the guards, and captured the Bastille. What the king could not foresee is the political power of a mob, a "foule," deriving its etymology and strength from the pressure of thousands of feet pounding the pavement. From this founding event onward, the building of the French nation could be read as a history of mobile crowds kept alive today in yearly student and union demonstrations. How does "rien" become the emblematic event of French national identity? What moves a crowd, and what does a crowd move? What do such gatherings accomplish, and how do they form in France and why?
readings from philosophers and physicists in the recent revivals of dualism and panpsychism.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL310
Prereq: None

CHUM314 Ethnographies of Emerging Media
Emerging media, from social network sites to mobile phones, are reshaping many aspects of daily life, selfhood, and society, yet are often designed with elite, technically savvy users in mind. Whose social connections do "social media" articulate? What kinds of mobility are facilitated by laptops and smartphones? This seminar examines the implicit norms that shape technology design and use, especially dominant understandings of sociality and mobility. We will examine emerging social and mobile media through ethnographic, critical, and interpretive approaches from anthropology, science and technology studies (STS), and information studies, as well as feminist and queer theories. The course will emphasize theoretical and analytical tools to address topics such as mobility and disability, the materiality of information, networked forms of sociality and selfhood, digital divides and inequalities, transnationalism and place-making, virtual worlds, "big data," and design ethnography. We will consider emerging media practices in cross-cultural and transnational settings to examine the situated contexts of their design and use, while asking broadly what consequences these technologies have for our social worlds. This course requires intensive reading and writing, including a final project that can be undertaken in a variety of ways, such as an ethnographic or critical analysis of an emerging media practice.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Prereq: None

CHUM315 Emperor, Caliph, King: Comparing the Byzantines, Abbasids, and Carolingians
This seminar investigates a unique "age of empires" in the wider Mediterranean world—the ninth century—during which imperializing political revolutions inspired intense cultural production among the Byzantines in Constantinople, the Abbasids in Baghdad, and the Carolingians across Europe. Using the cultural artifacts surviving from these "renaissances," we will investigate how political cultures accounted for their own contested identities through myths of rebirth and return, specifically of Greek, Roman, and Persian imperial traditions. The course uses a workshop environment that relies on both collaboration and independent research; students will apply skills of analysis, creative thinking, and persuasive communication to presentations and a (in-translation) source-based research project.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-COL
Identical With: HIST327, COL347
Prereq: None

CHUM316 City, Mobility, and Technology: Toward the Modern City in Spain
"Movements, itineraries, encounters—these are some of the elements that have characterized modern literature. From the Baudelairean figure of the flâneur to the car chases of popular movies such as Bullitt, the city is described from a series of journeys that create a representation of urban space. However, these narratives reveal more than a personal account of the city: They show the urban architectures that allow the movement in those spaces (paths, roads, lighting), and in doing so, they portray the development of the modern city. With this framework in mind, in this course we will analyze the construction of the modern city in Spain through literary and filmic texts. We will pay special attention to Barcelona and Madrid, but we will also look at how other international cities are perceived and represented in Spanish literature. In doing so, we will explore how these authors understand the modern city and, furthermore, the connections and influences among what we will call international hubs in a specific historical moment.

Our journey will start in the 19th century with great novelists and essayists such as Leopoldo Alas "Clarín," Benito Pérez Galdós, and Mariano José Larra, and we will compare their conceptions of the city with those of poets such as Baudelaire. In their texts, we will see the construction of the industrial city and the conflicts that arise once the urban space becomes a mobile space, technologically and socially speaking. Then we move into the 20th century, and such authors as Federico García Lorca and Carmen Laforet will show us what is it like to be an stranger in the big city, a strangeness emphasized by the migratory movements that characterized the pre- and postwar era in Spain. And films including Luis García Berlanga's Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall and Alejandro González Iñarritu's more recent Biutiful will show us how the city grows outward fueled by capitalism, an economic system that leaves out those who do not inhabit the urban centers, such as the case of Bienvenido, or those who are exploited by it, as we will see in Biutiful. These fascinating narratives offer a very detailed portrayal of urban centers in Spain that will allow us to research their mobile nature."

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: FIST262
Prereq: None

CHUM317 Space and Materiality: Performing Place
"Scenography explores and shapes the material world in and through the performative event. In site-specific performances, scenography transforms place and time to create an alternative reality in which the materiality of the artistic design and the performer's body intervene in the architecture of a place and the spectator's reception of meaning. In this course, we will study site interventions through the lens of street performance, immersive theater, and the theatrical apparatus to build a theoretical and hands-on understanding of the material potential and limitations of the four key elements involved in the scenographic project—artistic design, the actor's body, local architecture, and time. This course is divided in four units: site-specific interventions; street performance; immersive theater; and theatrical apparatus. Each unit includes scholarly readings, assignments in performance and scenography, and a response paper. The final project for the course is a performance intervention devised for a particular site on campus that demonstrates the student's cumulative grasp of site specificity, scenography, and materiality."

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-THEA
Identical With: THEA357
Prereq: None

CHUM318 Comparing Revolutions: The United States and Early Canada, 1774–1815
"The American Revolution didn't just create the United States. Loyalists fled to British colonies in what would become Canada, while Native nations reasserted their sovereignty over ancestral homelands. British, French, American, and Indigenous peoples in North America expanded (or moved) west, established new communities, and struggled to retain (or create) new identities. Students in this seminar will read widely in the literature of the revolutionary era as it pertains to American, Canadian, and Native groups and will undertake
specifically comparative research as part of Professor Lennox’s larger book project. What did Benjamin Franklin think of Montreal? Where did Iroquoia go after 1783? How did the creation of states such as Vermont compare to the division of Quebec the same year? What impact did David Thompson’s exploration for the Hudson’s Bay Company have on Lewis and Clark? By combining close reading of the most recent literature with in-depth exploration of primary sources, this seminar will encourage students to consider the Revolution as a continental rather than national event.”

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM
Identical With: HIST349
Prereq: None

CHUM319 Zionism: A Political Theology
"This seminar examines the political theology of Zionism by focusing on the intersections of secular aspirations and theological notions embedded in the ideology and practice of the national Jewish mission.

To this end, the seminar is designed to explore the modern concept of political theology. In analyzing a range of selected primary and secondary sources, it will also bring this concept to bear on an understanding of the Zionist secular adaptations of theological concepts, such as heresy, faith, inner experience, and redemption. Finally, the seminar will focus on how this type of political-theology informed the national Jewish language, symbolism, literature, social institutions, and social and political imagination.”

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CJST319, RELI319
Prereq: None

CHUM320 Modern Intellectual History in Global Perspectives
Recently, postcolonial critics have urged historians to reconsider the emergence of ideas central to European intellectual history—including reason, society, and human rights—as part of a global process. In this course, we will explore intellectual history in dialogue with the non-West. Topics include the Enlightenment, romanticism, nationalism, modernity, and postmodernity. Discussions will address how these movements took shape through a series of cross-cultural exchanges and exclusions.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: FGSS319, COL320
Prereq: None

CHUM322 The Hopelessness Photology of the Syrian Uprising
"This course examines the Syrian uprising that started on March 15, 2011, and how photography can be produced to understand the social political factors in the creation of image language in "a hopelessness photology."

This course explores the trajectory of uprising through popular demonstrations and protest slogans in photography as the sine qua non of a new revolutionary and artistic language in Syria since 2011 so far. In addition, this course will provide a survey of the principles aesthetic and political dimensions through the study of thematic photography based on several critical approaches."

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Prereq: None

CHUM323 Necropolitics and Black “Fugitive” Politics
In his important essay interrogating the (im)possibility of black sociality, Fred Moten attempts to find an order of black social life which would unfold in the very confrontation between black (social) death and the law. However, as he argues, this form of black life would be “reducible neither to simple interdiction nor bare transgression.” The form of black life that interests Moten is essentially one of “fugitivity.” In a recent response to Moten’s text, David Marriott worries that “by writing blackness as ceaseless fugitivity,” Moten advances “a position in which blackness is only black when it exceeds its racial disavowal” and therefore blackness “can only be recognized as black in so far as it escapes the racism of its history.” In this course, we will trace and follow the implications of Moten’s intervention. More specifically, we will explore what forms and figures of sovereignty an aesthetics and politics of fugitive subjectivity could yield given that “black life” remains arguably the most precarious form of living under various contemporary “necropolitical” apparatuses of sanctioned racial exclusion, control, persecution and—in worse cases—genocide. Key figures will include Frantz Fanon, Achille Mbembe, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jared Sexton, David Marriott, Fred Moten, Christina Sharpe, Saidiya Hartman, Alexander G. Weheliye, Elizabeth Povinelli, and Gayatri Spivak.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM
Identical With: PHIL355
Prereq: None

CHUM324 Race and the Enlightenment: A Historical and Philosophical Enquiry
It was during the Enlightenment Era (c. 1760-1800) that scientific reasoning, a belief in progress, and new claims on personal and political liberty swept away a tenacious medieval worldview. It was also during this era, however, that the notion of race crystallized in European and North American thought. Today, we still live with implications of this major shift, be it in classification schemes, anatomical prejudices, or ethnographical myths. This is particularly true for Africans or people of African descent. This class will bring some the Enlightenment’s most prominent thinkers into dialogue with the emergency of the concept of race theory. In particular, we will focus on the clash between the Enlightenment era’s belief that “all men were created as equals” and the various ways that the Black African came to be studied within “natural history” and various philosophical models. This historical backdrop will lead us not only to a discussion of the economic imperatives of human slavery but to a series of contemporary reflections on the status of the Enlightenment put forward by postcolonial critics. Note: This class is offered in the context of the Wesleyan’s Center for the Humanities’ “Grand Narratives/Modest Proposals” theme and speakers series during the Spring 2018 semester.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: FIST325, SISP324, AFAM325
Prereq: None

CHUM330 Women Make the World: Global Technologies and Gender
Women are only recently appearing as actors in global histories of technology, even though they have long been inventors and creative innovators in a wide range of fields from domestic textile production and technologies for household maintenance to industrial manufacture. Initially, scholars located women in relation to specifically gendered objects such as reproductive technologies such as the birth control pill and tools for “women’s work” such as the washing machine. Yet, women have also made “masculine” technological work such as engineering and computer programming their own. Few individual women are credited for their inventions, and one of our challenges will be to locate women’s creative production of technological tools and processes in diverse societies from the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. What constitutes women’s technology,
even women’s work, is an unstable category that we will unpack in this class. Moving beyond the domestic space and the family, women’s technological work contended with new and emerging state projects related to the economy and politics. Women found their technological identities entangled with discourses of state building and, increasingly, after the end of the Cold War, with narratives about international development. These histories of the state overlapped with the domestic, and, over the course of the semester, we will engage with women’s global technological stories in relation to big questions about the family, sexuality, and gender and labor. In turn, these same histories will allow us to unpack the ways in which women have engaged with state and international discourses on the economy and development.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Prereq: None

CHUM332 Musical Mobility in America: Diasporas, Migrations, Borderlands
The United States has always been a nation of people on the move, by choice or through pressure. The three headings of diasporas, migrations, and borderlands summarize a complex, interlocking, and often volatile set of flows. In all cases, music plays a key role in defining, expressing, and encapsulating the individual and collective aspirations, fears, experiences, and sensibilities that mobility induces and engages.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: MUSC267
Prereq: None

CHUM338 You, Me, We, Them: A History of Comparison in a Globalizing World
“Race, nation, religion, and civilization represent some of the most powerful axes of identification by which humans over the past three centuries have known, embraced, incorporated, marginalized, and persecuted others. Yet each of these terms came to indicate very different referents in the shift from the medieval to the modern. Following experiences of European imperialism and non-European resistance, acceptance, and accommodation, postcolonial cultures drew on Western and indigenous traditions to know themselves and their place in a gradually globalizing set of political, economic, and epistemic orders.

In this interdisciplinary seminar, we will critically examine personal and social dynamics of comparison in three broad historical periods. First, using sources from Mughal India, medieval England, and the Ottoman empire, we will consider examples of how premodern communities engaged in acts of comparison to know the natural, human, and superhuman worlds (a distinction based on a necessarily questionable comparison). Second, through materials generated during the European age of discovery and empire, the seminar will explore how “modern” paradigms—formed by Western Christian and European-originated science—reshaped Indian, English, and Turkish worldviews. This occurred not simply because the taxonomical categories changed but because the very nature of comparison and classification shifted to modes that emphasized singularity, individuality, and nonambiguity. Meanwhile, new ideals of human belonging relied on emergent notions of inclusivity and tolerance. Finally, while globalization appears to both erase boundaries through transnational and cross-cultural flows of culture and capital, it has also served the interests of those seeking a deeper reinscription (or imagined reinscription) of differences. Thus, the seminar concludes with a set of theoretical reflections on comparison that are considered in light of specific postcolonial societies and their endeavors to define themselves and the larger world.”

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00

CHUM340 Observing Justice: Trials and Judgments in Arendt, Kleist, and Kafka
Hannah Arendt’s Eichmann in Jerusalem (written at Wesleyan’s Center for Advanced Studies in 1962) is often reduced to the easily misunderstood phrase “the banality of evil.” This seminar will seek to account for the explicit and implicit theoretical claims of Arendt’s work. The course will be divided into two parts: In the first, we will explore in-depth Eichmann in Jerusalem and its controversial reception in conjunction with Arendt’s evaluation of the faculty of judgment as elusive yet decisive in establishing a viable moral philosophy after Auschwitz. We will conclude our study of Arendt with her lectures on Kant’s Critique of the Power of Judgment, a work that she treats not as Kant’s aesthetics but rather as his (unwritten) political philosophy. The second part of the seminar will be dedicated to literary depictions of trials and/or texts that have themselves a trial-like structure. Our literary case studies include texts by Kleist, Kafka, and Peter Weiss. The ultimate purpose of the seminar is to study and critique procedural (and this includes literary and juridical) evaluative mechanisms that allow the truth of inhuman acts to come to light. Thus, we will examine the rules, procedures, and language games that are instrumental in making ineffable events appear.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: COL340, GRST340
Prereq: None

CHUM341 Global Histories: Problems in Scale, Scope, Depth, and Time
How big is too big? How far back in time can historians go? How best to understand the relationship between science and history? What counts as evidence? What accounts for the rise (or return, some would argue) of macro-history? What does it portend for the future of microhistory? This advanced seminar will examine the history and historiographical implications of macro-historical frameworks, including comparative history, world history, global history, deep history, and big history.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST315
Prereq: None

CHUM342 Knowledge, Race, and Justice: A Transhistorical Perspective
“This course examines the relation between the production of knowledge and discourses of race/altermity in three significant historical moments: during the 16th-century expansion of Spain into the Americas, during the 18th-century Enlightenment in Europe, and in the late 19th- and early 20th-century postbellum United States. In each period, a school of thought will be under investigation. The course begins with the Spanish School of Salamanca’s discussion of the “affairs of the Indies,” undertaken in the context of the then-emergent juridical/natural law perspective that was articulated as the primary basis of ethical judgments and that served as the conceptual framework within which the question of the status of the indigenous peoples and the expropriations of their lands was to be considered. Then the course moves to the European Enlightenment (Scottish, French, and German), where one of the central preoccupations remained a new taxonomy classifying human groups, this as part of an increasing scientific perspective. Finally, the Dunning School of historiography, located primarily at Johns Hopkins and Columbia universities, is examined. The formulations of this school of thought emerged in the aftermath of the Civil War and provided intellectual justification for the reconfiguration of racial hierarchy during the era of Reconstruction and beyond. Moreover, several of the prominent historians associated with the school played an important role
in the founding and in the early development of the professionalization of the discipline of history in the United States.

Each school of thought will be examined for its respective insights as well as for the limitations that we can perceive from a contemporary standpoint. These intellectual movements will be analyzed for their conceptualization that made the colonization of the Americas (in the case of the Spanish), the hierarchical categorization of human groups (in the case of the Enlightenment), or the reaffirmation of a postslavery racial hierarchy (in the case of the United States) seem legitimate and just."

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM
Identical With: HIST346, AFAM342
Prereq: None

CHUM343 Imitations of Life: Experimental Bodies at the Interface of Science and Culture
This seminar will examine scientific and cultural practices of corporeal simulation, or, practices of bodily substitution, imitation, and re-modeling. Topics examined will include: reproductive surrogacy; gender reassignment surgeries; experimental subject protocols; prosthetic enhancements; xenotransplantation; biometrics and alternative forms of bodily imaging; the use of nonhuman animals as human proxies; the rise of personalized medicine, and more. Students will engage with a wide range of case studies and theoretical materials from interdisciplinary perspectives. Special attention will be paid to the relationship between scientific discourses of "universality" and "particularity," where socio-cultural forms of difference (e.g., race, gender, disability, etc.) are at once ignored and exacerbated. While most of the material addressed in the class will relate to recent phenomena, we will also be attentive to relevant histories of corporeal differentiation and reimagining.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM, HA-CHUM
Identical With: AMST343, FGSS343, SISP343
Prereq: None

CHUM346 Digital Humanities: Intellectual Encounters in the 21st Century
Tweeting, Tumblr, blogs, and social media are changing the way that intellectuals produce, disseminate, discuss, and archive their work. This course will explore new modes of intellectual production and dissemination in theory and practice to explore and evaluate the ways that these forms are changing intellectual production (if indeed they are). The course combines two distinct components: attendance at the Center for the Humanities weekly Monday Night Lecture series, and faculty and weekly discussion meetings. The lectures will serve as content to be discussed, disseminated, and archived using such forms as Twitter, Tumblr, and class blogs. Then we as a class will evaluate these artifacts in terms of efficacy, depth, and appropriateness to the subject under consideration. Students will learn strategies for informed live tweeting, editorial oversight of academic discussion forums, academic blogging, and other new media.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: COL346
Prereq: None

CHUM347 Sound Systems: The How of Hearing
"Since the late 19th century artists, corporations and composers have all proposed, developed, presented, and occasionally commercialized physical systems that reconfigure how sound can be experienced. The early impact of the entertainment industry ranged from the introduction of stereo to movie theaters in Walt Disney’s Fantasia to the development of close miking for the crowning of Bing Crosby to McCune sound service’s introduction of stage monitors for the benefit of Judy Garland. Artists and composers used related methods to propose entirely new understandings of how music can be. Futurist Luigi Russolo’s Intonarumori of 1913 proposed an Art of Noise, while Pauline Oliveros’ concept of deep listening developed listening as a foundational form of music making. R. Murray Schafer’s concepts of soundscape and acoustic ecology project a music of environmental relations mediated through sound, while Maryanne Amacher’s sound characters create individual sounds understood as capable development and change beyond the expance of any one performance or composition.

This class will be a performing ensemble focused on “sound systems” as musical instruments and musical practices performing live and fixed media sound pieces through sound systems we will configure for different sites on campus. Together with developing the technical skills required to mount these pieces, we will also investigate and discuss the varied musical, social, acoustical, and psycho-acoustical understandings of music and sound that influenced their shaping."

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC461
Prereq: MUSC109

CHUM348 Representing Gender in Politics and the Media
This course examines the representation of gender in media coverage of politics. The course begins with political theory literature on the act of representation. What does it mean to represent someone? Political scientists have considered substantive and descriptive representation, among other types. Under what circumstances is one approach preferable for representing gender? How might these concepts be linked? The course extends these questions to the realm of news media, investigating differences in how female and male politicians are portrayed in the media, how viewers and readers react to these portrayals, and how politicians themselves attempt to craft a gender strategy that will enable their political success. The course examines these issues in cross-national perspective with the goal of understanding how representations of gender vary according to cultural context.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM
Identical With: FGSS347, GOVT292
Prereq: None

CHUM349 Body Histories in Africa
African bodies have long generated intrigue and misunderstanding. Outside observers, such as missionaries, travelers, colonial administrators, and anthropologists, have documented practices such as scarification and spirit possession as they simultaneously rendered their African practitioners "other." All too often the body as an instrument for creative expression, ritual healing, or social action was lost in translation. More recently Western feminists have focused their attentions on female circumcision. The persistence of circumcision (for both girls and boys) and other bodily practices speaks to their enduring social value and symbolic meaning. What can we learned from these and other body histories in Africa? In this course we will examine embodied rituals such as spirit possession, which marks the body as a site for human engagement with the supernatural. The widespread practice is also a gendered technique of healing documenting shifting understandings of health and illness. In addition, we will study the practice of "sitting on a man" by which women addressed the body politic through dance and collective nudity. The revealed body in motion shamed men into action and has been employed in the 21st century to shame oil companies for their greed and environmental destruction. In this and other examples, we will approach the body as an archive: it is an archive in motion.
and subject to social renewal. Our embodied evidence will allow us to explore shifting histories of religion, art, sexuality, the economy, and politics from the precolonial era to the contemporary moment. By taking the body as our lens we will also learn new ways to examine the African past through histories of aesthetics, value, labor, hierarchy, and knowledge production.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: None
Identical With: HIST341
Prereq: None

CHUM350 The Affective Power of Music

"Hope," Johann Mattheson tells us, "is a raising of the spirits. Despair, however, is a depression of the same. These can be very naturally represented with tones, especially when other factors such as tempo contribute their part." When Mattheson penned these words in the early 18th century, he was contributing to a growing body of theory known as the Affektenlehre, or the doctrine of affections in music. The aim of this hopeful Enlightenment project was to specify how, exactly, musical tones were to evoke basic emotions in listeners. For Mattheson, the project was straightforward: use tones in a way that is directly homologous to the operation of the "animal spirits" within the body. Although Mattheson's ideas—and the Affektenlehre in general—faded into obscurity by the early 19th century, the notion that music has a power to touch our emotions has persisted from antiquity to the present day. This course will explore the sound world of various moments in intellectual history in an effort to understand how theory and aesthetics have adduced music as a chief progenitor of basic affects such as hope, fear, despair, and joy. In addition to the Affektenlehre, we will explore classical warnings about the power of music, medieval accounts of music's ability to afford religious transport, the use of music in the theoretical work of the Frankfort School (including its important role in Ernst Bloch's Spirit of Utopia), and selected writings from the recent "affective turn." Together we will discover how the nondiscursive medium of musical tones has been used to speak so eloquently on the basic forms of human feeling.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Prereq: None

CHUM351 Melodrama Since 1700

Although today melodrama calls up ideas related to film, the term has musical origins: it originally indicated a work in which melos (music) and spoken drama were united in one multimedia format. Eighteenth-century melodrama admitted of many manifestations, encompassing everything from comic operas (like Mozart's Magic Flute, which alternated singing with spoken dialogue) to experimental symphonic works (in which a narrator's declaimed monologue was fastened onto a constellation of generic implications within the domain of film). Melodrama in this musical sense persisted through to the twentieth century, and included notable works such as Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire. But slowly melodrama as a term began to take on connotations relating to one of comic opera's central conceits: hyperbole and exaggeration. Melodrama became synonymous with comic excesses of emotional portrayal. Eventually, during the twentieth century, this meaning fastened onto a constellation of generic implications within the domain of film (think, for example, of Joan Crawford in Mildred Pierce). In its afterlife during the twenty-first century, melodrama has sometimes been used pejoratively: it can be employed as an epithet to disqualify the performance of emotion as inappropriately intense, or to designate emotion connected to an ostensibly inappropriate subject. But even in this new sense, melodrama retains an element of its early history insofar as it can be appropriated within subcultures in order to comically mock the traditions of mass culture. This course examines the long history of melodramatic art forms from the eighteenth century through to the present day. Together we will perform close readings of the objects within this rich tradition, supplemented by readings in queer theory, critical theory, and performance studies.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: THEA351
Prereq: MUSC201 OR MUSC202

CHUM352 The Politics of Death: The Living, the Dead, and the State

This course will explore the intersections between the living, the dead, and the state, focusing on the ways that death and the dead body raise particular questions and problems for different kinds of political regimes. The course will examine the collisions between the state and the dead, both symbolic and material, by investigating spaces where the state and death intersect in revealing ways: cemeteries, cremation, monuments, rituals, and religious institutions and cultures. The course will also follow, borrowing anthropologist Katherine Verdery's term, "the political lives of dead bodies," the ways in which states mobilize dead bodies to reconfigure the political order.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: HIST318
Prereq: None

CHUM353 Race and Spectacle in African American Literature and Film

The visible black body was essential to the business of the antebellum auction block, the success of the antislavery movement, the popularity of the Jim Crow stage, and the escapism provided by the theatre and its unruly secular relation, the circus. Despair, and also because of, such hypervisibility, black bodies manipulated and deployed invisibility in order to secure freedom, to achieve reform, and to survive. Writers such as Henry Box Brown, Ellen and William Craft, Pauline Hopkins, Nella Larsen, Ernest Gaines, and Octavia Butler demonstrate the ways in which exaggerated performances of race and raced identities can reveal the fictions of law and the power of marginality. This term, we will think together about what African American writers, as well as American and English filmmakers, render unbelievable in order to facilitate encounters with the real, the power of raced spectacle, and the consequences for society once spectacular truths are unleashed.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: None
Identical With: AFAM353
Prereq: None

CHUM354 Hope and Hopelessness in an Age of Mass Incarceration

"The United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. Over 2 million people are caught in the criminal justice system today. A disproportionate number of those incarcerated are people of color, particularly black, Latino/a, and indigenous men. Women, too, are a growing part of the prison population, as are queer, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people. Young people, particularly impoverished black youth, are funneled into correctional supervision through the school-to-prison pipeline. For many people in the country today, avoiding prison seems hopeless. This interdisciplinary course, grounded on philosophical reflections on hope, liberty, respect, and exclusion, will critically explore the moral, psychological, ethical, social, and political issues raised by mass incarceration in the United States. We will be particularly interested in whether and under what conditions hope is possible for those marginalized under the carceral system."

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
In this course, we will explore the concept of necropolitics as it pertains to queer communities and ideologies. We will examine sites of literal queer death, through the history of the AIDS epidemic, the emergence of hate crime statutes, incidences of transphobic/homophobic violence, and the disproportionate incarceration of queer people of color. We will also examine sites of symbolic queer death, through the discourses of citizenship and belonging, criminalization, civil rights and exclusions. Concepts covered will include: Michel Foucault’s work on biopolitics, Sarah Schulman’s idea of homophobia as a pleasure system, Jose Esteban Munoz’s work on queer futurity, Lee Edelman’s work on queerness as (in)humanism.”

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: AMST356
Prereq: None

CHUM366 The Sounds of Black and Brown Performance
This course organizes itself as a scene of listening with care to black and brown sounds, where listening is conceived as a mode of audience engagement of performances informed by avant-garde, queer, and critical race theories. Listening, then, is part of the artistic-theoretical practices that students will both read about and act out in this course. Here, we will engage theater, dance, and performance with the demand of listening in brown for the distinct sounds made in different performances, whether by identifiably racialized artist-subjects or not, and how they compel us to think of embodiment. If to say black is to say abjection, prison, AIDS, as well as the generative, the contra-rationally beautiful (Moten), and if to say “gender-y” is to say threatening, off-kilter, violable, as well playful, and transformative (Sedgwick, Doyle), then what happens when we listen in brown, that is, with the headphones of melancholia, depression, as well playful, and transformative (Sedgwick, Doyle), then what happens when we listen in brown, that is, with the headphones of melancholia, depression, as well as wildness, the excessive, the “hot and spicy” as critiques of the violence of the whitened norm (Muñoz)?

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-FILM
Identical With: FILM362, AMST362, ANTH361
Prereq: None

CHUM368 Comparative Philosophy
This seminar will explore the substantive and methodological issues that arise when one takes seriously the idea that philosophy has been, and continues to be, practiced within multiple traditions of inquiry, in many different ways, and in many different languages. We will examine and critique some of the ways in which “comparison” has been used, as well as examine arguments that comparison across traditions is, in fact, impossible. Although most of our attention will be focused on written academic research, we will also attend to the challenges and benefits of interacting directly with philosophers in other countries and cultures.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: PHIL337, CEAS258
Prereq: None
CHUM370 Engaging Audiences: Spectatorship Within Black Popular Culture and Performance
This course uses recent scholarship on spectatorship and popular culture to interrogate the production and reception of “popular” black performances and representations within and beyond the United States. With special attention to the historical context in which these black cultural products are created, disseminated, and received, we focus on the social spaces, local contexts, temporal conditions, and embodied acts within which these case studies emerge and examine the political implications of their consumption and sustainability. Central to our investigation will be a consideration of the ways in which the terrain of “the popular” is inextricably linked to issues of aesthetics, appropriation, authenticity, circulation, community, globalization, identity, marginalization, meaning-making, and power. Case studies will include historic and contemporary examples from theater, dance, film, music, media, and the visual arts.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: AFAM370, THEA370
Prereq: None

CHUM381 Student Fellowship
The student fellowship entails full participation in the lectures and colloquia. Student fellows read, hear, and converse on the common themes. They are to work on their research projects and give a presentation to the Center for Humanities fellows.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Prereq: None

CHUM384 The Contemporary Stage and the Antitheatrical Prejudice
Theater has always hosted a broad array of arts disciplines: dance, literature, music, the visual arts, and, most recently, film and the digital moving image are commonly incorporated on the theatrical stage. Regardless, the lingering assumption that theater is irrevocably anchored in a dramatic text resulted in the classification of the emerging theatrical forms of the late 20th century as “performance,” rather than as “theater” per se. The theoretical foundation of this course will be what Erika Fischer-Lichte has called “the performative turn.” We will consider theater as event as we examine its mobility across arts disciplines. Theater’s defining characteristic lies in the verifiable autonomy of a production’s “performance text,” not the written one, but the live and kinesthetic “text” that engages the actors’ bodies and design elements in time and space.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: THEA325
Prereq: None

CHUM407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

CHUM408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

CHUM409 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

CHUM410 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

CHUM411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

CHUM412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

CHUM420 Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

CHUM491 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member’s course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

CHUM492 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member’s course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT