

## MONTERRAT SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS 2011 / 2012

The Montserrat Program is grouped into five different thematic clusters: Core Human Questions (C); The Divine (D); Global Society (G); The Natural World (N); and The Self (S). Each cluster contains seminars examining the theme from a variety of perspectives.

### ↻ Core Human Questions ↻

MONT 100C

#### **Freedom and its Limits** (fall)

Though we often take freedom for granted, many don't enjoy these same rights and privileges, or understand them in the same ways. What are the limitations on freedom for various individuals and peoples? Moreover, how is freedom often entangled with these limitations? How can freedom for one mean enslavement for another? What boundaries define freedom and its absence? And how are such boundaries created? How maintained? How does slavery, or patriarchy, or even class, shape and delimit freedom? To pursue these questions and your own, we'll read many American and English writers' fiction: Hawthorne, Mill, Tolstoy, Chopin, Joyce, Faulkner, and Hemingway, among others.

MONT 101C

#### **Freedom and its Complexities** (spring)

The limitations on freedom are often subtle and far from clear. Why do we find freedom to be more complex in life than in theory? How do we decide every day, freedom from what, freedom for what? How do our values shape our individual freedom? Our ideals? Our physical and psychic needs? On what occasions are we willing to give up our freedom? For love? For work? For another's freedom? In other words, how is freedom more contingent on life's circumstances than we usually recognize? In this course, we'll continue to read primarily American and British literature, now including Machiavelli, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Joyce, Zamiatyn, Miller, and others.

MONT 102C

#### **Looking for Community** (fall)

The search for community has taken many forms in the movies. Both Hollywood and the filmmakers of other countries have dealt with the immigrant experience, and American movies—especially in the form of westerns—have often dramatized the territorial imperative and the drive to find new roots in the vast, free west. Other films consider the challenges of finding community after a long period of exile, imposed or self-imposed, or as a way of bringing an end to restlessness and uprootedness. This course will look at movies that examine the quest for some kind of community.

MONT 103C

#### **Freedom Seekers** (spring)

Among our most beloved movie heroes are renegades who yearn to break free from conventional lifestyles. The protagonists of the movies we will explore in the second half of the course challenge their communities by making unorthodox choices that sometimes turn them into outlaws. Some are artists whose vision of the world places them at odds with established norms; others are social or political rebels; still others are simply free spirits who instinctually pull against the constraints of convention. All of them pay a price for freedom.

MONT 104C

#### **Freedom, Meaning, and Desire** (fall)

We all want to be free, but what is freedom? Is it merely the absence of constraints—being able to do whatever one desires—or is it more complicated? While we want freedom, we also look for order and purpose in our lives. To be free is part of what it means to be human, but it can also make us uncertain of who we are and where we belong. By exploring some of the different ways in which it has been understood, from ancient Greece to the modern world, this course investigates the puzzling nature of freedom. The goal is to understand what freedom and being human could possibly mean for us today. Philosophical, literary, psychological works, and works of art will guide us in our reflections.

MONT 105C

**Playing God** (spring)

We are told that we were created in the image of God, and that we should try to live up to that image. What does it mean to do that? What are we trying to be or become, in our striving to be more God-like? This semester, we shall continue to reflect on the nature of freedom and what it means to be human by exploring some of the different ways in which we “play God.” Special attention will be given to: creation and our role as creators, freedom and love, our relationship with nature, artistic freedom, freedom and power, and the question of modern technology. Readings include: *Genesis*, Plato’s *Symposium*, Augustine’s *Confessions*, Kandinsky’s *The Spiritual in Art*, Heidegger’s, “The Question Concerning Technology,” Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and others.

MONT 106C

**The Quest for the Common Good** (fall)

We tend to value both individual freedom and the common good, and think the main political problem is to find the right balance between them. But perhaps the notion of “balance” fails to capture either the complex nature of human freedom or the requirements of social order. This semester we will explore how various thinkers have addressed this issue. Is there a common good, and if so, what is it based on? How inclusive can it be? What does it mean for an individual to be truly free? Readings will be drawn primarily from political philosophy and literature, including works by Sophocles, Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Ellison, and others.

MONT 107C

**Freedom: Beyond Good and Evil?** (spring)

While some philosophers seek a balance between the individual and society, others see an irresolvable conflict, arguing that the truly free individual must transcend all social and moral constraints in order to be absolutely self-legislating. What would this kind of freedom look like? Does it leave the individual in an ethical void or does it make it possible for the individual to connect to a higher order? Do such individuals remain genuinely human, or do they become more like beasts—or gods? Finally, does this view of freedom leave room for any sort of reconciliation between self and society? Readings will be primarily drawn from philosophy and literature (Euripides, Freud, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Roth, Woolf, and others)

MONT 108C

**This Is Order?** (fall)

This course explores different conceptions of order as they function in human life. We often take order to be either simply good or bad without understanding the ways in which it functions to help or inhibit human flourishing. We will examine the concept of ‘order’ in a variety of philosophical, literary, political, and religious contexts. One guiding question for this course is: Does order necessarily imply purpose? Our readings will come from authors such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Maimonides, and Genesis.

MONT 109C

**Free At Last?** (spring)

As with conceptions of order, we often assume that we know what the word ‘freedom’ means without being able to view the ways in which it comes to play the role in our life that it does. We will explore the distinction between ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ freedom (to take one example) and explore how it functions in philosophical, literary, political, and religious contexts. One guiding question for this course is: Is freedom the opposite of purposive order, or its greatest achievement? Our readings will come from authors such as Machiavelli, Descartes, Kant, Kierkegaard, and Freud.

MONT110C

**Rebel Saints** (fall)

Sometimes rebellion is a profoundly moral act. Literature and history provide us with examples of rebellious figures who are seeking a better way of life or even a better social order—figures like Socrates, Antigone, Prometheus, Thoreau, Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Literary works by and about such rebels will acquaint us with their stories; and through those stories we will try to understand when and why it is reasonable to accept things as they are, and when, why, and how to reject the usual order of things. We will also try to understand the inevitable risks and less obvious compromises that can accompany even the most idealistic and effective of rebellions.

MONT111C

**Utopian Visions & New Orders** (spring)

Idealists have dreamed of engineering the perfect society for millennia—a society in which everything about our work, our love life and our relationship with God is rightly ordered. We will examine the tradition of Utopian literature and experiments from Plato and St. Augustine to the present day. Perhaps the most impressive Utopian experiments took place in 19th century America, when scores of settlements were founded. We will read authors like Hawthorne and Bellamy who wrote fictional accounts of such experiments, and will consider why these American Utopias collapsed, why they never became the dystopias of modern science fiction, and their lasting legacy for education, labor conditions and scientific investigation in this country.

MONT112C

**Stages of Freedom** (fall)

In the fall semester, we will look at dramatic representations from the classical and Renaissance periods that explore notions of free will and the tensions that arise in societies that implicitly constrain its implementation. How did the notion of liberty develop in western culture under such circumstances and why does self-determination emerge as such an essential value? What are the forces that resist the emergence of individuality and self-actualization? We will examine the emergence of the tragic impulse in drama and how it represents the tension between freedom and cosmic constraint

MONT113C

**Stages of Constraint** (spring)

In the spring semester, we will read a series of plays from the modern era and explore the seeming contradiction between political freedom and an ever-growing sense of societal oppression. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, playwrights dramatized the alienation and isolation that emerged as liberal ideology came into ascendance. Hard-earned political liberty was accompanied by the crushing encroachment of technology, industrialization and urbanization. Playwrights searched for new forms and developed new aesthetic strategies in an effort to explore the struggle for personal freedom in societies that apparently replaced one form of bondage with another.

MONT114C

**Heroes or Outlaw?** (fall)

Is a hero someone who fights for freedom or for order? Who upholds laws or who overturns them? This course will study diverse “heroic” figures in literature, history, religion, and popular culture and explore the choices they confront about obedience and rebellion. We will consider how the values associated with heroism have changed over time, how they vary from one society to another and apply differently to men and women. In addition, we will compare media coverage from various countries to trace how one person’s hero can be another’s despot, fanatic, or renegade. Throughout we will examine the paradoxes that underlie our own cultural norms, allowing many of us to admire *both* the cop and the robber, the law-enforcing Lone Ranger and the bandit Ned Kelly, the power-wielding King Arthur and the power-disrupting Robin Hood, the revolutionary Che Guevara and the defender of national union Abraham Lincoln. Are there *any* qualities such disparate figures share?

MONT 115C

**Collaboration and Resistance** (spring)

When is an ordinary citizen obliged to follow the laws of his or her country, and when does an individual have the right, even the responsibility, to defy a given social or political order? Is violence ever an acceptable or necessary form of protest? When is conformity a virtue, and when is it a moral failing? This seminar will look at how various individuals – ranging from SS officials in Nazi Germany to guerilla liberation fighters in Algeria – have answered those questions in the modern era, and how their answers have been judged by others. Sources will include Hannah Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Evgenii Zamiatyn’s *We*, Richard Yates’ *Revolutionary Road*, Ngugi wa Thiongo’s *Matigari* and Lawrence Wright’s *Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*; films “Schindler’s List,” “Battle of Algiers,” and “When We Were Kings.”

## ☞ The Divine ☞

### MONT 100D

#### **From Heroes To Hemlock** (fall)

Every society is founded upon some basic moral order. For the ancient Greeks, moral order began with Hesiod and Homer whose works lay out a divine cosmology of Gods and Heroes. Their writings, often recited publicly, provided examples of spectacular deeds and events, exemplifying the ideal citizen. Over time, this divine order faced challenges from emerging dramatists, practitioners of early natural science, and finally by Socrates, the originator of political philosophy. This course will draw from a variety of classical texts to examine what happens when established moral order breaks down in the face of such challenges.

### MONT 101D

#### **From Providence to Progress** (spring)

The human condition portrayed in Genesis shows Adam and Eve enjoying God's providence in the Garden of Eden. However, the expulsion from Eden prompts mankind to develop the arts and sciences, putting technology in a complicated relationship with the divine. Some consider technology to be the engine of progress, while others believe it poses a challenge to divine order. We are left to wonder: Is technology the means for overcoming God's curses on Adam and Eve, allowing us to produce our own bounty, or is it the catalyst of moral decay? This course will examine these questions drawing on the Old and New Testament as well as works of philosophy and literature.

### MONT 102D

#### **Greek Gods and Mortals** (fall)

The division between mortal and immortal is, at first glance, a non-negotiable one. In texts such as Hesiod's *Theogony*, Homer's *Iliad*, and the tragic plays of Euripides, the distinctions between human limitation and divine deathlessness are sharp. But the Greek gods, in their habits and passions, were at the same time very humanlike, and so highly reflective of the Greeks' understanding of themselves. The mortal / immortal divide in Greek culture, and its rich complications, will be the focus of this course. We will also consider how Greek mortals – literary characters, as well as the historical figures Socrates, Alexander the Great, and others – reached for their own, unique, competing types of immortality.

### MONT 103D

#### **Roman Lives & Afterlives** (spring)

The course continues as we turn to Greece's geographical and cultural neighbor Rome, whose literature and physical monuments also confront the nature of the divine, and are similarly steeped in the desire for a sort of human immortality. What kind of an afterlife can we humans attain? Do we have any control over it? In searching for answers to such questions, we will look closely at Virgil's *Aeneid*, Livy's *History of Rome*, and St. Augustine's *Confessions*, along with memorializing objects such as honorary busts and funereal monuments. Attention will also be given to the afterlife of Roman literature and thought in later centuries, as in, for example, modern European and American political discourse.

### MONT 104D

#### **Transcending Self-Reflection** (fall)

Socrates' admonition, "Know thyself" challenges us to understand and articulate our identity, our origins and our ultimate purpose and destiny in relationship to the transcendent. We will examine how ancient authors employ epic, lyric and epinician poetry, drama, historical narrative, philosophical reflection, letters and memoirs to shape "self" image in light of this tripartite goal. The critical lens of transvaluation will help us consider how various cultures offer contemporary interpretations of that reflective process as expressed through gesture, masks, tests, disguises and artistic depiction and in both personal friendship and more corporate social endeavors. Creative and critical assignments will help students engage in the reflection process.

### MONT 105D-01

#### **Model Christian Discerners** (spring)

"Discernment of spirits" is central to St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises where he invites retreatants to deepen their relationship with God through a series of meditations divided into four "weeks." Rooted in the biblical and pagan traditions of self-reflection, "discernment" remains a central concern throughout two millennia of Christian experience. St. Ignatius's writings will serve as our critical lens for examining how authors ranging from St

Augustine and Theresa of Avila to Therese of Lisieux and Thomas Merton, employed varied genres while contemporary artists use film and other media to enhance our understanding of “discernment.” Students will engage in the process of “discernment” through critical and creative assignments.

#### MONT 106D

##### **Relationships: Human, Divine** (fall)

During the first semester we will study friendship: within the family, with other human beings we experience as “friends,” and with God. We will explore how friendship has found expression in the language of symbol, in literature and in music, from ancient to modern times. We shall examine the relationship of friendship to faith, hope, and love, but also to infidelity and sin, and to forgiveness. The seminar will explore how the relationship of God to human beings is incarnated in the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, and how human beings’ relationship to God is expressed in covenant, in prayer, and in vocation. How hierarchy and mutuality function in all relationships will also be considered.

#### MONT 107D

##### **Connections: Creator, Creations** (spring)

During the second semester we will study the connections between the Creator and creation as well as the connections among creatures, including animals, human beings, plants and the earth. We will examine how these connections are depicted in specific biblical texts and in later Christian literature, exploring how the relationship between Creator and creation has found expression in symbols, in art and in science, from ancient until modern times. We shall pursue the relationship of Christianity to ecology while also reflecting on abuse and excessive consumption of creation as sin. Finally, we will ask, "If interdependence is a given, and stewardship a responsibility, how can sustainability be attained?" This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

#### MONT 108D

##### **From Myth to Science** (fall)

We distinguish ourselves from all other animals by our imagination and the ability to communicate to others what we imagine. For at least 20,000 years the chief product of our imagination, and the chief tool we used to help us live our lives, was our mythmaking. Over the last 300 - 500 years the dominant product of our imagination has been scientific theories. This semester we will trace this transformation by following a storyline through some of the antecedents of modern science, from its origins in Paleolithic myths to its emergence in the Newtonian revolution.

#### MONT 109D

##### **Scientists Argue About Gods** (spring)

In the first semester we considered the origin of science from its mythmaking beginnings. This semester we will use that knowledge to examine current discussions about gods from practicing scientists who are atheists, agnostics and theists. We will consider the more passionate, combative arguments of some scientists--both atheist and theist--as well as the more temperate and nuanced discussions of others. We also hope to give fair hearing to scientists of both the Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic traditions.

#### MONT 110D

##### **Creatures and Creators** (fall)

How did we and our world come into being? This seminar will study the way creation has been traced to divinity by numerous writers. We will then consider how the urge to create has in turn drawn humans to words. Our readings will begin with creation myths from around the world, then move to writers like William Shakespeare, John Milton, and Leslie Marmon Silko. Those writers transform religious texts into great human art (*The Tempest*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*). From there we will shift to novelists like Mary Shelley, Margaret Atwood, and Kazuo Ishiguro who warn humans about the dangers we face when we try, like gods, to create life itself (*Frankenstein*, *Oryx and Crake*, *Never Let Me Go*).

#### MONT 111D

##### **The Devil Made Me Do It** (spring)

What is the nature of evil? If there is evil in the world, how can God be good? Writers have long pondered those questions and we will consider a few of their answers, especially those that focus on human free will. Our texts this spring will center on literary works which often shape the discussion of evil around the image of devils. We will return to myths studied in the first term and to Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. We will also look at sections from Dante’s

*Inferno*, analyze Christopher Marlowe's great play, *Doctor Faustus*, and Shakespeare's tragedy, *King Lear*. Two twentieth century novels (Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* and Anthony Burgess' *Clockwork Orange* should make clear the discussion has not ended.

## ↻ Global Society ↻

MONT 100G

### **Viet Nam: the Country** (fall)

This course explores the ways wars obscure our understanding of the people with whom we share the planet, and with whom we must ultimately make peace. In the first semester we consider Viet Nam, a country that was the site of a past war. During the first weeks of the term we will sample American representations of Viet Nam in film and story, before turning to Vietnamese film and literature, which will be the main focus of the course. We will explore similarities and contrasts as we develop a more complex understanding of Viet Nam and the Vietnamese as both beyond and enmeshed in these various depictions. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 101G

### **Muslim Worlds** (spring)

In the second term of this year-long course, we will bring the questions and insights we have developed in looking at the past to bear on looking for the human face obscured by the headlines of the present wars in the Islamic Middle East. Through ethnographies, poetry, film, literature, and brief histories, students will be introduced to the lands and peoples of the region. They will bring this background knowledge to a term-long project examining news sources from and about four countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 102G

### **You – The Global Citizen** (fall)

In this course, we will explore what it means to be a global citizen, connecting our lives as individuals to our late modern global context. What unique global challenges face us in the 21st century? How has our responsibility as citizens evolved as our understanding of global interconnections has deepened? And, what can we do as individuals (more specifically, you, as a student) to contribute to their resolution? We will read about, view documentaries on, and experiment with social, political, economic, and environmental problems (and solutions) as we investigate how our everyday behaviors on a micro level connect us to these macro issues.

MONT 103G

### **You – The Ethical Consumer** (spring)

In this course, we will explore what it means to be ethical consumers, connecting our everyday purchasing behavior to global systems. How are aspects of the global economy helping/harming human rights, environmental sustainability, local communities, animal protection and social justice? How are we, as consumers, responsible for the consequences generated by such an economy? How are businesses embracing their social responsibility and what examples exist in our own community of Worcester? How can you shift your own purchasing habits in ways that encourage results more in line with your values? We will use readings, videos, audio clips, interviews with local businesses and “real life” experiments to learn about the complex nature of our economic roles.

MONT 104G

### **Foundations of Chinese Culture** (fall)

China is one of the world's oldest continuing civilizations, extending back in time more than three thousand years. In order to understand modern China, we need to understand the foundation on which it is built. This course explores that foundation, providing an overview of its history and geography, custom and traditions, food, music, drama, and more, through readings, lectures, discussions, video, music, and hands-on workshops. As we learn, we compare China with the West, looking at differences large and small that lead to different values and different ways of viewing the world. In this way, students learn to be global citizens capable of viewing events from multiple cultural perspectives. This course counts toward the Asian Studies concentration.

MONT 105G

**Screening Chinese Culture** (spring)

You all know about China's rapid economic development over the past several decades. Economic development has brought about dramatic changes in Chinese society, and these changes are ongoing. How do Chinese people feel about these changes, and how do they adjust to their ever-changing world? In this class, we use Chinese cinema to get an inside view of Chinese society from the mid-1980s when these changes began, to the present time. Cinema is a perfect way to view the changing landscape in China's cities and countryside and to witness the drama of people's lives as they learn to live in a new society without losing the traditions and beliefs that define their culture. This course counts towards the Asian Studies concentration.

MONT 106G

**Reacting to the Colonial Past** (fall)

How did a few European states come to control nearly 80% of the world's land surface by the beginning of the First World War? And why did that power begin to crumble fifty years later when anti-colonial nationalist movements swept across the globe in the wake of the Second World War? This course is part of a full-year sequence that will explore European imperialism, liberation movements, and the legacy of colonialism in the twentieth century. Since India was one of the first colonies to mobilize against British rule, we will focus our energies on Indian independence and the formation of India and Pakistan. A focal point of the course will be students' active engagement in collaborative projects and debates when we study Indian independence. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 107G

**Enduring Legacies of Empire** (spring)

What has been the legacy of colonialism and independence movements? This semester will be devoted to understanding how colonialism affected individuals—the men, women, and children—who lived under colonial authority and how colonialism continued to shape society and politics in newly liberated nations. To understand the intimate reach of empire, this course will consider the policies of colonial authorities as well as analyze the attitudes and reactions of colonizers and the colonized to the imperial project. During the second half of the semester, we will examine the case study of the apartheid system in South Africa. A highlight of the class will be student-led debates about justice, democracy and nation-building in South Africa. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 108G

**Disaster Economics I** (fall)

This course is the first half of a two-semester sequence that will introduce the basic concepts of microeconomics and explore ways in which economic analysis can help us understand the effects of disasters on society. Disasters interrupt economic activity and cause changes in consumer priorities and market conditions which can be used to illustrate the principles of economics; economic theory can provide valuable insights for policy makers and individuals affected by disasters. The course will examine the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, the devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the flooding in Australia in late 2010. The course will cover the first half of the topics in a standard course in principles of microeconomics.

MONT109G

**Disaster Economics II** (spring)

This course will continue the introduction to the basic concepts of microeconomics and will also explore the policy implications of different types of disasters. We will compare the challenges facing governments confronted by active volcanoes, like Mount Merapi in Indonesia, with those associated with earthquakes like the recent ones in Haiti, Chile, and China, and the long-term problems of flood-prone regions. We will also follow in the news disasters that occur during the semester. The course will cover the second half of the topics of a standard course in principles of microeconomics.

MONT110G

**Crises & Individual Heroes** (fall)

When global crises unfold, some ignore them all together, while others confront them head on by making the search for solutions their own personal business. Who are these men and women who have responded to global political, social, environmental, and health crises in the turn of the millennium in such personal ways? What motivates them?

What resources do they possess? What challenges do they face? What impacts do they produce? The course will study major global crises of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the lenses of the personal stories of individuals who attempted to solve them. Genocide, environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS, and terrorism are example of the global crises addressed in the course. Case studies of crises will be drawn mostly from the developing world. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

#### MONT111G

##### **Crises & Organized Response** (spring)

As global crises unfold, the world has increasingly relied on cooperative global arrangements to address them. State-sponsored-multilateral organizations (United Nations, World Health Organization), private foundations (the Clinton Foundation, the Bill and Melina Gates Foundation), and activist non-profits (Doctors Without Borders, Greenpeace, and the Red Cross) have devised institutional responses to crises, with different degrees of success. The course will evaluate the resources that institutions rely on to respond to crises, the constraints they face, and the impacts they produce. Case studies will parallel the ones discussed in the Fall. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

#### MONT 112G

##### **Computers and Society** (fall)

Computers are ubiquitous in society today and are integral to our lives. Websites such as Facebook and WikiLeaks are changing how we interact with one another and gather information. Many every-day activities are dependent on computers and computer networks. Communication, transportation, electrical grids, manufacturing, education and many other fields of endeavor increasingly rely on computer technology. In this course we will examine the uses of computers in societies in the U.S. and throughout the world and discuss how this technology affects our lives and how we interact with one-another. In addition, students will learn to write simple computer programs in order to begin to understand the subtleties of how computers work.

#### MONT113G

##### **Ethics of Computing** (spring)

The increasing use of computers raises questions that require us to re-examine how we think about a variety of ethical issues. The ease with which computers can be used to gather information affects the ability of individuals to maintain their privacy. The ease of copying and distributing digital files (such as music and movies) affects artists' ability to maintain ownership of their own work (their intellectual property). We will discuss philosophical approaches to deciding how best to deal with a variety of issues related to computer use such as privacy, intellectual property, security, accountability, the digital divide, hacking and viruses. In addition, students will continue to learn about how computers work, from circuits to networks.

#### MONT 114G

##### **Madmen, Monsters, Werewolves** (fall)

Why do human beings sometimes imagine "Others" as monstrous? This course will explore, through text and the visual and plastic arts, the representations of the "Other" from the classical period through the Age of Exploration. We will begin with tales of "unusual" men and women in Homer, proceeding to study of Persians, Indians, "Ethiopians," and barbarians in Greek and Roman literary, historical, geographical, philosophical and scientific texts. With the emergence of Islam, followers of Mohammed were imagined "infidels" others along with European women and men labeled "witches" or "wild men." Accordingly, the course will familiarize students with medieval and Renaissance visual and textual treatments of "others" in Europe and newly discovered lands in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

#### MONT 115G

##### **20th Century Genocides** (spring)

In this interdisciplinary seminar we will examine the Holocaust and other twentieth-century genocides, from a number of perspectives: historical, ethical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, literary and philosophical. In the Europe of World War II, Armenia, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and other locations we will pursue a study of contemporary genocides across victims, perpetrators, bystanders and rescuers, drawing upon historical documentation, first-person testimonies, photography, visual arts and music.



## ☞ The Natural World ☞

MONT 100N

### **Development and the Environment** (fall)

Animal development is the transition from fertilized egg to highly complex, unique individual that is capable of reproduction. Normal development is completely intertwined with the environment - the local environment of the womb, the nest/home or the greater outside world. What role does it play in shaping physical features, behavior and health? This course will consider animal development in an ecological context. We'll begin with an overview of developmental biology, then examine environmental toxins and animal development. We'll also discuss how changing the environment with the intent to improve lives may have unintended consequences, and consider the conflicts that arise when different groups have divergent opinions about environment and health links.

MONT 101N

### **Literature and Science** (spring)

This course will explore the way literature and science inform each other, meeting at a matrix of shared humanistic concerns. We will not examine science and literature from the vantage point of science fiction. Instead, we will look at them in the way they most realistically illuminate each other. Some of the most eloquent literary statements in science have been in defense of science itself, the way, for example, the Second Law of Thermodynamics can be read to provide a defense of evolution. At the same time, many of our writers embrace science as the means of humanistic expression. We will explore these and other topics in works of both fiction and non-fiction.

MONT 102N

### **Modeling the Environment** (fall)

If we continue to use fossil fuels to generate energy for transportation, what effects can we expect to see from the pollution they generate? Are there realistic alternatives to those fuels? Our ability to develop answers to such questions and to understand the political, economic and social issues involved depends on understanding quantitative information. Mathematical models--equations of various sorts capturing relationships between variables involved in a complex situation--are fundamental for understanding the potential consequences of choices we make. In this course we will introduce a number of basic techniques for constructing models and see the ways they are applied to environmental issues. This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

MONT 103N

### **Analyzing Environmental Data** (spring)

Are we experiencing global climate change? Does a high-fat diet lead to increased risk of certain cancers? Statistical thinking is one method humans have developed to discern underlying patterns in quantitative information. It forms an ever-growing component of our public debate on issues in the environment, human health, and politics. In this course, you will learn some basic tools of statistical inference (that is, the process of inferring the presence of a general pattern from the data contained in a smaller sample) and how and why those tools actually work. In the process, you should develop an appreciation of the power and the limitations of statistical thinking and learn to analyze claims backed by statistics.

MONT104N

### **Environmental Understanding** (fall)

"Going green" is currently a popular trend, but what is environmentalism and how do the contributing and sometimes competing fields of science, philosophy, history, economics, and politics shape it? We will study environmentalism from a scientific perspective, with a focus on ecology, one science that strongly informs it. We will learn about the history of environmentalism and the contributions of philosophy, economics, and politics to its current state. Finally, we will also study the natural history of our local New England environment, to help us appreciate the inspiration that motivates much environmental concern.

MONT 105N

### **Environmental Issues** (spring)

Environmental science seeks to understand how the natural world works, and how humans and the environment interact to affect one another. How are humans shaping the environment and how is this change affecting humanity? Certainly the environment is changing, but what are the causes and consequences of specific environmental changes? What are possible solutions to current environmental problems? Building on our understanding of

environmentalism from the first semester, this course will focus on current environmental issues and the search for scientific solutions to those issues. Topics will include biodiversity, population growth, waste management, water resources, food production, energy, and climate. This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

MONT 106N

**I Mean, Therefore I Eat** (fall)

'We are what we eat' – what does this really mean? In what ways does eating contribute to the making of a self or a group? The course explores how specific dietetic decisions reflect a detailed and comprehensive image of a person or a community. We will start by considering the different ways in which foods can mean something to us: how particular foods can be associated with an occasion, a person, a place. Next on the menu will be the ethical, environmental, and political values that our diets reflect. The class will draw upon a wide range of resources, including classical and contemporary philosophical texts, food essays, magazine and newspaper articles, videos and images.

MONT 107N

**I Esteem, Therefore I Eat** (spring)

The recipe for creating pleasure through food is complex. Start with the palate. Americans hold food experts in high esteem; Italians do not. Are some experts more right than others? Is the quality of a food objective or is it simply a matter of personal taste? Add a dash of art. Some chefs aspire impressing their table guests. But can food be art? Could a cook ever compare to Michelangelo or Leonardo? Stir food's effect on the body into the mix. Most food labels display nutritional "facts." We use them to seek the "mental pleasure" of a healthy diet. But how should we interpret these facts? Is nutrition a science like – say – cell biology?

MONT 108N

**Math/Music: Structure and Form** (fall)

Why does Western classical music divide the octave into twelve notes? Why do some collection of pitches sound more pleasing than others? How do you tune/construct a piano or a guitar? These and related questions can best be understood through the language of mathematics. We will utilize mathematical concepts such as graphs, trigonometry, logarithms, equivalence relations, irrational numbers and continued fractions to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for music. The requisite musical theory (e.g., notation, rhythm, time signatures, pitch, scales, intervals, circle of fifths, and the overtone series) will also be covered.

MONT 109N

**Math/Music: Aesthetic Links** (spring)

Ever notice that many lovers of math and science are also excellent musicians? While Bach was an incredible composer, was he also a great *mathematician*? Can mathematics be considered an *art*? Building on the foundational work from the first semester, this course will explore the creative and artistic connections between math and music. We will study, analyze and listen to composers such as Bach, Haydn, Schoenberg and Xenakis who, whether they are cognizant of the fact or not, use mathematical ideas in their creations. The class will culminate with each student writing and performing (or finding someone to perform) their own mathematical/musical compositions.

MONT 110N

**Go West, Young Man and Woman** (fall)

Since America's beginnings, the frontier has shaped our sense of who we are. Frederick Jackson Turner claimed that westward expansion gave rise to a sense of freedom and opportunity by "breaking the bond of custom [and] offering new experiences..." This course will use American literature to complicate Turner's thesis: To what extent was the American West always a myth since it had been populated by native people long before Europeans "discovered" the continent. How does "nature" continue to be important to our sense of well-being? To what extent does the possibility of adventure and discovery still influence our national identity? Students will have opportunities to write their own fiction and nonfiction.

MONT 111N

**Bright Lights, Big Cities** (spring)

Cities and suburbs are their own natural environments that are no less "real" than mountain ranges or Saguaro forests. In this course, we'll trouble the dichotomy between nature and culture, rural and urban, and discuss the

values embedded in these seemingly simple oppositions. We'll survey the terrain of literary responses to urban and suburban life and examine the myth of alienation and disconnection that arises out of crowded subways or gated communities. Finally, we'll look at recent efforts to get back to nature (or live more simply) in cities. What's this all about? Once again, students will have opportunities to write their own fiction and nonfiction. This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

## 🌀 The Self 🌀

MONT 100S

### **Popular Music and Identity** (fall)

This course will examine how popular music influences all aspects of personal and collective identity in American culture. How does popular music influence the ways we think about race, gender, age and social class? What role do corporate and commercial interests have in promoting and sustaining certain conceptions of personal identity through music and music video? Studying a wide variety of popular music, including Pop, Rock, R&B, Hip-Hop and Soul and reading from top scholars in the fields of music, sociology, cultural and gender studies, students will consider the ways popular music both reflects and shapes the culture in which we live. This course counts toward the Women's and Gender Studies concentration.

MONT 101S

### **Rap Music and Self-Expression** (spring)

Not since the advent of Rock-n-Roll have audiences, critics, scholars been so apprehensive about the power and probity of a form of musical expression. Why is rap so powerful? And why are all forms of music that enable or invite self-expression understood to be dangerous? This course will examine the relationship between rap music and the politics of self-expression. Front and center will be the controversies raised by rap music as well as the forms of personal, political and social expression rap alone makes possible. Studying a wide variety of rap and hip-hop music, students will examine the musical, historical, cultural and aesthetic conditions that have made rap music the voice of a generation. This course counts toward the Africana Studies concentration.

MONT 102S

### **Coming of Age: Fiction & Film** (fall)

From Holden Caulfield to the teenagers in the controversial TV show "Skins," we remain fascinated by characters that depict the transition from childhood to adulthood—the process we call "coming of age." In the first semester, we will examine a wide variety of recent short and longer fiction as well as film to understand what these narratives of development reveal about ourselves and the world around us. How, in particular, do adolescent protagonists both represent and challenge our notions of self, of identity, of family and community? Through oral presentations and a range of analytic writing assignments, students will develop critical reading, writing, and speaking skills.

MONT 103S-01

### **Coming of Age: Adaptations** (spring)

Coming-of-age stories have been immensely popular with readers since the 1800s. In the spring we will pair classic novels (such as *Great Expectations*) with both film adaptations and more recent coming-of-age narratives in order to explore the flexibility—and continued relevance—of these archetypal works. We will be asking what makes the coming-of-age story worth telling so often and what difference it makes to adapt this story to the medium of a novel, a graphic novel, a memoir, or a film. Throughout, we will continue to hone the critical reading, writing, and speaking skills you developed in the fall. This course counts toward the Women's and Gender Studies concentration.

MONT 104S

### **In Search of the True Self** (fall)

We tend to assume that each of us has a "self" -- that there is a basic consistency to "who I am," even though I may act differently in different situations. We also strive for self-knowledge, believing it can help us lead a more authentic life. Finally, we tend to associate the self with a single "inner voice" that comes from deep within, rather than a multiplicity of voices shaped by outside forces (culture, social class, etc.). In this course, we study various social and psychological theories of the self, which raise provocative questions about such assumptions. Some of those questions have been asked for centuries; others grow out of recent social and technological developments.

MONT 105S

**Disorders of Self** (spring)

What can dementia, stroke, and neurological and psychiatric disorders teach us about how the brain creates personal identity and a unified sense of self? This course will explore the neurobiological origins of the self. By examining what goes wrong with the sense of the self in individuals with brain dysfunction, we will explore the link between brain and identity. From remarkable cases of patients who deny parts of their body are their own, to patients failing to recognize their own images in the mirror or thinking their relatives have been replaced by exact duplicates, we will begin to unravel the perplexing question of how the brain shapes the individual's identity and consciousness.

MONT 106S

**Power, Protest & Social Change** (fall)

The history of the United States is, in large part, a story of power and protest. Injustice and oppression are universal elements to the human story, but what makes a person willing do something concrete about it? What makes a person act? How do groups organize and movements come into being? How does social/political change happen? How is it resisted? We will explore these questions through case studies of modern U.S. social movements: African-American civil rights and New Left/anti-war. We will pay special attention to the variety of individual experiences and perspectives within these struggles for justice as well as interrogate our own sense of what is possible in a democracy. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 107S

**Voicing the Political Self** (spring)

In this course, we will examine a third modern U.S. social movement, the struggle for gender/sexual rights/liberation. We will then turn our analysis from collective action to individual and ask, "What constitutes a political self?" Through the study of autobiographies, films, oral history, and works of art, we will examine the wide variety of ways in which individuals express their political values in the public sphere. Through the process of political autobiography writing, students will work to understand and to articulate their own motivations and potential as political beings. Students will interrogate and articulate why they believe what they believe and how might they live out those beliefs in the larger global community. This course counts toward the Women's and Gender Studies concentration.

MONT 108S

**Writers' Tales** (fall)

How do we tell stories about ourselves? And how do we think of our lives in terms of stories? This course explores how individual protagonists shape their own lives into books, with an emphasis on narrative structure and design in picture books, short stories, novels, and graphic novels. Texts may include Crockett Johnson's *Harold and the Purple Crayon*; David Macaulay's *Black and White*; Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*; Steven Millhauser's *Edwin Mullhouse: The Life and Death of an American Writer, 1943-1954* by Jeffrey Cartwright; Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*; Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*; Marjane Satrap's *Persepolis*; and Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. We'll also consider illustration, book design, and books as objects in keeping with the second half of our year-long sequence.

MONT 109S

**Artists' Books** (spring)

This semester investigates representations of our lives in visual books. We will learn to design and construct books in various forms including the artists' book, digital book and graphic story. In this hands-on, studio art class we will practice the basic skills of designing sequential images in combination with text. Experimentation and improvisation are encouraged. We will encounter diverse examples of the self portrayed through images and words, and respond with our own creative work.

Lab Fee: \$70