

**MONTERRAT SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS**  
**2012-2013**

**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

**Greeks Reconstructing the Past** (fall)

The writing of history is one of the great "discoveries" of the ancient Greeks. Poems like the *Odyssey* kept the Greeks connected with their past for centuries, but the truth behind a story like that of the Cyclops was probably of little importance to an ancient audience. Herodotus, an Asian Greek from Halicarnassus, first made "inquiries"--the literal meaning of "history"--into what **really** happened in the past, especially during the Persian Wars. We will read Herodotus' works, as well as those of Thucydides, another luminary from the fifth century BC, and we will examine what standards these historians used for finding historical truth and how successful they were in their attempts.

MONT 101C

**Romans Reconstructing the Past** (spring)

Given their admiration for most everything Greek, ancient Romans reconstructed their past in many of the same ways as the ancient Greeks...but with a Roman twist. We will read from the works of Livy, a first century BC writer, who was at times more concerned with composing morality tales than with presenting historical truth. Tacitus, who lived a century later, faced the daunting task of writing a truthful history at a time when an angry emperor could cut short a historian's career...and life. We will also read from the biographies of Suetonius, a very learned man, whose approach to historical truth could, at times, be quite surprising.

MONT 102C

**Beauty, Suffering, and Truth** (fall)

We'll examine the way moments of beauty and suffering (and goodness, justice, love) help us come to an understanding of what it might mean to "live in the truth." We will look at a number of literary works (mostly short stories first semester) from the Bible to the contemporary novelist Marilynne Robinson, examining how our experience of beauty and suffering (the two great means by which we are compelled to ask Why?) are intimately connected to the discovery of what makes our lives meaningful.

MONT103C

**Time and Truth** (spring)

In Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, Emily, asks the stage manager, "Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it?" *That we should realize life as we live it*—that's the idea that we want to look at in the second semester. This semester we will pick up with Marilynne Robinson's idea that "right worship is right perception." We will look at literary works that help us recognize what we cannot see, and often experience as missing, even when what we are looking for is right before our eyes.

MONT 104C

**Emerging from the Cave** (fall)

As Plato's "Parable of the Cave" teaches, at times we become painfully aware that what we took to be reality was but a shadow, a mere appearance. Such moments leave us disoriented, anxious. How do we make our way toward the light of truth after such an experience? We will explore this and related questions by reading a number of major works of short fiction and poetry drawn from the last two centuries. Poets to be studied will likely include William Wordsworth, John Keats, T.S. Eliot, and Elizabeth Bishop. The short fiction will be by the likes of Leo Tolstoy, William Faulkner, and Flannery O'Connor.

MONT 105C

**Returning to the Cave** (spring)

In "The Parable of the Cave" Socrates argues that the person who emerges from the Cave and "sees" the Sun must return to the Cave and share what he or she has discovered with the community. In the spring we will explore what "living in the truth" means in a number of texts drawn from ancient and medieval cultures. Likely works to be studied: selections from the Bible; a dialogue by Plato; Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*; a Greek tragedy; Augustine's *Confessions*; Dante's *Purgatorio*. Throughout the term we will ask how texts such as these might still help to illuminate the "caves" of our contemporary world.

MONT 106C

**Truth Seekers** (fall)

The movies have given us many kinds of truth seekers. In its most generic form, in murder mysteries, this quest entails the tearing down of preconceptions and the dodging of deceptions in order to arrive at the solution. Sherlock Holmes argues that when you eliminate the impossible, what remains is the truth, but the process is seldom so easy. A film's protagonist sometimes seeks the more profound truths of identity or the nature of an institution, a culture, the modern world. This course will look at a range of movies that track those journeys – many of which begin as murder mysteries.

MONT 107C

**Confronting The Truth** (spring) The truth is supposed to set you free, but only if you can live with it. In the spring semester we'll examine movies in which the focus is not on the quest to find the truth but on the challenges of confronting it once it's staring you in the face (whether or not you've gone looking for it). The subject matter of these films will include war, class, guilt, romance, sexuality and the perplexing cluster of truths that always accompanies the process of growing up.

MONT 108C

**Discerning Scientific Truth** (fall)

As humans we distinguish ourselves from all other animals by our imagination and the ability to communicate to others our questions and answers about the world. For at least 20,000 years the chief answer to those questions, and the chief tool we used to help us live our lives were the truths contained within our myths. Over the last 300 - 500 years the dominant answers to our questions about the world have been scientific truths. This semester we will trace the origin of scientific truths by following a storyline from Paleolithic myths, through the antecedents of modern science, to the Newtonian revolution and ending in the "Republic of Science."

MONT 109C

**Implementing Scientific Truth** (spring) Scientists share certain basic beliefs and attitudes about how they view their work and what is the nature of truth. Nevertheless, there are several areas and arenas where scientists are still in conflict. In certain specific circumstances scientists can disagree about what is the truth. Scientists can disagree on how the truth should be used in contributing to the designed world. And, since science cannot provide complete answers to all questions, scientific truths need to engage with and work with or against other truths and within other social structures. This semester we will examine these issues looking at how science contributes to the work of engineering and how science functions in a democracy.

MONT 110C

**Why Care About Atoms And Such?** (fall)

Course Description ( fall ): A key assumption of science is that one obtains some kind of truth about something by taking that thing apart and understanding the pieces. It follows that taking the pieces apart could lead to a deeper kind of truth about the thing being taken apart. This process continues until one obtains an understanding of the ultimate, most minute pieces. In physics, such pieces are the elementary particles. In the fall semester, we will discuss just what science has learned about these elementary particles and we will consider what kind of understanding or truth they give us about the large-scale world in which we live.

MONT 111C

**Living in Technology & Truth** (spring)

Modern technology is permeates every aspect of our lives. Technology is synonymous with progress. Computers and their countless offspring and applications, all kinds of medical innovations--devices of every types and size--are supposed to make life an easier, more pleasant, and richer experience. But, just what is modern technology? How is technology involved with "living in the truth?" Does one control the devices in one's life? Is the need to control a technological need? How does one best live with technology? To help us explore these and related questions, we will read several science fiction novels, several non-fiction works, and a number of essays.

MONT 112C

**Seeking The Truth** (fall) This two-semester course explores our collective search for the meaning of truth and the challenge of incorporating that knowledge into our lives. Focusing primarily upon lessons and models drawn from dramatic literature, the class will look at how the quest for truth has been an organizing principle and driving force in western culture. In the fall semester, we will explore contrasting classical notions of truth as enunciated in the works of Athenian philosophers (Plato & Aristotle), playwrights (Aeschylus, Sophocles & Euripides) and historians (Herodotus & Thucydides).

MONT 113C

**The Consequences of Truth** (spring)

The Gospel of John tells us "... you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (8:32), but the character Colonel Jessup in *A Few Good Men* (played by Jack Nicholson in the movie) declares on the witness stand, "You want the truth? You can't handle the truth!" In the spring semester, we will look at philosophical and theatrical works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., Brecht, Büchner, Dostoevsky, Havel, & Ibsen) that explore the conundrum of the modern condition where the truth may set us free but hardly promises happiness.

MONT 114C

**Loving the Truth** (fall)

How do we know what is true? Do we learn what is true through reason alone, or is it somehow necessary to "love" the truth? Is the truth something we learn through detached observation, or must it be passionately sought? What might it mean to be a "truth lover?" In the first semester we'll investigate these questions with some help from such books as: Plato's *Symposium*, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*. We'll also study television shows like *Sherlock* and films by directors like Woody Allen.

MONT 115C

**The Truth About Love** (spring)

Is love its own kind of truth? Can the experience of love help us to learn the truth about ourselves? about our world? Are love and the truth compatible? Is the truth about love, ultimately, that there is no such thing? Or, even if love exists, should our duty to the truth come first? In the second semester we'll ask these questions of and with such books as: *The Song of Songs*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Freud's *Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, and Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. We'll also turn to films like *Rushmore* and *Casablanca*, and popular love songs from The Beatles to Drake.

## ✧ THE DIVINE ✧

MONT 100D

**Ecology & Sacramental Ethos** (fall)

In the first semester we will examine the current ecological crisis and explore the Catholic sacramental imagination as a means of developing an ethic of care for the earth. The sacramental imagination sets itself to the task of both finding God in all things and honoring creation as a gift from the Creator. We will first analyze the scientific and ethical dimensions of the ecological crisis and then examine the role that prayer, spiritual exercises, and liturgical worship play in forming persons capable of perceiving the sacramentality of the earth. Texts and authors examined include: the Book of Genesis, the Gospels, Augustine, Ignatius of Loyola, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Thomas Merton, Annie Dillard, and Benedict XVI. This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

MONT 101D

**Justice & Prophetic Ethos** (spring)

In the second semester we will examine the social crises of global poverty, political violence/war, and racism and explore the prophetic imagination of the Judeo-Christian tradition as a means of responding to these challenges. Through an analysis of the biblical prophets, Jesus's preaching on the kingdom of God, and contemporary political and liberation theologians we will explore the manner in which the prophetic imagination challenges individuals and communities to orient their economic, political, and social activities toward the creation of a more just world. Text and authors examined include: biblical prophets, the Book of Job, the Gospels, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Archbishop Oscar Romero, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 102D

**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 103D

**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 104D

**The Ground of Truth** (fall)

This seminar explores philosophical conceptions of the divine by tracing the historical transformations of the relationship between faith and reason. We will begin with a reading of some seminal texts of Greek Philosophy, such as Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo*, in which the ultimate goal of human knowledge is to rise to a comprehension as well as an imitation of the divine in contemplation. At the same time, by defining the relationship of man with God in terms of such contemplation, philosophy poses itself as a higher, more sophisticated form of religion, aiming at substituting for external or sensible practices of religion, such as sacrifices, prayers, purifications and so on. This inaugurates a tension between faith and reason that we will trace through the Age of Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before, however, we turn to the advent of modernity, we will study the decisive contributions that Christian philosophy made to philosophy, in particular those of personhood and history, through such foundational texts as St. Augustine's *Confessions* and St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*.

MONT 105D

**The Blindness of Reason**

While faith was the presupposition for any religious or philosophical thought in antiquity, modern philosophy begins with faith's opposite, namely, doubt. The priority of the (thinking) subject over the world and the communal relationship with others, a priority that is conceived in terms of independence, found its emblematic representation in such mythical figures as Oedipus and Prometheus. The Promethean man's independence from authority was largely the result of the Reformation's critique against the religious forms of mediation and it ultimately led to an anemic conception of God, as a creator who sets the world in order but remains indifferent to human affairs (Deism). Thus, humanity robbed of its savior could not but seek its salvation in itself (Humanism). If modernity begun with doubt its culmination is reached in skepticism, out of which comes Nietzsche's dark pronouncement of God's death. Readings will include Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Descartes' *Meditations*, Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Kant's *Religion within Reason Alone*, selections from Nietzsche's works, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

MONT 106D

**Greek Gods and Mortals** (fall)

The division between mortal and immortal is, at first glance, a non-negotiable one. In this semester we will read closely texts such as Hesiod's *Theogony*, Homer's *Iliad*, and the tragic plays of Euripides, with an eye on the authors' presentation of the gods, and on how that presentation reflects the Greeks' understanding of themselves. But we will also consider the ways in which Greek mortals – literary characters, as well as historical figures such as Socrates – reached for other, competing types of immortality.

MONT 107D

**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. We will look closely at Virgil's *Aeneid*, Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*, 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 modern times, in, for example, 20th-century poetry and in American political discourse.

MONT 108D

**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 109D

**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 110D

**The Human & the Divine** (fall)

In the wake of Darwin especially, there have emerged profound and (for some) disturbing questions about the uniqueness and "specialness" of the animal we call "human": In what ways are we like, and unlike, other animals? To what extent are we determinate products of nature and nurture and to what extent free? And how can the view of the human being found in much of modern science be reconciled with that which is found in religion? In this course we will explore topics ranging from the existence of (so-called) "wild children" and the question of human nature all the way to the compatibility -- or incompatibility -- of science and religion.

MONT 111D

**Natural & the Supernatural** (spring) This course will explore the ideas of the natural and the supernatural, focusing especially on spiritual life as it emerges in the context of religion as well as in that of art, nature, mysticism and those other regions of seemingly "transcendent" experience that have led (some) people to believe that there may be more to the world -- and to ourselves -- than a strictly scientific perspective would suggest. As such, the course will examine such issues as the nature of religious and aesthetic experience; the question of occult, psychic, and other such (seemingly) "paranormal" phenomena; and, not least, the very nature(s) of reality itself, human and otherwise.

## ↻ 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 or Asian 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

**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 103G

**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 toward the Asian Studies concentration.

MONT 104G

**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 105G

**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 106G

**Powerball, Politics & Poker** (fall)

This course is a yearlong introduction to game theory, a broad collection of mathematical techniques used in the analysis of strategy and behavior. We'll begin with a primer on probability and its application to games of pure chance, while also examining gambling as a global cultural phenomenon. In the weeks before the November election, we'll take up the study of polling and the mathematics of voting systems. We'll conclude with a first look at strategic games and their mathematical representation.

MONT 107G

**Battles, Bowerbirds & Bargains** (spring)

We'll start by developing the fundamental concept of a Nash equilibrium, exploring its insights and limitations. We'll also look at the historical development of game theory, which has roots in economics but was also largely shaped by the Cold War. The second third of the semester will be devoted to evolutionary game theory, which seeks to understand the evolution of behavior. We'll conclude with a study of cooperative games, coalitions, and collective action.

MONT 108G

**Crises & Individual Heroes** (fall)

Course Descriptions (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 examples of the global crises addressed in the course. Case studies will be drawn mostly from the developing world. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 109G

**Crisis & Organized Response** (spring)

Course Description ( 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 110G

**Latino Images in U.S. Film** (fall)

This course focuses on images of Spanish speakers in the United States based on their representation in films from the 1920's to the present. The goal is to encourage students to understand the cultural, historical, and political contexts that have given rise to Hollywood stereotypes such as the Latin Lover/Bombshell, the Bandit, the Greaser, the Buffoon, the Gangster, the Drug Kingpin, as well as the counter tradition of films that contest these stereotypes. The course is also designed to serve as an introduction to film analysis and to the history of the US film industry from the perspective of Mexican Americans and other US Latinos. This course counts toward the Latin American and Latino Studies concentration.

MONT 111G

**Anglo Images in Latin Am Film** (spring)

This course focuses on images of English speakers in Latin America based on their representation in films from the 1940's to the present. The goal is to broaden the scope of the previous semester to chart the evolving relationship between Hollywood, independent filmmakers, third-world cinema from Latin America, and international co-productions. In addition to analyzing images of English-speakers in majority Spanish- or Portuguese-language contexts, we will examine narrative strategies and modes of production that invert classical Anglo-centered cinematic norms. This course counts toward the Latin American and Latino Studies concentration.

MONT 112G

**Economic Growth and Disparity** (fall)

Average annual income in the U.S. is over \$40,000 a person. In some African counties, income per person is less than \$800 a year. In 1900, the U.S. and Argentina had about the same level of average income, and today U.S. income is more than triple Argentina's. What forces have led to such growth and disparity around the world? This course will look into these questions as well as discuss how economic well-being may be measured. Along the way, you will develop economic and quantitative tools that can be used to understand the global economy and society. This course covers the material taught in the first half of a traditional principles of macroeconomics course.

MONT 113G

**Economic Cycles and Pay Gaps** (spring)

Inequality within countries has come to the forefront of worldwide debate during the slow recovery from the recent "great recession." The Occupy protests are a manifestation of deep dissatisfaction with growing inequality within the U.S., and similar movements have developed in many other countries. What is propelling this global phenomenon? In this semester, you will explore the forces that drive inequality within countries. In addition, this course will provide an introduction to business cycles, macroeconomic policy, the institutions engaged in economic policy as well as the quantitative tools used to understand these topics. As such, it covers the material in the second half of a traditional principles of macroeconomics course.

MONT 114G

**Traveling to the Unknown** (fall)

Improvements in transportation technology have allowed us to travel to distant parts of the globe and to encounter peoples and places far removed from our own homes. Why is a person driven to venture into new and foreign places? What do they discover along their journey? How does the experience of the voyage challenge how they think about their world and their place within it? We will address these sorts of questions as we examine, through literature, historical travelogues, and film, stories of the journeys taken by a variety of people to unfamiliar regions of their world.

MONT 115G

**The Unknown Comes Home** (spring)

Objects, ideas, and traditions travel across the globe much like, and often accompanied by, people. What happens when the unfamiliar appears close to home? Why do some individuals embrace the new while others shun what is alien? How does the arrival of the exotic shape the people among whom it is found, and how might these people, in turn, re-imagine the unfamiliar? In this course, we will examine the movement of unfamiliar objects, traditions, and people to the United States. We will investigate the influence of Indic thought on American writers like Thoreau and the encounters of Beatniks, like Kerouac, with

Buddhism. We will also study the trials and successes of Asian immigrant communities. This course counts toward the Asian Studies concentration.

## ❧ THE NATURAL WORLD ❧

### MONT 100N

#### **Drug Action and Design** (fall)

People use drugs to cure infection, to alter perception, and to influence cellular pathways. We will explore the fundamental biochemistry and pharmacology of drug design and action and examine the regulatory process of drug approval. Through readings and class discussions, we will explore related societal issues such as insurance coverage for prescription drugs, the design of clinical trials and the placebo effect, the use of drugs in religious ritual, and how and why a society chooses to control the use of some substances by making them illegal or under physician control, but to promote the use of others. Throughout the course we will develop our ability to read, write and argue about topics of scientific relevance.

### MONT 101N

#### **Biotechnology and Ethics** (spring)

Advances in technology have changed how we can control our health and bodies, as well as that of our offspring. Is this a blessing or a curse, or a combination of both? We will examine contemporary issues of bioethics through a case study approach. We will begin by grounding ourselves in the language of ethics with critical readings of notable thinkers such as Kant, Hume, Mill and Nietzsche. We will then draw on our biochemical knowledge from the fall to discuss both the scientific background and ethical implications of topics including informed consent, genetic testing, gene therapy, stem cell research, surrogacy and assisted reproduction, and the allocation of health-care spending and resources.

### MONT 102N

#### **Justice in Theory** (fall)

Our very problematic relationship with the environment has generated a great deal of debate and acrimony. No one disputes that we are consuming natural resources at an ever-increasing rate. No one disputes that our population is increasing at a dramatic rate, and that our interference with natural systems is increasing even faster. And no one disputes that our industrial practices leave ever less room and for other living things. What *is* disputed in each case is whether this is *wrong*. In this class we will study two theories of justice (liberal and conservative) and four theories of the environment to try to answer these questions, and anything else you want to bring up. This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

### MONT 103N

#### **Justice in Practice** (spring)

It turns out that neither the benefits nor the burdens of our current environmental practices are evenly distributed: time and again, both at home and abroad, vulnerable populations bear the burdens (polluting industries, contaminated media, waste sites) while privileged populations enjoy the benefits. In this class we will look briefly at some of the human costs of our industrialized lifestyle, then explore both the laws addressing those costs and the grassroots movements that arose when the laws failed. Going back to our theories of justice from the first semester and a third that we'll learn here: what should we do? This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

### MONT 104N

#### **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.

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MONT 105N

**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.

MONT 106N

**Biology of Aging** (fall)

This course will introduce students to the molecular mechanisms of aging. We will discuss the different physiological and evolutionary theories of aging, the molecular, cellular, and genetic changes that accompany aging, and the diseases of age. Students will learn how scientists study aging using model organisms, human centenarians, and by studying rare aging syndromes. We will also evaluate the therapies that are being rapidly developed to combat aging. The readings in the course will be a combination of textbook material and popular sources, and we will consider how citizens make health care choices based on media reports of scientific discoveries.

MONT 107N

**Development and Reproduction** (spring)

Understanding of animal development and reproduction has increased dramatically in the last half a century. In what ways has this expanded knowledge changed human medicine? How has new technology influenced reproductive decisions, and how has it influenced basic research? Following an overview of developmental biology, this course will explore these issues and others related to reproduction and society. We will also consider the impact humans have on animal development, by direct or indirect means. Throughout history, we have selectively bred animals for food, work and companionship; we will examine how these relationships changed in the age of molecular biology.

MONT 108N

**Our Bodies** (fall)

Across the globe, from prehistory to the present, humans have depicted themselves in art. The image has changed with the aspirations of the society and the materials available, such as wood, bronze, marble or paint. Societies developed rituals of food and drink that affected the body. Often they imagined their gods as enhanced people. With scientific advancements, including human dissection, artists acquired an understanding of the physical body; a wide range of personality types and human conditions (gender distinctions, childhood, old age, obesity, or madness) were introduced in art. Both seminars will encourage students to actually participate in making and manipulating imagery through Photoshop and other new technologies. Works of art and landscape on campus, the Worcester Art Museum, and in Boston are part of both semesters.

MONT 109N

**Our World** (spring)

Nature is, indeed, all around us, but we see it selectively. What a society values invariably appears in its art. Landscape was a rare subject in medieval society; it developed only as the age of discovery brought exploration of new worlds. The growth of science in the 15th century made possible the technique of mathematical perspective that dominated painting until the 20th century. A little more than a century ago, our country's political ideology of Manifest Destiny appeared in paintings of huge panoramas of the American West. Photography vastly changed our view of nature. Contemporary artists create installations that become a part of the natural environment sometimes for periods as brief as a day, or they may permanently alter the environment. The class will actually create an installation piece set in the landscape at Holy Cross.

MONT 110N

**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 111N

**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 to impress 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 112N

**Go West, Young Man & 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 work towards writing a long creative nonfiction essay.

MONT 113N

**Bright Lights, Big City** (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 briefly explore the history of cities before you begin to venture out on your own into cities – first Worcester, then New York, and finally perhaps Boston – to continue the great literary tradition of the travel essay and writing about place. We will also 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? This course counts toward the Environmental Studies concentration.

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MONT 100S

**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 101S

**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 102S

**Competing Visions of Freedom** (fall)

Americans have long cherished freedom as one of the core ideals of their democracy. Yet from the very earliest days of European colonization right up to the present day, Americans also have fought over the meaning and definition of the word. Who is entitled to freedom? Is every citizen of a republic entitled to the same measure of freedom? Is freedom centered on the self/individual, or must it take into account the common good? This course will examine several key moments in the nineteenth century when different factions of Americans challenged each other's definitions of freedom and in the process, redefined its meaning. These moments include the abolitionist crusade against slavery, the labor movement and its fight to gain economic justice for workers, the women's rights movement's efforts to secure the vote, and the struggle of Native Americans

to preserve their way of life in the face of western expansion. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 103S

**Struggles for Justice** (spring)

Building on our work in the first semester, this course will examine several social justice movements in the 20th and 21st centuries, including those for African American Civil Rights, Women's Liberation, Gay Rights and the Protection of the Environment. Much attention will be paid to the life stories of people involved in these movements, especially the development of their self-awareness as members of an oppressed group and commitment to bringing about social and political change in the service of justice. As part of this study, students will also engage with local social justice initiatives in the Worcester area such as those focused on education, poverty, refugee services, domestic violence, and the environment. This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 104S

**Games of Chance** (fall)

Games of chance have been around for as long as recorded human history. Modern gambling takes many forms, including card games, wagering with dice, and spinning wheels. In the game of blackjack, if the dealer's "up card" is a deuce and your hand totals thirteen, why is standing pat a good betting strategy? What's the best strategy for wagering in the game of roulette? In this course, we will use the theory of probability, randomness, and chance to answer these questions. We will also look into the question of allowing casino gambling in Massachusetts. Is the increase in permanent jobs and revenue through taxation worth the possible negative effects that would result, such as increased gambling addiction and crime?

MONT 105S

**Wagering and Society** (spring)

Lotteries can be traced as far back as ancient China and Rome, as well as the early modern history of England. Countries held lotteries for much of the same reason that states sponsor them today: to raise revenue without raising taxes. Tickets for Mega Millions and Powerball can easily be purchased by anyone, where each ticket offers a chance of winning millions of dollars. But what are the odds of actually winning, when so many tickets are sold? In this course, we will investigate the likelihood of winning lotteries using methods from probability theory. We will also examine the benefits that state-sponsored lotteries provide, as well as the costs, to its citizens.

MONT 106S

**Finding Oneself** (fall)

We generally think of "coming of age" as an internal process of forming our values and our identities within the context of family, friends, and community. But ethnic and racial identities, religious beliefs, sexual and gender identities are also shaped by repression and social exclusion. French director Louis Malle came of age through a friendship with a Jewish boy in Occupied France during the Holocaust (*Au revoir les enfants*), and Marjane Satrapi's girlhood was interrupted by the Iranian Revolution (*Persepolis*). These stories help to tell us about ourselves and the historical forces that shaped the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This course counts toward the Women's and Gender Studies concentration.

MONT 107S

**Conformity or Resistance** (spring)

One's values and identities continue to be challenged by political and historical forces. Novelist Ignazio Silone identified the challenge of living a just life between fascism and communism in Italy in the 1930s (*Bread and Wine*). Eugenia Ginzburg was swept "into the whirlwind" of Stalinist labor camps in 1940s Russia. Even in a mass democratic society, how does one determine when to conform to social norms and when to resist the values of that society or political system? When is conformity a virtue, and when is it a moral failing? This course counts toward the Peace and Conflict Studies concentration.

MONT 108S

**Social Roles in Medicine** (fall)

Students will examine the broader historical, philosophical, political, and scientific context in which medical care is provided. We will also focus on the social context in which medical care is received. By examining particular "cases" in the history of medicine (e.g., the AIDS epidemic 1985- present, Eugenics 1890-1930), the development of medical education, health care policy in today's aging society, and memoirs of doctors and patients that relate first-hand experiences of care and coping with illness, we will better understand the intertwined social roles and identities of those involved in the provision and receipt of medical care.

MONT 109S

**Neurobiology of the 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 110S

**Music as Experience** (fall)

What is the power of music? What do our musical choices and experiences tell us about ourselves? For centuries poets have told us that music raises the passions and expresses the inexpressible. But what role does music play in our lives? In our world of iPods and YouTube, we are surrounded by music all the time. But this is a relatively new development. Before the advent of recording, listening to music always involved live performance. This course will explore the power of music by focusing on the phenomenon of live performance in a technological age. The emphasis will be on "Classical" music and coursework will include attending several concerts. No previous experience in music required.

MONT 111S

**Music as Expression** (spring)

Why is the love song such an enduring tradition? Why do characters in musicals and operas express their feelings in song? Why do countries have anthems? Music is a complicated form of expression, one that can transcend barriers of language, time, and place. How does a great masterwork like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony inform us about the time and place in which it was first conceived and performed? How do we hear it differently from those who might have been in Beethoven's first audience? In this course we will explore music's ability to express emotions and ideas, focusing on "Classical" masterpieces, love songs, anthems, and traditions of writing about music. No previous experience in music required.

MONT 112S

**Science of the Self** (fall)

Our experiences shape who we are and how we view others. How does our brain use our experiences to form our sense of self and constrain the ways we perceive others? How does our brain allow us to quickly form first impressions of people based on their facial appearance and emotional expressions? How do our facial expressions convey information about our "self?" How can we explain our ability to connect our behaviors to our mental states (feelings and intentions) and our ability to connect others' behaviors to their mental states? Through our discussions and our readings in neuroscience and psychology, we will investigate how our brain gives us our personal identity.

MONT 113S

**Technology: Revealing the Self** (spring)

Using different technologies (modes of communication) can have a profound influence on the quality of our interactions with others and on what we reveal of our "self" during those interactions. Throughout the course, we will examine how our face-to-face interactions are different from those using texting, video-chat, or other social media, such as Facebook. Is the "self" you reveal on Facebook the one you intend to reveal? Are you able to hide characteristics of your "self" when using social media as well as you think? Using our discussions and our readings in psychology and neuroscience, we will explore the positive and negative aspects of interacting in a technological world.