Committee on Social Thought - Courses, Winter 2022

Please note the quarter will start 1/10/2022. Classes will be meeting remotely for the first two weeks and are scheduled to resume in-person on 1/24/2022.

20679 Simone de Beauvoir as Philosopher. This class will survey the philosophical work of twentieth-century Existentialist thinker Simone de Beauvoir. Best known as the author of the landmark second-wave feminist book, The Second Sex, de Beauvoir wrote extensively on topics in ethics, politics, and phenomenology. She also published several novels, one of which (The Mandarins) won the prestigious Prix Goncourt. Even so, the vast majority of de Beauvoir’s work is rarely studied in either France or the United States. Our goal in this class will be to take de Beauvoir seriously as one of the most important philosophical thinkers of the twentieth century. We will aim to understand her intellectual program holistically, with emphasis on the way in which her Existentialist concerns informed her work in literature and feminism. Works to be read include The Ethics of Ambiguity, The Second Sex, The Mandarins, Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter, and selected essays. Classes and readings will be in English; background knowledge of post-Kantian European philosophy is helpful but not necessary. xFNNDL 25502. E. Little (TR 11:00 a – 12:20p, F305)

31221 Antigone. Heroine or harridan? Political dissident or family loyalist? Harbinger of the free subject or captive of archaic gender norms? Speaking truth to power or preserving traditional privilege? Sophocles' Antigone has been good to think with since its first production in the fifth century BCE. From ancient commentators through Hegel to contemporary gender theorists like Judith Butler, readers have grappled with what Butler calls "Antigone’s Claim." The play's exploration of gender, kinship, citizenship, law, resistance to authority, family vs. the state, and religion (among other issues) has proved especially compelling for modern thought. We will supplement our reading of the play with modern commentary grounded in literary interpretation and cultural poetics, as well as philosophy and political theory. We will end by considering three modern re-imaginings of Antigone: Jean Anouilh's Antigone, Athol Fugard's The Island, and Tanya Barfield's Medallion. Although no knowledge of Greek is required for this course, there will be assignment options for those who wish to do reading in Greek. Requirements: weekly readings and posting on Canvas; class presentation; final paper. PQ: This course will be taught the first five weeks of the quarter, 1/10/22 – 2/11/22. xCMTH 31221/GREK 45808. L. Slatkin (TR 3:30p – 6:20p, F305)
31710 Machiavelli's Discourses on Livy. This course is devoted to reading Machiavelli’s Discourses on Livy supplemented by substantial selections from Livy’s History of Rome. Themes include princes, peoples, and elites; republics and principalities; pagan and Christian religion and morality; war and empire; founding and reform; virtue, corruption, liberty, and fortune; ancient history and modern experience; reading and writing; and theory and practice. Familiarity with Machiavelli’s The Prince strongly encouraged. xPLSC 20800/PLSC 32100/FNDL 29300. N. Tarcov (MW 3:00p – 4:20p, F305)

35011 Symbol & Allegory. A familiar account of modernism in the arts sees a turn from Baroque conventions of allegory (abstract ideas clothed in fragmentary arbitrary pictorial or linguistic signs) to a revolutionary romantic combination of image and content in the symbol, which had a late flowering in the Symbolist movement around 1900. Whether the development is celebrated (Coleridge, New Criticism) or deplored (Benjamin, Paul de Man), few question this historical and explanatory schema, investigate its application outside poetry, or ask what role allegory has played in the art of the ostensibly anti-allegorical nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this course, we will consider neoclassical, romantic, and modern views of allegory, symbolism, and meaning in art. PQ: Open to undergraduates with instructor consent. xCMLT 35011/ARTH 34731. A. Pop (TR 9:30a – 10:50a, CWAC 152)

35710 The Essence of Human Freedom. The essence of freedom, Heidegger claims, is originally not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing. Human freedom, therefore, cannot be construed as autonomy. We shall read Heidegger’s seminar “The Essence of Human Freedom” and his essay “On the Essence of Ground” in which these ideas are developed. x PHIL 35710. I. Kimhi (T 12:30p – 3:20p, F 505)

36018 Poetry and Trauma: Hayden, Lowell, Plath. We will read the poems of three 20th century American poets, Robert Hayden, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath, with an eye to the historical and psychological wounds suffered by the poets and the transformation of wounds into art. By close attention to both text and context, we will try to feel our way into the mysteries of poetic creation and human resilience. ENGL 26018 / ENGL 36018. R. Warren (W 10:30a – 1:20p, F505)
38003 Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. Our goal in this course will be to read through and understand the most important chapters of Hegel’s revolutionary book. Main topics will include Hegel’s new conception of philosophy and philosophical methodology, his agreements and disagreements with Kant, the nature of self-consciousness and human mindedness in general, individuality and sociality, and the relation between philosophy and history. **PQ: Undergraduates should have some background in philosophy; a knowledge of Kant would be especially helpful.** The course is also open to Master’s and PhD graduate students. Lecture plus discussion. xPHIL 28202/38202/FNDL 23410/CHSS 38003. **R. Pippin (Lecture, MW 1:30p – 2:50p, ECK 133, See course schedules for discussion section locations and times.)**

39821 (GRMN) Goethe’s Faust: Myth and Modernity. In this seminar we shall undertake an intensive study of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Faust*, with close textual study of the entirety of Part I and Act 5 of Part II. We will begin by casting a brief look at the earliest versions of the Faust myth, the so-called Faust Chapbook of 1587 and Christopher Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* composed 1589-92, premiered 1592, and we will have an eye on later versions such as those of Paul Valéry and Thomas Mann. Some consideration will be devoted to the question of modern “myth” and the Faust myth will be compared to that of Don Juan in particular. Our major task, however, will be to develop a close reading and interpretation of Goethe’s text, which ranks as one of the supreme achievements of the European literary tradition. The interpretive issues at the center of our inquiry will include: a) the theory of (modern) tragedy; b) desire and subjectivity; c) Faust in relation to post-Kantian philosophy; d) the theme of time and the “moment.” In addition to major works of scholarship, we shall touch on interpretations of the play by Schelling and Kierkegaard. Command of German will be helpful, but students may also refer to an English translation. (Recommended English version: Faust I & II, translated by Stuart Atkins, introduction by David E. Wellbery, Princeton Classics, 2014. Recommended German version: Faust I und II, hrsg. Albrecht Schöne, 2 vols. Text + commentary. Deutscher Klassiker Verlag 2017.) **This course is parented by the Department of Germanic Studies.** xSCTH 39821 D. Wellbery (W 3:30p – 6:20p, F505)
47015 (CHDV) Scientific and Humanistic Contributions to Knowledge Formation. In this course, we will explore whether the sciences and the humanities can make complementary contributions to the formation of knowledge, thus leading to the integration and unification of human knowledge. In the first part of the course we will take a historical approach to the issue; we will discuss how art and science were considered complementary for much of the 18th and 19th century (for example, in the views and work of Wolfgang Goethe), how they became separate (‘the two cultures’) in the middle of the 20th century with the compartmentalization of academic disciplines, and how some attempts have recently been made at a reunification under the concept of ‘consilience’. In the second part of the course, we will focus on conceptual issues such as the cognitive value of literature, the role of ideas in knowledge formation in science and literature, the role of creativity in scientific and literary production, and how scientific and philosophical ideas have been incorporated into literary fiction in the genre known as ‘the novel of ideas’. As an example of the latter, we will read the novel One, No One, and 100,000 (1926) by Luigi Pirandello and discuss how this author elaborated and articulated a view of the human persona (including issues of identity and personality) from French philosophers and psychologists such as Henri Bergson and Alfred Binet. This course is parented by CHDV. x SUTH 47015. D. Maestripieri (Please see CHDV course listings for time and location.)