

Fall 2008 Schedule

Four-Unit Courses:

Note: Seminar IST-9 is required of all students.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

(IST-8A-001: 4 Units)

Evan Fletcher, Center for Neuroscience

Consciousness has been implicitly the subject of study in the arts and religion throughout recorded human history. But in the last decade it has emerged as an explicit subject of scientific investigation and currently it is a "hot" topic. On the one hand, some scientists see grounds for optimism that a scientific explanation of consciousness will eventually be attained. Neuroscience has localized areas of the brain responsible for specific cognitive tasks. On the other hand, there are doubts, which also seem to have a scientific basis. Results in logic and computational theory suggest to some that the mind is certainly not a computer and perhaps cannot even be completely mimicked by a computer. But some computer scientists disagree! The field is in fact filled with rich controversy. This course will introduce some of the main ideas and controversies in the scientific study of consciousness. In order to do so, we will touch upon the fields of neuroscience, computer science, logic and physics. We will also visit some ideas in the philosophy of mind.

GE: Science and Engineering, Topical Breadth, and Writing

AMERICANS DEBATE THEIR RIGHTS

(IST-8B-001: 4 Units)

Jay Mechling, American Studies

Critical thinking-- a crucial skill to be developed in a university education—entails at its heart the ability to see both sides of important questions. Formal classroom debate is an excellent way to acquire and improve the skills of critical thinking. Each student in this course teams with another to research a rights question (such as privacy or gun control), prepares with the partner both an affirmative and a negative case on the question, and engages in oral debates (arguing first one side, and then the other) against another team that has researched the same topic. This course does not assume that you have had public speaking or debate training in your high school experience. You will work on those skills in this course. We also aim to understand American culture through these debates.

GE: Arts and Humanities, Topical Breadth, and Writing

A SENSE OF PLACE IN AMERICAN ART

(IST-8B-002: 4 Units)

Hearne Pardee, Art & Art History

This course will examine a variety of approaches to landscape in art, centered on the concept of place. It involves both the interpretation of works of art, and of actual landscapes. By readings, slide lectures, field trips and research on sites in and around campus, students will be made aware of ways in which American artists have dealt with their immediate surroundings, from the wilderness to the big city. Much of our work will involve practice in observation and description, which will lead to consideration of the ways in which art has shaped our perspective on the world around us. While there is no studio component to the class, students will be encouraged to use photography, drawing or video to complement their verbal documentation of sites, and the course will require visual analysis of works of art. These works will serve as a springboard for fresh observations of our everyday environment.

There will be a course reader, including artists' journals, art historical texts, poetry, and writings by contemporary cultural critics. We'll consider the important place of natural landscape and exploration in American art, the influence of Impressionism and photography, and contemporary efforts to integrate

nature and design. As an independent project, students will interpret a local site of their own choosing. Grading will also be based on class participation and a midterm exam.

GE: Arts and Humanities, Topical Breadth, and Writing

THE HISTORY OF THE END OF THE WORLD

(IST-8C-001: 4 Units)

David Biale, History

With the arrival of the new millennium, the perennial question of the end of the world has resurfaced with great urgency. In this course, we will examine the history of this obsession, tracing it from its origins in Jewish and Christian apocalypticism, to medieval millenarian and messianic movements to contemporary American apocalypses, including global warming and nuclear winter. We will read sources from the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, the Dead Sea Scrolls, medieval writings and, for the contemporary period, *Left Behind*, *An Apocalyptic Novel*. The course will also include the film *The Seventh Seal*.

GE: Social Sciences, Topical Breadth, and Writing

DR. OPPENHEIMER: OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE WMD

(IST-8C-002: 4 Units)

James Shackelford, Director, ISHP

Few topics have dominated the headlines in recent years as much as weapons of mass destruction (WMD). We shall explore this topic in an attempt to get beyond the headlines. A special focus will be the seminal role of the late University of California professor, J. Robert Oppenheimer, as well as his colleagues at UC and the UC institution itself, in the development of the most dangerous WMD, thermonuclear weapons. Our study will be greatly aided by the excellent book, *Brotherhood of the Bomb* by UC Merced Professor of History Gregg Herken.

GE: Social Sciences, Topical Breadth, and Writing

Lower Division Seminars:

CAMPAIGN 2008 AND ALL THE KINGS MEN

(IST-9: 1 Unit)

Faculty Presenters led by James F. Shackelford, Director

Required of all students. This course consists of a number of faculty presentations on this current topic. Students will respond to these presentations through weekly e-mail journals. This required course is supplemented by small-group discussions offered through IST 8 "Colloquium". The course is graded Pass/No Pass.

No GE Credit

COLLOQUIUM

(IST-8: 1 Unit)

Led by Student Tutors

These colloquium sections – held on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday in the late afternoon or evening hours – offer opportunities for tutor-led small-group discussion of the IST 9 seminar presentations and assistance with developing journal topics. The course is graded Pass/No Pass.

No GE Credit

Mid-Level Seminars:

The Science and Engineering of Terrorism, Antiterrorism and Beyond

(IST-90-001: 1 Unit)

James Shackelford, Director

"Terrorism" is a term that has since September 11, 2001 shaped much of our national political debate. Central to this discussion are weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This seminar will explore the science and engineering of nuclear weapons, as well as the pivotal role played by the University of California in this technology. We will also explore the equally challenging technology required to protect us from these WMD. We can find some encouragement in exploring how these technologies occasionally can be reconfigured for the benefit of humankind, e.g., in improved healthcare. The course is graded Pass/No Pass.

No GE Credit

Aggies at Play (IST-90-002: 1-unit) Jay Mechling, American Studies

Years ago an historian coined the phrase "homo ludens," Latin for "the playing human," because "homo sapiens" and its emphasis on thinking misses too much of what makes us human. "Play" might seem to be a trivial topic, but this course examines play in its several forms, from playful routines between friends to more formal games, including IM sports, club sports, and varsity sports. Fieldwork on campus will bring to our classroom concrete examples for us to analyze using the ideas and language developed in brief readings. The goal of this course is to show students that, far from trivial, the topic of play reveals a great deal about our social and cultural lives. Gender issues are prominent among these. The course is graded Pass/No Pass.

No GE Credit

Upper Division Research:

Special Study for Integrated Studies Honors Students (IST-194HA: 4 Units) James Shackelford, Director & Eric Rauchway, History

This is a research course to be taken by students who have chosen to participate in the Integrated Studies Honors Program in their Junior and Senior years. It may be repeated once for credit, and is intended to be taken in both the Junior and Senior years. Its counterpart, IST-194HB (also a requirement for upper division ISHP students), is offered in the winter.

Professor Shackelford oversees students in Science & Engineering; Professor Rauchway oversees students in History and the Social Sciences.

No GE Credit