

## **Spring 2014 Experimental and Special Topics Course Descriptions**

### **BIOL 394: Introduction to Neuroscience**

3 credit hours

This will be an upper-level lecture course focused on the functioning of the nervous system, especially the brain. Basic topics covered will include the anatomy and physiology of a neuron, an in-depth look at the action potential, neurotransmitters and their receptors, and brain regions responsible for motor, sensory and regulation functions. More advanced and current information will be presented regarding the role of glial cells in neuronal functioning, the molecular mechanisms of learning and memory, the roles of central pattern generators in normal functioning, and a closer look at dysfunctions of the various systems. The course will use an undergraduate-level textbook supplemented by outside reading from other textbooks and primary and secondary articles.

### **ENGL 194: Intro to Critical Reading**

1 credit hour

Through carefully designed readings, short writing, and in-class discussion assignments, this course will help you learn how to improve your reading comprehension and vocabulary. You will develop the pre-reading, active reading, and post-reading reflection skills that will help you to find greater success in college and beyond. This course is ideal for students in any major who want to improve their critical thinking and reading comprehension skills.

### **ENGL 362: Topics in American Literature: Slavery in Literature**

3 credit hours

This class examines modern-day slavery through the lens of the literary past, as it looks to literature for answers to troubling questions such as: How is it that slavery still exists? How do people justify it through their actions or inactions? What is being done to fight slavery, both as a real “thing” and as a reality that is informed by certain assumptions and perceptions that enable it—even if those enabling it do not know it? What is the role of literature and the media in bringing an end to modern-day slavery and the multiple forms of human trafficking that inform it? We will also examine how literature works to form a public-awareness campaign that will educate the public regarding the problem of slavery today. Beginning with “traditional” and contemporary slave narratives, we will examine numerous genres, considering both their historical contexts and their literary and rhetorical strategies.

### **ENVS 394: Natural and Social History of Oceania**

3 credit hours

Course presents a survey of Pacific Island history from prehistory to current geopolitical realities (Social History) while simultaneously introducing the unique ecologies of these Islands and Archipelagos (Natural History). Course addresses the original exploration and colonization of the Pacific Ocean by the ancestors of the Micronesians, Melanesians and Polynesians, and the ways that they developed their societies. The course will consider the environmental impact of islanders on their new homes, the development of sailing and navigation, and the growth of warfare and chiefdoms. Explore impact of European and American exploration and colonization post Cook. Finish with a survey of traditional and modern Pacific societies as they exist today throughout Oceania. Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, The Solomons, Vanuatu, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa, Guam, and other significant populated areas in Oceania will be addressed. Sustainability, Sea Level Rise, Drought and Climate Change: Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **GEOL 394: Environmental & Engineering Geology**

3 credit hours

This course will cover a wide range of topics, related to environmental and engineering geology including description and classification of soils, study of soil and rock properties, landslides, and engineering significance of geological structures. Students will develop quantitative skills and

learn methods for solving basic engineering geology problems in the real world. Laboratory exercises will introduce with hands-on examples and activities.

**HIST/RELI 194: Christianity: A Global History**

3 credit hours

This course will be a general survey of the history of Christianity, from its origins to the present day. It will focus especially on Christianity as global, culturally diverse religion. In addition to exploring the history of Christianity, this course will also serve as an essential introduction to Christian scripture and theology.

**HIST/RELI 294: The Popes and the Papacy: From Peter to Francis**

3 credit hours

This course examines the changing institution of the papacy and those who have served as bishops of Rome. Topics include the role of Simon Peter, the ancient Roman church before and after the legalization of Christianity, the papacy in the early Middle Ages, and papal power at its height in the high medieval period. The second half of the course will trace the post-medieval papacy from the Renaissance and Reformation to the present day, dealing with such issues as the papacy's role in the Scientific Revolution, nationalist movements, fascism and communism, and the reforms of and reactions to the Second Vatican Council.

**HIST 394: History as Seen through Genre: Biography in China**

3 credit hours

China has long valued the importance of biography in historical writings. This course will focus on two goals; reading a variety of Chinese biographies within the Chinese tradition through translation and examining how scholars have commented on and/or created their own approaches to Chinese historical figures. Upon completion of this course, students will have gained an overview of the biography in the Chinese tradition and will have perused the lives of dozens of influential (and not so influential) persons during China's long history from 1200BC through the 19th Century.

**HIST 394: Rome and the Barbarians**

3 credit hours

This course examines the changing conditions in the European and Mediterranean world from approximately 200 to 600 CE, a time period marked by the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the disintegration of the empire in the West, and the rise of several "barbarian" successor kingdoms. This course will examine not only the events of the period, but also the various interpretations modern scholars have made. Did Rome "fall?" Was the empire simply transformed into what would become Europe? Did this usher in a rustic, ignorant "Dark Age" or a vibrant, innovative "Late Antique" period?

**LEAD 294: Non Profit Leadership**

3 credit hours

This course is an introduction to the nonprofit sector and its role in American political, social and economic life. Students will examine the context, issues and skills associated with leadership in the nonprofit (voluntary) sector by evaluating various aspects of organizational capacity including marketing, human resources, programs and planning, operations and governance, financial resource development and management and information technology.

**MASS 194: Multimedia Foundations**

3 credit hours

This foundational course for media studies teaches the essential equipment, hardware, and software used in multimedia production and digital storytelling. Students will learn text, audio, video, photo, graphics, animation, and distribution tools, and related professional practices.

**MASS 301: Food, Media, Culture**

The Focus of this special topics course is nonfiction food writing in magazines, newspapers, books and film. We will discuss food as culture and the manner in which media representations figure in this dynamic. Interest in food politics, food preparation, and food-related health and environmental issues is reflected in the popularity of books by journalists such as *Fast Food Nation* and *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and magazine writing appearing in titles ranging from *Rolling Stone* to *The New Yorker*. Readings will cover food topics from farm to table, through writings by investigative journalists, policy analysts, restaurant reviewers, culinary experts, and documentarians.

**PHIL 194: Asian Philosophy**

3 credit hours

Asian Philosophy is an introduction to the major philosophical traditions of China and India, concentrating on the work of such major thinkers as Lao Tzu, Confucius, Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Shankara, and Ramanuja as well as contemporary philosophers from China, India, Korea, and Japan. Topics of discussion include the nature, problems, and methods of eastern philosophy; the nature of ultimate reality; the nature of leadership and politics; the nature of the self; the nature and existence of God; the nature and limits of human knowledge; human nature and the human condition; the meaning and value of life and death; the nature of the good life; and the search for enlightenment.

**PSYC 301: The Psychology and Biology of Food Intake**

3 credit hours

This course encompasses the study of psychological and biological factors that govern eating behavior. Topics include taste preferences, food aversions, the regulation of hunger and satiety, food as comfort and friendship, eating as social ritual, and social norms of blame for food problems. Also examined are problems such as malnutrition, eating disorders, and the global obesity epidemic; the impact of food advertising aimed at children; poverty and food; and how the modern environment influences each of us and the food choices we make.

**SPAN 294: Argentina and Brazil through Film and Popular Culture**

3 credit hours

This course will explore two specific non-US cultures—Argentina and Brazil—looking at the politics, historical traditions and customs, and economics through art. Moreover, it will compare Argentinean and Brazilian cultures and how each one has uniquely responded to the transition to democracy and economic liberalism of the last 30 years. Lastly, the study abroad component of this course will particularly satisfy the goals of the Global Perspectives general education requirement.

**RELI 194: Christianity: A Global History**

3 credit hours

See HIST 194.

**RELI 294: The Popes and the Papacy: From Peter to Francis**

3 credit hours

See HIST 294.

**RELI 394: Christian Social Ethics**

3 credit hours

In this course students will practice the normative discipline of making moral judgments from a Christian perspective. In so doing, students will: use a basic set of philosophical concepts that are germane to the discipline of ethics (deontology, teleology, virtues, and empirical judgments); interpret and apply four sources of knowledge (Scripture, tradition, reason and experiences) to moral questions; evaluate a variety of Christian responses to various moral problems; articulate their own Christian moral arguments on a variety of social issues.