

Committee on Social Thought - Courses, Spring 2021

25800 Shakespeare's Revenge. The philosopher Simone Weil argued that the desire for revenge is “a desire for essential equilibrium.” How might we understand this claim? This course will examine the use of the revenge theme in five plays of Shakespeare – Titus Andronicus, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and The Tempest – with a view to a.) deepening our understanding of these stories through close-reading; and b.) using them as a resource for thinking about revenge as a type of philosophical problem. What does a search for “equilibrium” entail, in such a context? How does an individual passion for revenge relate to conceptions of justice? More broadly, in what sense can a life fall into or out of balance? We will read and discuss each play as a whole, but with a special eye towards the psychological, historical, and metaphysical issues that revenge evokes. The focus of the course will be on Shakespeare’s two most explicit treatments of the revenge theme in his mature work: Hamlet and The Tempest. These readings will be supplemented by a consideration of his earliest foray into revenge drama (Titus Andronicus), the relationship between vengefulness and sexual jealousy (Othello), and the notion of cosmic retribution for sin (Macbeth). In addition, we will briefly examine plays by Seneca – the chief influence from antiquity on Elizabethan playwrights of revenge – and Thomas Kyd in order to further our understanding of the conventions of revenge drama in Early Modern England. **Undergraduate seminar.** xFNDL 25800, *B. Jeffery (TR, 4:20p-5:40p, REMOTE)*

20672 Back to the Land: Agrarian Communalism in Western Europe and the U.S., 1880-1980. As the 19th century drew to a close, many Westerners alarmed by the march of ‘industrial civilization’ began to form clubs, communes, corporations and political parties grounded in the belief that humanity could only be saved by a collective return to Nature. From the 1880’s-1980’s, this paradisiacal vision of the simple life attracted rebels from across the political spectrum. Although many people associate ‘back-to-the-landers’ with long-haired, sandal-wearing vegetarian pot-smokers, variants of agrarian communalism have been embraced by fascists, libertarians, socialist Zionists and radical feminists. In this course, we will analyze the appeal and impact of the back-to-the-land ideology. The class will be structured around a series of linked case studies, beginning in Victorian England and ending with contemporary American movements. **Undergraduate seminar.** *Although this class is listed as blended, please note, it will meet remotely for much of the course/quarter; we will try to incorporate outdoor, in-person settings for Chicago based students, weather and COVID restrictions permitting.* xHIST 25024, *D. Guthertz (TR, 9:40a-11:00a, BLENDED)*

20675 St. Petersburg: Text and City. St. Petersburg, Petersburg, Petrograd, Leningrad, Piter. Russia’s “Window to Europe” has as many faces as it has names: eastern and western; imperial and revolutionary; physical and mythical. This course explores the relationship between geographical space and cultural imaginary by examining what Vladimir Toporov has called the “Petersburg Text of Russian Literature,” a mythology of Russia’s European capital that has arisen from and through a unique constellation of literary classics. Readings include a close analysis of Andrei Bely’s modernist masterpiece *Petersburg*, as well as works by Pushkin, Gogol,

Dostoevsky, Blok, Akhmatova and Kharms. *Obs: All readings in English translation. Undergraduate seminar.* xREES 20675/CMLT 20675, D. Molina (TR. 1:00p-2:20p, REMOTE)

30929 The Strange World of Francis Bacon. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was a statesman, natural philosopher, essayist, and one of the most original thinkers of a spectacularly original age. Hailed as a visionary of modern science, reviled for his politics, praised for his prose style, admired for his legal reasoning, and skewered as a native empiricist. Bacon eludes modern categories. This seminar will look at his thought in the round. Texts include *The Great Instauration*, the *New Organon*, the *Essays*, and *New Atlantis*. **NOTE: This course will be taught the first five weeks of the quarter (March 29-April 30, 2021). Consent Required.** xHIST 45003/CHSS 30929, L. Daston (MW, 9:10a-12:00p, REMOTE)

31223 Homer's *Odyssey*: Estrangement and Homecoming. One of the two foundational epics of so-called Western Culture, the *Odyssey* is the great epic of cross-cultural encounter, in all its seductive and violent aspects, as well as the great poem of marriage. An adventure in nostos (homecoming), the *Odyssey* shows us the pleasures and dangers of voyaging among strangers. Constantly exploring the boundaries between the civilized and the savage, the poem offers as well a complex meditation on many ancient institutions, not least the family, patriarchy, hospitality customs, and the band-of-brothers so central to epic ideology. And as a masterwork of narrative art, the *Odyssey* asks us to consider the relation of fiction to "truth." We will explore these and other matters in the *Odyssey*, and may make some concluding forays into contemporary re-workings of Odyssean themes and characters. 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 Chalk; brief class presentation; final paper (assignment to be discussed) due at the end of the quarter.* **Open to undergraduates with instructor consent.** xCLAS 33616/FNDL 21223, L Slatkin (MW, 1:50p-5:00*p, please note that the course will end at 4:40 PM; REMOTE)

36014. T.S. Eliot. With the major new edition of Eliot's poems by Jim McCue and Christopher Ricks, the new volumes of Eliot's letters, and two separate new editions of Eliot's complete prose, we are in a position to rethink the meanings and force of Eliot's life work. The course will be devoted to careful reading of his poems, essays, plays, and correspondence, with attention to his literary, cultural, and political contexts. xENGL 34850 & 26614/FNDL 26614, R Warren (R, 1:00p-4:00p, REMOTE)

36065 (KNOW 36065): Classification as World-Making. This course will compare a set of fields in order to understand how classificatory knowledge structures our world. It begins with two philosophers—Aristotle and Kant—who offered strikingly different accounts of the role of categories in thought. Moving between disciplines, this course will furnish students with a diverse set of concepts and methods for working with classification in their own research. Above all, it will encourage critical accounts of the construction and effects of categories—as means for ordering the world and controlling it. This course is parented by Stevanovich Institute

on the Formation of Knowledge. x SCTH 36065 *Dr. Alexander Campolo (M/W 1:50-3:10p, BLENDED)*

37323 Leo Strauss and Lucretius On the Nature of Things. Leo Strauss's oeuvre contains two discussions of the works of classical poets: An outstanding book on Aristophanes' comedies (Socrates and Aristophanes, 1966), and a demanding essay on Lucretius' poem ("Notes on Lucretius", 1968). Socrates and Aristophanes I shall teach in the spring of 2022. In the spring of 2021, I shall present my interpretation of Strauss's "Notes on Lucretius" and of Lucretius' work itself – a most radical, non-teleological and non-anthropocentric view of nature. In a 1949 letter to E. Voegelin Strauss wrote about Lucretius: "His poem is the purest and most glorious expression of the attitude that elicits consolation from the absolutely hopeless truth for the only reason that it is the truth ... The closest approximation in our world is the side of Nietzsche that is turned to science." A special focus of the seminar will be on the poetic means Lucretius uses for teaching philosophy. Literature: Leo Strauss: "Notes on Lucretius," in: Liberalism Ancient and Modern. New York 1968, pp. 76–139. Lucretius: *De rerum natura / On the Nature of Things*. Ed. Cyril Bailey, Oxford 1947. **Note: The seminar will be taught remotely and will take place Monday/Wednesday, 10:20 a.m. – 01:30 p.m.*, during the first five weeks of the term (March 29 – April 28, 2021).** xCLAS 36720/PHIL 37323/PLSC 37323, *H. Meier (MW, 10:20a-1:30p, REMOTE)*

38201 (FREN 39100) Pascal and Simone Weil. Blaise Pascal in the seventeenth century and Simone Weil in the twentieth formulated a compelling vision of the human condition torn between greatness and misery. They showed how human imperfection coexists with the noblest callings, how attention struggles with distraction and how individuals can be rescued from their usual reliance on public opinion and customary beliefs. Both thinkers point to the religious dimension of human experience and suggest unorthodox ways of approaching it. We will also study an important text by Gabriel Marcel emphasizing human coexistence and cooperation. **This course is parented by Romance Languages. PQ: Taught in English. For French undergraduates and graduates, we will hold a bi-weekly one-hour meeting to study the original French texts. Undergraduates must be in their third or fourth year.** xCMLT 39101 & 29101/RLST 24910/ FREN 39100 & 29100/FNDL 21812, *T Pavel. (F, 9:10a-12:20p, TBD)*

40204 (HIJD 40204) A Proto-History of Race? Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in Spain and North Africa (1200-1600) This course focuses on phenomena of mass conversion and the emergence of ideologies of lineage and purity of blood in the western Mediterranean, more specifically, the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. The rivalry between Islam and Christianity (with Judaism a frequent go-between) in this region produced many distinctive cultural formations. Among those formations were ideas about the limits of conversion that may be compared to modern concepts of race. The word "race" was itself first applied to humans in Iberia during this period, to designate Christians descended from Muslims or Jews, and similar concepts emerged in Islamic North Africa. We will explore these ideas in the Christian Iberian kingdoms, with frequent excursions into Almoravid, Almohad, Marinid and Nasrid Islamic polities. Our goal will be to produce a Mediterranean archaeology of some of the concepts with which Christian and Muslim colonizers encountered the New World and sub-Saharan Africa in

the sixteenth century. **This course is parented by Jewish Studies. Open to undergraduates by petition.** xCRES 40204 / HCHR 40204 / HIST 42204 / ISLM 40204, D. Nirenberg (2:40p-5:40p, REMOTE)

40126 Economic Theory and the Theory of the State. Modern economics was built on the assumption that, in a perfectly competitive economy, the price system will allocate resources to their highest-valued uses. Yet, at the same moment that the neoclassical theory of competitive equilibrium took shape, it was recognized that benefits and costs of productive activity and of consumption were often not priced in the market. These 'external economies', as they came to be called, posed a profound challenge to the new economic theory. Economists came to ask how and why they emerged, and what could be done about them. Was the coercive power of the state necessary to force those who benefitted from external economies to include them in their production or consumption functions? Or could common-law adjudication take care of the problem? The problem of externalities has now drawn economists into the study of law, interest groups, ideology, and the theory of the state. In this course, we will track the conceptual history of externalities from the writings of Henry Sidgwick and J.S. Mill to the work of Mancur Olson and Douglass North. **Consent required.** J. Isaac (T, 1:00p-3:50p, REMOTE)

40128 Raison d'Etat and Modern Liberalism. In this course we will examine the classical view of the contrast between *raison d'état* and natural rights, as given canonical expression by Friedrich Meinecke, and then proceed to assess a series of works that have called into question this binary view of the making of modern political thought. Among the authors discussed are Leo Strauss, Reinhart Koselleck, Michel Foucault, and Albert Hirschman. **Consent required. Open to undergraduates with permission of instructor.** xHIST 39417, J. Isaac (F, 12:40p-3:30p, REMOTE).

50301 Heidegger's Critique of German Idealism. The texts we will read: Heidegger's 1929 book, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, his 1935 course, published as the book *What is a Thing*, the critique of Hegel published in 1957, *Identity and Difference*, and the 1942/43 lectures published as *Hegel's Concept of Experience*. We will conclude with a discussion of Heidegger's 1936 lectures, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*. The topic of the course: finitude. Students who have taken the winter quarter seminar on Heidegger will be given priority, but that is not a necessary condition of admission to the seminar. **Graduate Seminar.** xPHIL 51702, R. Pippin (R, 9:40a - 12:40p, REMOTE).

50800 (CMST 67205) Deleuze and the Image. The Image is a concept that returns and varies across Gilles Deleuze's philosophical works. In this seminar, we will work through Deleuze's characterization of the Image in its varying forms—image of thought, thought without image, movement-image, time-image, the visible and the expressible, Idea and percept, and sensation and figure, among others. Of special concern will be Deleuze's arguments concerning the relation of philosophy to art. Readings will include selections from *Proust and Signs*, *Difference and Repetition*, *Foucault*, *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, *Logic of Sensation*, *What is Philosophy?*, and perhaps other texts. Reading knowledge of French is recommended but not required. **This course is parented by Cinema and Media Studies.** xSCTH 50800, D. N. Rodowick (M, 10:20a-1:10p, REMOTE)

51415 Envy, Gratitude, Depression and Evasions: The “Contemporary Kleinians.” In this seminar we shall consider contemporary psychoanalytic thinking on fundamental aspects of human being: envy and gratitude, the capacity to learn from experience, mourning and depression, Oedipal struggles, the structure of the I, the superego and other forms of defense. We shall also consider relevant clinical concepts such as projective identification, splitting, internal objects, the paranoid-schizoid position, the depressive position, and attacks on linking. The seminar will focus on a group of psychoanalytic thinkers who have come to be known as the Contemporary Kleinians. Their work develops the traditions of thinking that flow from the works of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein – and we shall consider their writings as well when appropriate. Readings from Betty Joseph, Edna O’Shaughnessy, Wilfrid Bion, Hanna Segal, Elizabeth Spilius, John Steiner, Ronald Britton, Michael Feldman, Irma Brenman Pick and others. **By permission of Instructor.** xPHIL 51416, *J. Lear and K. Long (M, 1:50p-4:40p, REMOTE)*