

GROUP I: Capital Punishment

David Johnson, Sociology

Monday, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

BusAd D103

Capital punishment is one of the most contentious social issues in America today. This course will explore the topic from a variety of inter-disciplinary perspectives in order to learn what makes the death penalty so controversial and in order to discern what makes America retain this practice when almost every other industrialized democracy has abolished it (Japan is the only other rich-democratic exception).

There is no government power greater than the power of life and death. In fact, the philosopher and political theorist John Locke once went so far as to say that political power consists precisely of "the right of making laws with the penalty of death." If this is true, then along with the right to wage war, the death penalty is one of the best indicators of the character of a state and of the sovereignty of a people.

Although capital punishment is commonly regarded as a necessary mechanism for controlling crime, it is much more than just that. Indeed the death penalty is also a "window" onto many matters of major importance, including blame, responsibility, pain, vengeance, forgiveness, fairness, justice, human nature, democracy, redemption, and beliefs about life after death. Thus, to study capital punishment is to confront the perennial questions of philosophy in a way that simultaneously requires engagement with many practical questions of public policy.

Students who enroll in this course will be required to think, talk, and write about the connections between the ultimate criminal sanction and these other matters of ultimate significance. Because studying the death penalty exposes many core values and raises countless hard questions, this course will be of interest to students in a wide variety of fields, and it should have especially wide appeal to students in social sciences and humanities.

Texts: Prejean, *Dead Man Walking*; Turow, *Ultimate Punishment*; and Zimring, *Contradictions of American Capital Punishment*.

GROUP II: Medicine and Society across Times and Cultures

Mary Tiles, Philosophy

Tuesday, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

BusAd G101

The aim of this seminar will be to open up discussion of the role of medicine in society by looking at its practice at other times and other places. Our guide on this rather ambitious undertaking will be the large and very rich text by Roy Porter. There is a wealth of supplementary material that students will be able to choose from as they determine which avenues they would like to pursue in greater detail. There is plenty of scope here for students to pick up on topics of interest and do some research of their own. One of the benefits of this text is that it covers the history of medicine in places other than Europe, although even the European History is worth remembering. It is worth being reminded how recent the move toward a "science based" medicine, one founded on the idea of looking at the human body as akin to a machine is. This course is designed to qualify for W focus. Students will be asked to write two 10 page papers, with the option of rolling them into a single 30+ page research paper on a single topic.

Wk 1: The roots of Medicine

Wk 2: Antiquity-include readings from Galen

Wk 3: Medicine & Faith and the Medieval West

Wk 4: Indian medicine

Wk 5: Chinese Medicine

Wk 6: The Renaissance

Wk 7: The New Science and the Enlightenment

Wk 8: Scientific medicine in the Nineteenth Century and Nineteenth Century Medical Care

Wk 9: Public Medicine and Public Health

Wk 10: From Pasteur to Penicillin, Tropical medicine , and World Diseases

Wk 11: Psychiatry

Wk 12: Modern Medical Research and Clinical Science

Wk 13: Surgery

Wk 14: Medicine State and Society, Medicine and the People

Wk 15: The Past the Present and the Future

Texts: Porter, *Greatest Benefit to Mankind*; Quetel, *History of Syphilis*; and selected readings.

GROUP III: Memory

Miriam Fuchs, English

Tuesday, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Henke 324

The subject of this seminar is memory: what psychologists and neurologists think memory is; what the public believes memory to be; and what cultural scholars consider to be memory's role in understanding and writing about ourselves. The seminar will progress from investigating the nature, definitions, and functioning of memory to understanding memory's role in creating individual identity and cultural and collective histories.

The course would build on the English honors seminar ("The Anatomy of Memory") I'm teaching now. While I might not urge my eight students to take both courses, I might not discourage them either; the approach for HON 491 will be more broadly interdisciplinary. The goal here will be to offer students a basic knowledge and conceptual understanding of memory, introducing them to an array of disciplines: neurology, developmental and cognitive psychology, maybe oral history, education, psychiatry, literature, and cultural studies. I certainly don't claim expertise in all these fields. But memory has been central to my own work in biography, autobiography, mixed genres, and auto/biographical fiction, and I'm becoming familiar with research done in them. At the very least, I can introduce students to resources in their respective majors.

Class sessions would begin with definitions and explanations of memory. Topics would include memory retrieval, verbal and spatial memory, scientific understanding and popular ideas of how memory works based on metaphor and imagery. Topics would also include memory difficulties such as retrograde and anterograde amnesia, as dramatized in the films *Memento* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* that students will view. The seminar's focus will move on to cultural, historical, political ethnic, collective, perhaps commemorative and legal perspectives on memory. The reading selections will point to ways in which context impacts the processes of memory and therefore of identity-formation and communication. Finally, the seminar will encourage students to investigate how mnemonic narration can be a form of invention as well as recollection, subject to many changing forces.

Oral Reports

Each week one student will introduce the topic of discussion and be responsible for engaging students in dialogue and inquiry. The presenter will prepare annotated bibliography on the weekly discussion topic and distribute it to all members of the seminar. In this way, everyone will work cooperatively to find directions for further research.

Email Discussions

The presenter will also be responsible for initiating and moderating that week's email discussion.

Written Assignments

Oral presentations and sharing of research and annotated bibliography (15%)

A formal write-up of oral presentation (10%)

Participation and active engagement in all discussions (15%)

Seminar project of 15-20 pages and final presentation (60%)

Core Readings and Viewing

Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude*

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (film)

Tony Eprile, *The Persistence of Memory*

Patricia Grace, *Potiki*

Mary Karr, *The Liar's Club*

Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

Memento (film)

www.memorylossoline.com for glossary and definitions

Resources in "The Memory Exhibit" www.exploratorium.edu/memory

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*

Selections from St. Augustine's *Confessions*; Lewis Thomas' "The Lives of a Cell"; Freud's "My Contact with Josef Popper-Lynkeus"; Henri Poincaré's "Mathematical Creation"; Kingston's "No Name Woman"; Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past"; Nabokov's *Invitation of a Memory*

Text: McConkey, *The Anatomy of Memory*.

GROUP IV: Writing the World: Mapping Creative Process

Tia Ballatine, English

Wednesday 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Sakam B309

An active imagination is as essential for scientific study and political activity as it is for art. This class is designed to re-acquaint young writers and thinkers with the power—and the necessity—of the imagination by offering historical perspective, an open environment for discussion, and tools that might help remove walls stubbornly positioned between the rational mind and the imagination. For some, those walls may be flimsy veils easily pushed aside; others may encounter firmly mortared brick that presents a formidable obstacle, but by reading thoughtful meditations by artists and scientists about the creative process and by examining texts that offer equal time to both the rational and the creative mind, we will seek ways around those walls. Through our study, we will examine the notion that the success of a work of art or that the understandability of an idea may not necessarily be dependent on the resolution of contradictions, but may instead have much to do with a harmony achieved first by permitting those contradictions to coexist and then by admitting that such coexistence of contradictions is essential to the innermost structure and manifestation of art and idea. Hopefully, we will thus be able to uncover new ways to approach old problems and new means to write with greater strength about our explorations in our various disciplines.

Using in-class exercises designed to acquaint each member of the class with the intelligence of his or her intuitive mind, we will struggle to change imposed habits of rationality and to cultivate a facility of seeing and understanding in non-habitual ways, thus discovering through practice a means to harness the energy that lies between the spontaneity of the intuitive mind and the limitations imposed by the rational mind. Without losing touch with our most useful rational minds, we will permit a greater trust of the intelligence of the intuitive mind and, through that trust, discover ways to create a more active dialogue between the intuitive and the rational minds, understanding that such dialogue might support an active partnership between the usefully disorganized imagination and the equally useful organizational skills of the rational mind.

EVALUATION:

Informal brief in-class essays and exercises, e-mail responses: 20%; occasional quizzes on readings, and class participation: 20%; final project: 60%. One hour of the final class session will be devoted to writing an extensive self-reflective essay that will allow students to evaluate their own learning during the course of the semester.

POTENTIAL MAP OF SEMESTER:

NB: Every class focuses on discussion with writing exercises but some classes are "workshop" classes, focusing more strongly on writing than on discussion.

- Week 1 - Presentation of class goals, expectations etc. Plato: *The Symposium*
- Week 2 - Plato: *Ion and Meno*. Horace. *Epistles*.
- Week 3 - Jostein Gaarder. *Sophie's World*.
- Week 4 - WORKSHOP: extended writing and discussion
- Week 5 - Roberto Calasso. *Literature and the Gods*.
- Week 6 - Federico Garcia Lorca. *In Search of Duende*.
video: *The Disappearance of Garcia Lorca*.
- Week 7 - WORKSHOP: extended writing and discussion
- Week 8 - Albert Einstein. *Ideas and Opinions*. video: *How I See the World*
- Week 9 - ORAL REPORTS: Each student will have 15 minutes to present ideas for their final project to fellow classmates.
- Week 10 - Italo Calvino. *Cosmicomics*. NY: Harvest/HBJ Book, 1976.
- Week 11 - WORKSHOP: extended writing and discussion
- Week 13 - Carl Jung. *The Undiscovered Self*. Video: Suzanne Wagner, *The World Within*.
- Week 12 - WORKSHOP: extended writing and discussion
- Week 14 - Alan Watts. *The Book on the Taboos Against Knowing Who You Are*. Video: *Man in Nature; Work as Play*
- Week 15 - WORKSHOP: extended writing and discussion
- Week 16 - Final discussion of projects, in-class self-assessment essays; class evaluations

Texts: Calasso, *Marriage of Cadmus & Harmony*; Calvino, *Cosmicomics*; Einstein, *Ideas & Opinions*; Gaardner, *Sophie's World*; Garcia Lorca, *In Search of Duende*; Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*; and Watts, *Book on the Taboos Against Knowing Who You Are*.